

No.

This is the latest change request by Chorley FM after changing its key commitments just two years ago. To go from serving young people and the LGBT community to the whole of Chorley is a large leap.

The proposals contain a revised target community of *“The population that live, work and study in Chorley”*. ‘Work’ and ‘study’ are redundant in this description if Chorley FM will broadcast to everyone and anyone who *lives* in the area, removing the very concept of a target community.

As a reason for this change, the station says *“It was a mistake to assume the taste of our audience was linked to their age”*, but no tangible evidence is provided to this effect. Given the dramatic nature of the changes, one would expect some sort of empirical evidence to be provided.

The requested change to programming directly challenges local commercial and narrows the range of programmes available, hinting at the aspirations of the station. If the request is successful, Chorley FM will offer nothing more to the community that is not already provided by others. Where a community is already served by a commercial station, a community station’s key commitments should be defined and enforced so as to ensure an alternative service is provided.

The request to remove the phrase *“the station does not broadcast programmes consisting of continuous current or recent chart music”* because *“Its inclusion has caused problems and some young presenters left the station for being denied chart music to play”* seems to be a people management issue rather than one that requires wholesale restructure of the character of service. Given the services available in Chorley, it’s doubtful that there’s much call for another station playing chart and current music. The music should be for the targeted community not to satisfy the whims of presenters.

In regards to speech output, all references to then station’s original LGBT target community have been removed. In one change, social gain objectives and programming for the LGBT community are gone, disenfranchising the community. This is the destruction of a community radio so as build a commercial station on its foundations. Furthermore, such a wholesale change of character of service is not conducive to broadening listener choice and does not fulfil the role that community radio provides.

Lastly, for a licensee to blatantly breach its character of service for so long a period of time undermines the very principle of community radio. It should not be permitted to move the goalposts so radically mid-way through its licence term.