

Key Commitments change request form

Community radio station name:	Future Radio
Licence number:	CR000192
Licensee (company name):	The NR5 Project (Trading as Future Projects)
Contact name:	Dean Tucker
Date of request:	02/10/2023

Details of requested change(s) to Key Commitments

A community radio operator may apply to Ofcom to have the station's Key Commitments amended.

Please complete the table overleaf by including your current Commitment in the left hand column and your proposed revised Commitment in the centre column. In the right hand column please give a brief explanation as to why you wish to make each change.

We also require you to complete a second table which asks you to explain your proposed changes with reference to the statutory framework.

If you do not provide an explanation for your proposed changes and a completed comparison table, Ofcom cannot consider a Key Commitments change.

Please complete this form and return it to: broadcast.licensing@ofcom.org.uk

Existing Commitment (as in your published Key Commitments) Please only include one commitment change per row, and add more rows as necessary into the table.	Proposed revised/new Key Commitment	Reason for proposed change
Music. The main types of music broadcast over the course of each week are: pop, indie, soul, rock, and dance.	Music. The main types of music broadcast over the course of each week are: alternative, pop, indie and rock from the past 50 years, together with a range of specialist music genres and local music.	This more accurately reflects Future Radio’s musical output, which builds upon the existing commitment.
The service provides original output for a minimum of 12 hours per day.	The service provides original output for a minimum of 63 hours per week.	We would like to move from a daily minimum to a weekly minimum. The current daily requirement has become increasingly difficult to sustain. Impacts of the pandemic and the cost of living means volunteers are unable to commit as much time on air as they have done previously. This change would allow us more flexibility in the event of unforeseen live/pre-recorded programming changes, due to volunteer availability.

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Statutory requirements

Under section 106(1A)(a)-(f) of the Broadcasting Act 1990 (as amended and modified¹) Ofcom must be satisfied that your proposed changes **meet at least one of the criteria referred to below**.

Please indicate which of these criteria you believe your proposed changes satisfy by deleting YES or NO as applicable and provide an explanation for why you consider a particular criterion is met in the relevant box. You should note that even if Ofcom is of the opinion that your explanation of your proposed changes meets one or more of these criteria, there may still be reasons why Ofcom is unable to consent to the change. When explaining your proposed changes, it is not enough to state that you believe one of the criteria is met. You must also demonstrate *why* you consider that at least one of these criteria is met.

In particular, if Ofcom is not satisfied that the changes would not substantially alter the character of the service (criterion (a) below), Ofcom cannot consent to the change without consulting on your proposals.² If this is the case, we will contact you to confirm that you are happy for us to consult on your proposed changes, and whether you wish to make any changes to your request in light of the need to make it public.

As part of our consideration of your request to make changes to your Key Commitments, we require applicants to provide an explanation for **at least one** of the criteria below.

(a) In your judgement would the proposed changes substantially alter the character of the service?	NO (Please explain why below)
The character of the service would not change. The proposed changes would offer greater flexibility on how original content hours are met, and more accurately reflect the musical output Future Radio provides.	
(b) Do you consider that the proposed changes would narrow the range of programmes available by way of relevant independent radio services to persons comprising the relevant community?	NO (Please explain why below)
The changes would not narrow the range of programmes made available by Future Radio, it would better reflect the broad output Future Radio wishes to provide. The changes would allow us to put more resource into enhancing our current output to provide as good a quality service as possible, rather than continually trying to fill gaps.	
(c) Do you believe that there is evidence that, amongst persons comprising that community, there is a significant demand for, or significant support for, the changes that you have proposed?	YES (Please explain why below)
Our volunteer steering group, which represent volunteers and listeners, have been consulted on the proposed changes. They recognise the station's current challenges and are supportive of the changes being proposed.	

¹ As amended by sections 312 and 313 of the Communications Act 2003 and modified by the Community Radio Order 2004.

² Ofcom may approve a change under any of criteria (b), (c), (d) and (e) without consultation, or after a consultation of less than 28 days, if Ofcom considers that to hold a consultation at all, or for 28 days or more, would result in a delay that would be likely to prejudice the interests of the licensee. Ofcom may also remove for the purposes of consultation any confidential information submitted by the licensee.

<p>(d) Do you consider that your proposed changes would be prejudicial to the access by members of that community to the facilities used for the provision of the service and for training in the use of those facilities?</p>	<p>NO (Please explain why below)</p>
<p>By providing greater flexibility to our commitment to original output, Future Radio will be able to resource more work within the community, and greater training opportunities to new & existing volunteers, and to others beyond Future Radio. Our ethos is to support better futures for those in our community, this change would allow us to spend more time on delivering that ethos.</p>	
<p>(e) Do you consider that the proposed changes would be prejudicial to the delivery of social gain resulting from the provision of the service provided under your licence?</p>	<p>NO (Please explain why below)</p>
<p>As stated, our training programmes and other projects within our community would not change. Our focus on providing a voice for people who would not otherwise be heard would also not change. Our speech output will continue to focus on delivering important information to our listeners and facilitating discussion on issues affecting our community and will be unaffected by these changes.</p>	

Please set out below any additional information and/or evidence you wish to provide in support of your proposed changes.

In particular, you may wish to outline how you think your proposed change(s) fit(s) within Ofcom's [published guidance on changes to Key Commitments](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0017/31913/kc-changes-guidance.pdf) (https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0017/31913/kc-changes-guidance.pdf).

Future Radio last reviewed its key commitments in 2016 and much has changed since then. A move to new premises following the station's landlord entering liquidation, the subsequent effect that had on our volunteer base and the resulting financial challenges it produced has led to the new station management reviewing Future Radio's Key Commitments now.

The changing broadcast landscape within our city, since our Key Commitments were last reviewed, including recent changes to local commercial radio and BBC local radio's output, provides us with an opportunity to provide a more diverse range of music and speech content. The proposed changes to our Key Commitments will enable us to provide an alternative to the pop focussed output of the national stations.

In addition, the cost of living crisis continues to challenge the availability and commitment of volunteers and the proposed changes to our Key Commitments will provide us with the flexibility to ensure that we continue to provide original and local content across the week, rather than having to focus on filling gaps when volunteers become unavailable.

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Data Protection

We require the information requested in this form in order to carry out our licensing duties under the Broadcasting Act 1990, Broadcasting Act 1996 and Communications Act 2003. Please see Ofcom's [General Privacy Statement](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/foi-dp/general-privacy-statement) (<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/foi-dp/general-privacy-statement>) for further information about how Ofcom handles your personal information and your corresponding rights.

Amended May 2018

Ofcom Notes on the Request

The request was AGREED, because Ofcom was satisfied in relation to Section 106(1A)(a) of the Broadcasting Act 1990 (as modified by the Community Radio Order 2004, and further modified by the Community Radio (Amendment) Orders 2010 and 2015) i.e. that the change would not substantially alter the character of the service, and for the policy reasons given below.

The Licensee has asked to convert its original output requirement from daily to weekly, alongside a reduction from 84 hours a week to 63 hours a week total. This represents a 25% reduction in their original output requirement. The Licensee has explained that changing circumstances have reduced the availability of volunteers.

We are satisfied that a move from a daily to a weekly target will allow the licensee greater flexibility in managing its resources, and that the relatively modest reduction in weekly hours is unlikely to compromise how the service is received by listeners over the course of the week.

The licensee has also requested to modify their existing Key Commitment for their music output from including soul and dance as genres to instead including alternative as a genre and a 'range of specialist music genres and local music'. The licensee has stated that their volunteer steering group is supportive of the proposed changes. They have also argued the change will allow them to focus on promoting the local music scene and delivering programming to underserved communities, as well as providing representation on air.

Future Radio's core purpose as set out in its Key Commitments is to 'act as a voice for the local community', deliver 'inclusive programming' including to 'underserved groups' and facilitate participation of these groups. As such, we do not consider that a change to the types of music the station must play is likely to have an impact on its ability to continue delivering on its core purpose. Indeed, it could be argued that the change to include local music might help facilitate the service to act as a voice for the local community. Taken with the fact that the volunteer steering committee has not expressed opposition to this move, Ofcom has taken the view that the changes to the Key Commitment for their musical output would not affect the service's ability to appropriately serve its target community.

In terms of our policy criteria, we do not consider these changes are in conflict with the community radio 'characteristics of service' as set out in the legislation, and for the reasons set out above we consider the extent of the impact of the change on the character of the service to be low. We are therefore approving this request under section 106(1A)(a) of the Broadcasting Act 1990, and for these policy reasons.

November, 2023