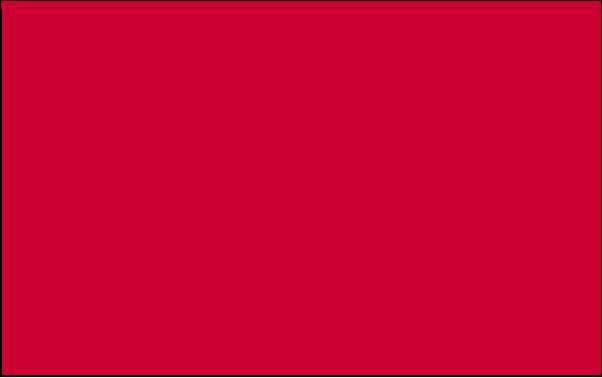


Your response

Question	Your response
	<p>Confidential? –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> <hr/> <p>I do not agree with this proposal.</p> <p>Before this consultation has even closed, Bauer have announced the assimilation of a large number of small local stations into a single national brand to be broadcast from four regional centres.</p> <p>It appears OFCOM have either been naïve in their interim conclusion or misled by Bauer’s proposal.</p> <p>Bauer stated that allowing this change would not imply all stations would co-locate and share programming. However, this is precisely what Bauer have announced at the end of May under the disguise of a rebranding exercise.</p> <p>If Bauer’s plans go ahead numerous local stations will effectively be closed down with programming originating from one of four regional centres. A common programme will be broadcast for the majority of the time with the only nod to localism being some unspecified amount of news output and drivetime shows operated as one of four regional opt outs on weekdays only. Compared to the current services this constitutes a complete dumbing down of the stations output.</p> <p>Quite apart from the direct impact on jobs in the media industry from Bauer’s proposals, the local impact on businesses, organisations and good causes supported by the current stations will be immense. I don’t believe an operation</p>



like that proposed by Bauer can offer the same local coverage as the current stations do and any claim to the contrary is pie in the sky.

As a final note, it appears the wisdom of OFCOM's policy of 'approved areas' also has to be questioned if it facilitates moves like this from Bauer. I would even go as far as to say that OFCOM will have failed in ensuring local radio serves its audience.