



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Ms Dee Ford  
Group Managing Director  
Bauer Media  
Castle Quay  
Castlefield  
Manchester  
M15 4PR

Our Ref: JS36030

29<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Ms Ford,

Thank you for your letter earlier this week notifying me about Bauer Media's plans to absorb Minster FM into a new Greatest Hits Radio station that will cover North Yorkshire.

I fully understand the changing media landscape and I am aware that radio has not been immune to the the economic challenges caused by increased competition and dramatically changing listener behaviour. While the strategy of consolidation outlined in your letter may address these challenges, it does not acknowledge the unique appeal of local radio stations within a market you freely admit is saturated.

Already in York listeners have the option to tune into many national or regional radio stations but opt for Minster FM for a truly local mix of music, news and trends. Local disc jockeys are much beloved personalities and Ben Fry, who presents the excellent Minster FM Breakfast Show, has even taken on the civic role of York's Town Crier and was recently named Tourism Ambassador of the Year. I know that you will receive many similar letters espousing the appeal of each of the local radio stations that are to be rebranded but I just wanted to begin my letter by conveying how Minster FM is really part of the soundtrack of our city, with many visitors to York first hearing the voice of David Dunning or Tim Lichfield as they enter their taxi from the railway station.

While I note that Bauer Media have offered further clarification to their initial press release, I was wondering if you could address the following concerns that have been raised with me by my constituents:

- Bauer Media have revealed what motivated their decision to absorb these radio stations but would you be able to provide residents with any details regarding the individual assessment Bauer Media made of Minster FM that led to this decision?
- What factors will affect Bauer Media's decision regarding the future of Minster FM's studios in Dunnington?
- In your letter, you indicate that Bauer Media have begun a consultation process with staff. What format will this take and what real impact will this have on any future decisions?
- Can local listeners expect a wider consultation regarding their views on the future of the radio station and what impacts their decision when choosing a radio station to listen to?

One area of concern for me is that by absorbing Minster FM into a larger regional radio station, it will result in the loss of an independent, quality news source and a voice for our local communities. Now, more than ever, accurate public service broadcasting is essential and local residents deserve the highest standards. To this end, could you clarify:

- Will there be a dedicated local news bulletin?
- If so, how frequent and for what length of time do you expect local news bulletins to be on Greatest Hits Radio - North Yorkshire
- What boundaries will the 'local' news cover?
- North Yorkshire is arguably one of the largest areas Bauer Media's new radio stations will cover, will this be reflected in longer local new bulletins?

As I mentioned at the beginning of this letter, I understand the difficulties your sector is facing but I do not believe sweeping changes that affect such a valued local service can take place without consultation and the opportunity for residents to present their concerns.

I thank you for taking the time to read this letter and appreciate you considering the concerns of many of my constituents in York.

Yours sincerely,

Julian

Julian Sturdy  
Member of Parliament, York Outer