Licensing Community Radio

A statement of Ofcom's strategy for the introduction of community radio in the UK, and the process by which licences will be advertised, awarded and regulated.

Contents

Introduction

This document sets out the policies that Ofcom (the Office of Communications) will implement in relation to the introduction of a new tier of local, not-for-profit, radio services, called community radio. Ofcom welcomes the opportunity to regulate this new tier of broadcast radio which allows a new range of opportunities for prospective broadcasters across the country.

The policies put forward in this statement take account of information and feedback from four sources:

- The Community Radio Order 2004. This was laid before Parliament on 15 June. It was approved by Parliament and became law on 20 July 2004. (www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/stat.htm)

- 139 responses to the public consultation which was conducted by Ofcom between 17 February and 20 April 2004. All non-confidential responses have been published on the Ofcom website (http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/past/comm_radio/).

- Research into the pilot scheme. Ofcom commissioned research into four of the pilot community radio (then called access radio) services, which were first licensed in 2002. The research looked at the audiences for these services, as well as assessing the impacts on participants and agencies operating in the communities concerned. A summary of the findings from this research, produced by Research Works, is being published at the same time as this statement, and is attached (Annex 1).

- 'New Voices' and 'New Voices – an Update' by Professor Anthony Everitt (published in 2003, and available on the Ofcom website, http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/past/comm_radio/com_radio/).
  Professor Everitt was appointed by the Radio Authority to conduct an independent evaluation of the pilot scheme referred to above, and to make recommendations about the future licensing of the sector.

Summary

Ofcom's approach to licensing and regulating community radio

- Ofcom aims to facilitate the development of a distinctive new tier of radio.
- We have agreed to Government's request to conduct a review of the sector two years after the first community radio services commence broadcasting.

Spectrum and coverage areas

- We will aim to allocate FM spectrum, where possible, to support the introduction of community radio. We are seeking to identify frequencies which could not support commercially sustainable services but which should be usable for non- or partly-commercially funded stations. In general, community radio will have a higher priority for resources than potential improvements to the coverage of existing FM commercial radio stations. AM frequencies will be utilised when required, where possible.
- The maximum coverage in urban areas will generally be a 5km radius. In rural areas, where possible, we will aim to be more flexible, but in most parts of the UK it is unlikely that there will be sufficient FM resource to support services covering a larger area than 10km across.
- We shall consider, on a case by case basis, licensing a service on more than one transmitter if the terrain presents difficulties, there is sufficient spectrum available, and it is a technically efficient approach.

Inviting applications

- The community radio licence application form and accompanying notes of guidance are being published at the same time as this statement. The questions in the application form reflect the requirements of the Community Radio Order and other appropriate legislation.
- We will publish a notice inviting applications for community radio licences for the first time on 1 September 2004.
- There will be a twelve-week period between the invitation for applications and the closing date (23 November 2004).
- We will not specify where a service should be; instead applicants will identify the community they wish to serve.
- This general process will be repeated annually, although in future years specified parts of the UK may be excluded due to a lack of suitable available spectrum.

Potential economic impact on commercial radio

- The Community Radio Order does not allow Ofcom to license a community radio station which would have a coverage area that would overlap by 50% or more (in adult population terms) with the measured coverage area of a local commercial station which contains 50,000 or fewer adults.
- Although the Order does allow Ofcom to license a service which would overlap by 50% or more with a commercial station with 50,001-150,000 adults in its measured coverage area, the legislation does not allow Ofcom to permit such services to gain any income from advertising or sponsorship of programmes.

- In all other cases Ofcom is required by legislation to include conditions in each licence which limits the proportion of income from advertising and programme sponsorship, and to ensure that a new community radio service does not unduly prejudice the economic viability of any other local commercial radio service.

Funding

- Where the sale of spot advertising and programme sponsorship is allowed, there will be an upper limit of 50% (or less, at Ofcom's discretion) on income from these sources taken together.
- Sponsorship of anything that is not broadcast is excluded from this limit; the legislation also says that sponsorship for purposes that are "mainly or wholly philanthropic in nature" is also excluded from this limit.
- The legislation requires that community radio stations must be funded from multiple sources. A community radio station cannot receive more than 50% of its funding from any single source.

Submission of applications

- The application form and accompanying notes of guidance will be available on our website. Completed applications can be submitted electronically. All applications will be published on our website.

Assessment and award of licences

- We expect to receive a large number of applications this year, and will therefore seek to prioritise the order in which we consider them as follows: firstly, we shall aim to reach decisions involving frequencies currently used by pilot stations; secondly, we will look to award licences in areas of low demand and where award decisions would not impact on other areas (e.g. in terms of frequency availability); thirdly, we shall consider applications in all other areas.
- Licences will be awarded in batches on a rolling basis over several months.
- A group should commence broadcasting within two years of award.

Application fee and licence fees

- There will be a non-refundable application fee of £600 payable for each application submitted.
- The Broadcasting Act licence fee will be £600 per annum; in addition, relevant turnover (income from advertising and sponsorship) will be subject to the same tariff as that applied to commercial radio licences, which for the financial year 2004/05 has been set at 0.627%. Any amount due will be offset against the £600 already paid.
- The annual Wireless Telegraphy Act licence fees are as follows: for FM, £339 for measured coverage of fewer than 100,000 adults; £509 per (complete) 100,000 adults covered; for AM, £226 for coverage of fewer than 100,000 adults; £339 per (complete) 100,000 adults covered.

Regulation of community radio services

- Each licence will include details of the station's commitments to provide social gain, opportunities for participation in the operation and management of the

service and accountability to the relevant community. It will also include a description of the programme output, as well as specifying a limit on income from advertising and sponsorship.

- An annual report will be required on progress in achieving the promises made, plus a financial report so that we may check that funding rules have been adhered to. Ofcom will aim to make some or all of this information available to the public.

- Licensees will be required to keep a file of relevant information relating to the delivery of their key commitments. If necessary Ofcom may check this to ensure licensees are complying with their licence conditions and the claims made in the annual report.

- Ofcom may impose a statutory sanction if it believes a licensee has repeatedly, deliberately or seriously breached the terms of its licence conditions or our Codes. The penalty must be appropriate and proportionate to the breach for which it is imposed.

Grants for community radio

- Government has confirmed a grant of £500,000 for community radio broadcasters for 2004/5 and for 2005/6, to be administered by Ofcom. Ofcom can make such grants as we consider appropriate to providers of community radio services. After we have invited applications for licences we will develop a more detailed structure for the fund, which we will publish in the Autumn.

Background

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1.   The Communications Act 2003 allows the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport to introduce community radio by secondary legislation. In February 2004 Government published a draft Community Radio Order and at the same time Ofcom published its consultation on the future licensing of community radio. The public consultation period for both of these documents ended on 20 April 2004.

2.   Government laid the Community Radio Order 2004 before Parliament on 15 June. It has been approved by both Houses of Parliament and became law on 20 July 2004. The Order sets out a definition and some rules for community radio, as well as the framework for the advertisement and award of licences.

Ofcom's approach to licensing and regulating community radio

3.   There was general support from respondents to our consultation for the introduction of community radio in the UK. Some respondents feel it is long overdue. This was tempered with reservations expressed by some commercial radio operators, especially those operating small-scale services. These concerns are more fully explored later on (see paragraphs 32, 33, 36 & 38).

4.   Many respondents argued for relatively close regulation to ensure that stations adhere to the promises made on application. While Ofcom's aim for light touch regulation is generally welcomed, the majority of respondents (including potential applicants, as well as commercial radio operators) expressed the view that Ofcom should monitor community radio operators more carefully than commercial stations, to ensure that community radio remains clearly distinct from the commercial sector and delivers social gains. (Regulation of the different requirements of community radio broadcasters, in terms of programme output, social gain, access and financial matters, is referred to in more detail in paragraphs 61-67 of this document.)

5.   It is Ofcom's view that regulation of the sector needs to take account of the following factors:

- the statutory requirements for community radio services, as set out by Government in the Community Radio Order, are much more detailed than for commercial radio (e.g. not-for-profit, and the delivery of social gain);
- it is a new sector, and it would seem sensible to start off cautiously, with the option of changing regulation as necessary and appropriate at a later date, after a review of the sector has been carried out;
- it is important that community radio services are distinct from commercial radio, both in terms of their on-air output as well as their off-air activities;
- there was a clear message from respondents to the consultation that we should be a light touch regulator where we can, but that we should, for example, be 'hands on' in ensuring that groups deliver on their social gain promises.

6.   We have agreed to Government's request to conduct a review of the community radio sector two years after the first services commence broadcasting. Amongst other things this may include the delivery of social gain and impact on the target communities, funding matters, including the level of advertising and sponsorship revenue, and the economic impact on the commercial radio sector.

Policy on allocation of spectrum and coverage areas

7.   In the consultation we set out our proposed policy for the allocation of spectrum and the anticipated size of coverage areas for community radio services.

Allocation of spectrum

8.   There were a number of strongly held views on our proposals for the allocation of spectrum. On one side, the Community Media Association and others felt that new commercial services were being given a higher general priority than community radio, and they were opposed to this. On the other hand, some commercial operators disagreed with the suggestion that community radio should have a higher priority for resources than potential improvements to the coverage of existing FM commercial radio stations, arguing that some stations are currently unable to fully serve their areas due to poor coverage.

9.   Aside from these views, however, there was a general acceptance from most respondents that Ofcom should strive to satisfy and balance competing demands for licensing commercial radio, RSLs and community radio. We therefore do not intend to change the policy on spectrum allocation that we set out in our consultation, and are seeking to identify frequencies which could not support commercially sustainable services but which should be usable for non- or partly-commercially funded stations. Ofcom considers that frequencies that cannot deliver a coverage area of more than a 5km radius are not likely to be able to support economically viable commercial radio services but however would be suitable for community radio services.

10.   More clarity was requested on frequency availability, especially in metropolitan areas, where demand for community radio services is expected to be highest, and where spectrum is already most heavily used. We are currently conducting an exercise to identify suitable FM frequencies in major conurbations throughout the UK. It is expected that this exercise will be completed in the Autumn, at which time we intend to publish the findings. Frequencies are being sought in the BBC and non-BBC FM bands, consistent with proper protection of existing services. We are pleased to note that the BBC in its response said *"we support in principle the suggestion that some community radio services be accommodated within the sub-bands used for BBC services"*. We note also the BBC's concerns about possible impact on reception of existing services and that it intends to co-operate fully with Ofcom in reviewing the availability of frequencies in the sub-bands used for BBC services.

11.   It should be noted however, that frequency clearance is a process which needs to take into account a number of site-specific factors and so we are unable to address every contingency and combination of applications we may receive. Furthermore, the exact extent to which applications will compete with each other for frequencies will not be known until all have been received and collated by Ofcom.

12.   There was one observation, made by a few respondents, that is worth airing: that the large number of illegal broadcasters in major cities indicates that spare spectrum exists. The existence of illegal stations may indicate some available spectrum, but as many radio listeners will agree, pirate broadcasters cause

interference to the reception of many commercial and BBC channels because they are not planned or regulated. Illegal broadcasters often use what they think is a clear frequency, but they do not take into account that it may be used by a weaker station some distance away, the bandwidth required for their own transmissions or the need to protect other related frequencies (such as those used by emergency services).

13.   We hope that the emergence of new community radio licences may encourage some members of the community, who might otherwise engage in illegal broadcasting activity, to seek a licence to broadcast to their community on a legitimate basis. We also note the observation that Ofcom will need to consider stepping-up its enforcement action against illegal operators as community radio stations operating at lower power levels than most commercial stations will be more vulnerable to interference from this source.

Coverage areas

14.   In the consultation we proposed that:

- Community radio stations on FM in urban areas will generally be licensed for a coverage radius of up to 5km.
- For urban 'community of interest' services, where the target community occupies an area of more than a 5km radius, only AM frequencies will be allocated.
- In rural areas where there is greater availability of suitable FM frequencies (such as parts of Scotland and Wales) and a coverage radius of more than 5km is proposed (because of the dispersed population, for example), we may license such services on FM.
- In rural areas where the availability of suitable FM frequencies is poor and a coverage radius of more than 5km is proposed, only AM frequencies will be allocated.

15.   There was broad agreement that a 5km radius was appropriate for most community radio services. However, some potential applicants urged Ofcom to consider, on a case by case basis, licensing services with larger areas on FM in rural locations, or that we consider allowing a service to broadcast on more than one transmitter, if appropriate. Notably, the latter argument was put forward by a number of respondents in South Wales. Some potential applicants for community of interest services argued that, on a case by case basis, we should consider agreeing to coverage over a larger area than a 5km radius for them too.

16.   In the proposals outlined in the consultation we did not rule out coverage areas larger than 10km across, but this will be the exception rather than the rule. The limited availability of suitable FM spectrum in most areas will preclude consideration of service areas greater than this. We shall consider, on a case by case basis, whether licensing a service on more than one transmitter might provide better coverage of the target community, for example, if the terrain presents difficulties. However, this will only be the case where there is sufficient frequency availability, and this approach is deemed to be the most technically efficient.

17.   The research that Ofcom commissioned into four of the pilot services (management summary attached, Annex 1), showed that a service aimed at a community of interest can be very successful in attracting an audience (the elderly in Havant and Glaswegian Asians in the case of the two services researched). Some people from the target community who live outside the coverage area of these

services would like to see the station coverage increased. However, in most areas we will not have the FM spectrum available to facilitate this. (For a full description of the pilot scheme, please refer to Section 5 of our consultation document 'Licensing Community Radio').

18.   In conclusion, we intend to maintain the policy put forward in our consultation document (and set out in paragraph 14 above). In addition we may consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether to license a service utilising more than one transmitter, if this is a technically efficient way to serve the target community.

The licensing process

Inviting applications

19.   In the consultation we proposed an applicant-led process, where the applicant identifies the neighbourhood or community they wish to serve. Because of the nature of community radio we believe it would be inappropriate for Ofcom to decide the specific locations or target communities to be served by stations. We also proposed a twelve-week window each year within which anyone could apply for a community radio licence.

20.   There was general support for the suggestion that the process should be applicant-led. Some respondents questioned the need for one closing date for all applicants, and suggested that we should consider advertising on an area-by-area basis. However, there are two problems with this. Firstly, we would need to prioritise some areas over others. Secondly, by awarding licences in one area, development may be restricted in an adjacent area because of the scarcity of suitable FM spectrum. If there are not sufficient suitable frequencies to offer licences to all those that appear adequately to satisfy the selection criteria, Ofcom will need to make judgements between applicants in the same area, or between applicants who wish to serve nearby areas but would be competing for the same spectrum. The same closing date for applicants throughout the country will help to facilitate such decisions.   If demand for licences does not exceed the supply of frequencies then this will not be a problem. However, in our planning, we need to take account of the strong likelihood that there will be more suitable applicants than available frequencies, particularly in the major population centres. Therefore we believe there should be one closing date for all applicants.

21.   There will be a twelve-week window for the submission of applications. Some have argued that the size of this window does not matter, as most will want to submit applications close to the closing date. This may be true, but the twelve-week period from the invitation to apply for licences to the closing date gives sufficient notice to applicants to prepare and submit their applications.   We strongly encourage applicants to submit their applications well before the closing date.   Applications received after this time will not normally be accepted.   All applications will be considered together and not on a first come first served basis.

22.   We intend that this process of inviting applications for licences will be carried out annually, with a twelve-week period between the invitation to apply for licences and the closing date. However, it may be that in future some parts of the UK may have to be excluded due to a lack of available spectrum. Some respondents asked that we avoid inviting applications during the Summer, when many organisations that may wish to apply for a community radio licence will not be adequately resourced to assemble their proposals. We think this is a sensible suggestion, and have therefore decided to delay inviting community radio applications this year until September. The closing date therefore will be in late November, and in subsequent years we shall aim to follow a similar pattern. We are publishing the application form and accompanying notes at the same time as this statement, to enable groups to start preparing their applications well in advance.

23.   As a consequence of this change to the licensing timetable, we have decided to extend the licences of the pilot scheme operators for a further six months (to 30

June 2005).   We do not wish to disadvantage the communities served by the fourteen stations still in operation by allowing the licences to expire at the end of this year, as the operators of these services may want to apply for a community radio licence to continue broadcasting. The new timetable would not allow sufficient time for us to make licence award decisions in the areas where the pilot stations are broadcasting before the licences held by these stations expire. The change to the timetable also gives all potential community radio applicants more time to prepare their proposals, and avoids the summer holiday period.

Application and award timetable

24.   As set out above, the timetable has changed from that which was set out in the consultation, when we anticipated that applications would be invited for the first time in June, on the assumption that the Order might become law in May. We now aim to:

- Invite applications for community radio licences for the first time on Wednesday 1 September 2004;
- Allow a period of twelve weeks before the deadline for receipt of applications, which will therefore be on Tuesday 23 November.

Application procedure

25.   The Community Radio Order establishes the legal framework for advertising and awarding licences. The changes that Government has made to the Order following its own public consultation are reflected in the application form and in our application and selection processes. The definition of community radio and the selection criteria that Ofcom must have regard to when selecting licensees are set out below. (Application documents may change in subsequent years as we develop regulation of the sector, but the latest version will be available on the Ofcom website throughout the year.)

Eligibility criteria

26.   The 'characteristics of a community radio service' are set out in the Order. To be eligible for a community radio licence, a proposed service must:

- Be provided primarily for the good of members of the public or of particular communities and in order to deliver social gain, rather than primarily for commercial reasons or for the financial or other material gain of the individuals providing the service
- Be intended primarily to serve one or more communities (a community is defined as either people who live or work or undergo education or training in a particular area or locality, or people who have one or more interests or characteristics in common)
- Not be provided in order to make a financial profit, and uses any profit produced wholly and exclusively to secure or improve the future provision of the service or for the delivery of social gain to members of the public or the target community
- Offer members of the target community opportunities to participate in the operation and management of the service
- Be accountable to the target community.

27.   In addition, the Order states that:

- Only bodies corporate (i.e. not individuals) can apply for community radio licences
- No group may hold more than one community radio licence
- There are ownership restrictions which prevent the holders of other broadcasting licences from holding community radio licences. These rules do not apply to holders of Restricted Service Licences (television or radio), Radio Licensable Content Services, Television Licensable Content Services, or Digital Sound Programme Service licences.
- Licences are for a maximum of five years.

Social gain

28. The delivery of 'social gain' is a crucial element of community radio. The draft Order was amended following Government's consultation earlier this year, and the definition of 'social gain' in the Order now sets out certain mandatory requirements, as well as examples of further social gain aims that stations might wish to work towards. Applicants must put forward proposals for achieving the following social gain objectives, in respect of individuals or groups of individuals in the community that the service is intended to serve:

- The provision of radio services to groups that are otherwise underserved by (analogue) commercial radio services in the area.
- The facilitation of discussion and the expression of opinion.
- The provision (whether by means of programmes included in the service or otherwise) of education or training to individuals not employed by the person providing the service.
- The better understanding of the particular community and the strengthening of links within it.

29. In addition, the Order sets out examples of further objectives of a social nature that community radio operators might achieve:

- The delivery of services provided by local authorities and other services of a social nature, the increasing and wider dissemination of knowledge about those services and about local amenities.
- The promotion of economic development and of social enterprise.
- The promotion of employment.
- The provision of opportunities for the gaining of work experience.
- The promotion of social inclusion.
- The promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity.
- The promotion of civic participation and volunteering.

Selection criteria

30. There are now eight criteria that Ofcom is required to take into account when deciding whether, or to whom, to award a community radio licence:

- The ability of each applicant to maintain the service they propose to provide throughout the licence period.
- The extent that the proposed service would cater for the tastes and interests of persons comprising the relevant community.

- The extent to which the proposed service would broaden the range of programmes on local services available in the area, and, in particular, the extent to which the service would be of a nature or have a content distinct from that of any other local (i.e. local and community) service which would overlap with the licence for the proposed service.
- The extent of local demand or support for the provision of the proposed service.
- The extent to which the proposed service would result in the delivery of social gain to the public or relevant community.
- Provisions for ensuring accountability to the relevant community.
- Provision for access by members of the relevant community to the facilities to be used for the provision of the service and for their training in the use of those facilities.
- Ofcom must also have regard to the need to ensure that any community service does not prejudice unduly the economic viability of any other local commercial radio service.

31.   The application form for a community radio licence must reflect all of these requirements, as well as some additional requirements in the legislation, such as transmission details. The form and accompanying notes of guidance are being made available at the same time as this statement. The notes of guidance will encompass Ofcom's community radio policy, as well as requirements from the Order and other broadcasting legislation.

Potential economic impact on commercial radio

32.   The consultation question which prompted the most feedback was that regarding our proposals to invite submissions from commercial radio operators if they considered that their economic viability might be affected by the provision of a community radio service.

33.   Small-scale commercial stations, many of which operate at a very low margin of profitability, were concerned that community radio services were being allowed to compete with them for advertising and sponsorship revenue at all, and were also concerned that they would have insufficient staff resources to gather evidence of potential harm to present to Ofcom. Prospective community radio licence applicants were concerned that they would be expected to counteract any arguments put forward by commercial stations, when they had neither the expertise nor access to the necessary market information to do this.

34.   The Community Radio Order requirements have changed in this area. The Order now sets out three rules that relate to this issue, as follows:

- There should be no community radio stations licensed with a coverage area which would overlap by 50% or more with the measured coverage area (MCA) of an existing commercial radio station which contains 50,000 adults[1] or fewer (the 'first tier');
- Any community radio station with a coverage area which overlaps by 50% or more with a commercial radio station with an MCA which contains more than

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[1] A list of the adult population figures for commercial radio MCAs can be found on our website, at:
http://www.ofcom.org.uk/licensing_numbering/radio_sound_broadcasting/commercial_radio/

50,000 adults and fewer than 150,000[1] adults will not be allowed to take any advertising or programme sponsorship (the 'second tier'); [2]

- Ofcom should have regard to the need to ensure that any community radio service does not prejudice unduly the economic viability of any other local service ('third tier').

35. It is important to note that Ofcom has no power to vary the first and second tier rules as they are set by the legislation, nor can we choose to be flexible in their application. ('Overlaps' refers to overlaps in population, not area. Overlaps apply both ways; that is a community service overlapping with a commercial service and vice versa.)

36. The first and second tier of rules require a straightforward assessment using adult population figures and checking for overlaps between commercial and community services. In all other cases Ofcom is required to include conditions in each licence regarding the proportion of income from paid-for advertising and programme sponsorship, with the aim of ensuring that a new community radio service does not unduly prejudice the economic viability of any other (non-BBC) local commercial radio service. We no longer intend to invite commercial radio operators to submit evidence of potential economic impact of proposed services; nor will we expect community radio applicants to provide input. Instead an assessment will be conducted by Ofcom and any decisions to vary the limit on advertising and sponsorship income to a level lower than that specified in the legislation (see paragraph 41 below) will be made by the Radio Licensing Committee (the Order gives Ofcom power to impose other licence conditions relating to advertising and sponsorship if it thinks it appropriate to do so, to avoid undue prejudice to the economic viability of another local radio service).

Funding

37. In the consultation we asked for views on whether there should be a general limit of 50% of annual income from the sale of advertising and sponsorship, or whether this should be decided on a case-by-case basis. There was a wide range of responses.

38. Many respondents were opposed to the principle of setting a rule, as it was seen as primarily being designed to protect commercial stations, and restrain the development of community radio services. Some commercial operators argued that community radio stations should not be permitted to sell advertising or sponsorship at all, while some prospective community radio operators suggested the complete opposite, i.e. that there should be no limit on how much income from advertising or sponsorship a community radio station is permitted to gain.

39. A number of other respondents argued that a case-by-case basis was the most sensible way forward as circumstances vary from area to area, although there was a concern that commercial radio operators would be able to influence case-by-case decisions. It was also suggested that case-by-case decisions would lead to greater uncertainty for applicants.

40. Overall, however, there was a feeling that for a healthy community radio sector, there needs to be a diversity of funding. This chimes with Professor Anthony

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[2] Corrected on 1st September 2004 to reflect that under the Community Radio Order 2004 the scope of the second tier restriction is not limited to existing commercial services only.

Everitt's recommendation, in 'New Voices', that: *"just as it would be wrong for community radio to be totally reliant on subsidy, a vision of full commercial viability should also be resisted. It is important that community radio retains its social orientation and does not risk diluting its community aspirations. Accordingly a ceiling should be set for commercial earnings."*

41. Government has decided to set some limits on funding, and introduced the following rules into the Order:

- Where advertising and programme sponsorship is permitted there will be an upper limit of 50% of income that may be generated from these sources (Ofcom has the power to vary this limit downwards only).
- A community radio licence holder should not receive more than 50% of its funding each year from any one source (i.e. from a company, organisation or person).

42. The restrictions on income from sponsorship refer to the sponsorship of programmes included in the service. This means that income from the sponsorship of anything that is not broadcast is excluded from these limits (for example, sponsorship of a station event, website or training scheme). Sponsorship "for purposes that are wholly or mainly philanthropic in nature" is also excluded from the restriction. We intend to classify such sponsorship as a donation, and as such it may be credited on-air but must be distinguishable from commercial sponsorship (and may not contain a sales message, for example).

43. In addition, Government has lifted the 1990 Broadcasting Act restriction that would disqualify the holding of a licence by an organisation which received more than 50% of its funding from public sources in the previous year.

Submission of applications

44. There was general support for our proposals on the submission of applications.

45. The application form and accompanying notes of guidance will be available on our website. Completed applications can be submitted electronically or as a paper copy. All applications received will be published on our website after the closing date. If requested, Ofcom may agree to keep some material confidential (for example some financial material or staff details, where appropriate).

46. Ofcom is required to take account of the extent to which there is evidence of local demand or support for the provision of a proposed service. It is for applicants to decide how they wish to demonstrate demand or support. However, Ofcom does not believe that generic support for the establishment of a new community radio station is as meaningful as evidence of considered support for an applicant's specific proposals. In addition, template-based letters or petitions will not generally be considered as substantial evidence of support. Applicants may however wish to summarise evidence of such generic demand or support in their application form, and if they wish to submit such material, provide this separately, preferably in electronic form.

Assessment and award of licences

47.   Judging from the volume of enquiries that we have received about community radio licences, we expect to receive a fairly large number of applications later this year. We therefore proposed, in the consultation, to prioritise the order in which we will consider applications. There were a fair number of respondents who agreed with the proposals set out in the consultation. Others felt it would be unfair to consider applications from the pilot areas first. Some took issue with our second and third priorities (considering areas of high demand, followed by remaining areas) and suggested that this be reversed, so that we look at 'uncontested' areas and areas of low demand before regions of high demand as they may be simpler and quicker to deal with. It was suggested that we should prioritise awards to those groups that can commence the soonest.

48.   We have considered these suggestions and propose to change our priorities slightly. We expect to prioritise our considerations of applications submitted in 2004, as follows:

- First, award decisions which involve frequencies currently used in the pilot scheme;
- Second, applications for services in areas of low demand, where the award decision would not affect awards in neighbouring areas (e.g. in terms of frequency availability);
- Third, applications in remaining areas.

49.   We may need to vary these priorities if other unforeseen issues arise after the closing date for applications. In any case, we will confirm after the closing date how we intend to prioritise the consideration of applications. We expect that licences will be awarded in batches on a rolling basis. If the number of applications received is high, consideration of all applications is likely to take a number of months.

50.   In addition to the above, we expect that any group that is awarded a community radio licence should commence broadcasting within two years of award. If they are unable to do so, the offer of a licence may be withdrawn, and the frequency considered for use in the same area or elsewhere in the next round of licence awards.

Additional selection criteria

51.   Aside from the selection criteria that the Order directs us to have regard to when making licence awards (see paragraph 30), we asked for views on what, if any, additional criteria Ofcom should use if we need to decide between applicants. A large number of respondents felt that consideration should be given to previous experience, either in broadcasting, for example through restricted service licences (RSLs), or community development, especially with the target community. Aside from this there was no consensus on the suggestions made in the consultation on using the multiple deprivation index, or on selecting services aimed at the whole neighbourhood rather than a community of interest.

52.   Other suggested criteria put forward by respondents tended to be along similar lines to the requirements of the Order, particularly social gain factors.

53.   However, as there are now eight selection criteria in the legislation, as well as the characteristics of service definition, and the mandatory social gain aims, it is our view that these will be sufficient to enable the Radio Licensing Committee to make its decisions. We therefore do not propose to use any additional criteria.

Application fee and licence fees

54.   Each application must be accompanied by a non-refundable application fee of £600.

55.   Before a service can commence broadcasting, it will require a Broadcasting Act licence and a Wireless Telegraphy Act (WTA) licence. The Broadcasting Act licence for services on FM or AM will be charged as follows:

- A flat annual fee of £600; in addition,
- A station's total commercial revenue will be subject to the same tariff as that applied to commercial radio licences, which for the financial year 2004/05 has been set at 0.627%. Any amount due will be offset against the £600 already paid (effectively this would mean that only relevant turnover of over £95,000 per annum will incur a higher tariff).

56.   It should be noted that Broadcasting Act licence fees for all radio broadcasters (analogue and digital, commercial, community and restricted service) will be subject to a further Ofcom consultation during 2004, and therefore these fees may be subject to change from 2005.

57.   The WTA annual licence fees are as follows:

For broadcasts on FM:

- £339 for a measured coverage area which includes fewer than 100,000 adults (aged 15+)
- £509 per (complete) 100,000 adults covered (any final group of fewer than 100,000 adults being disregarded)

For broadcasts on AM:

- £226 for a measured coverage area which includes fewer than 100,000 adults
- £339 per (complete) 100,000 adults covered (any final group of fewer than 100,000 adults being disregarded)

58.   Taking the Broadcasting Act and WTA licence fees together, the minimum annual licence fee for a community radio service on FM will total £939 (£78.25 per month).

Radio Licensing Committee

59.   The consultation document stated that licence awards would be made by a standing committee of the main Ofcom board, to be called the Radio Licensing Committee. This committee has now been appointed, and its members are as follows:

Ian Hargreaves, Ofcom Board Member (co-chair)
Kip Meek, Senior Partner, Competition & Content (co-chair)
Kevin Carey, Content Board Member
Pam Giddy, Content Board Member
Peter Bury, Director of Strategic Resources
Neil Stock, Head of Radio Planning & Licensing
Peter Davies, Head of Market Intelligence
Martin Campbell, Head of Radio Content & Standards

60. Up to two additional members will be added to the committee when appropriate to provide particular expertise, for example, where there are important issues in the Nations and Regions.

Regulation of community radio services

61.   Respondents from both community radio and commercial radio backgrounds felt that social gain objectives were important. It was felt that the requirement to deliver social gain needed greater emphasis than was implied by the draft Order (which stated that social gain would be satisfied by the achievement of one or more objectives from a list). As already noted, the Order has increased the social gain requirements for applicants (see paragraph 28).

62.   Respondents generally wanted to emphasise the difference between community and commercial operators, and the distinctiveness of the sector is seen as an important factor. It was suggested that we should be vigilant in ensuring the delivery of a station's licence commitments. This view was balanced by those who asked that we be sensible and flexible in our expectations and how we regulate, and that care is taken to ensure that the targets set by applicants are realistic and achievable. As Professor Anthony Everitt reported in his evaluation of the pilot scheme, in some areas operators may fall short of what they hoped to achieve, in other areas they may exceed expectations, unexpected challenges will arise and a degree of flexibility to take such things into account may be necessary.

63.   There was general support for the consultation proposal that a station's key commitments should be set out in the licence, and that an annual report should be required to check whether stations were delivering on the promises they made. The key commitments will include: social gain (including the four mandatory social gain commitments set out in paragraph 28), access for members of the relevant community to opportunities to participate in the operation and management of the service, accountability to the relevant community, a description of the programme service, and conditions regarding the proportion of income from paid-for spot advertising and sponsorship of programmes (where this is allowed).

64.   We plan to develop a template for the annual report which all licensees will be required to complete. This will be made available in due course. We intend to make the report from each station available publicly. There will be a separate pro forma for the financial report that each station will need to submit. This will also be published, and will include information such as major sources of income and expenditure, but we do not expect to publish detailed confidential information such as individual salaries. We also intend to make public whether or not a licensee has stayed within the limits imposed by their licence for advertisement and sponsorship income, and the statutory limit of 50% maximum of income from any one source. As proposed in our consultation, Ofcom will work with stations to agree when it is convenient for them to prepare and deliver these reports. For example, licensees may wish to tie their reporting in with accounting schedules, or with the timetable for a report to a funding body.

65.   We will require licensees to keep information on file for examination, should we need to see it. This should relate to the delivery of the key commitments (for example training records) as well as financial records. This file will help ensure that the station can justify its activities in case of complaint by ensuring that they hold a complete record of the work they have undertaken towards achievement of their licence obligations. Ofcom may check this file, if necessary, to ensure that it

supports the claims made in annual reports, or as evidence in the investigation of specific complaints.

66.   The News and Current Affairs Code and Programme Code, and the Advertising and Sponsorship Code, originally published by the Radio Authority, and the Code on Fairness and Privacy, originally published by the Broadcasting Standards Commission, represent Ofcom's current policy and will apply to all community radio broadcasters. Complaints will be dealt with in the same way as for other licensed radio services. All radio stations licensed by Ofcom are required to record their output and keep recordings for a period of six weeks.

67.   The imposition of a statutory sanction against a broadcaster is a serious matter. Ofcom may, following due process, impose a statutory sanction if it believes that a licensee has repeatedly, deliberately or seriously breached the terms of its licence conditions, or Ofcom's statutory Codes.   Where a station is found to be in breach, the degree to which any penalty is applied must be appropriate and proportionate to the contravention in respect of which it is imposed. In addition Ofcom must have regard to any representations made to them by or on behalf of the regulated station concerned.

Grants for community radio

68.   In March 2004, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport announced a £500,000 grant from Government for community radio. This grant is for 2004/05 and a similar amount has been allocated for 2005/06. The allocation of grants is to be administered by Ofcom. The Communications Act 2003 states that we can give grants only to licensed providers of community radio services.

69.   We intend to put a structure in place for the administration of this Fund after we have invited applications for licences. The administration of grant applications will be dealt with separately from the licensing function. We will aim to publish a statement on the administration of the Fund in the Autumn.

Future research and feedback on community radio

70.   We invited suggestions in the consultation as to how we might research the impact of services on target communities. Most respondents acknowledged the need for feedback in two areas: informal feedback and formal research.

71.   Getting informal feedback from listeners and participants in stations, as well as those in the target community who did not listen or participate, was seen as important for Ofcom in reviewing the impact of this new sector, as well as important for station operators. Several people suggested we might consider having a simple feedback form on the Ofcom website. The comments received might usefully be fed into our proposed review of the sector. (We have now set up an email address for community radio comments and queries: communityradio@ofcom.org.uk).   There was also general agreement that stations need to explore creative ways of encouraging feedback from their community and researching their station's impact. For example using website polls, freephone telephone numbers, on-air forum sessions or linking up with local colleges to help design and conduct surveys.

72.   Formal research by Ofcom into the impact of this new sector was felt to be essential by some respondents. It was suggested that this needed to look at a wide range of issues including audience, participation (e.g. trainees, volunteers), on-air and off-air impact on the target community, views of local organisations (e.g. councils, voluntary groups) and impact on existing commercial radio operators (economic viability, the effect on listening figures, and advertising revenue).

73.   Government has asked that we conduct a review of the sector two years after the first stations commence broadcasting and we will consider further what research we will need to conduct to help make this a meaningful review. Preparations for such a review will begin soon after the first batch of community radio stations has been licensed by Ofcom.

Ofcom's community radio role

74.   In the consultation we asked for views on what role Ofcom might have in respect of community radio, beyond the licensing of new services.   Many respondents asked that Ofcom provide information and advice for potential community radio applicants, and for groups after they have won a licence.   There was concern that many operators would be inexperienced and need some support from Ofcom.   As well as this statement of our policy, we will also publish detailed notes of guidance for applicants to aid them in completing the application form and planning their service.   This will include reference to the relevant legislation as it will apply to community radio.

75.   Some of the suggestions we received, for example, providing information on suppliers, best practice guidelines (including advice on staffing, business planning and technical issues), information on sources of funding and grants, training and mentoring schemes, would more appropriately be provided by an organisation such a membership association or trade body for the sector.   We will explore areas where it might be sensible to collaborate on some of the suggestions put forward with sector bodies such as the Community Media Association.

Conclusion

76.   A number of respondents expressed their appreciation at being given the opportunity to contribute to the shaping of our policy on community radio. We are grateful for all the input we received. The introduction of community radio in the UK has excited a lot of interest, and Ofcom is pleased to be given the job of licensing this new sector.

Annex 1

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'Research Works':

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

MAY 2004

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1.   BACKGROUND, METHOD AND SAMPLE

In 2001, the Radio Authority launched an experiment into Community Radio designed to test the sustainability of a separate tier of small-scale community services. Fifteen not-for-profit projects, aiming to deliver *social gain* to specific neighbourhoods or communities of interest, were offered one-year licences. The term of these licences was extended to December 2003 and was further extended to December 2004. There are currently fourteen stations broadcasting.

Each station has a 'promise of delivery' that sets out its programme promises, but also its aims in terms of *social gain* and access. These vary from station to station but might include:

–   training opportunities
–   work experience opportunities
–   contribution to tackling social exclusion
–   contribution to local education
–   service to neighbourhood or interest groups
–   access to the project for local people (some of the projects have recruited hundreds of volunteers; some are run entirely by volunteers).

Ofcom wished to build on its knowledge of Community Radio and, as part of a consultation exercise regarding how stations might be licensed and regulated, wanted to understand the opinions of listeners to the pilot stations currently on-air, as well as evaluating any impacts on the communities in which these projects are operating.

In January 2004, Ofcom commissioned research agency Research Works to conduct an in-depth piece of independent research into this area. The specific objective of this research was to assess the overall impact of Community Radio in terms of who is listening and what benefits these listeners feel are being delivered, both on a personal and social level. The findings were considered according to the needs of three distinct target audiences: listeners, station participants and community leaders.

The four stations chosen for this study were selected to represent a mix of Community Radio projects:

-   two stations serving communities of place (Forest of Dean Radio and ALL FM in Manchester)

- two stations serving communities of interest: Awaz FM (the Asian audience in Glasgow) and Angel Radio (people over 60 in the Havant area).

Equally, the four stations chosen offered a range in terms of geographical location - Awaz in Glasgow, ALL in Manchester, Forest of Dean in the English/Welsh borders and Angel on the south coast of England – as well as a variety of socio-economic settings (Forest of Dean is rural/disadvantaged, ALL FM serves a diverse and disadvantaged area of urban Manchester, Angel serves a mainly retired/middle-class area, while Awaz serves the entire Asian community living in central Glasgow).

In terms of the research approach, there were two-phases - comprising both quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative research was conducted as in-street interviews in a range of relevant locations, while the qualitative research comprised a mix of individual depth interviews and focus group discussions. A pilot phase of qualitative research was conducted, in order to familiarise the researchers with the station areas and audiences.

The quantitative sample was made up of radio listeners in the areas covered by the community stations - quota controlled to reflect the target audience for the individual stations (i.e. people over 60 for Angel Radio and the Asian Community for Awaz FM). In each of the four station locations, the qualitative phase of research addressed the three audiences (listeners, station participants and community leaders) separately.

The fieldwork conducted for this study comprised the following:

	AWAZ	ANGEL	FODR	ALL
In-street interviews with				
Radio Listeners	325	304	428	685
Focus groups: listeners	3	2	2	2
Depth interviews: listeners	4	4	4	4
Focus groups: Participants	-	1	-	-
Depth interviews: Participants	6	-	6	3
Depths: Community Leaders	3	3	3	3

In more detail:

Awaz FM: 325 quantitative in-street interviews were completed plus qualitative research comprising: three focus groups and four depths with Indian and Pakistani listeners (Male and Female, aged 18-50). One depth, one paired depth and one triad with station participants (Male and Female, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh). There were also three depth interviews with community leaders - from local charities, community development and the police.

Angel Radio: 304 quantitative in-street interviews plus qualitative research comprising: two focus groups and four depths with listeners (Male and Female, 60+) and one group with station participants (Male and Female, 60+). There were also three depth interviews with community leaders from local charities, social services and health services.

Forest of Dean Radio: 428 quantitative in-street interviews were completed plus qualitative research comprising: two focus groups and four depths with listeners (Male and Female, aged 25-45). A paired-depth and four depths with station participants (Male and Female). There were also three depth interviews with

community leaders - from community youth project, historical society and local housing services.

ALL FM: 685 quantitative in-street interviews were completed plus qualitative research comprising: two focus groups and four depths with listeners (Male and Female, aged 25-45). Three depths with station participants (Male and Female). There were also three depth interviews with community leaders - from the police, community development and education services.

2.   SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

A summary of the research findings for **<u>Awaz FM</u>** follows:

Station Profile: Awaz FM serves all parts of the Asian community in Glasgow, which comprises approximately thirty thousand people. There are no other analogue radio broadcasters in the area specifically serving this target audience, although broad-based, national and local, Asian programming can be obtained through digital media (digital radio, Internet, Digital TV). The station is based in the heart of Glasgow and broadcasts twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, offering programmes in a variety of Asian languages and mixing speech and music. BBC local and national radio is also available to this audience, alongside a number of local commercial stations.

Quantitative Data: Spontaneous awareness of Awaz FM was remarkable - 60% of the total sample were spontaneously aware of the station, while another 31% recalled Awaz after prompting. 73% of the total sample indicated that Awaz FM was one of the stations they 'ever listen to', while 59% of the sample stated that Awaz FM was the radio station 'most listened to'. Listeners to Awaz FM were extremely enthusiastic - 79% are listening every day, 62% of the sample listen for 3 hours + each day and 38% say that they listen throughout the day (weekdays and weekends). Favourite programmes were the breakfast, drive-time and early evening shows. A majority - 56% - have been in touch with Awaz FM: 47% have taken part in phone-ins and 17% have been to an event organised by Awaz. Non-listeners have typically never experienced the station – 69% have never listened to Awaz FM, but there were some active rejecters: 20% did not like the variety of programmes, while 13% had tried it once and did not like it. This is, however, an exceptionally satisfied audience: 94% of listeners rated Awaz FM as very good or good. Awareness of Awaz's community status was very good - 98% of the listeners knew that Awaz FM is a community station, 98% that it is run for the benefit of the Asian community and 95% that it is there for the community to take part in.

Qualitative data: Amongst *listeners*, it was clear that radio Awaz is extremely popular across the Glasgow Asian community regardless of age, gender, religious group (Muslim, Hindu and Sikh) and ethnic group (Pakistani and Indian). This community is proud to have a coherent identity (Glaswegian Asian) which Awaz is perceived to champion.
Listeners were generally very knowledgeable about programmes (for example noting that there is currently no Hindu religious content) and presenters, tending to have favourites. Awaz was felt to be making a significant contribution to the community in terms of information and entertainment. Equally, respondents explained that Awaz provides a meeting place for all members of the community and therefore offers a unique space for listeners to articulate cultural and religious issues and to be informed about health and social issues. Parents reported that hearing Asian languages on the radio helped develop their children's language skills and contributed to their cultural education.

Station participants represented the diversity of the Glasgow Asian community in terms of gender, age, ethnic and religious background. All felt that they gained satisfaction from being part of a community enterprise and recognised (from the feedback provided by listeners) that they were making a valuable contribution. Volunteering is seemingly increasing in popularity and training is becoming more formalised, with participants attending training courses run by an external expert.

Community leaders reported close, on-going, links with the station, since it had first started broadcasting, centred on supporting, organising and promoting community initiatives, whether by advertising events or promoting health and social messages. Overall, initial expectations had been exceeded, with local organisers noting an increased sense of public confidence in terms of accessing services and overt pride in being part of a unique and distinct community.

A summary of the research findings for **Angel Radio** follows:

Station Profile: Angel Radio is based in Havant, a small town on the south coast of England, located close to Portsmouth. It is primarily a 'new town' with a centre developed in the 1950s and has a large retired population. Angel Radio broadcasts from its own town centre premises, which - apart from the station studios and offices – includes a shop and drop-in area. Listeners are encouraged to visit Angel at any time. The station broadcasts twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, and offers a strong mix of music aimed at its target audience, adults aged sixty-plus (the station policy is that no music will be played which was recorded after 1959). Programming also includes a strong element of `reminiscence therapy' during which presenters are encouraged to talk about their lives and experiences while playing music of their choice. BBC local and national radio is also available to this audience, alongside a number of local commercial stations.

Quantitative Data: Spontaneous awareness of Angel Radio was good: 19% of the total sample were spontaneously aware of the station, while another 31% recalled Angel after prompting. 23% of the total sample indicated that Angel Radio was one of the stations they 'ever listen to', while 11% stated that Angel Radio was the radio station 'most listened to'. Listeners to Angel radio were enthusiasts: 51% are listening every day, 39% of the sample listen for 3 hours + each day, 35% say that they listen throughout the day (weekdays and weekends) – with 13% saying that they listen throughout the day and night! Favourite programmes were big band and old-time dance music. A majority - 68% - have not been in touch with Angel Radio, but those that have typically took part in phone-ins, while some have visited the station. Non-listeners have typically never experienced the station – 80% have never listened to Angel Radio. Overall, this is a very satisfied audience: 95% of listeners rated Angel Radio as very good or good. Equally there was good awareness of Angel's community status - 96% of the listeners knew that Angel Radio is a community station, 93% that it is run for the benefit of the older community and 88% that it is there for the community to take part in.

Qualitative Data: A majority of ***listeners*** were firm fans of Angel, listening regularly on a daily basis. All supported Angel's focus on relevant music, which was noted as a clear point of difference with other radio stations – the idea of less chat and more music was positively endorsed. There was consistent praise for the style of programmes, particularly theme days, quizzes, phone-ins, requests; these were seen as seen as good fun, *"involving"* and *"thought-provoking"*. Angel was typically described as *"friendly", "nostalgic", "for me", "for my age group", "different",* and effective at *"bringing people together"*. Most of the listeners were aware that Angel is a community station manned by volunteers and felt that it positively enhanced the confidence of older people – *"other stations forget about us…"*. Listeners were very aware of the station's financial problems and were keen to see improvements in the business footing of Angel Radio that will guarantee its survival.

The ***station participants*** were a strong, dedicated and enthusiastic group, ranging in age and background. All had been keen listeners to Angel prior to volunteering – and their decision to volunteer had typically been triggered by either a life change

(bereavement, retirement) or specific enthusiasm for the station's aims and output. All participants clearly felt rejuvenated by their involvement with Angel and highlighted specific gains such as learning new skills, meeting new people and *"engaging your brain…having a worthwhile focus in your life".* This group strongly believed that Angel contributed to their community in terms of: help and support for older people, understanding of the needs of older people and providing an access point for information and support. Again, participants were extremely conscious of the precarious nature of the station's finances.

Community leaders were very supportive of Angel FM, feeling that it has provided them with an opportunity to engage with the older community. They saw the station as tailored to the needs of the elderly and bringing the community together. A specific gain is that Angel reaches many excluded, vulnerable people. All respondents noted positive social gains, including more contacts from elderly people, enhanced confidence on the part of those making contact and improved access to relevant information on local services and issues.

A summary of the research findings for **Forest of Dean Radio** (FODR) follows:

Station Profile: The Forest of Dean is a predominantly rural area, located between Ross-on-Wye in the north and Chepstow in the south, with the Welsh border on its western flank and the River Severn forming its eastern border. There are a few large towns scattered throughout the Forest area, but these are rather isolated and public transport links are poor. The population has been affected by the decline of local businesses and industries – and unemployment is high. Forest of Dean Radio broadcasts irregularly and most programming is available at the weekends (during the course of this research a regular daily breakfast and early evening show was added to the schedule). When new programming is not available, the station typically broadcasts taped music output or 'looped' music. The programming is diverse, covering local issues, sport and music. There are significant reception problems throughout the Forest area, which affect national and commercial radio as well as FODR programmes (and also mobile phone reception). Reception can be particularly poor during the evening.

Quantitative Data: Spontaneous awareness of FODR was reasonably good: 15% of the total sample were spontaneously aware of the station, while another 50% recalled FODR after prompting. 11% of the sample indicated that that FODR was one of the stations they 'ever listen to' - 1% of the sample stated that FODR was the radio station 'most listened to'. Listeners were obviously affected by the inconsistent programming - 62% listen once a week or less often and 67% listen for one hour or less. 24% do not listen at all at weekends. Favourite programmes were local news and chat, the breakfast show and music shows. A majority - 73% - have not been in touch with FODR: of those that have, 9% have taken part in interviews and 9% have been to an event organised by FODR. Non-listeners have typically never experienced the station – 72% have never listened to FODR, but there were also some obvious reception/programming problems: 17% of non-listeners said that they cannot find the station, while 9% said that FODR is not on enough or that they are not sure when it is on. This is, however, a relatively satisfied audience: 74% of listeners rated FODR as very good or good. Awareness of FODR's status was good - 89% of the listeners know that FODR is a community station, 89% know that it is run for the benefit of the local community and 89% that it is there for the community to take part in.

Qualitative data: *Listeners* were typically 'Foresters' or had lived in the Forest of Dean for a long time (30+ years). They were principally from middle/lower socio-

economic groups. The majority of respondents were listening to a range of other local stations. Respondents preferred to hear a presenter rather than repeated taped music - and therefore listened more frequently from Thursday to Saturday (although some were disappointed at the repetition quality at these times). Some were aware of the station schedule but most saw the programming as largely random. There was some recall of regular programmes e.g. 'Sit Down and Listen', 'Forestwide' and 'Classical hour'. Regular listeners were very enthusiastic about the station, seeing it as idiosyncratic and friendly. Listeners wanted better reception, more live shows, less repetition, phone ins, debates, requests and the continuation of a Forest of Dean focus for programming. FODR was seen as unlike any other radio station, reinforcing the listeners' sense of belonging and providing new understanding about the place in which they live. Listeners were typically aware that FODR is community radio and understood this to mean catering for small and isolated communities – bringing them together and celebrating 'localness'. Respondents felt that the station offered specific social gains and a sense of cohesion within the Forest (which is often ignored by more prosperous regional neighbours) specifically highlighting its issues, events and history. The most common complaint from listeners concerned the inconsistent nature of the programming, which effectively discourages regular listening.

Station participants were typically Foresters and had particular (often artistic) interests or talents i.e. poetry, art, history and music. Several volunteers were unemployed, while others worked part time and a small number were retired. All volunteers claimed to have gained confidence through the development of writing, technical, social and personal skills. Most appreciated the opportunity to promote local artists, writers and musicians as well as the chance to gain practical radio experience. Some station participants, however, reflected the concerns of listeners about the irregular nature of FODR's programming.

Community leaders had become associated with FODR through involvement with specific initiatives e.g. housing, and had been asked to produce shows covering local problems and offering relevant advice. Respondents felt that the community, through FODR, have been given a unique opportunity to address specific problems on air. Most believed that that traditional Foresters typically lack self esteem, confidence and suffer as a consequence of low aspirations – respondents felt that the station has been extremely successful at developing the talents of local people by making and delivering programmes.

A summary of the research findings for **ALL FM** follows:

Station Profile: ALL FM broadcasts to the Ardwick, Longsight and Levenshulme area of Manchester. These three communities lie along a main road (the A6) and represent a disadvantaged area of the city, comprising a wide mix of ethnic groups in a strongly urban setting, affected by high unemployment and poor housing/facilities. The station broadcasts twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, offering an eclectic mix of programmes serving many of the different communities living in the area. There is a mix of speech and music programming. BBC national and local radio, as well as local commercial radio, is also available in the area.

Quantitative Data: Spontaneous awareness of ALL FM was relatively low - 9% of the total sample were spontaneously aware of the station, while another 28% recalled ALL after prompting. 12% of the total sample indicated that ALL FM was one of the stations they 'ever listen to', while 2% stated that ALL FM was the radio station 'most listened to'. Listening seems sporadic, with only 17% listening every day and 38% listening once a week or less often. They typically listen for shorter

periods, with 50% listening for between 1 and 3 hours daily and 30% listening for one hour or less. 32% say that they mainly listen in the evening (weekdays and less at weekends). Favourite programmes were music programmes, particularly garage music. A majority - 62% - have not been in touch with ALL FM, but those that have typically took part in phone-ins, have been interviewed, have volunteered to help or visited ALL. Non-listeners have typically never experienced the station – 87% have never listened to ALL FM. This is, nevertheless, a satisfied audience: 94% of listeners rated ALL FM as very good or good. Equally, awareness of ALL's community status was good: 95% of the listeners know that ALL FM is a community station, 93% that it is run for the benefit of the local community and 90% that it is there for the community to take part in.

Qualitative data: ALL FM *listeners* were diverse in terms of age (16-55 years old) and ethnicity (including white, African Caribbean and Asian listeners). There was a bias towards the C2DE socio-economic groups and students. Listening tended to be ad-hoc (e.g. in the car or in the background at home) with a minority tuning in to specific shows (e.g. Friday and Saturday evening for R&B / Funk shows, On Eire on Sundays). Detailed knowledge of the station was limited with listeners having very little knowledge of actual programming except a general perception of eclectic music and ethnically-specific shows. Feedback from listeners focussed on the music mix. There was no real knowledge of presenters or news programmes. In principle, respondents supported the need to appeal to the whole community - in practice, however, the diverse range of music on offer did not encourage consistent listening. Most were aware that ALL FM was a community radio station, but understanding of the term varied. Listeners felt that ALL FM was attempting to bring the range of cultures together, highlight local issues and promote local groups. ALL FM was considered successful in raising awareness of the range of different ethnic groups in the area and (for those that listened to ethnic programmes) encouraging interest in different cultures and styles of music. There were, however, doubts expressed about the coherence of the ALL community concept – while respondents certainly felt a sense of community towards their own particular area (i.e. Ardwick, Longsight and Levenshulme), they were much less sure that the three areas truly comprised a single community of place.

Station participants were predominantly young (18-30 years) and from lower socio economic groups, with several unemployed. There were also some older presenters and presenters from specific communities. Volunteers typically had an interest in a specific music type or issue. Reasons for volunteering included career progression as well as personal development, involvement in the community and issue specific roles. Participation resulted in increased confidence, increased knowledge and skills in media as well as a sense of involvement in the community.

Community leaders had typically been actively involved with the station, presenting programmes relating to their areas of interest e.g. housing and community development. Respondents used their shows to highlight relevant issues, interview guests, answer questions and play music. All felt that ALL FM has created a stage for facilitating and recognising the needs of the many ethnic groups in the area, and highlighted their culture and music. Additionally, they believed that the station has included and developed local talent in the form of presenters, DJs and sound engineers.

3.   CONCLUSIONS

The research data clearly indicates that the Community Radio experiment should be viewed as successful:

- significant numbers of the radio-listening population in the four station areas are aware of, and listening to, Community Radio

- both those listening to, and participating in, Community Radio generally say that it enhances their personal well-being and sense of community

- community leaders typically see Community Radio as delivering tangible benefits for their local communities.

Overall, the public typically perceives Community Radio as well-run, relevant and entertaining - and clearly different to the existing radio product offered by either commercial or public broadcasters.

It was, however, very apparent from the results of the research that the concept of community radio is easier to communicate amongst an audience of 'interest', rather than an audience of 'place':

- in the former instance, relevant groups quickly identified that the station is `for them' and spotted that participation/involvement is being invited

- communities of interest expressed an emotional investment in their community, as well as very clear reference parameters for identifying relevance and meaning in broadcast content

- communities of place suffer from variable coherence in terms of their sense of community - some communities are more conceptual than actual, while others suffer from blurred boundaries and the absence of a core philosophy to bind the audience together

- consequently, listeners seemed to take much longer to recognise that the station is 'for them' and that participation/involvement is being sought.

A number of specific observations can be made as a consequence of the research:

Awaz FM can only be viewed as a phenomenal success in terms of reaching a majority of its target audience and encouraging high rates of participation, interest and reported social gain.

Angel Radio should also be viewed as hugely successful in terms of quality of delivery and social impact amongst a very vulnerable audience. Angel, however, clearly demonstrates that commitment, enthusiasm and professionalism are not enough - business experience and acumen are also required in order to run successful Community Radio. Both listeners and participants were well aware that it will be necessary to establish financial stability, if the station is to continue to operate (and the consequences of it ceasing to broadcast would be significant for many of the vulnerable, elderly listeners).

Forest of Dean Radio is obviously producing extremely popular output and is succeeding in creating a real sense of community for an area which typically sees

itself as marginalised and forgotten. It is obvious, however, that lack of consistent programme output (along with, to a lesser extent, reception problems) is holding back the valuable work being undertaken. Both listeners and participants felt that the slow process of building community partnerships must not determine the quantity of programming produced. There was a consistently recognised need to make more programmes more speedily.

ALL FM is well-liked by listeners and produces a high standard of varied programme output. It suffers, however, from serving an area which often does not see itself as a single community. Many listeners felt that the station is trying to please too many audiences by providing such a diverse programme output that listeners felt they could never be certain 'what is going to be on'. Consequently, the station seems to have become primarily known for dance music, amongst a relatively small, young, audience. Its community outputs were not well recognised amongst listeners.

Research Works
May 2004

For a copy of the full report produced by Research Works, please contact the Community Radio licensing team (communityradio@ofcom.org.uk; Radio Planning & Licensing, Ofcom, Riverside House, 2a Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HA).