

SUPPORTING JUSTIFICATION

All recommendations for the nature and operation of the Pilot Station proposed under phase 2 of the feasibility study are based on 10 Guiding Principles which the Board developed to provide demonstrable measures of success for the Project and for its stakeholders.

1. That the Pilot Station's output is focussed on supporting the Local Community and increasing wellbeing in the Rutland and Stamford Area.

The Board reviewed the results of the Listener Survey which provided key findings with regard to expectations for the output of a new radio station:

- A source of local news and information on local events
- A sense of belonging and understanding of the local area
- A feeling of connection with others in the local area, driving increased wellbeing.

It was agreed that these elements were only partially served by Greatest Hits Radio in their delivery model and that filling this gap would provide an attractive offering to the community with sufficient differentiation from the current station.

A demographic analysis provided further insight into the types of activities that would appeal to differently aged audiences and it was noted that this mirrored the emphasis on community of the original Rutland Radio station, further validating the output goals.

2. That the Pilot Station's branding and content, whilst building on the essence of the community aspects of the original Rutland Radio station, will differ sufficiently to ensure that it is recognised as a completely new Radio station serving Rutland and Stamford.

The Board agreed that, in focussing on the local community, the Pilot Station would capture the desirable community features of the original radio station, whilst remaining sufficiently distinct from the current offering of Greatest Hits Radio.

The naming of the Pilot Station must also reflect its new mission and not use wording that is owned or protected by Bauer Media (Greatest Hits Radio).

Furthermore that this would:

- Create distinction in choice for the prospective audience.
- Enable co-existence without conflict between the Pilot Station and the existing Commercial Radio station.

3. That various opportunities can be provided for wide ranging community involvement in relevant aspects of branding, delivery and content.

The Board agreed that to justify RCC grant funding and to differentiate the Project from other proposals for the Rutland (and Stamford) area, that it should seek community input for development of the Station and in doing so audience awareness and engagement would be increased.

It is anticipated that a substantial portion of the Pilot Station's output will be delivered by volunteers from within the local community. The work done to date has identified a number of enthusiastic volunteers with prior experience in professional broadcasting.

4. That initial broadcasting of the Pilot Station can start within 3 months in order to capitalise on existing demand

Given a good level of current demand for a community radio station, the Board felt that there was a tangible risk that this demand might erode over time and compromise the overall success of the Project without a viable proposal that could be implemented in the short term (1-3 months).

The Board noted that this requirement would drive an initial platform selection (i.e. online as opposed to FM or SSDAB) that would limit audience reach and so realistic estimates of audience numbers needed to be evaluated with this in mind.

5. That all proposals are justified by realistic estimates of audience numbers and future revenue streams

Audience numbers

Given the above requirement for a near-term solution, the Board reviewed estimates of potential audience numbers based on available information and knowledge, including:

- Survey results, including the content listened to and the times and mode of listening.
- Historic information from Rutland Radio.
- Case studies from other Community Stations
- Examples of audience loyalty to key presenters and how this may influence listening numbers for similar propositions

Audience predictions were subsequently prepared for both an online-only model and FM¹ and/or SSDAB models.

The Board agreed that, there was sufficient evidence of numbers to justify an initial delivery on an online platform that would provide a basis from which to grow future interest and development.

Future revenue streams

Given the above requirement for a short term solution, the Board evaluated financial viability to deliver a Pilot Station and the incremental cost of a future FM licence.

Revenue streams were evaluated from three sources:

- Initial funding from RCC in the form of a transferrable grant from the original Project allocation for salary, assets and running costs.
- Conservative estimates of possible advertising revenue on an online platform.
- Potential incremental Grant sources.

A detailed Financial Analysis was prepared with this information and reviewed by the Board who agreed that the RCC remaining funds, if granted, are sufficient to run the Pilot Station through to mid-September 2021 should no additional income be achieved.

¹ OFCOM are no longer issuing Community Radio FM licences but Alicia Kearns (MP) is exploring future possibilities through the DCMS.

6. That the funding required for the Pilot Station could be met from the RCC Radio Project budget (if granted), giving time to plan and resource sustainable growth.

As noted above, the Board agreed that the Pilot Station could be adequately funded until Sept 14 2021 from the RCC Radio Project budget, if allocated as a grant. This will provide a window of 6-8 months to organically grow the audience through media activity; to validate the project concept and to build ongoing advertising and grant revenue.

To support a community radio station beyond September 2021 it will be necessary to establish sustainable revenue streams. Incremental grant sources would be important to the successful development of new platforms (FM/SSDAB) but would potentially take longer to source and will only be accessible with a legal independent company structure (CIC) in place.

7. That the initial operating model for the Pilot Station is flexible enough to be scalable, as and when future technological developments provide opportunities for expansion, with minimal disruption to the quality of the station's output.

The Board agreed that any initial delivery platform should provide a cost effective basis from which further expansion could occur in a responsive, cost effective and efficient way with no "throw away" expenditure.

The future availability of a Community FM licence and/or SSDAB licence were both considered in depth from a cost benefit perspective and financial models were created that represented the likely timeline of these options becoming available.

The Project Manager explained in detail how the envisaged online product could be transitioned to take advantage of either development.

The Board agreed that the online operating model, as presented, would be suited to meet this need.

The Board noted that Ofcom is always keen to see radio stations doing feasibility runs before full launch to gather data on listening, effectiveness of advertising and running costs and therefore a Pilot Station approach will build our relationship with Ofcom and support potential future bids for FM or digital licences.

8. That the method of delivering the Pilot Station is operational and technically reliable.

The Board were concerned to validate that the operational delivery proposed for an online "from home" station with respect to equipment usage and volunteer presenters would be sufficiently reliable to avoid downtimes².

The Project Manager explained the methodologies that would be used to ensure reliability and the Board agreed that these supported a viable proposition for the Pilot Station. The budget includes contingency planning.

² Possible reasons for outages have been reviewed with acceptable downtime metrics under development.

- 9. That the Project Manager will transfer to 'Rutland and Stamford Sound' and who alongside any broadcast duties, will be accountable to the Directors for the effective management of the Pilot Station.**

The Board acknowledge and welcome the transfer of the Project Manager post to 'Rutland and Stamford Sound'. The Project Manager would have administrative and volunteer support and would ensure the effective management and development of the Station.

The financial models consistently reflect this requirement.

- 10. That all aspects of setting up and operating the Pilot Station give due consideration to good environmental practice.**

The Board agreed that by adopting a home-based operating model the project eliminated the need for office and routine transport costs.