

Your response

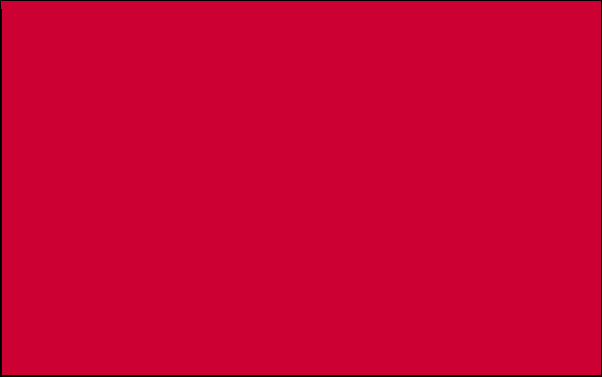
Question	Your response
	<p>Confidential? – N</p> <p><i>Do you agree that for the purposes of where locally-made programming may come from, Ofcom should approve the 'South of England (Bauer)' area in relation to the 12 local licences listed in Section 2 of this document? If you do not agree, please give reasons.</i></p> <p>I do not agree with Bauer's proposal for a new 'South of England (Bauer)' area for the purposes of locally made programming. This objection is specifically in relation to the inclusion of Salisbury in the region.</p> <p>The first justification Bauer give for this change is with regard to the alignment with the ITV regions. Whilst Salisbury sits (only just) in the Meridian area, much of the current Spire FM catchment area sits with the West region. Listeners residing north of Salisbury identify far more with Bristol and the West rather than Southampton, such as the large military community based on Salisbury plain and the farming community.</p> <p>Salisbury has very little in common with the happenings on the South Coast and would be out of place sharing local content with the four coastal stations also in the proposal. Neither does it have much in common with the metropolitan commuter-belt stations of Newbury, Reading, Basingstoke, Guildford etc. Salisbury is the same distance to Cardiff as it is to Aylesbury! I find it very hard to believe that adequate provision of local content appropriate to Salisbury would be provided if these other stations are also to have their interests met. It must be highlighted that Salisbury is currently not in the South region and the reasons for its original omission from the region should be remembered and noted. It is my belief that Salisbury in fact needs its own approved area, due to its unique nature.</p>

Salisbury currently has superb local programming. This comes in the form of Spire FM which offers extensive coverage of local news (critical during the recent poisonings), genuinely local advertising, lifeline support for the vulnerable and needy, support of multiple local and national charities based in Salisbury (Trussell Trust, Help for Heroes) as well as traffic and travel appropriate to its residents and those working in the city. The reason that this local content is so strong and so successful is that Salisbury is relatively rural, isn't part of urban sprawl and has a unique identity compared to areas to the South and East.

The current provision is so much more than the sum of its parts and any provision shared with stations mentioned earlier would fall well short of what is relied upon by the city. Businesses, charities and thousands of individuals will be poorer for the change. The music played is not why people listen to the current provision, the genuinely local content is.

In section 2.3 of the consultation it is explained that Ofcom recently created much wider Approved Areas to allow creation of local material. Whilst I understand and sympathise with the need for broadcasters to rationalise content making centres in order to make the process more efficient, I do not believe that Bauer plans to take this change in the spirit of how it was intended. Taken in context with Bauer's recent announcements regarding rebranding of many of their local stations (including Spire FM), what is being proposed here is to take a station with superb local provision, strip it of its local identity and provide 'local programming' shared with other stations over such a wide area that no one is to be satisfied. It is not a case of making genuinely local content at a production hub for relay to the city.

When I first moved to Salisbury I was touched by the warmth of its local radio; hearing a different local school sing a song each day in the run up to Christmas, listening to which village fetes were on this weekend, hearing out local garage being advertised, the list could go



on. I remember hearing a traffic update where a listener rang in to report (and apologise) that he'd broken down on a busy road. Another listener then rang in to say he'd be able to tow him clear and was on his way. This is what local means – local people talking to local people.