

Review of Future Licensing and Technical Policy for Community Radio

OFCOM

RPC rating: validated

Description of proposal

The BIT assessment relates to a set of amendments to the current technical regulation of community radio stations, including coverage extensions and improvements to existing services.

The BIT assessment also provides a detailed assessment of a change to the way in which OFCOM invites potential new community radio stations to apply for a licence. It is currently seeking to reform this process to make it more attractive and accessible to new providers. This change will have no impact on existing community radio stations.

Impacts of proposal

The amendments to the current technical regulations could impact all existing community radio stations, of which there are 250. The amendments will result in more flexible limits on the size of the physical coverage areas of each radio station. OFCOM explains that this is likely to be beneficial to community radio stations but the impact is likely to be negligible. OFCOM will also allow community radio stations to apply to invest in greater infrastructure to improve network coverage in some areas. If community radio stations choose to expand or improve their coverage, this will result in a societal benefit.

The RPC verifies the estimated equivalent annual net direct cost to business (EANDCB) of zero. This will be a qualifying regulatory provision that will score under the business impact target.

Quality of submission

The BIT assessment is fit for purpose; however, the assessment would benefit from a more detailed explanation of the likely benefits to existing community radio stations. Whilst it appears reasonable to assume that these benefits will be negligible based on the size of the market and the scale of the changes to policy, the RPC

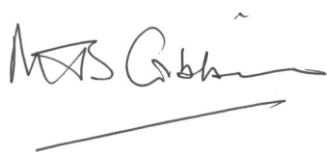
would welcome more information on both those aspects. In particular, information on the likely uptake and benefit per operator would be useful.

Departmental assessment

Classification	Qualifying regulatory provision (OUT)
Equivalent annual net cost to business (EANCB)	zero
Business net present value	Not provided

RPC assessment

Classification	Qualifying regulatory provision (OUT)
EANCB – RPC validated ¹	zero
Business Impact Target (BIT) Score ¹	zero



Michael Gibbons CBE, Chairman

¹ For reporting purposes, the RPC validates EANCB and BIT score figures to the nearest £100,000.