

Your response

Question	Your response
	<p>Confidential? —Y / N</p> <p>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.</p> <p>No, I do not agree. The proposed new 'South of England (Bauer) area will result in the loss of many important and well respected local radio stations to be absorbed into a much larger area removing the local nature. The area proposed is very large including communities which are in no way connected. I am a very regular listener to Spirit fm, the local radio station for West Sussex based in Chichester. A radio station which can include areas such as Weymouth (75 miles from Chichester), Newbery (45 miles) and Aylesbury (67 miles), can not in any way be considered 'Local' when compared to the excellent service we already have. These measurements are based from Chichester where Spirit fm is based, however their broadcast area stretches mostly East of here, further away still from the rest of the broadcast area.</p> <p>Spirit fm plays an important part in the West Sussex community championing many community causes and fundraising for local charities. Most recently they have raised significant amounts of money for our local food banks and local hospital during the Covid-19 crisis, but this level of community support has been there since they began in 1996. Being a truly local station, with all programs made and broadcast from West Sussex as meant that they can really connect with the community they serve as the whole team live and work within this community.</p> <p>All of the presenters are much respected and</p>

valued members of the community and have given a lot of their own time getting involved in and publicising community projects and fundraisers. These presenters are an important part of West Sussex – having regional presenters who could be anywhere in the South of England region instantly removes this important part of local radio.

Spirit fm also provides many job opportunities in the local area, including a very successful apprenticeship scheme allowing school leavers an outstanding start in their media career in collaboration with Chichester College. Should the proposals go ahead it is likely all of these jobs will be lost – a clear detrimental effect on the local community.

As well as the loss of jobs at Spirit fm these changes will also have a knock on effect to many other local businesses and charities. For charities they are likely to lose a lot of the fundraising support and free publicity that Spirit fm provides which for smaller local charities will be a very hard hit – especially when recovering from the Covid-19 crisis. For local businesses (again trying to get back on their feet post Covid-19) they will be losing local affordable advertising space. Proper local radio stations allow small local firms to be able to access affordable advertisement which is specific to their local area. If Spirit fm were to be absorbed into a much larger area then these small local firms will be pushed out.

The proposed changes seem to show no benefit to the communities they serve – only to Bauer who are looking to cut costs and maximise profits. Ofcom have a responsibility to protect local radio stations which seek to serve and support their local communities from being turned into large stations run purely to maximise profit.