

Key Commitments change request form

Community radio station name:	Radio Ashford
Licence number:	CR000201BA/2
Licensee (company name):	Radio Ashford Ltd
Contact name:	Richard Collins
Date of request:	18 th October 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
<p>Character of Service: “Radio Ashford is for the health community and broader local community of Ashford, Kent.</p> <p>It provides entertainment and health information aimed especially at those directly involved in healthcare, as well as for the wider community, with special attention paid to voluntary organisations and civic and social services in Ashford. “</p>	<p>Character of Service: “Radio Ashford is the radio station for the community of Ashford, Kent.</p> <p>It provides a local voice for the local community, providing a service of entertainment, community information and with special attention paid to community and voluntary organisations, civic and community and health services in Ashford and the surrounding areas.</p> <p>Radio Ashford offers a local service and broadcasts promoting life in the local area.”</p>	<p>To revise the health focus in to a broader whole local community focus.</p> <p>The Radio Ashford service is for the whole community, of which health is part given the level of facilities and employment in that sector locally.</p>
<p>Speech. The main types of speech output broadcast over the course of each week are:</p> <p>“news, community news, discussions and information features on health-related topics”.</p>	<p>Speech. The main types of speech output broadcast over the course of each week are:</p> <p>“Community news, views, discussion and information, national news, local traffic and travel, weather, information on local events, health and well-being information”</p>	<p>To allow a broader description of the wide variety of community focussed information we provide.</p>

<p>“The service provides original output for a minimum of four hours per day”.</p>	<p>“The service provides original output for a minimum of twenty eight hours per week. “</p>	<p>Radio Ashford very often provides over 40 hours of original programming each week and would strive to continue to do so. We request to change our minimum original hours commitment to a weekly total, rather</p>
		<p>than a daily one. This will allow us to follow the flexibility of volunteer programme presenters availability across a week, rather than a specific day and reflects the commitments format of many fellow CR stations.</p>
<p>“The service provides locally-produced output for a minimum of 13 hours per day.”</p>	<p>“The service provides locally-produced output for a minimum of ninety one hours per week.”</p>	<p>We request to change our commitment to a weekly total, rather than a daily one, whilst retaining the same overall number of hours.</p> <p>This will allow us to follow the flexibility of volunteer programme presenters availability across a week, rather than a specific day and reflects the commitments format of many fellow CR stations.</p>

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?	YES/NO (Please explain why below)
The proposed changes would not have the practical effect to substantially alter the character of Radio Ashford	
(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?	YES/NO (Please explain why below)
The changes would not narrow the programme range and Radio Ashford would continue to maintain and increase programmes as resources allow.	
(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/NO (Please explain why below)
The changes proposed will not have any practical effect on the station output or the audience.	
(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?	YES/NO (Please explain why below)
The changes proposed will not have any effect on the station in this regard.	
(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?	YES/NO (Please explain why below)
The changes proposed will not have any affect on the station in this regard.	

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.

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).

The changes enable us to operate in a similar framework to fellow CR stations with weekly commitments rather than daily ones. Reflecting the nature of CR operating in a not-for-profit framework and relying on volunteers. As the changes are not proposing any reduction in service, hours or commitments to the community, we hope that Ofcom will agree this change.

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) that the changes would not substantially alter the character of the service, and for the policy reasons given below.

The Licensee has requested changes to its character of service and its speech content requirements, as well as requesting to convert its original & locally-produced output requirements from daily to weekly requirements.

We are satisfied that the original and locally-produced output requirement changes are not substantial changes to the character of service, and we are happy to approve these changes. Ofcom is generally willing to accept requests from Licensees to change from daily to weekly requirements, recognising that this gives greater flexibility to licensees to manage their volunteer resources without making a significant change to the service provided to listeners.

The Licensee has also requested to change its speech requirement, seeking to add in further requirements to broadcast views, local traffic and travel, weather and information on health and well-being information. We are satisfied that this change would not represent a substantial change to the character of the service, as the station is not proposing to reduce any of its other speech requirements and we consider that the new requirements are consistent with Radio Ashford's overall character of service.

Finally, the Licensee has requested changes to its character of service, seeking to change its target community from "the health community and broader local community of Ashford" to simply "the community of Ashford". The Licensee has requested other changes to its character of service, emphasising its local character. Although the specific reference to "the health community" will be removed, the Licensee has included in its proposed new character of service that it will continue to pay 'special attention' to "health services in Ashford and the surrounding areas", and the station will continue to be required to provide health and well-being information. As such, we are satisfied that this change would not substantially alter the character of the service.

In terms of our policy criteria, Ofcom is satisfied that the changes will not affect the station's ability to deliver the characteristics of a community radio service as set out in the legislation. As set out above, we are also satisfied that the impact of these changes on the overall character of the service delivered to listeners in Ashford will be low. We have therefore decided to exercise our discretion to approve this request.

November 2023