

Response to Sam FM (Bristol) – Request to change Format

November 12th 2020.

To: samfmconsultation@ofcom.org.uk

I object to the format change of SAM radio.

This is systematic destruction of local station identities, replacing an established service with presenters without local knowledge, unlikely to have even stepped inside the service areas, let alone lived in those areas, live with local people, do not speak with a local accent, and therefore do not identify with the local listenership.

Weather and travels reports with some local news is NO SUBSTITUTE for a real local service, by presenters and news editors with local knowledge, local accents and local understanding of the area the target listeners live. Local information is not merely news and weather and “whats on” lists, and OFCOM is seriously misguided in that belief.

You can only appeal to the people of Bristol with broadcasters who know Bristol, otherwise they may as well listen to a national service which is the format change is intent to, with minor so-called local opt out for brief periods, but not produced locally, or by people in the local area.

As witness to the mass networking of other local radio services, I object on the grounds that those living in Bristol and Bath are not subject to the same destruction. Local radio diversity is suffering with the UK wide dissemination of a national service branded "Hits Radio" and similar networked services to locally targeted transmitters.

This narrows the choice significantly, because other nearby services already provide Hits Radio, technically forming a set of relay stations for a national format over the majority of broadcasting hours.

As noted the survey is not representative, and a much larger survey should be conducted if a music policy change should be pursued. The survey should also include questions about localness of a radio service, not just music policy.

OFCOM should deny this request, reassess what is deemed “local”, and permit locally based stations to provide a truly local service, denying a takeover by national entities. Hits Radio already has a presence in the area (as does the parent Bauer) and does NOT require further relay transmitters.

Nic Clews.