

PRESS RELEASE

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BBC's Local Radio stations should focus on their core older audience to retain distinctiveness, says Radiocentre

The recent proposal to make BBC Local Radio content more “personality driven” risks diluting the distinctiveness of the service, according to Radiocentre’s response to the BBC Trust Review of the BBC’s Local Radio stations.

The personalities on BBC Local Radio have always been an important part of its offering and will remain so, but this should not be at the expense of a commitment to news, debate and local knowledge. If BBC Local Radio drifts away from these core requirements it will risk becoming too similar to other BBC services or local commercial radio stations.

The problem with the proposed new direction for BBC Local Radio stations, with a focus on less formal speech output across the schedule, is that it puts distinctiveness at risk and appears to pre-empt the outcome of the service review.

Radiocentre recommends that BBC Local Radio’s “all speech” programmes, which are broadcast at breakfast time, should remain 100% speech and primarily news focused. In addition, the BBC Trust should seek to formalise a higher speech commitment for BBC Local Radio of 70% during weekday.

Siobhan Kenny, CEO of Radiocentre says: “If BBC Local Radio remains primarily speech orientated and limits the amount of music played during the daytime, it will not only deliver what its core older audience wants but also continue to offer something different to other BBC stations and local commercial radio. We hope that BBC Local Radio stations will be able to evolve in this way rather than drifting away from their core audience.”

ENDS

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