

Consultation response form

Consultation title	Ofcom's proposed Plan of Work
Full name	[X]
Contact phone number	[X]
Representing (delete as appropriate)	Organisation
Organisation name	Banbury FM Ltd
Email address	[X]

Your response

Question	Your response
Question 1: Do you have any comments on Ofcom's proposed Plan of Work 2024/25?	Confidential? – N

Ofcom have recognised in their plan the need to address a number of areas of the Media Bill which are likely to pass into law during the coming year. However, the areas chosen to be addressed must be addressed in full, not in part.

My concern lies with section 2.18 "We undertake work to understand changes in markets and the needs of audiences, and report on, advise on and implement changes to our regulation. During the coming year, key projects will include:" and the task: "Commercial radio local content: Following the Media Bill, we will consult on new 'localness' guidelines and implement a new regime for regulating local news provision on analogue commercial radio."

This item will consult on the deregulation of existing analogue licences, effectively allowing them to remove local programming and bases within area, with just a minimalist local news programming provision remaining.

The Media Bill (as amended) in Clause 42 provides an opportunity for Ofcom to accept on-demand applications for new analogue entrants, which was anticipated by elected members to provide a balance to allow the local void to be filled.

It therefore is perplexing that Ofcom have proposed consulting on one-half of the change to analogue licencing without also consulting on the other.

It would seem wise for Ofcom to consult on both elements within the same timescale or, if time does not allow, to protect local listening by consulting on new on-demand analogue applications BEFORE allowing existing licence holders the opportunity to remove any remaining semblance of localness from analogue broadcasting.

At a time when local content is being decimated by the BBC, Ofcom has the option within the Media Bill to facilitate local analogue services across the country – not just local services in the few areas where SSDAB is both affordable, technically possible and practical. Please put local listeners first and ensure that the opportunities in the Media Bill which best serve them are actioned first, rather than the interests of the big groups, who can afford to wait.