

Your response

Question	Your response
	<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</p> <p>In direct response to the details and background information in Section 2:</p> <p>2.1: Enabling the larger groups, such as Bauer, to rationalise the number of studios they operate, it essentially allowing them to destroy the very purpose some local radio studios were originally set up for. Local studios with local presenters and local producers do far more for their community than present generic programs with generic playlists. My local radio station, Spirit FM, has played a major role in our community for the past quarter of a century including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting local musicians and local talent - Delivering local and relevant advertising - Promoting local charities, fundraisers, and community organisations - Taking part in, and even presenting from, community events - Fronting campaigns that directly support our community, such as last years Tonne of Tins campaign. <p>2.2 The approved areas hardly justifies 95% of programming being delivered far outside of our community, with the remaining 5% being delivered from far enough away to not be locally relevant. In the spirit of the revised regulations, I feel cost saving initiatives could include centralizing certain programs and national traffic, news and weather coverage. But the majority of local radio should focus on the community. With the majority of radio, such as Greatest Hits, not being relevant to our local community, and a centralized single</p>

regional show being limited to supporting a much larger area in a very short time, I cannot see how is of benefit to anyone. For those wanting to listen to national radio channels, there are already plenty of options available. For those of us choosing to listen to local radio, the changes proposed by Bauer remove our one and only truly local radio station Spirit FM. I believe this is unacceptable and In my opinion is an oversight by Ofcom to even allow such changes to happen.

2.3 Your reference to a consultation and findings is difficult to comprehend. How strongly was this promoted and how widely was it discussed? Should these discussions have been made public to the listeners of the very radio shows that would be affected by such a change? I certainly was not aware of this until only a few days ago. Surely the most important people to consult are the listeners of the local radio studios, not the company executives with a major interested in reducing costs by making plans to close local radio stations without promoting any public consultation.

2.4 I do not understand why there is a need to broadly match TV regions. Producing and broadcasting television is a far more costly exercise and the ability for small businesses to cost effectively advertise, and for community organisations and local charities to increase their visibility by running promotional activities on television is very very difficult to do. The main point is that by offering national programming and in covering a much larger region, there are very few timeslots and advertising slots available for local programming. Local radio has provided that much needed outlet and many small local businesses and organisations and charities will suffer with the closure of a local radio studio, and on top of the current pandemic and social distancing, for many the loss of such a valuable local communication platform could be the end of the road.

2.5 The licensee in the case of Spirit FM has the opportunity to save significant costs by closing the local studio. They are clearly not interested in maintaining local radio for the benefit of

local communities, and would rather replace it with their generic non-local Greatest Hits Radio which is clearly against the wishes of THOUSANDS of listeners who have signed a petition joined a social media campaign to save Spirit FM.

2.6 – 2.9 The single area that covers all the stations listed is VAST. With the majority of programming being delivered at a national level, how do Bauer intend to deliver high quality locally relevant programming advertising to so many different areas in the very limited timeslots they are proposing? It is simply not possible.

In direct response to the consideration of the request in section 3:

3.2 While Bauer may have provided reasons for their request, I do not believe there is any benefit for the listeners who will lose the local radio station and with it the majority of local programming and locally relevant material.

3.3 I do not believe Ofcom have sufficiently consulted with listeners, or promoted the consultation sufficiently with many listeners only becoming aware of the consultation 3 days prior to the end of the consultation period, to justify the response that they are minded to approve the creation of the South of England (Bauer) area.

3.4

- I personally believe that closely matching a television broadcast area is insufficient for local radio for the reasons I have already given.

- While I agree that there are some common listener affinities along the south coast, I strongly believe that the majority of listeners prefer to keep majority of programming relevant to a smaller local area, based on the thousands of responders to the petition and #savespiritfm social media campaign.

