

# Service Review

# BBC Radio 5 live and BBC Radio 5 live Sports Extra

January 2012

**BBC**  
RADIO



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RADIO



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# Summary

## Background

The BBC Trust is the governing body of the BBC and it is our responsibility to get the best out of the BBC for licence fee payers. One of the ways we do this is by carrying out an in-depth review of each of the BBC's services at least once every five years. This time we have reviewed BBC Radio 5 live and BBC Radio 5 live Sports Extra.

The Trust sets out what it expects of each service in a published service licence. Our review had three broad aims: first, to assess how well 5 live and Sports Extra are performing against commitments set out in these licences; second, to consider the stations' future direction; and third, to determine whether amendments to the licences are required.

The stations' service licences state:

The remit of 5 live is to be BBC Radio's home of continuous news and live sports coverage. It should aim to bring its audience major news stories and sports events as they happen, and provide context through wide-ranging analysis and discussion. Programming should be designed to inform, entertain and involve. The service should appeal to news and sports fans of all ages and from all ethnic backgrounds and areas across the UK. It is available on medium wave, DAB digital radio, digital television platforms and on the internet.

The remit of Sports Extra is to bring a greater choice of live action to sports fans by offering a part-time extension of BBC Radio 5 live. The service should aim to provide increased value for licence fee payers from the portfolio of sports rights already owned by the BBC by offering alternative coverage to that provided on other UK-wide BBC services. All output on Sports Extra should be live sports coverage. Sports Extra is available on a part-time basis on DAB digital radio, digital television platforms and on the internet.

We carried out a public consultation over the summer of 2011 and received around 9,500 responses from licence fee payers. In addition, we received a number of responses from the radio industry and other stakeholder organisations. We also commissioned a piece of quantitative and qualitative audience research to inform our thinking for the review. This evidence, alongside performance monitoring and financial analysis, has given us a clear understanding of these stations' strengths and weaknesses.

## Conclusions

BBC Radio 5 live and BBC Radio 5 live Sports Extra are performing well and both help to deliver the BBC's public purposes to a sizeable audience.

**5 live** is greatly valued by listeners who appreciate its unique and accessible mix of news and sports programming. The station contributes significantly to the BBC's public purposes through its news programming and sports coverage.

News is the core of the station and audiences perceive the station's news programming to be high-quality and distinctive, having breadth, depth, wit and intelligence. The station's distinctive approach to news is based on a wide news agenda, its accessible tone and interaction with the audience. Audiences praise the station's strength in covering breaking news stories and this is a key element of its distinctiveness.

We recognise one of the station's key strengths is in its balance between coverage of lighter and heavier news items, and while we believe 5 live should cover a broad range of news and topical items, we would like the station to ensure that all of its news programmes demonstrate a clear sense of journalistic ambition and originality. We have set out a number of conclusions and actions which we hope will ensure that 5 live maximises its considerable strengths in news, and continues to deliver a unique version of the BBC's highest editorial priority of "the best journalism in the world".

5 live's audience greatly appreciates the quality of its sports coverage, and we recognise the important role 5 live plays for the BBC as a major outlet for a wide range of sports. While we recognise that the volume of live coverage and discussion of football is in line with audience interest in the sport, we believe that the BBC is uniquely able to provide coverage of a range of sports, including those of minority interest, and that it could do more to reflect these in its output.

5 live has a sizeable budget, due to the costs of its high-quality and original news and sports programming. We recognise that sports programming can be expensive, however we expect the balance of spending to shift more towards news in coming years.

**5 live Sport Extra** is valued for its additional high-quality coverage of a range of sporting events. We believe it should continue to offer sports coverage that cannot be accommodated on other BBC radio stations.

## Key Findings and Actions

The main findings and actions from this review are set out below:

### Current performance

#### **5 live provides high-quality news and sports programming**

The evidence that we have gathered in our audience research and public consultation shows that 5 live is valued by its audience for its distinctive approach to news and its high-quality sports programming.

The audience's positive impression and high level of satisfaction with 5 live are due to a number of factors. The audience praises the range of high-quality news programmes along with an accessible and relaxed tone which runs throughout the station. They feel that 5 live presenters are knowledgeable, that the programmes keep them up-to-date and informed, and that 5 live treats news with intelligence and depth.

In addition to its news programming, the breadth, depth and quality of sports coverage is considered by listeners to be unrivalled on radio. Audiences greatly value the sports programming on 5 live and feel it is a distinctive element of the station.

#### **A sizeable audience of around 6.7 million people listen to 5 live each week**

Over recent years, 5 live has achieved consistent increases in its weekly audience and it now reaches around 6.7 million listeners each week. In addition, around 20 per cent of the 5 live audience – some 1.3 million adults – do not listen to any other BBC radio station.

5 live has built a substantial audience for its news and sports output, and we encourage the station to maintain its appeal to deliver public value to these listeners. In line with the BBC's *Putting Quality First* strategy, 5 live's focus should be on providing as high-quality and distinctive journalism and sports content as possible, and we hope this approach will maintain the station's appeal.

#### **5 live has a service licence remit to appeal to a broad spectrum of listeners**

Unlike some BBC radio stations which cater for particular audience groups, 5 live has a remit to appeal to a broad audience, be that in terms of age, ethnic background or region.

5 live fulfils this commitment well. The median age of a 5 live listener is 47 and the station attracts a fairly even spread of younger and older listeners. The station also achieves widespread appeal across the nations and regions of the UK and is performing relatively well amongst audiences from less well-off households and from black and minority ethnic groups – groups that traditionally have been less likely to listen to BBC radio. Its appeal, however, is strongly skewed towards male listeners, as men make up around 72 per cent of the station's audience.

BBC management has some concerns about reach amongst younger audiences, and identifies the 25-34 age group as key to replenishing their audience in the long term.

Reach amongst the over 45 audience has increased by around 14 per cent in the last five years, while reach amongst those under 45 has only increased by around one per cent. This partly reflects a general decline in radio listening amongst younger audiences. Given 5 live's broad and growing audience, we do not feel that this is a major strategic challenge for the station however.

In terms of gender skew, ideally, we would wish to see a more even balance, so we would encourage 5 live management to regularly consider whether the presentation and subject matter of its output has the potential to appeal to female listeners.

The service licence for 5 live states that *it should seek to blend its news and sports programming in ways that help to draw a younger and more diverse audience to the BBC's news coverage than other parts of the BBC*. We feel that this wording is somewhat at odds with the remit of the station to appeal to a broad range of listeners. We will therefore amend the service licence to clarify that the station should appeal to a broad range of listeners in line with its remit.

### **Some audiences are unaware of the breadth of content that 5 live offers**

BBC management feels that increasing awareness of 5 live and the scope of its offer would be beneficial to all audiences. Only around 50 per cent of UK adults are aware of 5 live. In addition, BBC management believes that awareness of the breadth of 5 live programming is also low. We support BBC management's aim to increase awareness.

The majority of 5 live output is news. However, research has shown that audiences are more likely to associate the station with sport. Although we have heard from a small number of listeners who have initially gone to 5 live for sport, then discovered the news output, we feel that the station should be better known for its news output. Therefore, rather than aiming to increase awareness of the breadth of content, we would particularly like to see the station build audience awareness of its news provision.

### **Awareness of Sports Extra is quite high although reach varies considerably**

Over the last five years the weekly audience for Sports Extra has fluctuated significantly, depending on when the station is on air and the type of sport broadcast. Around 35 per cent of UK adults are aware of Sports Extra, which is actually the highest level for any BBC digital radio station. This may be partly due to the close relationship established between Sports Extra and 5 live.

### **Action 1: Radio 5 live should aim to raise awareness of the station, in particular its news output, and ensure that its appeal remains broad**

We support BBC management's aim to improve audience awareness of 5 live. In particular we would like to see the station build audience awareness of its news provision, as this is the core of the service.

We also ask BBC management to monitor the audience profile of the station to ensure that the current broad appeal is maintained and that the current gender skew does not become stronger.

*We will ask BBC management to report back on awareness and audience profile periodically.*

We will amend 5 live's service licence to clarify that it should appeal to a broad range of listeners, removing the specific commitment to serving a younger and more diverse audience.

*The service licence will be amended immediately.*

## **News**

### **5 live delivers the BBC's editorial priority of the "best journalism in the world" to a sizeable audience in a unique way**

High-quality journalism is at the heart of 5 live's remit. There is no other BBC radio station with such a strong commitment to news running through the spine of its schedule. 5 live should make a significant contribution to the BBC's citizenship purpose through its news programming.

5 live's role in providing a unique form of high-quality journalism will remain its fundamental purpose over the coming years, and we support its ambition to provide news of the highest quality to a broad range of listeners.

### **Audiences perceive 5 live news programming to be generally high-quality and distinctive**

The evidence we have gathered shows that audiences value the news provision on 5 live. Around 80 per cent of the audience rates it highly for *providing high-quality news* and for *keep[ing] me up to date with breaking news*. These two priorities form the basis of 5 live's news proposition. When discussing the nature of 5 live news in more detail the audience praise:

- the breadth, depth, wit and intelligence of its news output
- the mix of heavier and lighter news items
- the ability of presenters to make news stories accessible without trivialising them

- the ability of presenters to move seamlessly between serious and less serious issues as required by the news agenda of the day.

On the basis of these strengths, the audience identify clear points of difference between 5 live news and news provision on other BBC services.

### **Breaking news is fundamental to the 5 live proposition, although it does not capture all that 5 live does in its news provision**

5 live has a specific commitment to breaking news in its service licence. It says the station should *make use of its flexible live schedule to offer instant access to breaking news and become a rolling news service whenever appropriate*. No other BBC radio station has such a commitment or the capacity in resources and scheduling to deliver this.

This is a core aspect of 5 live which the audience identifies as a strength and an intrinsic part of the 'live' aspect of the station. They know that 5 live can be relied on to be at the centre of breaking news stories, and listeners turn to the station to get the most up-to-date information.

We believe that 5 live's role as the BBC station to which audiences can turn to hear major breaking news is extremely important, and we are clear that the commitment to offer instant access to breaking news must be preserved through all parts of its schedule. 5 live should actively interrupt any of its programmes to go to breaking news when it happens.

Currently, the 5 live service licence remit refers to the station as the 'home of continuous news' on BBC radio. We do not feel that the term 'continuous' is an accurate reflection of 5 live's news provision and is more appropriate for a rolling TV news channel.

While breaking news is fundamental to the rationale and distinctiveness of 5 live, we do not feel that this encompasses all of the station's news provision. We will therefore amend the service licence to reflect more closely the nature of 5 live's commitment to news.

### **Action 2: We will amend the 5 live service licence remit to more closely reflect the nature of 5 live news**

The 5 live service licence remit will be amended so that its commitments to news and to breaking news will be clearer.

The station's remit will be as follows:

The remit of BBC Radio 5 live is to provide live news and sports coverage. It should be BBC Radio's main outlet for breaking news by bringing its audience major news stories as they happen. It should provide context to its news and sports coverage through wide-ranging analysis and discussion.

We will reflect this throughout the service licence.

*This amendment will be implemented immediately.*

## **5 live's distinctive approach to news is based on a broad news agenda, its accessible tone and its interaction with the audience**

5 live has a service licence commitment to cover a broad news agenda. The majority of its audience feels that there is the right balance between serious and lighter news items on the station. 5 live's original approach to covering a wide range of stories helps make the station appealing and is distinctive compared with other BBC news outlets.

The station's tone and approach is very accessible. This helps make news and current affairs interesting to listeners, and allows 5 live to provide greater understanding of news events for audiences who may not experience other BBC news output. Audiences praise 5 live's capacity to make complex news stories accessible, clear and engaging, without losing intellectual integrity. This tone and approach can directly contribute to the ambition to provide high-quality journalism in accessible ways and aid the delivery of the BBC's citizenship purpose.

Audience interaction runs through every 5 live programme to some degree. We believe that well managed and constructive debates that include listeners as well as expert contributors, on news and topical issues, are a distinctive part of 5 live's offering. They make the station more accessible and democratic, and directly contribute to the citizenship purpose through enabling debate and discussion.

## **We have heard concerns from stakeholders and from a minority of listeners that some news programming could contribute more to the BBC's public purposes**

In the course of this review we have heard from commercial radio organisations such as UTV and RadioCentre who feel that 5 live does not do enough to contribute to the BBC's citizenship purpose through its news programming. They feel that 5 live has moved away from its commitment to serious and continuous news.

Our audience research has shown that, while the station is seen to perform well in terms of its news provision, it does not always meet audience expectations in this area. In our public consultation, we have also heard comments from a minority of the audience that some 5 live news programming can sometimes seem too light. This comment is partly a result of the nature of 5 live news – its broad agenda, accessibility and high levels of interactivity mean that it will not always fit an individual's expectation of news coverage.

## **We are clarifying the scope of 5 live's news programming and emphasising the role the BBC's news values should play in it**

Prior to the launch of this review the Trust considered a complaint from UTV that 5 live did not comply with its service licence commitment that around 75 per cent of output should be news. An aspect of this complaint was that the station does not have an adequate definition of news. While we did not uphold this complaint, we tasked the service review with addressing this concern, as we felt it raised significant and valid questions.

It is clear that what constitutes news is highly subjective, both in terms of subject matter and in how this is presented. A key theme that emerged from our evidence was that topicality is an important ingredient for content on 5 live. Respondents in our audience

research feel that topical content is a key priority for 5 live, and we think it should be at the heart of all the station's programming.

We have concluded that it would be preferable for the 5 live service licence to set clearer commitments relating to news, rather than create a definition. These commitments should provide more clarity for the station, its audience and stakeholders about the nature and scope of its news output, while retaining the flexibility to evolve new formats and editorial approaches.

The commitments are now as follows:

*Around three quarters of its output across the year should be dedicated to news programming and current affairs. The weekday peak hours at breakfast and evening drivetime should comprise high-quality news programming covering the main news agenda of the day*

*In addition to the regular bulletins and reporting, 5 live can approach news through other formats such as topical debates and discussion, with contributions from journalists, presenters, guests and listeners. News programming can feature a broad range of subject matter that is of concern, relevance or interest to the 5 live audience. Discussion and other feature items should have a clear news or topical impetus. There will also be times when 5 live will set, rather than follow, the news agenda through its original approach. All 5 live news programmes should clearly reflect the BBC's mission to provide the best journalism in the world.*

We recognise that there should be a balance between lighter and heavier items in news programmes, and that this balance directly contributes to 5 live's distinctive and accessible tone. However, as part of the commitments we set out, we would like to see fewer 'non-news' features in news programmes on the station where they are used instead of, rather than as well as, coverage of important news topics.

In order to track compliance with these commitments, we have agreed that programme by programme measurement will continue to be appropriate as long as it is clear which programmes are part of the news quota.

### **Action 3: We will amend the 5 live service licence to include clearer commitments for news programming.**

In order to provide audiences, BBC management and other stakeholders with more clarity regarding news on 5 live, we will amend the service licence to include new aims and objectives.

Each year, in its public reporting of service licence compliance, BBC management should name the programmes in the 5 live schedule that contribute to the 75 per cent news commitment.

*This action will be implemented immediately.*

## Sports

### **5 live listeners believe that it sets the standard for sports radio broadcasting**

5 live and Sports Extra make a significant contribution to the BBC's public purposes through their sports broadcasting and are an important part of the BBC's sports portfolio.

Audiences have very high expectations of 5 live sports broadcasting and generally feel that these expectations are met. They rate 5 live's sports programming extremely highly and feel it sets the standard for sports radio. They praise the wide range of live sports coverage and the skill of commentators to bring the listener close to the action and convey the atmosphere of an event. In addition, they feel that the supporting programmes and debate, as well as the sports journalism evident on the station, also contribute to this commitment.

### **5 live is committed to covering a range of sports, and we would like to see the station build on its commitment towards minority sports**

Coverage of a range of sports and events is an explicit part of the 5 live service licence and is a key aspect of 5 live's distinctiveness from commercial broadcasters. Due to the nature of licence fee funding, 5 live has the capacity to cover a large variety of sports, whereas commercial radio providers need to focus on the most popular sports and events.

5 live and Sports Extra currently cover a broad spectrum of sports, although the majority of live coverage and discussion is focused on football and, in particular, the English Premier League. Audience reaction to the current mix of output is not straightforward: they are most interested in football and the other most popular sports; yet there is recognition that the station could do more to provide coverage of minority sports and those not widely accessible on UK radio.

We recognise that achieving an optimum balance of coverage on 5 live between the most popular sports and those of minority interest is a difficult challenge, and one that audiences can appreciate. For instance, some respondents in our audience research said that they would like to see more non-mainstream sports covered, although they recognise that these may have limited appeal. The challenge for 5 live is to balance audience demand for popular sports alongside 5 live's public service requirements to cover a range of sports, including those of minority interest.

Understandably, commercial radio broadcasters and many sports governing bodies are keen for 5 live to provide more coverage of sports other than football.

Prior to the launch of the review, we considered a complaint from UTV that 5 live did not comply with its service licence in relation to its coverage of minority and secondary sports. Although we did not uphold this complaint, we tasked this review with addressing this area and providing greater clarity on 5 live's role.

BBC management has proposed to codify its commitment to a range of sports in the service licence by guaranteeing to cover at least 20 sports a year. While we feel that this is a good starting point, it does not provide enough clarity in either frequency or volume of coverage. In addition, it reflects what 5 live currently does, rather than seeking to increase its commitment.

We believe the BBC has an important role to play in covering a range of sports, including those which may get little or no coverage from other broadcasters, and in its commitment to encourage participation in sport. We have been impressed by 5 live's investment and resources dedicated to a range of sports. While we recognise that football is the nation's most popular sport and so has an important role on the station, we believe that there is scope for 5 live to provide more coverage of other sports and sometimes focus less on football in its discussion programming and sports news. The London 2012 Olympics provides an opportunity to promote public interest in a range of minority interest sports in the near term.

#### **Action 4: Radio 5 live should provide more regular coverage of a range of sports alongside football**

We recognise that 5 live and Sports Extra provide high-quality sports programming that covers a wide range of sports. However, we have asked BBC management to develop its provision of a range of sports, including those of minority interest. Although football will continue to be the most covered sport, other sports should receive more representation within 5 live's sports output.

In addition, BBC management should signpost and increase the awareness of the wide variety of sports that it covers.

We will codify this in the 5 live service licence as follows:

5 live should offer live commentary, as well as news and other programming, on at least 20 sports from around the world across the year. Coverage should be a mixture of one-off events and regular programming. Sports output – including in peak listening hours – should cover a wide range of sports, including those of minority interest.

*This action will be implemented immediately. We have asked BBC management to publicly set out its commitment to a range of sports at the beginning of each year through the statements of programme policy.*

#### **Sports Extra has a complementary role to 5 live**

Sports Extra's remit is to bring a greater choice of live action to sports fans by offering a part-time extension of 5 live. Sports Extra's listeners value the additional high-quality coverage it provides. However, some listeners are unsure what to expect from the service as it is part time and ad hoc.

The vast majority of Sports Extra's audience also listen to 5 live each week. This large overlap shows how Sports Extra complements 5 live, and we believe that the station is performing well against the terms of its service licence by bringing a greater choice to sports fans.

During the course of this review, BBC management has discussed with the Trust the idea of extending the service licence remit of Sports Extra in order to accommodate some

regular daily programming made up of repeats from 5 live and other BBC stations. We support the strategy of making better use of BBC content, and agree that there could be a role for Sports Extra as another outlet for sports of minority interest. However, this would be a change to its current remit, and given the current savings being made across the BBC as part of the *Delivering Quality First* strategy (which we consider below) we do not feel it is the right time to take this suggestion further.

## Value for money

### **As part of the BBC's Delivering Quality First strategy, 5 live and Sports Extra are required to make some cuts to output**

Over the last four years, both 5 live and Sports Extra have been part of the BBC's continuous improvement process and have contributed to the BBC's target of making around 3 per cent efficiencies each year. The licence fee settlement agreed in 2010 is equivalent to a minimum reduction in funding of 16 per cent by 2016-17. BBC management has made a range of proposals setting out how it will deliver the strategy the Trust has set for the BBC within the terms of this settlement.

These proposals include productivity (ways in which the BBC works) and scope (changes directly relating to BBC services and content) savings outlined for 5 live and Sports Extra. The scope savings are approximately 6 per cent to 7 per cent of the 5 live and Sports Extra content spend for these services and will involve the following:

- reducing the costs of overnight programming
- maintaining the volume of sport output at current levels, although reducing the cost of sports presentation by measures such as using smaller teams at many events
- reducing 5 live's team of regional journalists in England, and working more closely with other parts of BBC News, particularly BBC Local Radio and Newsgathering
- focusing business programming on the key times of early morning/breakfast and afternoons
- ending some Sunday programmes, including comedy in the morning and current affairs programmes in the early evening.

The Trust consulted publicly on these proposed cuts as part of the BBC's wider *Delivering Quality First* proposals, and is currently assessing whether the proposals match the high level strategy we have set. The Trust will publish its final conclusions on these proposals in spring 2012. However, we have used this service licence review to reach conclusions on the proposals affecting 5 live and Sports Extra, as their future strategies have been considered as part of this work and do not have financially substantive implications for the BBC as a whole.

We are broadly content that the proposed changes fit with the strategy we have set for the BBC, and are an appropriate way to make the savings required for the services. The exception to this is the proposed cut to 5 live current affairs programming. We see current affairs as an important part of the news service on 5 live and a distinctive offer from BBC radio overall. We have agreed with BBC management the importance of a dedicated current affairs offer, and that this will be retained.

## **As a result of cuts to BBC Online, 5 live has closed its online message boards**

As part of its contribution to the BBC's public purposes, 5 live has a commitment to host online communities for listeners to debate areas of interest. This led to 5 live hosting online message boards along with a number of other BBC radio services. However, due to low audience usage and a reprioritisation of BBC Online budgets, most of these were closed. We believe that 5 live still contributes to this purpose by allowing listeners to interact and debate through a range of methods including text, Twitter, Facebook, email and phone.

### **Action 5: We will amend the 5 live service licence to remove the example of hosting online communities**

In order to reflect the changing nature of technology and the different ways in which audiences interact with the station, we will amend 5 live's service licence to remove mention of hosting online communities.

*This amendment will be implemented immediately*

## **5 live has a relatively high budget compared with other network radio stations. In future, the balance of spending will shift more towards news**

The 5 live service licence budget is £58.4 million, which is the second highest of the BBC's network radio stations, behind Radio 4. In contrast, as a part time service, Sports Extra has one of the lowest service licence budgets at £2.6m.

While the cost per listener hour of 5 live has fallen slightly over recent years, it remains higher than all other BBC network radio stations except for Radio 3. However, audience perceptions are very positive, with nine out of ten listeners believing the services represent either very good or fairly good value.

5 live's costs are based on the nature of its output: news and live sports programming carry substantial staff and production costs. In addition, 5 Live makes sizeable contributions to BBC newsgathering costs and has a large cost in terms of sports rights.

In 2010-11, spending on sports rights and programming on 5 live was slightly higher than spending on news. We recognise that sports rights and high-quality sports production can be expensive, however we feel that the balance of spend towards sports does not reflect the station's role to provide 75 per cent news. We have agreed that, with *DQF (Delivering Quality First)* and other budget changes, the balance of spending should shift more towards news in the coming years. We believe that this should be possible without damaging audience appreciation of 5 live's sports output.

## **We encourage BBC management to explore opportunities for 5 live and Sports Extra to benchmark their costs**

During the course of the review we have heard from some stakeholders who believe 5 live should undergo an exercise of benchmarking its costs. We understand the value of benchmarking exercises and agree that it is important for the BBC to demonstrate its value for money. Therefore we will ask management to continue its work to benchmark the costs of its radio services, either internally or externally.

# Main Report

- 1 The BBC Trust is the governing body of the BBC and it is our responsibility to get the best out of the BBC for licence fee payers. One of the ways we do this is by carrying out an in-depth review of each of the BBC's services at least once every five years. This time we have reviewed BBC Radio 5 live and BBC Radio 5 live Sports Extra.

## Review Scope

- 2 We published the terms of reference for this review when it was launched in April 2011. The high level questions we set out to consider are:
  - **How well are these services performing against the terms of their service licence and the Quality, Reach, Impact and Value for money performance framework?**
  - **What is the future strategic direction for these services?**
  - **Should the licences for these services be changed?**
- 3 We have treated the following areas as out of scope of this review:
  - **Impartiality and Editorial Controls.** Although news and current affairs is a key part of 5 live's remit, an assessment of the impartiality of its journalism is out of scope of this review. Compliance with Editorial Guidelines is covered by other areas of the Trust's work.
  - **Out of London and Independent Supply.** The BBC Executive board has reviewed its out of London supply to the network radio stations. In addition, the Trust has concluded a review of the independent supply quota for network radio.
  - **Sports rights acquisitions.** In March 2011, the Trust published an independent value for money report examining the BBC's processes for the acquisition of sports rights; this matter is therefore out of scope. However, as a key part of the 5 live and 5 live Sports Extra offer, we will consider the role and value of sports output in how it serves audiences and promotes the BBC's public purposes.

## Methodology

- 4 The review was carried out for the Trust by its independent advisers in the Trust Unit under the direction of the review's lead Trustee, Alison Hastings. We gathered evidence from a wide range of sources which are summarised below:
  - **Public consultation** – We used the service licences to develop a set of questions for public consultation. The consultation ran for 12 weeks from 20 April to 13 July 2011 and we received around 9,500 responses from licence fee payers, organisations and the Trust's Audience Councils in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, whose role is to advise the Trust on how well the BBC is promoting its public purposes from the perspective of licence fee payers, and serving licence fee payers, in different parts of the UK.

- We also received a formal submission from the BBC Executive board with regard to the services.
- **Performance data analysis** – We analysed data using the BBC's QRIV performance framework which considers four drivers of public value – quality, reach, impact and value for money. This framework is set out in Figure 1.

### Figure 1: The BBC's Quality, Reach, Impact and Value for Money (QRIV) Performance Framework

**Quality** – Quality is measured in terms of audience perception of various aspects of the quality of programmes and stations.

**Reach** – The extent to which BBC services are used by the audience. In this report, unless otherwise stated, the reach of radio services is expressed as the percentage of the population who have listened for at least 5 consecutive minutes in an average week.

**Impact** – The extent to which BBC content delivers the BBC's public purposes. The purposes are set out in the BBC's Royal Charter and are as follows:

- **Sustaining Citizenship and Civil Society**
- **Promoting Education and Learning**
- **Stimulating Creativity and Cultural Excellence**
- **Reflecting the UK's Nations, Regions and Communities**
- **Bringing the UK to the World and the World to the UK**
- **Emerging Communications**

**Value for Money** – A consideration of performance (reach, quality and impact) alongside cost to provide a perspective on cost-effectiveness.

- We carried out our performance analysis using the following evidence sources:
  - radio audience data from the Radio Joint Audience Research survey (RAJAR), based on around 110,000 diaries filled out each year. All RAJAR data quoted in this report is based on the full financial year 2010-11 for adults aged 15+ unless otherwise stated
  - online usage figures based on the BBC's server logs
  - regular BBC audience surveys which measure audience perceptions, usage and awareness of content from the BBC and other providers
  - financial data taken from the BBC's Annual Report and management accounting system
- **Audience research** – The Trust carried out audience research to inform our thinking for this review and supplement the data we had available. We commissioned Kantar Media to undertake a quantitative piece of research, and The Knowledge Agency to carry out qualitative research. This helped inform us

how well these services were delivering against the BBC's public purposes and helped explore audience perceptions of quality for the services. The quantitative element of this work was carried out in the same way as the BBC's annual purpose remit survey, and identified 'importance' and 'performance' scores for a number of statements relating to 5 live's and Sports Extra's delivery of the BBC's public purposes.

- **Interviews** – We explored the issues raised during our review through interviews with people within the BBC and through meetings with external stakeholders.

- 5 As part of this review we have also reached conclusions on the proposals affecting 5 live and Sports Extra as part of the BBC's *Delivering Quality First* strategy to make a minimum reduction in funding of the BBC of 16 per cent by 2016. The Trust consulted publicly on the BBC's proposals for making these savings, which ran for 12 weeks from 6 October to 21 December. We have used the results from this consultation, along with the evidence gathered in this review to reach conclusions on the proposals affecting these services. The Trust is due to publish its overall final conclusions on these proposals in spring 2012.
- 6 Further information about the Trust's approach to service reviews can be found on the BBC Trust website at [bbc.co.uk/bbctrust](http://bbc.co.uk/bbctrust).

## Report Structure

- 7 The main body of this report will consider the performance of 5 live and Sports Extra using the QRIV framework as outlined above. Where we think action is required to improve performance or shape the future direction of the services, this is noted by highlighted actions.

# BBC Radio 5 live and BBC Radio 5 live Sports Extra

## Quality

### **5 live is highly valued by its audience who appreciate the accessible and up-to-date mix of news and sports programming**

- 8 Evidence gathered as part of this review suggests that audiences highly value both 5 live and Sports Extra. The majority of respondents to our public consultation are very positive about the services, and our qualitative audience research found that the overall impression and level of satisfaction of these stations is high.
- 9 Respondents to our public consultation commend 5 live on the range of news and sports programmes, and feel that the station has an accessible and relaxed tone which is distinctive and complements other BBC output. In our qualitative audience research, 5 live is spontaneously praised for being knowledgeable, keeping people up to date, and for treating news with more intelligence and depth than most alternatives. Respondents generally consider the breadth, depth and quality of sports coverage to be unrivalled on radio.
- 10 Audiences feel that 5 live offers them something they are unable to get from any other radio station, and 78 per cent of listeners would miss the station if it were not there. In addition, 80 per cent of the audience say that it has well-made, high-quality programmes<sup>1</sup>.
- 11 Submissions to the review from our Audience Councils also broadly praise 5 live for delivering breaking news and sport in a distinctive and high-quality way. There was strong overall appreciation for the stations, and a feeling that the content and presentation style offer something distinctive in comparison with other BBC radio stations and the wider commercial market.

### **While the overall impression of 5 live as a station is high, audience appreciation of individual programmes is lower**

- 12 The majority (73 per cent) of listeners to 5 live are 'high approvers' of the station and the mean 'overall impression' score for 5 live is 8.2 out of 10<sup>2</sup>. This is higher than Radio 1 and Radio 2, but lower than Radio 4. However, audience perceptions of the quality of individual 5 live programming are generally not as high as other BBC network radio

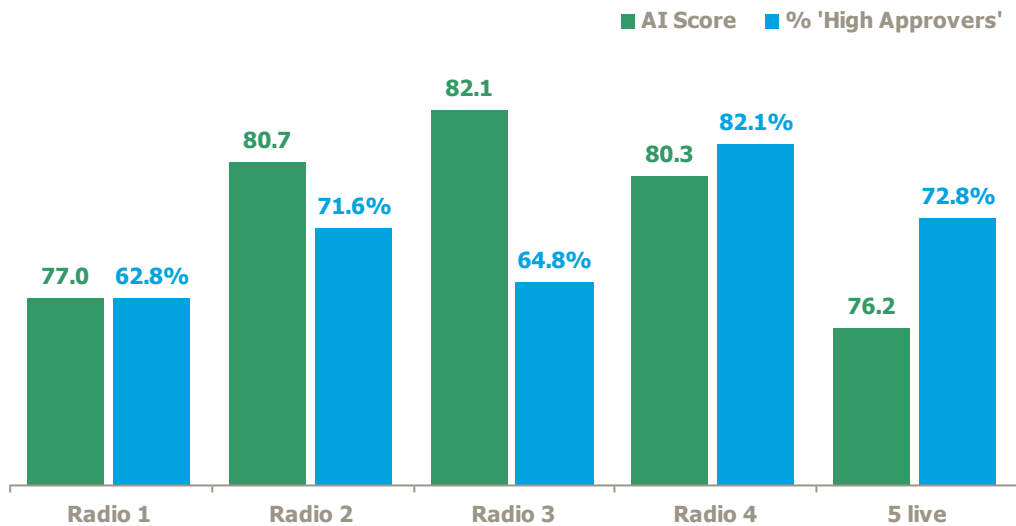
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<sup>1</sup> Source: BBC Trust audience research – all adults aged 15+ who have listened to 5 live in the last month (601)

<sup>2</sup> Source: Brand and Reputation Tracker (January to June 2011), 'high approvers' are those scoring the station 8 or more out of 10.

stations. In 2010-11 programmes on 5 live had an average appreciation index (AI) score of 76.2<sup>3</sup> as illustrated by Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Average AIs and proportion of 'high approvers' of BBC radio stations**



Source: BBC Pulse Survey 2010-11, Brand and Reputation Tracker January – June 2011. Note different scales have been used for illustration.

- 13 However, the differing remits of BBC network stations and the different types of programmes broadcast make it difficult to compare AI scores across stations. 5 live programming is focused on news and sports output, for which audience appreciation is generally lower. In this instance we do not think that the lower AI scores overall are necessarily indicative of lower quality programming, and evidence gathered as part of this review suggests that the station has a high-quality and distinctive offering.
- 14 The BBC also tracks audience perceptions of 'high-quality' programming. While perceptions are generally very positive, they are lower for 5 live than most other BBC network stations. In 2010-11, 82 per cent of listeners agreed that programming on 5 live was of a high quality. This was higher than Radio 1 (81 per cent), but lower than Radio 2 (84 per cent), Radio 3 (93 per cent) and Radio 4 (89 per cent).<sup>4</sup>

### **5 live's news programming is generally considered to be high-quality**

- 15 Evidence from our public consultation and audience research suggests that audiences rate 5 live highly for its capacity to cover breaking news and keep listeners up to date with developments. Audiences also praise its editorial approach to news provision: having an accessible tone, featuring a range of heavier and lighter news stories, and encouraging interactivity.

<sup>3</sup> Source: AI (audience Appreciation Index) is measured using the BBC's Pulse survey. Audiences are asked to rate programming out of 10 and this is aggregated into an index

<sup>4</sup> Source: BBC Pulse Survey 2010-11, respondents are asked to rate whether they agree the programme they listened to was high quality

- 16 While most audiences are positive about the news programming on 5 live, a minority of respondents are concerned that standards are not as high as they could be. We have also heard a view from some stakeholders that 5 live has pursued a strategy to make the station more entertaining and less news focused over recent years. We will explore these areas further in the impact section of this report.

### Sports output on 5 live and Sports Extra is highly valued by its audience

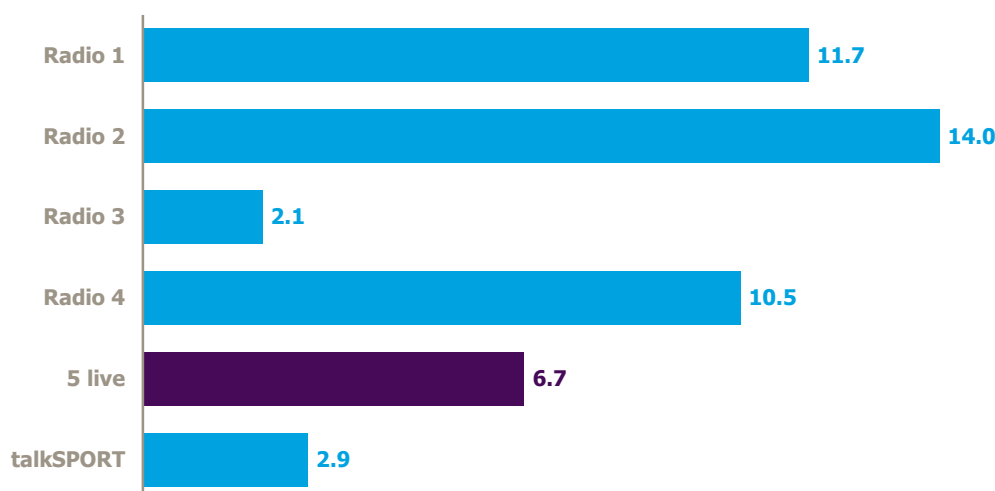
- 17 Evidence gathered as part of this review suggests that the sports coverage on 5 live and Sports Extra is highly valued by the audience, both in terms of the wide range of sports covered and the in-depth and insightful nature of the presentation. Respondents to our audience research feel that 5 live features a broad range of sports, and that coverage is high quality. They also consider the station’s sports programming to be a distinctive part of the service.
- 18 These perceptions of sports programming also contribute towards the overall perceptions of the station – particularly as sport has a strong appeal and high profile. This in turn can be very effective at drawing audiences into the station. We recognise the positive impact this has on perceptions of 5 live overall.

## Reach

### 5 live attracts a sizeable audience of around 6.7 million adults each week

- 19 Each week in 2010-11, 5 live reached around 6.7 million adults, approximately 12.9 per cent of the UK adult population. Compared with the BBC network radio portfolio, this is lower than Radio 1, Radio 2 and Radio 4, but higher than Radio 3. 5 live’s weekly reach is also just over double that of talkSPORT – the main commercial radio provider of sports broadcasting. This is set out in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Weekly reach (millions) for BBC network radio stations and talkSPORT**



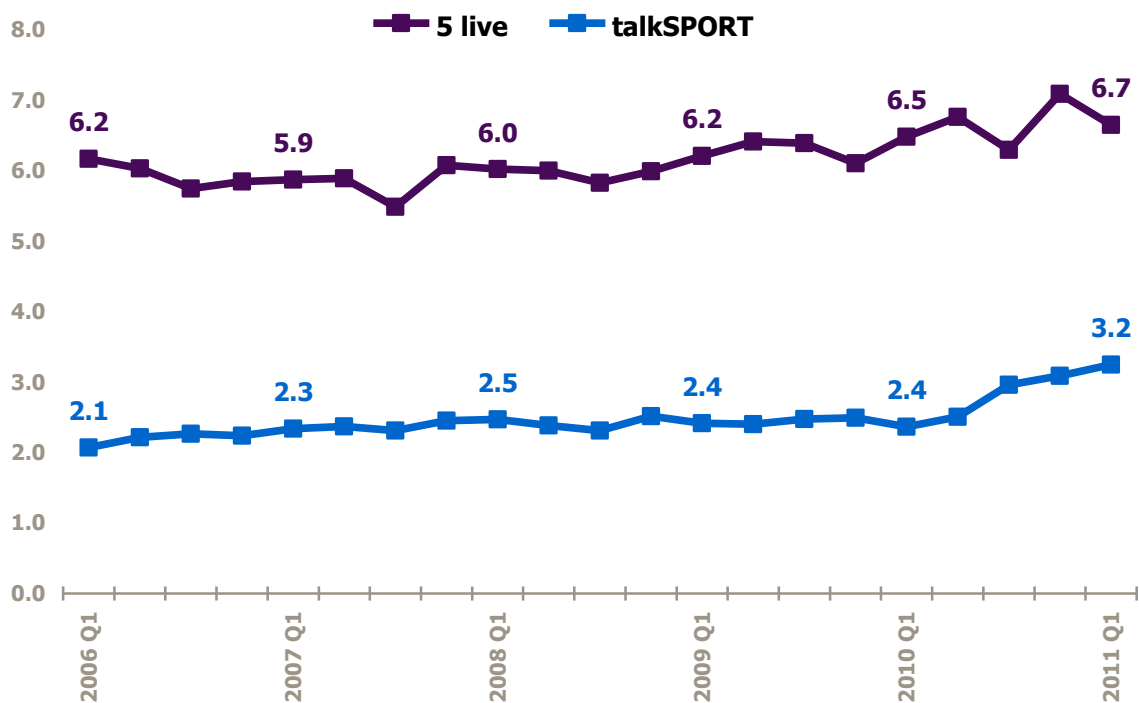
Source: RAJAR 2010-11

- 20 Around 20 per cent of the 5 live audience (1.3 million adults) do not listen to any other BBC radio station, so it brings some unique reach to the BBC radio portfolio, although less than many other BBC network radio stations<sup>5</sup>.

### 5 live has increased its audience over recent years

- 21 Since the beginning of 2008, 5 live has achieved small but consistent increases in its weekly audience. Compared with five years ago, its weekly reach has increased by over 8 per cent, outperforming the BBC network radio average increase of 3.7 per cent<sup>6</sup>. Over the same period, talkSPORT's reach has grown strongly and the station now has over 3 million listeners. This is illustrated in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: Weekly reach (millions) for 5 live and talkSPORT by quarter**



Source: RAJAR

- 22 The average 5 live listener tunes in for around 7 hours and 33 minutes each week. This is lower than all other BBC network radio stations except for Radio 3<sup>7</sup>. Since 2006-07, however, 5 live has maintained this level of listening, which contrasts with reductions experienced by most other network radio stations.<sup>8</sup>
- 23 Linked to this, 5 live's share of all radio listening has increased steadily over the last 5 years. In 2006-07, 5 live had a 4.3 per cent share of all radio listening compared with 4.8 per cent in 2010-11.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Source: RAJAR 2010-11

<sup>6</sup> Source: RAJAR 2006-07 vs. 2010-11

<sup>7</sup> Source: RAJAR 2010-11

<sup>8</sup> Source: RAJAR 2006-07 – 2010-11

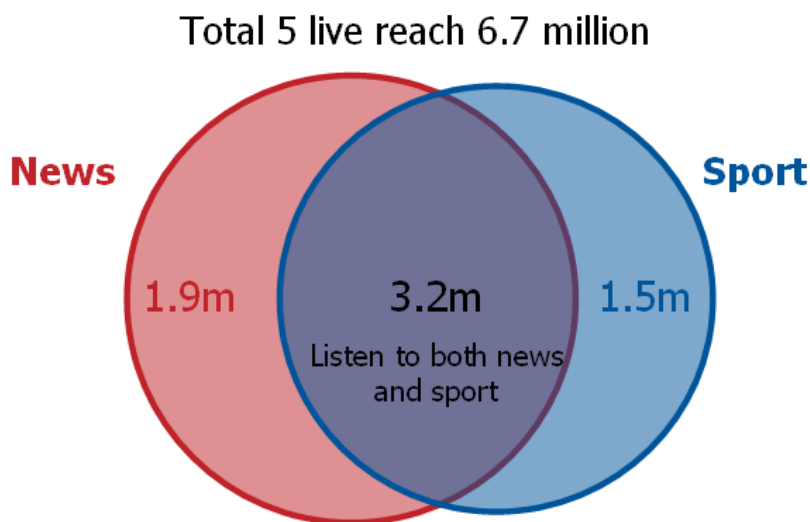
<sup>9</sup> Source: RAJAR

- 24 We have examined the performance of 5 live in order to identify where the increase in reach has occurred. Our analysis indicates that there have been increases in listening across most of the schedule, including both the news and sports output<sup>10</sup>.
- 25 This all round increase suggests that the editorial approach taken by BBC management over recent years – to develop the tone of 5 live, to become more accessible and to have a broader mix of programming – has been successful in appealing to new audiences.
- 26 We applaud the success that 5 live has had in increasing its reach in recent years and the contribution it makes to the BBC's overall radio reach and objectives. We encourage 5 live to maintain its appeal to deliver public value to listeners. In line with the BBC's *Putting Quality First* strategy, its focus should be on providing as high-quality and distinctive journalism as possible, and we hope such an approach will maintain its appeal.

**Reach on 5 live is driven by both news and sports output**

- 27 Of 5 live's total reach of 6.7 million people, some 3.2 million listen to both news and sports content on the station each week. This represents around 48 per cent of the total audience, and suggests that a sizeable proportion of the audience likes the fit of the news and sports offering as illustrated in Figure 5.

**Figure 5: Audience reach to news and sports output on 5 live**



Source: RAJAR 2010-11

**The reduction in live Premiership football coverage on 5 live has not resulted in lower reach over the last 12 months**

- 28 5 live has historically enjoyed having the rights to cover the large majority of Premiership football games. Following the most recent round of negotiations, however, the number of games covered live by 5 live fell from 192 to 128 – a reduction of a third. The other packages were won by talkSPORT, while Absolute radio gained a package previously held

<sup>10</sup> Source: RAJAR 2006-07 vs. 2010-11

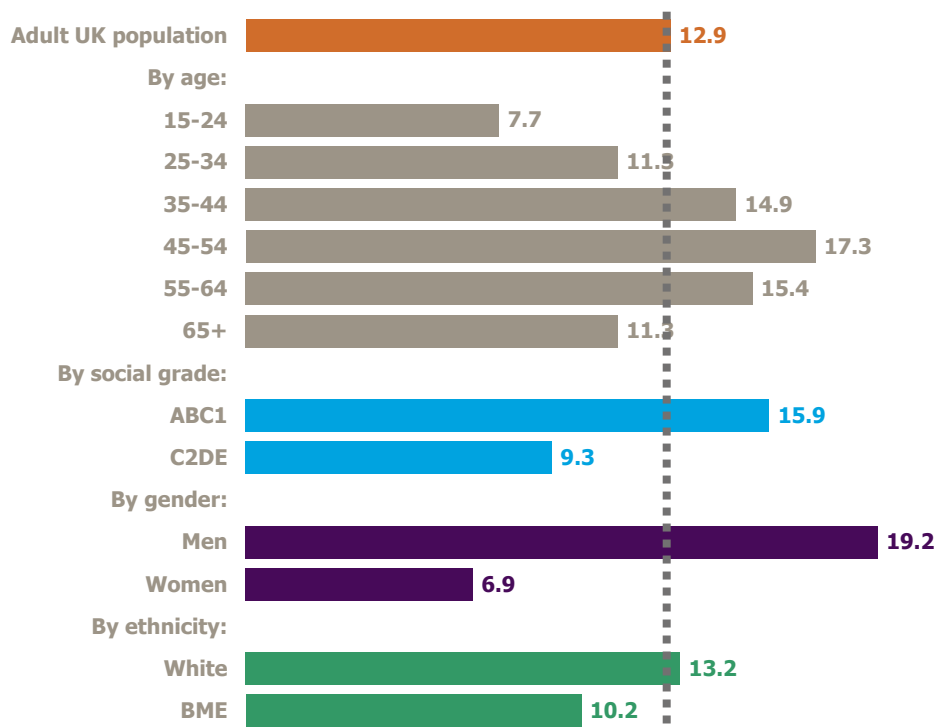
by talkSPORT. These changes came into effect in August 2010, at the beginning of the 2010-11 football season.

- 29 Over the last 12 months there has been an increase in listening overall (as illustrated in Figure 4) and to sports programming for 5 live and talkSPORT. Total weekend reach for 5 live has grown from 4.2 million to 4.3 million adults, while talkSPORT’s weekend reach has grown from 1.3 million to 1.7 million<sup>11</sup>. These increases for both stations may be driven partly by the wider availability of football commentary, increasing interest and engagement amongst all audiences.

**5 live appeals to a broad range of audience groups, although the station is heavily skewed towards a male audience**

- 30 The service licence states that the 5 live should *appeal to news and sports fans of all ages and from all ethnic backgrounds and areas across the UK*. Figure 6 illustrates the reach to 5 live amongst different audience groups.

**Figure 6: Weekly reach for 5 live by % of each audience demographic**



Source: RAJAR 2010-11

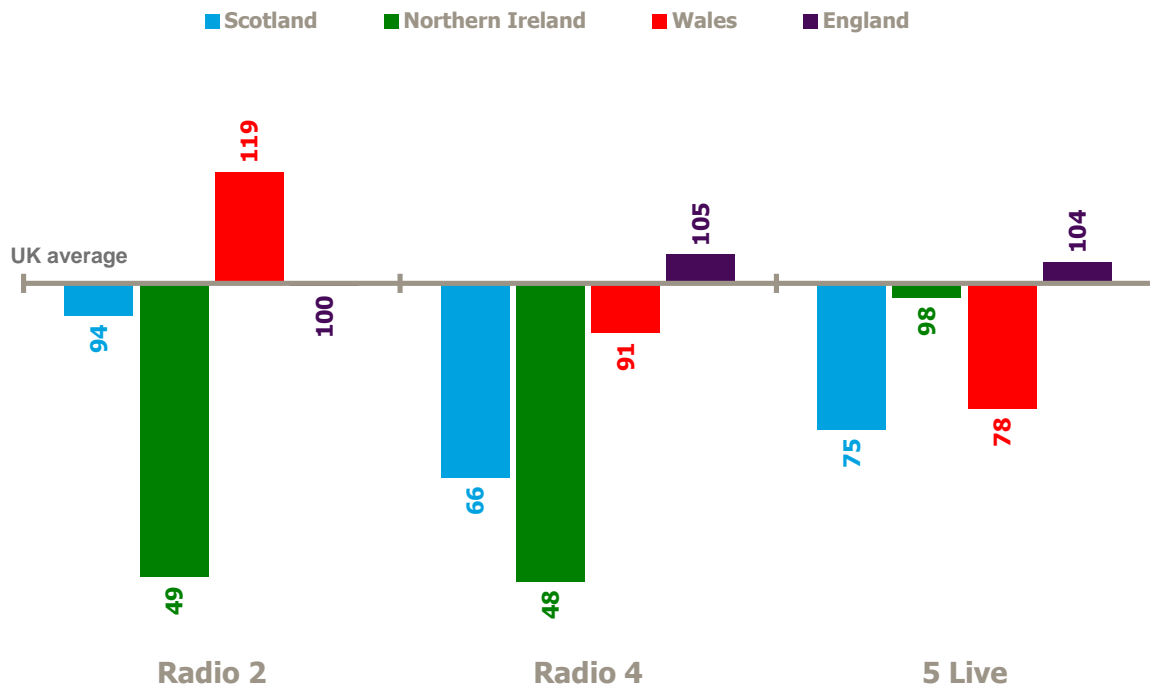
- 31 5 live listening is more evenly spread across the UK than most other BBC network radio stations. Although reach is higher in England than the devolved nations, the variations in reach across the country are not as high as for some of the BBC’s other radio stations. Listening to 5 live is also well distributed around England. The areas with the highest reach are the East and North West, which is not the case for some other BBC network radio stations, where reach tends to be higher in London and the South<sup>12</sup>. Figure 7

<sup>11</sup> Source RAJAR Q3 2010-Q2 2011 vs. Q3 2009-Q2 2010

<sup>12</sup> Source: RAJAR 2010-11

illustrates the reach to some of the BBC stations by nation, indexed to that in the UK as a whole.

**Figure 7: Reach of BBC Stations by Nation Indexed to the UK Average**



Source: RAJAR 2010-11. Note, a result of 100 in this chart means reach in that nation is equal to that in the UK, a figure over 100 means that reach is higher, and a figure under 100 means that reach is lower.

- 32 BBC management aims to maintain this broad appeal. It believes that 5 live will be able to exploit its move to Salford in order to better serve all parts of the UK and we welcome this ambition to further connect with audiences in different parts of the country.
- 33 Around 33 per cent of 5 live listeners are from C2DE households. While this is slightly lower than the average for all BBC radio stations (39 per cent), it is higher than some of the other BBC stations, such as Radio 3 and Radio 4.<sup>13</sup>
- 34 5 live reaches just fewer than 0.5 million black and ethnic minority listeners each week. This represents around 7.5 per cent of 5 live’s total audience. While this figure is slightly lower than the average radio listening profile for black and ethnic minority listeners, which is 9 per cent, it is still higher than the other BBC analogue network radio stations<sup>14</sup>.
- 35 The majority of 5 live programming skews heavily towards male listeners, and some 72 per cent of the audience are men<sup>15</sup>. A similar audience skew is apparent for both the news and sports programming on the station.

<sup>13</sup> Source: RAJAR 2010-11

<sup>14</sup> Source: RAJAR 2010-11

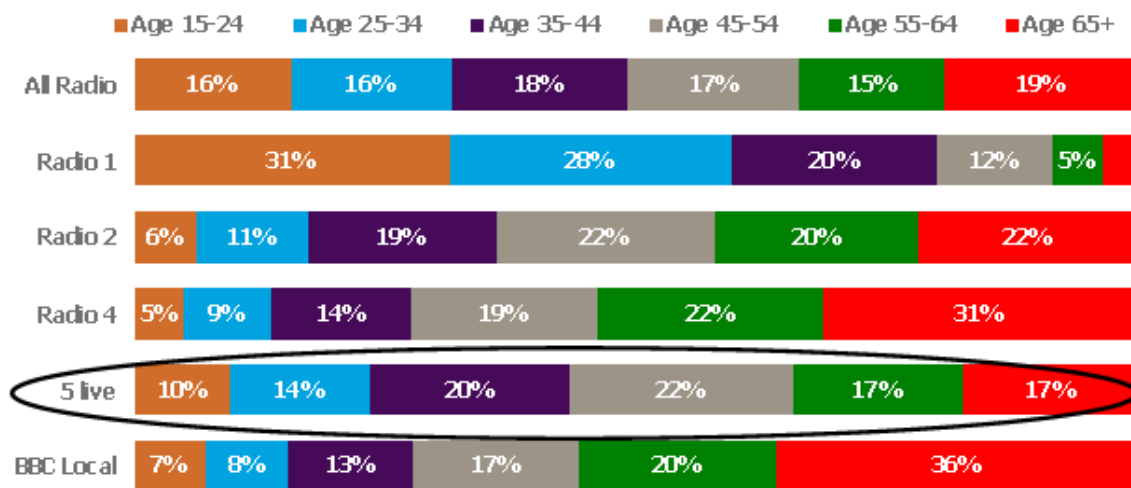
<sup>15</sup> Source: RAJAR 2010-11

36 Ideally, we would like to see a more even gender balance among the audience, so we encourage 5 live to consider whether the presentation and subject matter of its output has the potential to appeal to female listeners.

### 5 live listeners come from a broad range of ages

37 In 2010-11 the median age of 5 live listeners was 47, two years older than the average radio listener<sup>16</sup>. Although reach to the station is higher among the middle-age audiences, as illustrated in Figure 6, the age profile of the 5 live audience is actually the most even of the BBC's network radio stations, suggesting that the station does very well at appealing to a broad range of listeners. This is illustrated in Figure 8.

**Figure 8: Age Profile of BBC Radio Stations**



Source: RAJAR 2010-11

38 The service licence for 5 live states that *it should seek to blend its news and sports programming in ways that help to draw a younger and more diverse audience to BBC's news coverage than other parts of the BBC.*

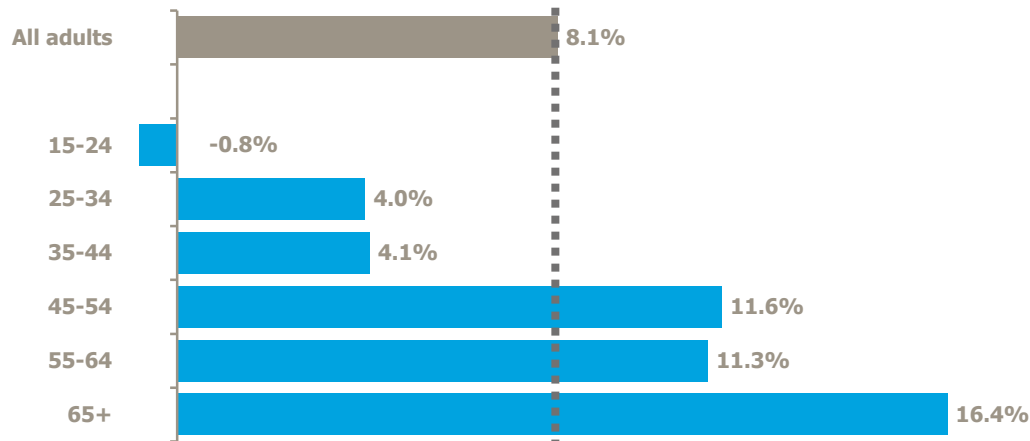
39 We support the broad appeal of 5 live amongst different ages, although we feel that this wording in the licence to draw in a younger audience is somewhat at odds with the remit of the station. This states that *the service should appeal to news and sports fans of all ages and from all ethnic backgrounds and areas of the UK.* We will therefore amend the service licence to clarify that the station should appeal to a broad range of listeners, in line with its remit.

40 We have analysed in further detail the changes in reach to the station over the last five years, and have found that they have not been evenly spread in terms of age. Analysis shows that reach has increased much more amongst those aged over 45, where the average increase is 14 per cent, compared with those aged under 45, where the average increase is only one per cent. This is illustrated in Figure 9. It has meant that the median

<sup>16</sup> Source: RAJAR 2010-11

age of 5 live listeners has also increased by one year since 2006-07<sup>17</sup>, however these changes partly reflect a general decline in radio listening amongst younger audiences.

**Figure 9: % change in 5 live weekly reach by age group between 2006-07 and 2010-11**



Source: RAJAR 2006-07 to 2010-11

- 41 In its submission to the service review, BBC management identifies the 25-34 age range as a key audience group for replenishing 5 live’s audience and maintaining the average age of listener. However, given the station’s broad and growing audience, as outlined above, we do not feel that this is a major strategic challenge for the station.
- 42 Amongst all audiences, awareness of 5 live is lower than for the other BBC network radio stations – around 50 per cent of adults in the UK are aware of the station<sup>18</sup>. BBC management also identifies a further challenge, in that many potential listeners may be aware of 5 live but unaware of the breadth of content that it offers.
- 43 While most of 5 live output is news, audiences are more likely to associate the station with sport. As part of our audience research, we did hear from some listeners who initially tuned-in to the station for sport, then discovered the news output, however we feel that the station should be better known for its news offer. Therefore, rather than aiming to increase awareness of the breadth of content, we would particularly like to see the station build audience awareness of its news provision.

<sup>17</sup> Source: RAJAR 2006-07 to 2010-11

<sup>18</sup> Source: BBC management submission

### **Action 1: Radio 5 live should aim to raise awareness of the station, in particular its news output, and ensure that its appeal remains broad**

We support BBC management's aim to improve audience awareness of 5 live. In particular we would like to see the station build audience awareness of its news provision, as this is the core of the service.

We also ask BBC management to monitor the audience profile of the station to ensure that the current broad appeal is maintained and that the current gender skew does not become stronger.

*We will ask BBC management to report back on awareness and audience profile periodically.*

We will amend 5 live's service licence to clarify that it should appeal to a broad range of listeners, removing the specific commitment to serving a younger and more diverse audience.

*The service licence will be amended immediately.*

### **Listening to Sports Extra fluctuates significantly due to the nature of its programming**

- 44 In 2010-11 Sports Extra attracted an average weekly audience of 691,000 listeners. Listening to Sports Extra varies significantly depending on the sports being covered. Over the last five years, weekly reach has ranged from around 555,000 to 1.2 million.<sup>19</sup>
- 45 Sports Extra has slightly lower reach compared with the BBC's other digital radio stations. In 2010-11 its audience was lower than 1Xtra, 6 Music and Radio 4 Extra, although higher than Asian Network. In addition, reach has not significantly increased over the last five years unlike some of the BBC's other digital radio stations<sup>20</sup>. We note, however, that broad comparisons are difficult to make due to the significant fluctuations in listening and the station's part-time schedule.
- 46 The Sports Extra audience is largely complementary to 5 live's. Some 86 per cent of Sports Extra's audience also listen to 5 live each week – the highest level of overlap between any of the BBC's radio stations. This large degree of overlap fits with audience perceptions of Sports Extra being complementary to 5 live. In reverse, however, the audience crossover is much lower, as only 9 per cent of the 5 live audience also listen to Sports Extra each week.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Source: RAJAR

<sup>20</sup> Source: RAJAR

<sup>21</sup> Source: RAJAR 2010-11

## Awareness of Sports Extra is higher than most other digital stations

- 47 Some 35 per cent of adults in the UK are aware of Sports Extra<sup>22</sup>. This is actually the highest level for any BBC digital radio station, which may partly be due to the close relationship between Sports Extra and 5 live. In the last five years, however, audiences' awareness of the station has remained relatively steady, while awareness of 1Xtra, 6 Music and Radio 4 Extra has increased. Unsurprisingly, awareness of Sports Extra is much higher amongst 5 live listeners at 76 per cent<sup>23</sup>.

## Impact

### 5 live and Sports Extra should make a significant contribution to the BBC's citizenship and nations, regions and communities purposes

- 48 The 5 live and Sports Extra service licences set out the ways in which 5 live should contribute to the BBC's public purposes. While 5 live should make a contribution to each of the six public purposes, its most important priorities relate to the citizenship purpose, through its news programming, and to the nations, regions and communities purpose through its sports programming. At a high level, our audience research indicates that audiences agree with these broad priorities.
- 49 There are a small number of quantitative commitments in the 5 live and Sports Extra service licences, which are reported on annually. Table 1 shows that 5 live and Sports Extra have met these requirements in 2010-11.

**Table 1: 5 live and Sports Extra service licence conditions**

Purpose	Commitment	2010-11
Sustaining Citizenship and Civil Society	News represents around three-quarters of 5 live output each year	75%
Stimulating Creativity and Cultural Excellence	5 live and Sports Extra should contribute to BBC Radio's commitment to commission at least 10% of eligible programmes from independent producers	17% for 5 live and Sports Extra

Source: BBC annual figures 2010-11

<sup>22</sup> Source: BBC Brand and Reputation Tracker Jan – Jun 2011

<sup>23</sup> Source: BBC Brand and Reputation Tracker Jan – Jun 2011. Previous trend data is based on the 'Pan BBC Tracking Survey', which was replaced by the Brand and Reputation Tracker in November 2010.

## Sustaining Citizenship and Civil Society

### **5 live should help the BBC to deliver the “best journalism in the world” and this is at the heart of its public service rationale**

- 50 The evidence that we have gathered in this review shows that the audience believes that news programming and high-quality journalism is a very important part of the 5 live remit. The station’s responsibility in bringing news stories to its audience is the primary way in which 5 live contributes to the BBC’s citizenship purpose and delivers public value. There is no other radio network in the BBC portfolio that has such a strong commitment to news throughout the majority of its schedule. Some 5.1 million people listen to the news output on 5 live each week, and this represents around 77 per cent of the station’s total audience. Each week around 2.5 million people listen to *5 live Breakfast*, and 2.4 million to *5 live Drive*<sup>24</sup>.
- 51 The centrality of news on 5 live is reinforced by audience perceptions that we assessed in our research. When asked how important a range of priorities were on 5 live, audiences gave some of the highest importance scores to key statements about the delivery of news, including *5 live keeps me up to date with breaking news* (79 per cent importance) and *5 live provides high-quality news* (81 per cent importance).<sup>25</sup> These scores indicate that the audience believes a core function of 5 live is to deliver high-quality news coverage.
- 52 Our other evidence also emphasises the importance of news coverage as the core public service rationale for 5 live. Our qualitative research found that, while the methods through which people consume news are changing, radio still has a vital role to play in keeping people abreast of the news, especially as it breaks and develops over the course of the day. Audiences are clear that 5 live is one of the key BBC services in achieving this. Our Audience Councils are also clear that news delivery is the most important part of 5 live’s public service role.
- 53 Additionally, the feedback that we have had from stakeholders such as UTV and RadioCentre suggests that 5 live’s news provision is its most important public service responsibility, and hence the area where it should focus on most in terms of strategy and resources.
- 54 We are assured from its submission to this review, and from our meetings with key staff, that BBC management is clear that 5 live’s most important contribution to the BBC’s public service mission is through its news programming. The BBC management submission outlines two of the key strategic priorities for 5 live:
- *to serve as the home for breaking news on BBC Radio*
  - *to bring BBC News to a wider audience by delivering the highest quality news coverage, distinctive, original journalism and a broad news agenda.*<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Source: RAJAR 2010-11

<sup>25</sup> Source: BBC Trust Audience Research – All adults aged 15+ who have listened to 5 live in the last month (601)

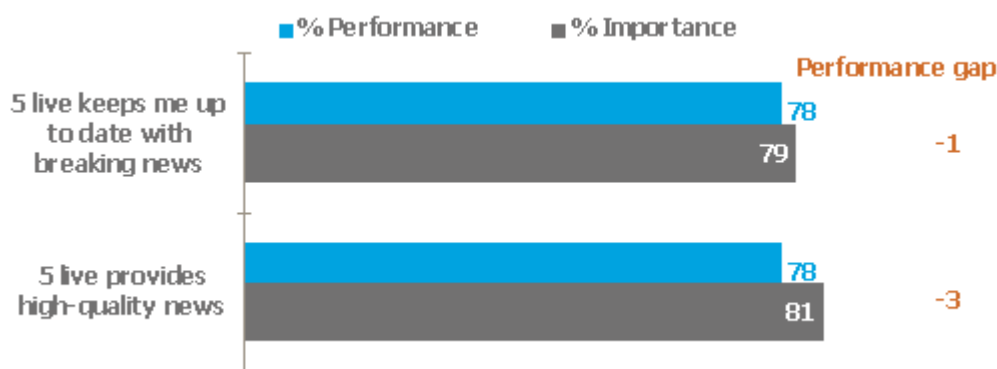
<sup>26</sup> Source: BBC management submission

We agree that these are important priorities for 5 live’s news provision, and discuss them in further detail below.

### Audiences perceive 5 live news programming to be generally high-quality and distinctive

- 55 Overall, our evidence shows that the service is performing very well in providing high-quality news, and audiences believe that 5 live provides news in a distinctive manner to that which is available from other BBC services or from the wider market.
- 56 In our quantitative research, we found that audiences feel that 5 live is generally living up to their expectations of news. Figure 10 shows that for two key news priorities – *5 live keeps me up to date with breaking news* and *5 live provides high-quality news* – 78 per cent of respondents agree that 5 live is performing well. When comparing this with how important audiences think these priorities are, it shows that audience expectations are being met. Therefore, we can conclude that 5 live is performing well at this broad level.

**Figure 10: Performance and importance scores for key news priorities**



Source: BBC Trust Audience Research – All adults aged 15+ who have listened to 5 live in the last month (601)

- 57 In our qualitative research, the majority of respondents are very positive about 5 live’s news provision. In particular, there is much praise for:
- the breadth, depth, wit and intelligence of its news output
  - the mix of heavier and lighter news items
  - the ability of presenters to make news stories accessible without trivialising them
  - the ability of presenters to adapt seamlessly between serious and less serious issues as required by the news agenda of the day.
- 58 This research also found that audiences feel that 5 live provides more detailed and intelligent news coverage than some other stations they listen to. Respondents are able to identify clear points of difference between the way in which 5 live presents news and the way in which other BBC services do so. These relate to: its capacity to cover major breaking news stories and offer up-to-date information; its ability to provide news in an accessible manner; and its appealing balance of heavier and lighter news and current affairs coverage.
- 59 Many respondents in our consultation comment positively on the relaxed, informal style and tone of news coverage on 5 live. They contrast this with the more formal style of Radio 4, suggesting that 5 live is offering a distinctive news service.

## Breaking news is fundamental to 5 live's distinctiveness

- 60 The audience feel that one of the primary elements of 5 live is its capacity to focus on breaking news, and this is a key way in which 5 live contributes to the citizenship purpose. This is explicit in the service licence, which states that 5 live should *make use of its flexible live schedule to offer instant access to breaking news and become a rolling news service whenever appropriate.*
- 61 Respondents in our qualitative research feel that 5 live's ability to focus on a major news story is a core strength of the service and a significant point of difference to other radio stations. Respondents note that covering major breaking news stories is an intrinsic part of the 'live' nature of the service and that it brings the skill of the presenters to the fore. They are able to name many major news events where 5 live was seen as a reliable and up-to-the-minute source of information.
- 62 This sentiment is echoed in other evidence that we gathered. Most respondents to our public consultation consider that 5 live covers breaking news very well. They feel that the responsive and flexible nature of the station allows it to effectively cover major stories and events and keep listeners up to date. There are many references in our consultation to the fact that 5 live is the service that people would turn to during a major news story as they can be assured that the station will be covering it. Similarly, evidence from our Audience Councils indicates how important and valued 5 live's role is in covering breaking news.
- 63 Our evidence found that, amongst a small minority of listeners, there is some criticism of 5 live's breaking news remit. Some listeners feel that, occasionally, 5 live interrupts its regular programming unnecessarily to break to a news story, and that there is too much repetition. This is particularly the case when audiences feel that there is no new news or that there are no fresh developments. While we recognise that this may occur at times, we feel that this is a necessary risk when trying to ensure up-to-the-minute coverage of breaking news stories. The decision on when to break from the scheduled programming is rightly in the hands of the programme makers.
- 64 No other BBC radio service has such a capacity to cover breaking news. Although our audience research found that the ways in which people access news have changed significantly over recent years – particularly with the increase in online news provision – radio still has a very important role to play. We believe that 5 live's role as the BBC station to which audiences can turn to hear major breaking news is extremely important, and we are clear that the commitment to offer instant access to breaking news must be preserved through all parts of its schedule. 5 live should actively interrupt any of its programmes to go to breaking news when it happens.
- 65 Currently the service licence remit of 5 live refers to the station as the 'home of continuous news' on BBC radio. BBC management has proposed to change this to the 'home of breaking news' in order to better reflect the existing nature and priorities of the station.
- 66 We feel that it is sensible to replace the term 'continuous news' as this is more appropriate to 24-hour rolling news channels, rather than a primarily news focused radio network. Strictly continuous or repetitive rolling news coverage is not what 5 live currently does. It would not increase the delivery public purposes if it did so and we have no evidence from audiences to suggest that they want 5 live to move in that direction. In

fact, if 5 live became more of a rolling news station, it could potentially damage the capability to approach news in a variety of ways.

- 67 While breaking news is fundamental to the rationale and distinctiveness of 5 live, we do not feel that this encompasses all of the station's news provision. We believe that breaking news is one part of 5 live's news provision, albeit a very important one.
- 68 We will, therefore, amend the service licence remit to reflect more closely 5 live's commitment to news.

### **Action 2: We will amend the 5 live service licence remit to more closely reflect the nature of 5 live news**

The 5 live service licence remit will be amended so that its commitments to news and to breaking news will be clearer.

The station's remit will be as follows:

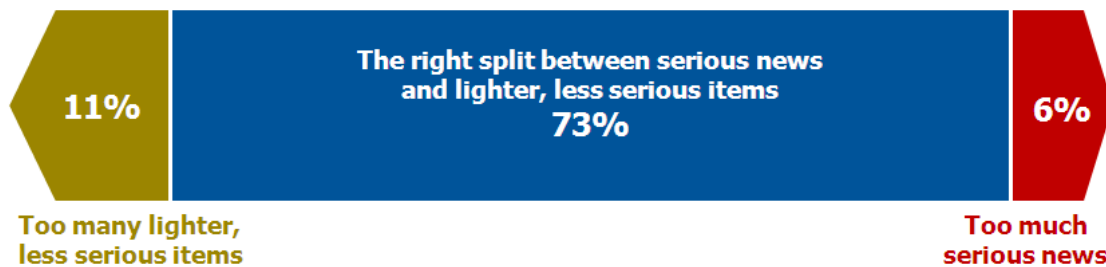
The remit of BBC Radio 5 live is to provide live news and sports coverage. It should be BBC Radio's main outlet for breaking news by bringing its audience major news stories as they happen. It should provide context to its news and sports coverage through wide-ranging analysis and discussion.

We will reflect this throughout the service licence.

*This amendment will be implemented immediately.*

### **Most listeners think that the network has the right balance of heavy and light news stories**

- 69 Our quantitative research asked listeners whether they thought that there was the right balance of serious news, and lighter, less serious items on 5 live. Figure 11 below shows that a large proportion of the audience thinks that there is approximately the right balance on 5 live. Only a small proportion of the audience feels there are too many lighter items and 6 per cent feels there are too many serious items. Our qualitative research and public consultation support this finding, so we conclude that 5 live is setting the editorial balance broadly at the right level.

**Figure 11: Audience perceptions of the balance of news items on 5 live**

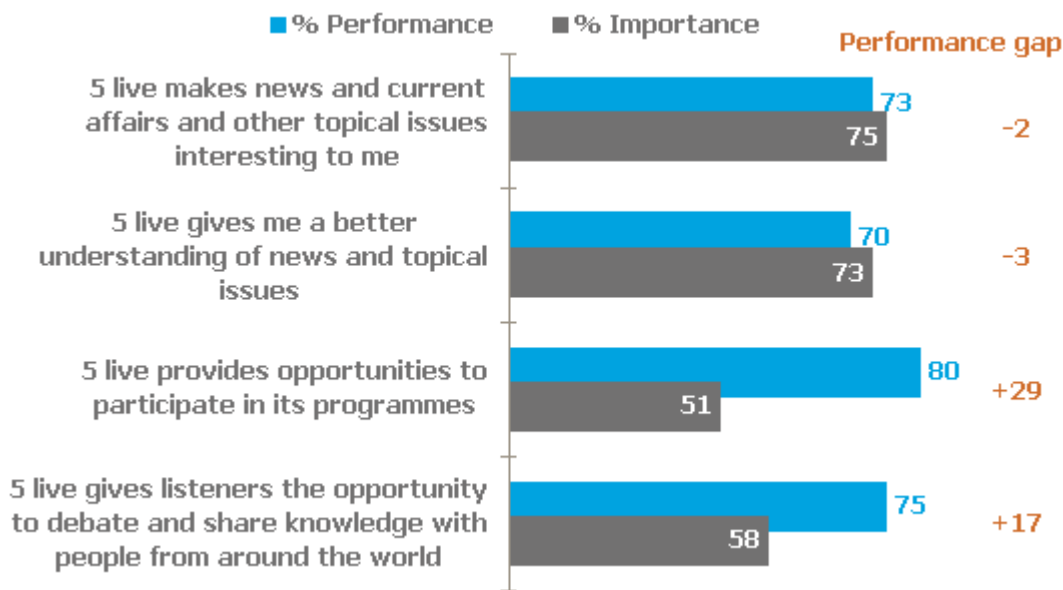
Source: BBC Trust Audience Research – All UK adults aged 15+ who have listened to 5 live in the last month (601), chart does not show 10% of respondents who answered 'don't know.'

- 70 However, a small proportion of the audience feels that, at times, 5 live has too much focus on trivial or less serious issues. For example, a small number of respondents in our public consultation suggest that some of 5 live's news programmes place too much emphasis on celebrities and popular culture. Some respondents do not feel that such topics are newsworthy and think that the station should have a more serious outlook.
- 71 While this is only a minority of the audience, we believe that this highlights the challenge that 5 live faces in living up to its service licence commitment to cover a wide range of subject matter through its news output. Importantly, BBC management must ensure that 5 live news – whether covering heavy or light stories – is in some way contributing to the BBC's citizenship public purpose.
- 72 We believe that 5 live should always cover the most important news items, but it can also use its journalistic skill and resource to provide high-quality coverage of lighter items, particularly when there is a less heavy news agenda. It is one of 5 live's distinctive strengths that it has a light-and-shade approach to news, and can present a diverse range of stories simultaneously and coherently.

### **5 live has an accessible tone and audience interaction is an important part of how 5 live delivers the public purposes**

- 73 There are commitments in a number of sections of the 5 live service licence that it should have an accessible and engaging tone, both generally and with regard to its news output. The service licence states that 5 live *should have an accessible tone and wide range of subject matter, and it should encourage listeners to interact with the service and share their opinions, such as via phone-ins, text messages and email.* It also states that it should cover events in an accessible style and *encourage listeners to participate in debates and audiences should regularly have the chance to speak directly to guests, including politicians and opinion formers.*
- 74 Our evidence suggests that 5 live is performing very well in making news and current affairs accessible. 75 per cent of respondents agree that it is important that *5 live makes news and current affairs and other topical issues interesting to me.* 5 live is mostly living up to this expectation, as 73 per cent of respondents agree that it performs well against this statement. We saw similar perceptions for the statement *5 live gives me a better understanding of news and topical issues.* This is illustrated in Figure 12.

**Figure 12: Performance and importance scores for audience accessibility and interaction news priorities**



Source: BBC Trust Audience Research – All adults aged 15+ who have listened to 5 live in the last month (601)

- 75 This is also corroborated by our qualitative research and public consultation. Audiences feel that 5 live’s ability to make news stories accessible without trivialising them is a particular strength, and they praise presenters throughout the schedule who do this expertly.
- 76 The levels of audience interaction on 5 live are higher than they are on other BBC services, which reflects the explicit commitment set out in the service licence. This has been a feature of the station for many years and, on a typical day, more than 2,000 listeners make contact with 5 live through Twitter, Facebook, texts, email and the phone<sup>27</sup>. The nature of this interactivity varies from specific phone-ins, such as Nicky Campbell’s *Your Call*, to simply reflecting comments in less explicitly interactive segments. BBC management believes that this allows 5 live to develop a democratic and modern tone where the audience can explore issues, and this leads to a much more accessible station.
- 77 Audiences recognise that interactivity is a key part of 5 live’s offer and rate its performance very highly: at 80 per cent for *5 live provides opportunities to participate in its programmes*, as shown in Figure 12. However, in terms of importance, audiences rate this priority much lower, at 51 per cent. This creates a large positive performance gap, where performance significantly surpasses expectations. Similarly, there is a large performance gap for *5 live gives listeners the opportunity to debate and share knowledge with people from around the world*.
- 78 We explored this area further in our qualitative research. We wanted to understand the role that interactive elements such as phone-ins fulfil on 5 live, and to discover whether these large performance gaps are an indication of strength or over-delivery. We found that the high level of interactivity on 5 live is generally considered to be positive. The

<sup>27</sup> Source: BBC management submission

majority of the audience actively enjoy interactive elements such as phone-ins, although only a minority suggest that they would contact the station themselves.

- 79 This view was echoed in our public consultation, where most respondents consider it a strength that 5 live provides many different opportunities for the audience to interact with the station. Our Audience Councils are also broadly supportive of the interactive elements of 5 live. For instance, Audience Council England note that *5 live encourages callers to participate through a range of entry points that are easily accessible [and] there is ample opportunity to join the debate which is well managed and respects the dignity of contributors while avoiding parochialism.*
- 80 Amongst the evidence that we gathered, there was a small amount of negative reaction to phone-ins and interactivity in a broad sense. Some respondents feel that there are now too many phone-ins on the station or that the callers are ill-informed and do not contribute or advance the discussion.
- 81 We believe that deciding when and how to use interactive elements such as phone-ins is a judgement for the 5 live programme teams themselves. Naturally, the approach taken differs depending on the tone of the individual programme and presenter. We believe that managed and constructive debates on news and topical issues that include listeners as well as expert contributors are a distinctive part of 5 live's offer. They make the station more accessible and democratic, and directly contribute to the citizenship purpose through enabling debate and discussion.

### **The 5 live audience has high expectations regarding the impartiality of BBC news**

- 82 Of all the news-related priorities, audiences rate *I trust 5 live to provide me with impartial news* as the most important. 82 per cent of respondents in our quantitative research agree that this is important. This is not surprising, as we know from our other work that audiences believe that the impartiality of news is a fundamental aspect of the BBC's public service broadcasting remit. However, only 72 per cent of respondents think that 5 live is performing well in this area, resulting in a -10 point performance gap.
- 83 We explored this issue in greater detail in our qualitative research. Respondents in these sessions suggest that 5 live news is as impartial as other BBC news. We recognise that the discursive nature of 5 live and the interaction between presenters, guests and the audience creates a challenge to ensure that each discussion is balanced and fair, and respondents feel that 5 live is doing a very good job of presenting a balanced range of views and giving different opinions a fair share of airtime. The belief that 5 live is impartial and balanced is also supported by responses to our public consultation.
- 84 Ensuring the impartiality of the BBC is a key priority for the Trust; it is essential to its independence that the BBC retains the public's trust as an impartial purveyor of news and programming, and we are committed to making sure that the BBC fulfils its obligation. If we felt that there were any substantive and recurring concerns about the impartiality of 5 live, the Trust has procedures to address these, including impartiality reviews, ongoing tracking by BBC management and an established route for complaints about impartiality.
- 85 We have heard some comment from stakeholders who suggest that 5 live is making references that could be considered commercial during its output. We are clear that any BBC service must adhere to the BBC's editorial guidelines which prohibit this, and the BBC has a formal procedure for dealing with any breaches of these.

## **Some stakeholders believe that 5 live's news programming is not contributing as much as it could to the BBC's citizenship purpose**

- 86 During this review we received submissions from a number of stakeholders who addressed the nature of 5 live's news programming. The most substantive of these were from UTV, the operators of talkSPORT radio, and from RadioCentre, the commercial radio industry body. Both of these organisations feel that 5 live does not sufficiently contribute to the BBC's citizenship purpose through its news programming, and that the station is not fulfilling the terms of its service licence in this regard. As well as considering their formal submissions, we have also met with both organisations to understand their concerns further.
- 87 UTV does not believe that 5 live is complying with the terms of its service licence to ensure that 75 per cent of its output is news. It feels that 5 live has moved away from its commitment to continuous news, and that the station has diminished its distinctiveness and public service focus. UTV also feels that 5 live is increasingly seeking listener input on a range of more trivial subjects.
- 88 To support its submission UTV asked a former 5 live news editor to undertake content analysis of 5 live. According to the definition of news that he applied in this analysis, only some of 5 live's news programmes contained a significant majority of news content. He found that Breakfast and Drive are among the programmes with the most news content, but that the level is significantly lower amongst other programmes<sup>28</sup>. UTV also commissioned research, which examined audience perceptions of what constitutes news. This found that audience perceptions of news vary significantly by topic. For instance, while 93 per cent of 5 live's audience thinks that 'information about UK politics and current events' are classified as news, only 30 per cent thinks that 'entertainment stories' are news.<sup>29</sup> UTV's submission and supporting evidence can be found on our website.
- 89 The RadioCentre makes a range of points with regard to 5 live's delivery of news. It believes that there is growing evidence that much of what 5 live currently defines as news is not to the standard of the 'best journalism in the world'.
- 90 We have considered these inputs to our review carefully alongside evidence on audience perceptions and our own view on how 5 live's programming fits with the remit we have set.

## **5 live news may not always meet the expectations of the audience**

- 91 Our audience research has shown that while the station is seen to perform well in terms of its news provision, it does not always meet audience expectations in this area. In our public consultation, we have heard comments from a minority of the audience that some 5 live news programming can sometimes seem too light. This comment is partly a result of the nature of 5 live news: its broad agenda, accessibility and high levels of interactivity means that it will not always fit an individual's expectation of news.

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<sup>28</sup> Source: UTV Media, independent academic assessment of 5 live's output by Robin Britten, May 2011.

<sup>29</sup> Source: BritainThinks, 'BBC Radio 5 Live: An Audience Perspective', April 2011

### **Any topic covered on 5 live should demonstrate editorial ambition**

- 92 We believe that 5 live should cover a broad range of news and topical items within its remit, as long as coverage demonstrates editorial ambition and other BBC news values, and is distinctive within the BBC radio portfolio. We encourage every news programme on the station to display journalistic ambition, whilst maintaining its accessible tone.
- 93 This dynamic was highlighted in UTV's content analysis of Breakfast and Drive which found that "...these programmes manage banter/chat/interactivity without jeopardizing – in fact they use it to enhance – their core purpose; presenting accessible, digestible comprehensive news" and that "connectivity and audience participation in no way slows the programme pace or the high news seriousness when called for."
- 94 We agree that interactivity can be used to enhance the core purpose of the news programmes on 5 live. We recognise that there should be a balance between light and heavier items in news programmes, and that this approach directly contributes to the station's distinctive and accessible tone.
- 95 Having considered this evidence and given the station's core priority to cover news, we expect that there should be fewer 'non-news' features in news programming on the station. This applies particularly when these segments are used instead of, rather than as well as, coverage of important news topics.

### **We have considered how best to define news for 5 live and have created a set of commitments to clarify its scope**

- 96 Prior to the launch of the review, we considered a complaint from UTV relating to 5 live's compliance with its service licence. One aspect of this was in relation to how news is defined on 5 live. We did not uphold this appeal, but felt that providing more clarity in the service licence as to what constitutes news might benefit audiences and stakeholders.<sup>30</sup> Both UTV and the RadioCentre identify this as a significant issue in their submissions to this review.
- 97 UTV believes 5 live's service licence should incorporate a clear definition of news on 5 live, and has suggested a definition to us. We have considered this but have concluded that we should not define news on 5 live in relation to topics which can or cannot be covered.
- 98 A common theme, raised by audiences, is that of topicality. Audiences feel that topical content is a key priority for 5 live and they are less likely to think that content is either news or appropriate for 5 live if it is not topical.
- 99 When considering how we govern the BBC's news output on its other services, we have concluded that it would be preferable for the 5 live service licence to set clearer commitments relating to news, rather than create a definition for this programming. This should provide clearer guidance for the station, its audience and stakeholders about the nature and scope of 5 live's news output. In creating these commitments we have drawn on the suggestions from BBC management and UTV, as well as the other evidence we have gathered in the review. The commitments are as follows:

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<sup>30</sup> BBC Trust, General Appeals Finding, April 2011

*Around three quarters of its output across the year should be dedicated to news programming and current affairs. The weekday peak hours at breakfast and evening drivetime should comprise high-quality news programming covering the main news agenda of the day.*

*In addition to the regular bulletins and reporting, 5 live can approach news through other formats such as topical debates and discussion, with contributions from journalists, presenters, guests and listeners. News programming can feature a broad range of subject matter that is of concern, relevance or interest to the 5 live audience. Discussion and other feature items should have a clear news or topical impetus. There will also be times when 5 live will set, rather than follow, the news agenda through its original approach. All 5 live news programmes should clearly reflect the BBC's mission to provide the best journalism in the world.*

- 100 By setting clearer commitments relating to news programming, the station should retain the flexibility to evolve new formats and editorial approaches, while having a clear sense of the purpose to which they are working. Audiences and stakeholders should be able to clearly identify elements of these commitments at the heart of every 5 live news programme.
- 101 We note that news content can take many forms, and does so on other BBC networks. Given the subjective nature of news, we feel that it would be almost impossible to quantifiably report on the specific amount of airtime that is news. To do so objectively would require such a prescriptive and inflexible definition of news that it would harm the station's ability to cover a broad agenda in an accessible and interactive manner.
- 102 We will expect that around three quarters of 5 live output contribute to this remit in a significant way, and that this contribution should be in addition to the regular news bulletins. This will be measured on a programme by programme basis, and BBC management will report this to the Trust on an annual basis. In addition, we will expect 5 live to name the programmes that count towards its 75 per cent news commitment as part of its public reporting.

### **Action 3: We will amend the 5 live service licence to include clearer commitments for news programming**

In order to provide audiences, BBC management and other stakeholders with more clarity regarding news on 5 live we will amend the service licence to include new aims and objectives.

Each year, in its public reporting of Service Licence compliance, BBC management should name the programmes in the 5 live schedule that contribute to the 75 per cent news commitment.

*This action will be implemented immediately.*

### **As part of the BBC's *Delivering Quality First (DQF)* Proposals, 5 live will reduce the cost of its overnight programming**

- 103 In order to play its part in meeting the challenge of the latest licence fee settlement 5 live management has proposed changes to reduce content spend on 5 live by 7.5 per cent to 2016-17. One of these proposals is to reduce the expenditure on overnight programming.
- 104 Currently 5 live programming is also carried overnight on most BBC Local Radio stations, Radio Ulster and Radio Cymru. Most stations join with 5 live from 1am to 5am, although there are some variations in these timings. As part of the wider DQF proposals, BBC management is proposing to extend the hours that 5 live is carried on these stations, and for some additional local and nations stations to also carry 5 live overnight. These changes will be considered separately by the Trust with conclusions due in spring 2012.
- 105 5 live should ensure that its overnight programming remains a high-quality and distinctive offering, particularly as it may be made available to a wider audience in the future. With this caveat, we have agreed with the plan to make these cuts as necessary.

### **We believe that current affairs is an important part of the 5 live news mix**

- 106 Although our audience research showed that 5 live is not strongly associated with investigative journalism, many respondents in our public consultation feel that this is done well, with in-depth analysis providing listeners with informative, engaging and enjoyable programming. Some respondents also suggest that this is an important part of the station's remit and that there should be more in-depth investigative journalism.
- 107 As part of the BBC's DQF proposals, the station planned to end some current affairs programmes. We see current affairs as an important part of the news offer on 5 live and a distinctive offer from BBC Radio overall. We also think current affairs is a core part of the BBC's editorial priority of producing "the best journalism in the world".
- 108 Therefore, we have agreed with BBC management the importance of a dedicated current affairs offer, and that this will be retained.
- 109 In future, there will be changes to business programming so that it focuses on the key times of early morning/breakfast and afternoons. We know that audiences value 5 live's business reporting, in line with responses to our public consultation where audiences praised 5 live's business news as a strong feature of the station and for being accessible and engaging. Through these changes we believe that the audience will continue to be served adequately in the future.

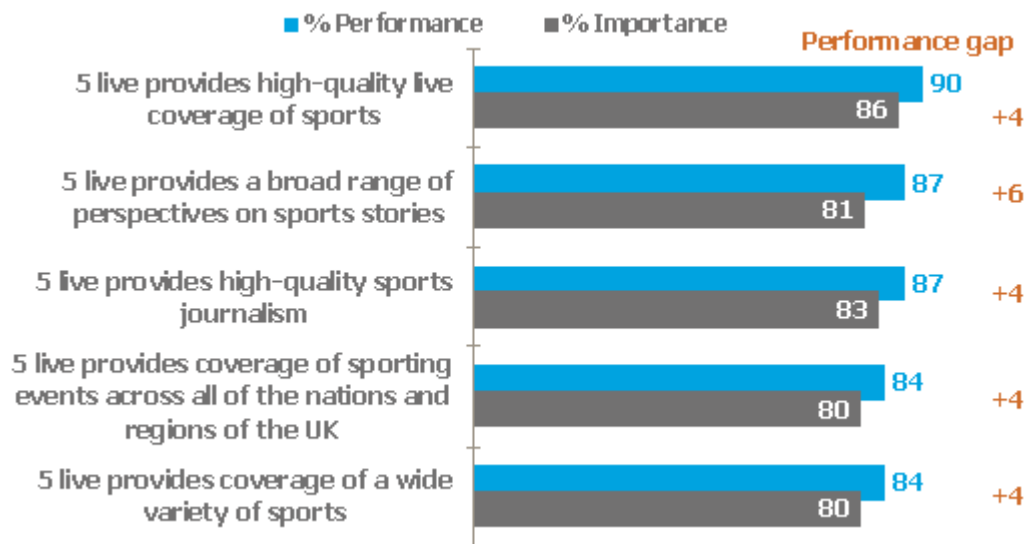
## **Reflecting the UK, its Nations, Regions and Communities**

### **5 live and Sports Extra make an important contribution to this purpose through their sports programming**

- 110 5 live and Sports Extra have a range of commitments to sports programming and live sport is at the heart of 5 live's remit. The stations are also a very important part of the BBC's sports portfolio.
- 111 Audiences recognise the importance of the public service role that 5 live has in terms of its sports broadcasting. Of all the purpose priorities we tested in our quantitative

research, it is those that relate to sports that tend to receive the highest importance scores – at least 80 per cent of the audience agrees that these priorities are important. The most important priority is that *5 live provides high-quality live coverage of sports*, with 86 per cent of the audience agreeing this is important, as shown by Figure 13.

**Figure 13: Performance and importance scores for sports-related priorities**



Source: BBC Trust Audience Research – All adults aged 15+ who have listened to 5 live in the last month (601)

### 5 live listeners believe it sets the standard for sports radio broadcasting in the UK

- 112 5 live meets these high expectations, as shown by Figure 13, above, in which the performance scores exceed expectations. The vast majority of listeners – nine of out every ten – believe that 5 live provides high-quality coverage of sports.
- 113 Our qualitative research explored what drives these very positive perceptions and whether there were ways in which 5 live could improve its sports coverage even further. In these discussions, respondents provided consistently positive feedback for the live sports coverage on the station, as well as for the sports news and sports discussion programmes. Many of the audience claim that live sports coverage on 5 live brings the listener closer to the action than is possible on television. The audience praise the commentators for their ability to paint a picture of the event, and the station's ability to convey the atmosphere of live sport is widely lauded.
- 114 These perceptions are supported by responses to our public consultation. Respondents feel that coverage on 5 live is comprehensive, professional and engaging. The quality of commentary is enjoyed and appreciated, and this is supported by knowledgeable contributions and the expertise of analysts. Respondents also praise the supporting news and discussion programmes. The submissions from our Audience Councils are generally positive about 5 live's sports output. They note that the audience appreciate the high standards of sports coverage on 5 live. They also recognise the wider coverage of sports-related issues. For instance, the Audience Council Northern Ireland praise 5 live for challenging issues such as funding, doping and governance.



- 118 While we note that 5 live's main focus should always be news, sports output will continue to be a popular part of the offer, and this is true of the BBC more widely. As well as contributing to the BBC's public purposes, the sports programming on 5 live also plays an important role in attracting listeners who might otherwise not hear BBC speech radio programming.
- 119 We would, however, like to see 5 live better known for its news provision than its sports coverage. Although sports provision is naturally high profile, we feel the ambition to increase awareness of 5 live news, as set out in Action 1, will help towards addressing this.

### **5 live should represent a range of sports, from major events through to sports of minority interest**

- 120 5 live's service licence commits that it *should offer commentary on major sports events and provide news and other programming on a broad range of sports from around the world, including minority sports from time to time.*
- 121 It is one of the distinctive aspects of 5 live's sports coverage that it has the capacity to cover a wide range of sports. Unlike commercial providers of radio sports broadcasting, there is no requirement for 5 live to generate advertising revenue, and therefore it does not have to adopt an approach based on potential listening figures.
- 122 5 live should provide coverage of major events and the most popular sports as this type of coverage directly contributes to the BBC's public purpose for bringing people together for shared events. 5 live should also cover less mainstream sports. While 5 live covers and features more sports than any other radio station, the level and degree of this commitment is an area that we consider in more detail.

### **Most listeners believe that the range of sports on 5 live and Sports Extra is broadly right, but some feel there is too much emphasis on English Premier League football**

- 123 Audiences think that the range of sports on 5 live and Sports Extra is about right. While football is always identified as the sport with most coverage, audiences are able to cite a range of other sports covered such as Formula One, rugby union, golf and cricket. Most 5 live listeners are interested in a number of different sports, which was demonstrated in our audience research, as well as research commissioned by UTV. This showed that at least 20 per cent of the audience has an interest in sports such as netball, volleyball or squash<sup>33</sup>. However, our research also highlighted that radio is not always seen to be the best medium for introducing audiences to new sports.
- 124 Some of the audience believe that football, and in particular English Premier League football, receives too much emphasis on 5 live and Sports Extra. However, audiences do recognise that this is the most popular and appealing sport, and therefore it is right that 5 live reflects public demand to a large degree. They also suggest that this is partly a reflection of the wider media and sports landscape, where there is a large amount of coverage of the English Premier League. Some respondents to our consultation think that

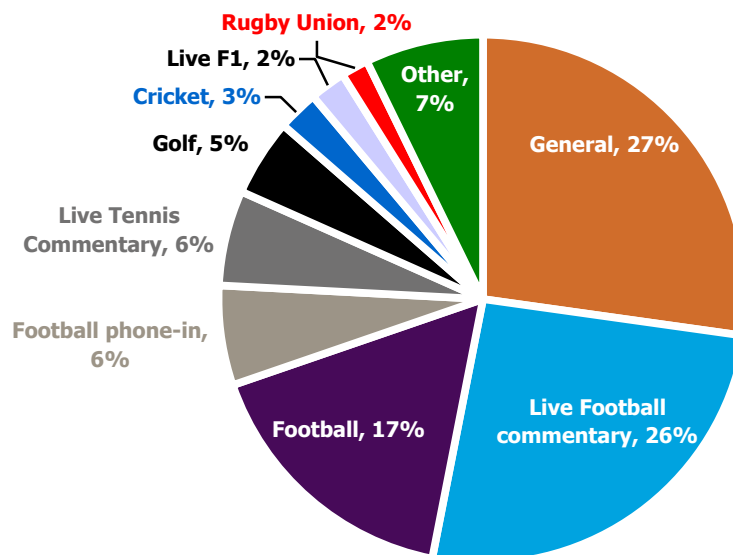
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<sup>33</sup> Source: BritainThinks, April 2011

the station could do more to provide coverage of minority sports and those not widely accessible elsewhere on UK radio.

- 125 According to data supplied by BBC management (see Figure 15), around half of 5 live’s sports output is football-related. Between June 2010 and July 2011, 26 per cent of sports output was live football commentary, with a further 17 per cent additional football programming and 6 per cent football phone-ins. There is also a further 27 per cent that is categorised as ‘general’ sports programming, including programmes such as *5 live Sport* and *Kicking Off with Colin Murray*, which feature a range of sports but in which a significant proportion of air time is football-related. We therefore estimate that up to two-thirds of 5 live’s sport output is focused on football, of which it is likely that a large majority is concerned with the English Premier League.

**Figure 15: Sport output on 5 live**



Source: BBC management data, July 2010 to June 2011

- 126 Several stakeholder organisations are of the opinion that 5 live and Sports Extra place too much emphasis on football. In its submission, the RadioCentre highlights concerns that far too much of the 5 live schedule is given to English Premier League football. Similarly, we heard representations from a number of sports bodies, such as Sport England and the Rugby Football League who feel that 5 live places too much emphasis on football to the detriment of other sports coverage.

**We would like to see 5 live build on its commitment to a range of sports, including those of minority interest**

- 127 We recognise that achieving the optimum balance of coverage on 5 live between the most popular sports and those of minority interests is a difficult challenge, and one that audiences identify and articulate themselves. In our qualitative research, some respondents did feel that they would like to see more non-mainstream sports covered, particularly those that they personally consider their favourites. However, they recognise

that many of these sports may have limited appeal. The challenge for 5 live is to balance audience demand for popular sports alongside its commitments to feature a range of sports, including those of a minority interest. We believe that more can be done to balance coverage of football with other sports.

- 128 Understandably, commercial radio broadcasters and many sports governing bodies are keen for 5 live to provide more coverage to sports other than football. For example, an open letter to the BBC Trust, co-signed by Tessa Sanderson and a number of sports organisations, highlights the BBC's responsibility to provide appropriate media coverage for the full range of sports enjoyed in this country. The Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation sees showcasing women's sport on 5 live as an opportunity for the BBC to create a greater understanding of the value of women's sport, and Sport England note 5 live and Sports Extra's opportunity and responsibility to provide a platform for smaller and lesser known sports in the run up to the Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- 129 Prior to the launch of the review, we considered a complaint from UTV that 5 live did not comply with its service licence with regard to its coverage of minority and secondary sports. Although we did not uphold this complaint, we noted that the service licence does not provide clear commitments as to 5 live's activity in this area and aimed that this review should address the issue.
- 130 In its submission, BBC management sets out its strategic priorities in relation to covering a range of sports:
- *5 live and Sports Extra will cover at least 20 sports per year, carrying live commentary on 5 live or 5 live Sports Extra as rights acquisition and timing allow. This range of sports will also continue to be regularly featured as part of magazine shows and sports news bulletins.*
  - *5 live and Sports Extra will explore the possibilities of devoting additional coverage to sports such as swimming, extreme sports, Paralympic sports and American sports where there is currently a gap between levels of provision and levels of audience interest.*

In order to support these strategic objectives, BBC management proposes that the service licences be amended to include the following commitment:

*Together with Radio 5 live Sports Extra, it should offer live commentary, news and other programming on at least 20 sports from around the world across the year.*

- 131 While we believe that the concept of a minimum of 20 sports is a good starting point on which to base the commitment, we feel that this proposal can go further. As it stands, this proposal does not require any changes to the current coverage on 5 live and Sports Extra. Instead, it codifies what 5 live and Sports Extra already do in the service licence, rather than increasing their commitment.
- 132 We believe the BBC has an important role to play in covering a range of sports, along with its commitment to encourage participation in sport. From the evidence we have gathered as part of the review we have been impressed by the investment and commitment that 5 live makes to a range of sports. We recognise that football has an important role on the station as the nation's most popular sport, however we believe that there is scope for 5 live to provide some more coverage of minority interest sports and sometimes to focus less on football in its discussion programming and sports news. This will also enable the

station to use the skill and resource of its sports staff to encourage greater public interest in a wider range of sports. The London 2012 Olympics provides a one-off opportunity to promote public interest in a range of minority interest sports in the near term.

- 133 We considered whether to impose any specific output requirements relating to the levels of sport broadcast by 5 live and Sports Extra. While we recognise some logic in this approach, it would be inappropriate for the Trust to dictate what the specific levels of sports output should be and would prohibit 5 live's ability to be flexible and adapt to changing audience needs.
- 134 Finally, we are clear that this commitment to covering a range of sports should apply specifically to 5 live, and that Sports Extra should be used to offer additional coverage of sports already covered by 5 live. Therefore we will amend 5 live's service licence to strengthen the commitment to regular coverage of a broad range of sports in main sports programmes. These changes are set out below:

#### **Action 4: Radio 5 live should provide more regular coverage of a range of sports alongside football**

We recognise that 5 live and Sports Extra provide high-quality sports programming that covers a wide range of sports. However, we have asked BBC management to develop its provision of a range of sports, including those of minority interest. Although football will continue to be the most covered sport, other sports should receive more representation within 5 live's sports output.

In addition, BBC management should signpost and increase the awareness of the wide variety of sports that it covers.

We will codify this in the 5 live service licence as follows:

5 live should offer live commentary, as well as news and other programming, on at least 20 sports from around the world across the year. Coverage should be a mixture of one-off events and regular programming. Sports output – including in peak listening hours – should cover a wide range of sports, including those of minority interest.

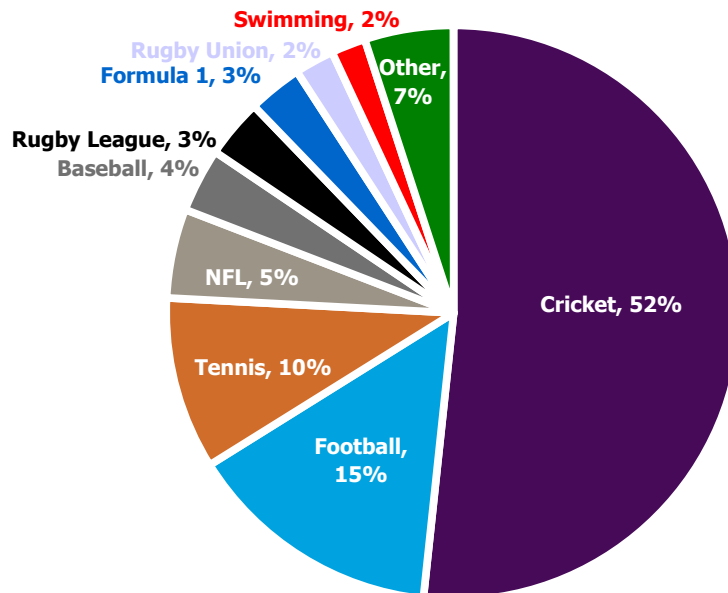
*This action will be implemented immediately. We have asked BBC management to publicly set out its commitment to a range of sports at the beginning of each year through the statements of programme policy.*

#### **Sports Extra has a complementary role to 5 live**

- 135 Sports Extra's remit is to bring a greater choice of live action to sports fans by offering a part-time extension of 5 live. From its launch, it has had a firm commitment to use sports rights already held by the BBC and not to acquire its own rights or to originate programming beyond live or near-live sports coverage.
- 136 In 2010-11, Sports Extra broadcast around 6 hours of output per day. Of this, cricket represented around 50 per cent of the broadcast output. This reflects the significant role

that Sports Extra has in the BBC’s cricket coverage – the station simultaneously broadcasts *Test Match Special* along with Radio 4 long wave. After cricket, additional coverage varies from major sports such as football and tennis to less mainstream sports such as cycling and the NFL. This is shown in Figure 16.

**Figure 16: Sport output on 5 live Sports Extra**

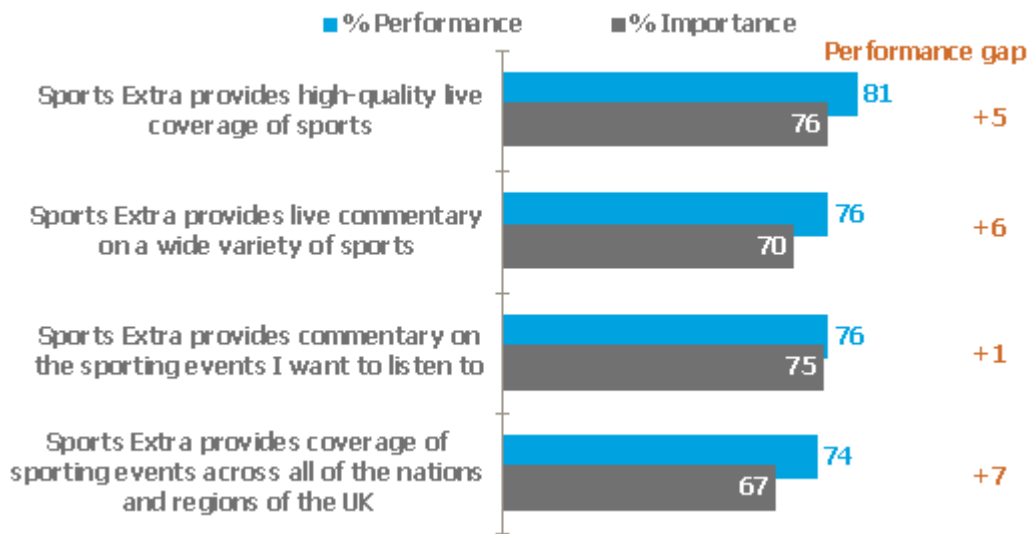


Source: BBC management Data 2010-11

**Sports Extra is valued by those who listen, and it performs well against the priorities in its service licence**

137 Audiences who are aware of and listen to Sports Extra value the additional sports coverage that it provides. They support the existence and remit of Sports Extra and feel that it provides high-quality coverage. While they do not rate the importance of the purpose priorities for Sports Extra as highly as for 5 live, they generally feel that Sports Extra is performing well against its commitments. This is demonstrated by the positive performance gaps as illustrated in Figure 17.

**Figure 17: Performance and importance scores for sports-related priorities**



Source: BBC Trust Audience Research – All adults aged 15+ who have listened to Sports Extra in the last 6 months (494)

138 The vast majority of Sports Extra listeners are also listeners to 5 live. Our qualitative research found that listeners view Sports Extra principally as a complement to 5 live, rather than necessarily an explicit home for minority interest sports. However, the very small proportion of respondents that listens to niche sports on the station definitely value the opportunity to hear additional live coverage of these sports.

**Some questions have been raised over the remit for Sports Extra during this review**

- 139 Despite a positive perception of the station’s offer amongst its listeners, we also found that audiences can be confused about Sports Extra due to the irregular and part-time nature of the scheduling.
- 140 Despite this, we believe that Sports Extra plays an important role in the BBC’s sports portfolio in providing a complementary service to 5 live, which is evidenced by the strong overlap of listening between the two stations. We believe that the station is performing well against the terms of its service licence by bringing a greater choice of live action to sports fans.
- 141 UTV has discussed with the Trust the issue of sports rights and their use on Sports Extra. UTV feels that if the BBC has acquired sports rights with a view to exploitation by Sports Extra rather than 5 live or Radio 4 LW, it implies that their acquisition has been made at odds with its formal service licence remit.
- 142 BBC management has told us it is occasionally able to offer non-exclusive additional coverage of events on Sports Extra with no or minimal payment of a rights fee. However, BBC management has assured us that no sports rights packages have been acquired that have only been broadcast on Sports Extra. We have confirmed with BBC management that, under the existing terms of Sports Extra’s approval, sports rights should only be obtained for 5 live or other BBC stations, and coverage provided on Sports Extra must only be overspill.

- 143 We have also heard some concerns from stakeholders about the BBC management's temporary use of DAB spectrum to broadcast coverage of events such as the Wimbledon tennis championships. These temporary arrangements have occurred on a small number of occasions when BBC radio outlets were covering a number of simultaneous sports events. We stated in our service licence review of Radio 3, Radio 4 and Radio 7, published in February 2010, that this raises questions about the BBC's use of sports rights across its radio portfolio, and we would consider the issue in this review<sup>34</sup>.
- 144 We believe that the BBC should always provide clarity to the market and licence fee payers over the number and scope of the services it operates and that temporary services should not be established without a transparent process in the future, such as that we have run for the forthcoming temporary Olympics DAB service, due to be in operation in July and August 2012, on which we consulted publicly<sup>35</sup>.

### **BBC management has considered extending the remit of Sports Extra to provide a more predictable schedule**

- 145 During the course of this review, BBC management has discussed with the Trust the idea of extending the service licence remit of 5 live Sports Extra in order to accommodate some regular daily made up repeats from 5 live and other BBC stations.
- 146 We support the strategy of making better use of content that has already been made, and agree that there could one day be a role for Sports Extra as another outlet for sports of minority interest. However, this would be a change to its current remit, and given the current savings being made across the BBC as part of the DQF strategy, we do not feel it is the right time to take this suggestion further.

### **5 live's news programming generally reflects the UK's nations, regions and communities well**

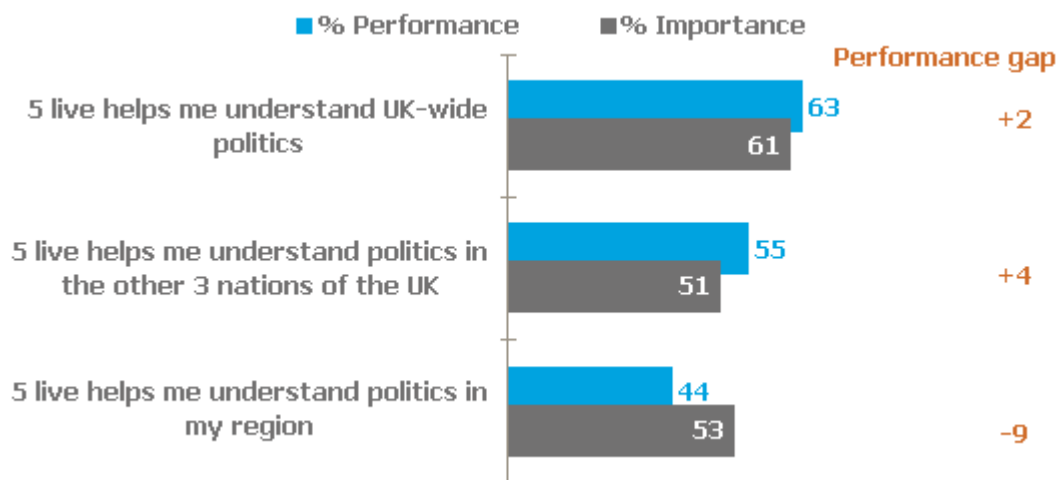
- 147 In addition to its sports programming, 5 live has an important responsibility to reflect the nations, regions and communities of the UK through its news programmes. It has a particular duty in relation to national, regional and local politics.
- 148 Our research found that, in comparison to the priorities relating to the provision of high-quality news and sport, audiences do not feel that these are as important. Figure 18 shows the performance and importance scores for the priorities relating to coverage of news and politics in the nations and regions of the UK. While the performance scores are generally lower for these priorities than others on 5 live, they are broadly in line with the expectations.

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<sup>34</sup>[http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/regulatory\\_framework/service\\_licences/service\\_reviews/radio\\_347/radio\\_347\\_final.pdf](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/regulatory_framework/service_licences/service_reviews/radio_347/radio_347_final.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> [http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/consult/previous/five\\_live\\_olympics.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/consult/previous/five_live_olympics.shtml)

**Figure 18: Performance and importance scores for nations-related and regions-related priorities**



Source: BBC Trust Audience Research – All adults aged 15+ who have listened to 5 live in the last month (601)

- 149 There is, however, a performance gap for the priority *5 live helps me understand politics in my region*. This was examined further in our qualitative research, as was the more general impression of 5 live across the UK’s nations and regions. In this regard, audiences across the country feel that 5 live has a mixed performance in representing the whole of the UK. However, most of the audience describe listening to other BBC and commercial national or local services as a complement to 5 live, and therefore are not really relying on 5 live to provide them with truly local information. They do not expect 5 live to do this, hence the lower importance scores in our quantitative research.
- 150 Our Audience Councils broadly corroborate this view. There was some suggestion that 5 live may appear to focus on London, and not cover news and sports across the breadth of the UK as well as it could. However, they also echo the sentiment that the BBC operates a broad portfolio of services that are intended to work together to serve all their audiences.
- 151 While we will always urge 5 live to ensure that it reflects the whole of the UK’s nations, regions and communities in its news and sports programming, we feel that the station is performing relatively well in this area. The accessible tone that 5 live has developed, along with the strong appeal in listening across many demographic groups, are good indications of a strong performance in this area.

**We believe that the move to Salford presents a good opportunity for 5 live to continue to serve audiences across the UK**

- 152 5 live has now completed its move from London to Salford, along with other BBC services such as children’s and sport. While audiences may not notice an immediate difference in what the station provides as a result of this move, BBC management outlines the importance of this in its strategic priorities for 5 live. It intends to:

*Take advantage of the move to Salford to connect more with audiences beyond the south of England and provide a different tone and range of voice to the London-based stations, whilst continuing to serve the whole of the UK.*

We support this ambition, and believe that the move to Salford will present 5 live with an opportunity to develop its provision for all audiences across the UK while continuing to be

an integral part of the BBC radio portfolio and remaining aligned with the values of other BBC news outlets.

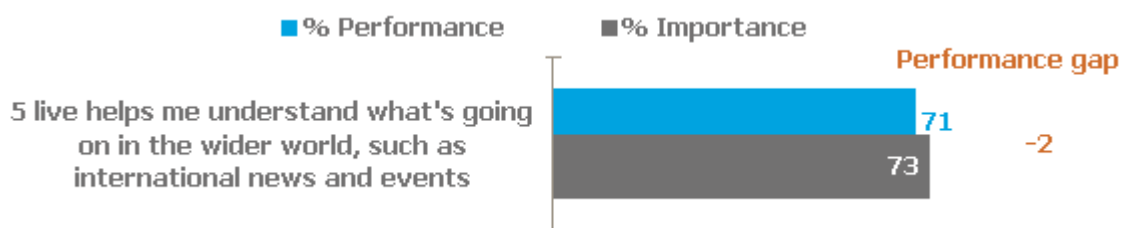
- 153 The DQF strategy will require 5 live to work more closely with other parts of BBC News, particularly BBC Local Radio and Newsgathering. While we do not believe that these changes should have a direct impact on what audiences hear on 5 live, we are mindful that the station should preserve the ability to report from the breadth of the UK, making the most of its links with BBC Local Radio to do so.

## Bringing the UK to the World and the World to the UK

### International coverage is considered to be a positive part of 5 live's news and sports programming

- 154 The audience views international news coverage as a positive aspect of the station's output. Most respondents in our public consultation say that it offers in-depth and quality coverage of a range of world issues and events, although some would like more coverage.
- 155 Our public consultation also considered 5 live's coverage of international and European politics. Respondents on the whole feel there is good coverage of these topics, particularly of politics in the USA. A minority comment that there could be more coverage of wider international and European political issues, as the emphasis tends to be on the UK and the USA. Balancing international coverage is an ongoing consideration for BBC News.
- 156 Further to these comments, our audience research shows that expectations are largely being met in regard to this purpose: 73 per cent of respondents agree that it is important that *5 live helps me understand what's going on in the wider world, such as international news and events*; and 71 per cent agree that 5 live performs well against this statement as shown in Figure 19.

**Figure 19: Performance and importance scores for global priorities**



Source: BBC Trust Audience Research – All adults aged 15+ who have listened to 5 live in the last month (601)

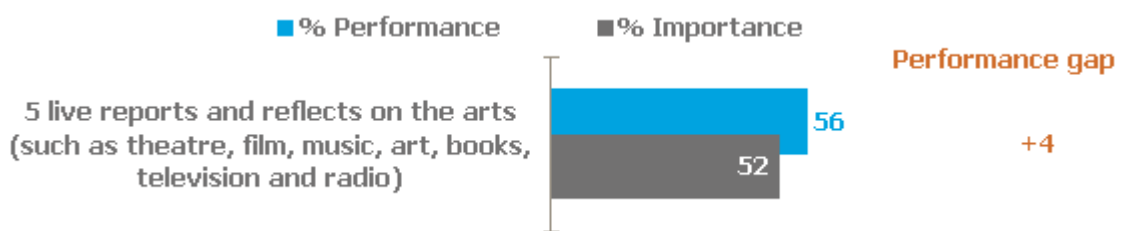
## Stimulating Creativity and Cultural Excellence

### The service licence sets out how 5 live can make a moderate contribution to this purpose

- 157 5 live's service licence states that 5 live can make a contribution to the creativity purpose through *reflecting significant developments in the arts, and by reporting and reflecting on the theatre, film, music, art, books, television and radio*.

- 158 The most obvious example of how the station achieves this is through the weekly *Kermode and Mayo's Film Review*. This is a popular and highly appreciated programme – it attracts around 600,000 listeners<sup>36</sup> and has an AI score of 79<sup>37</sup>. 5 live makes a further contribution to this purpose in some other daytime news programmes.
- 159 The audience does not feel that this is one of the most important roles for 5 live: only 52 per cent of the audience say that it is important that 5 live reports on the arts, although 56 per cent of the audience agree that it performs well in this respect.

**Figure 20: Performance and importance scores for creativity priorities**



Source: BBC Trust Audience Research – All adults aged 15+ who have listened to 5 live in the last month (601)

- 160 In our qualitative research, audiences say that this output can be enjoyable and that it plays an important part in providing variety in the 5 live schedule.
- 161 We believe that where 5 live can use its journalistic skill and resource to cover the arts to a high standard, this brings value to the audience. In line with 5 live's remit, it should always be topical, high-quality and distinctive from what is available on other BBC stations.

### 5 live and Sports Extra help the BBC meet its quota for independent productions

- 162 5 live and Sports Extra are required to contribute to the BBC's commitment to commission at least 10 per cent of eligible hours from independent producers and to make a further 10 per cent of eligible hours available to independents in a Window of Creative Competition.
- 163 Independent production companies now produce some of 5 live's most prominent programmes, such as the *606* football phone-in and *Fighting Talk*. In 2010-11, 5 live and Sports Extra commissioned 17 per cent of eligible hours from independent producers. This is the second highest proportion behind Radio 2 and a positive outcome.

<sup>36</sup> Source: RAJAR 2010-11

<sup>37</sup> Source: BBC Pulse Survey 2010-11

## Promoting Education and Learning

### 5 live contributes to this purpose through in-depth analysis, documentaries and specials on a wide range of subjects

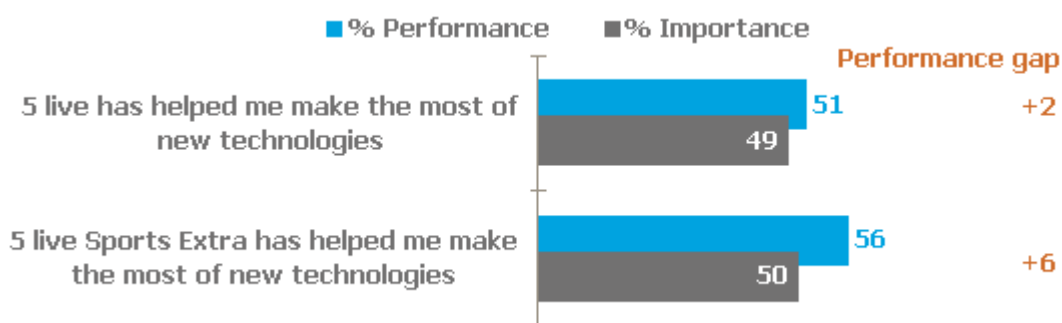
- 164 Evidence from our quantitative audience research suggests that the station is performing well in this respect: while 70 per cent believe that it is important that *I have learned new things while listening to programmes on 5 live*, 73 per cent agree that it performs well against this statement.
- 165 5 live also plays a role in the BBC’s learning and social action campaigns, such as *Sport Relief* and the BBC’s digital literacy campaign.

## Emerging Communications

### 5 live and Sports Extra are meeting audience expectations for this purpose

- 166 As Figure 21 shows, around half of the 5 live and Sports Extra audience believe that it is important that these services help them make the most of new technologies such as DAB. This indicates that audiences do not believe these priorities are particularly important. In addition, the audience expectations are being met, as both services perform well against these priorities. Sports Extra is seen to perform well in this regard, which suggests that it has played a role in encouraging people to use digital or DAB radio.

**Figure 21: Performance and importance scores for emerging communication priorities**



Source: BBC Trust Audience Research – All adults aged 15+ who have listened to 5 live in the last month (601), All adults aged 15+ who have listened to 5 live Sports Extra in the last 6 months (494)<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> N.B. These priority statements also relate to citizenship purpose of promoting digital media literacy.

### **Across all of the BBC network radio stations, 5 live has the highest proportion of digital listening and should seek to develop this further**

- 167 Some 39 per cent of listening to 5 live is on a digital platform, with the majority of this on DAB radio<sup>39</sup>. This is the highest proportion of all the BBC network radio stations. BBC management's submission to the review states that the inconsistent availability of 5 live's medium wave frequency, as well as the possibility that medium wave will become unsustainable in the long term, has made migrating audiences from medium wave to digital a high priority for the station.
- 168 We have heard from some audiences that the quality of reception of 5 live is an issue. Some respondents in our public consultation mention reception and ways of accessing the service as issues, and this was also raised in responses from each of our Audience Councils. We believe it is right that 5 live works to promote digital radio.
- 169 Podcast listening is a part of the 5 live offering. In the first quarter of 2011 there were just fewer than 1.6 million podcast downloads per month<sup>40</sup>. This was the second highest of the BBC's network radio stations, behind Radio 4. The *Kermode and Mayo's Film Review* is consistently among the BBC's most downloaded podcasts each month. On demand listening on 5 live is, however, the lowest of the five BBC network stations, reflecting the topical nature of the station's output.

### **As a digital only station, Sports Extra has a role to play in the BBC's overall digital radio offering**

- 170 Sports Extra attracts an audience of around 691,000 weekly listeners<sup>41</sup> and plays an important role in building awareness and usage of digital radio. In fact, the majority of the Sports Extra audience do not listen to any of the BBC's other digital stations – the station contributes 566,000 listeners who would otherwise not hear any BBC digital radio<sup>42</sup>.
- 171 Our audience research suggests reasons why some audiences who listen to 5 live do not listen to Sports Extra. Accessibility, rather than the content offer, is generally the biggest driving factor; 34 per cent of respondents state the reason they do not listen to Sports Extra is because they *did not have access to digital radio*<sup>43</sup>.
- 172 Some organisations suggest that the BBC should promote more of its popular content on a digital-only platform, and 5 live and Sports Extra can play an important role in this. While we are supportive of digital radio, we do not currently believe this is the best way to serve audiences, as a large proportion does not have access to the DAB platform. We feel that moving the most popular content onto digital only platforms would reduce value to audiences. However, as digital radio listening continues to grow, this approach should be monitored.

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<sup>39</sup> Source: RAJAR Q1 2011

<sup>40</sup> Source: BBC Server Logs

<sup>41</sup> Source: RAJAR 2010-11

<sup>42</sup> Source: RAJAR 2010-11

<sup>43</sup> Source: BBC Trust Audience Research – All adults aged 15+ who have listened to 5 live in the last month but not Sports Extra in the last 6 months (193)

### 5 live no longer hosts an online message board

- 173 The 5 live service licence states that the station should *host online communities for listeners to debate areas of interest*. One of the ways in which 5 live has previously fulfilled this requirement is by hosting an online message board. However, due to low audience usage and a reprioritisation of the BBC's Online budget following the BBC's *Putting Quality First* strategy in 2010, most network radio stations no longer host message boards.
- 174 We think that it remains important for the station to offer the opportunity for listeners to debate areas of interest. However, we believe that there are more effective and modern ways for the station to do this than through message boards. The station now provides *5 live Connect*, an online aggregator of audience contributions to the station by text, Facebook, Twitter, email and phone. Although this service is live only from 9am to 10am during *Your Call* and other specially selected programming, it enables further audience interaction and contributes to this aspect of the station's offer.
- 175 The station engages well with audiences through social media: over 70,000 people follow the station on Twitter, and the station makes use of social networking sites and online blogs written by staff members and closely linked to 5 live's editorial projects and priorities.
- 176 Our public consultation found that the majority of respondents feel that audience participation is an integral part of the station's output, and that 5 live provides a variety of methods for listeners to communicate with the station. Our audience research also found that the station is meeting the audience's needs in this area. The high level of interactivity is a positive feature for most listeners.
- 177 Based on the activity undertaken by the station and the current audience satisfaction with the levels of interaction available, we believe the station's requirement for providing listeners with the opportunity to debate areas of interest can be fulfilled without the need for message boards. We will therefore amend the service licence of 5 live to reflect the closure of these online message boards.

#### **Action 5: We will amend the 5 live service licence to remove the example of hosting online communities**

In order to reflect the changing nature of technology and the different ways in which audiences interact with the station, we will amend 5 live's service licence to remove mention of hosting online communities.

*This amendment will be implemented immediately*

### **BBC management would like to develop its permanent online archive to include 5 live content**

- 178 In 2010 we approved BBC management's proposals for the development of 'permanent collections' of archive content for Radio 3, Radio 4 and BBC Four.

- 179 As part of this review, BBC management has proposed to amend 5 live's service licence in order to offer content on-demand for an unlimited period after initial broadcast, as part of a 'permanent collection' of a small portion of 5 live material.
- 180 In principle we support BBC management's ambition to expand this archive collection, and we recognise the value for audiences in providing access to archive content, which can aid the delivery of the BBC's public purposes. We have, however, asked BBC management to develop this strategy across BBC services rather than consider them on an individual service by service basis.

## Value for Money

### **5 live has a relatively high budget, while Sports Extra's is the smallest of any BBC radio station**

- 181 5 live's current service licence budget is £58.4 million. This is the second highest of the BBC network radio stations, behind Radio 4. When additional expenditure such as overheads and distribution are included, the total cost of 5 live rises significantly. In 2010-11 the total cost of 5 live was around £73 million.
- 182 We monitor annual expenditure against the service licence budget and any over- or under-spend of more than 10 per cent requires the Trust's approval. As Table 2 shows, 5 live has stayed within the limit set by its service licence over the last three years.
- 183 Sports Extra has a service licence budget of £2.6 million and this has changed very little over recent years. Given its role as a live sports overflow service, all of its direct content costs are related to sports production costs, which accounted for £2.5 million in 2010-11. In addition, Sports Extra makes a contribution to the BBC's distribution and infrastructure costs of the BBC. When all this expenditure is taken into account, the total cost of Sports Extra in 2010-11 was £4.9m.

**Table 2: 5 live expenditure against service licence budget 2008-09 to 2010-11**

	2008-09 (£000s)	2009-10 (£000s)	2010-11 (£000s)
<b><i>Service licence budget</i></b>	<b>54,000</b>	<b>54,000</b>	<b>58,400</b>
<b>Direct programme making expenditure (i)</b>			
News & Current Affairs Programming (ii)	14,860	14,323	14,478
Sports Programming	11,266	9,531	11,665
Other production costs (iii)	6,135	6,225	6,513
<b>...sub total</b>	<b>32,261</b>	<b>30,080</b>	<b>32,655</b>
<b>Centrally allocated programme related expenditure (iv)</b>			
Centrally allocated Newsgathering	5,112	5,031	6,207
Sports rights	15,800	16,381	12,850
Centrally allocated overheads (v)	3,310	3,542	3,778
<b>...sub total</b>	<b>24,222</b>	<b>24,954</b>	<b>22,836</b>
<b>Total content expenditure (vi)</b>	<b>56,483</b>	<b>55,034</b>	<b>55,491</b>
Distribution (vii)	5,700	6,500	6,200
Infrastructure / support (viii)	10,300	11,200	11,300
<b>Total</b>	<b>72,483</b>	<b>72,734</b>	<b>72,991</b>

Source: BBC annual reports and management controls

(i) expenditure controlled by the 5 live management team

(ii) this includes directly allocated newsgathering costs

(iii) this includes commissioning and scheduling, local overheads, artists and contributors, other staff costs, other production costs, and other commissioned programming outside of news and sport

(iv) programme related expenditure not controlled by the 5 live management team

(v) this includes both 5 live's share of central overheads, and share of unrecovered overheads

(vi) this expenditure is monitored against the service licence budget

(vii) 5 live's share of broadcast transmission costs

(viii) 5 live's share of non programme-related specific overheads such as property, technology, finance etc.

### **Most of the 5 live budget is spent on news and sports programming**

184 Table 2 shows the breakdown of 5 live's service licence expenditure in terms of news, sport and other costs. In total, news and sport represent around 81 per cent of 5 live's content expenditure (this is split between spend directly controlled by the 5 live management team, and that which is centrally allocated by BBC management). Of the remaining 19 per cent the majority is spent on overheads, commissioning and scheduling, artists and contributors, and other staff costs. Only a fractional amount is allocated to non-news or non-sports programming genres.

185 5 live's spending on sports output accounts for around 44 per cent of the content expenditure total. Just under half of this is spent on sports programming, including 5 live's team of presenters and correspondents who cover a range of sports, including substantial

live coverage. We recognise that high-quality sports programming can be expensive and we acknowledge that audiences appreciate this high-quality content.

- 186 Sports rights represent nearly a quarter of 5 live's content spend. The majority of this expenditure is spent on the most popular sports, including football, cricket, Formula One, tennis, rugby union and golf. The most recent Premier League football deal accounts for most of the large reduction in sports rights spending on 5 live, from £16.4m in 2009-10 to £12.9m in 2010-11.
- 187 BBC management has concerns about an increasingly competitive sports rights market, along with the downward pressure of the budgets of all BBC services following the *Delivering Quality First* process. They feel that, were they to lose further significant sports rights this would damage 5 live's capacity to maintain its levels of listening and audience reach. We understand these concerns; however, we feel that the station has sufficient funding to continue to acquire the necessary range of sports to meet its public service commitments.
- 188 While we recognise that sports rights are often sold on an exclusive basis, we encourage BBC management to look for savings in this area, which may include rights sharing and forming non-exclusive deals where possible.
- 189 Given that spending on sports rights and programming on 5 live was slightly higher than spending on news in 2010-11, and that sport accounts for only 25 per cent of the station's output, we have agreed with 5 live management that there should be a shift in the balance of spending towards news in the future, arising from the *Delivering Quality First* savings and other budget changes. We believe that this should be possible without damaging audience appreciation of 5 live's sports output.

### Given its large budget, the cost per listener hour of 5 live and Sports Extra is relatively high

- 190 In 2010-11, the cost per listener hour for 5 live was 2.1 pence. This has fallen slightly over recent years (from 2.3 pence) as the levels of listening to 5 live have steadily risen. However, as shown by Table 3, 5 live's cost per listener hour is still higher than all other network radio stations, except for Radio 3. This is shown also by 5 live's cost per hour of output, which is lower than Radio 4's but higher than the BBC's music networks.

**Table 3: Cost per hour and per listener hour for BBC network radio stations in 2010-11**

	Cost per hour (pounds)	Cost per listener hour (pence)
Radio 1	1,823	0.7
Radio 2	2,953	0.5
Radio 3	3,840	5.9
Radio 4	9,025	1.4
<b>Radio 5 live</b>	<b>5,588</b>	<b>2.1</b>
<b>Radio 5 live Sports Extra</b>	<b>1,199</b>	<b>2.6</b>

Source: BBC management

- 191 Results of our audience research indicate that the vast majority of 5 live and Sports Extra listeners believe that these services represent good value for money: some 88 per cent of

the 5 live audience and 89 per cent of the Sports Extra audience believe that these services represent either very good or fairly good value<sup>44</sup>.

### **We encourage BBC management to explore opportunities for 5 live and Sports Extra to benchmark their costs**

- 192 During the course of the review we have heard from some stakeholders who believe 5 live should undergo an exercise of benchmarking its costs. UTV believes there would be value in conducting a benchmarking exercise between 5 live and talkSPORT, while RadioCentre thinks the BBC should undergo an efficiency review of talk radio, similar to the review conducted by John Myers on the efficiency of Radio 1, Radio 2, 1Xtra and 6 Music<sup>45</sup>.
- 193 We understand the value of benchmarking exercises and agree that it is important for the BBC to demonstrate its value for money. Therefore we will ask management to continue its work to benchmark the costs of its radio services, either internally or externally.

### **5 live will make both productivity and scope savings as part of the BBC's *Delivering Quality First* strategy**

- 194 Over the last four years, both 5 live and Sports Extra have been part of the BBC's continuous improvement process and have contributed to the BBC's target of making around 3 per cent efficiencies each year. The licence fee settlement agreed in 2010 is equivalent to a minimum reduction in funding of 16 per cent by 2016-17. BBC management has made a range of proposals setting out how it will deliver the strategy the Trust has set for the BBC within the terms of this settlement.
- 195 These proposals include productivity (ways in which the BBC works) and scope (changes directly relating to BBC services and content) savings outlined for 5 live and Sports Extra. The scope savings are approximately 6 per cent to 7 per cent of the 5 live and Sports Extra content spend and will involve the following:
- reducing the costs of overnight programming
  - maintaining the volume of sport output at current levels, although reducing the cost of sports presentation by measures that include using smaller teams at many events
  - reducing Radio 5 live's team of regional journalists in England, and working more closely with other parts of BBC News, particularly BBC Local Radio and Newsgathering
  - focusing business programming on the key times of early morning/breakfast and afternoons
  - ending some Sunday programmes, including comedy in the morning and some current affairs programmes in the early evening.

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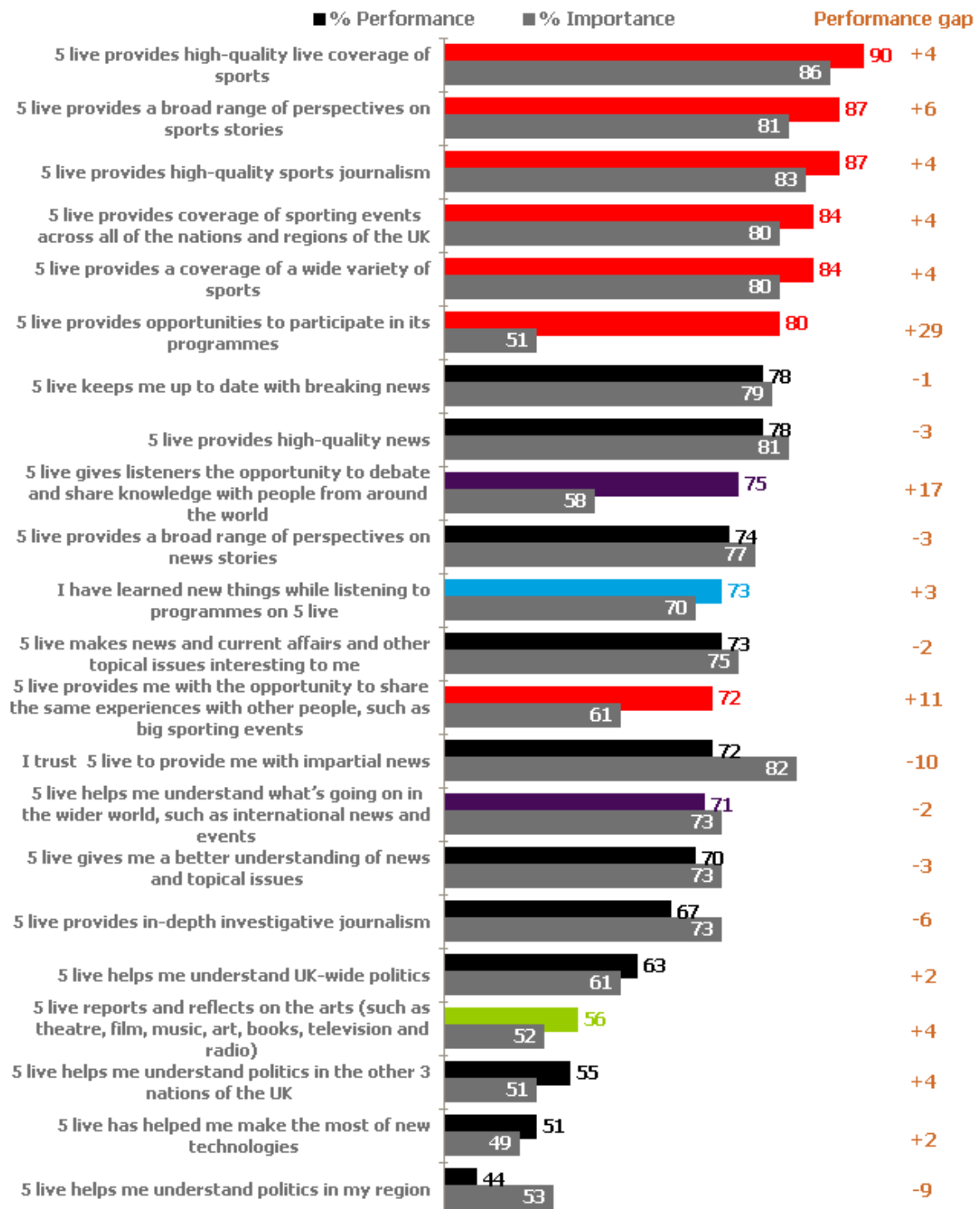
<sup>44</sup> Source: BBC Trust Audience Research – All adults aged 15+ who have listened to 5 live in the last month (601), and all adults aged 15+ who have listened to 5 live Sports Extra in the last 6 months (494)

<sup>45</sup> Source: John Myers, 'Synergies within BBC Radio 1, Radio 2, 1Xtra and 6 Music', May 2011

- 196 The Trust consulted publicly on these proposed cuts as part of the BBC's wider *Delivering Quality First* proposals, and is currently assessing whether the proposals match the high level strategy we have set. The Trust will publish its final conclusions on these proposals in spring 2012. However, we have used this service licence review to reach conclusions on the proposals affecting the output on 5 live and Sports Extra, as their future strategies have been considered as part of this work and do not have financially substantive implications for the BBC as a whole.
- 197 We are broadly content that the proposed changes fit with the strategy we have set for the BBC, and are an appropriate way to make the savings required for the services. The exception to this is the dedicated current affairs output, which we have asked to be retained (see paragraphs 108 to 109).

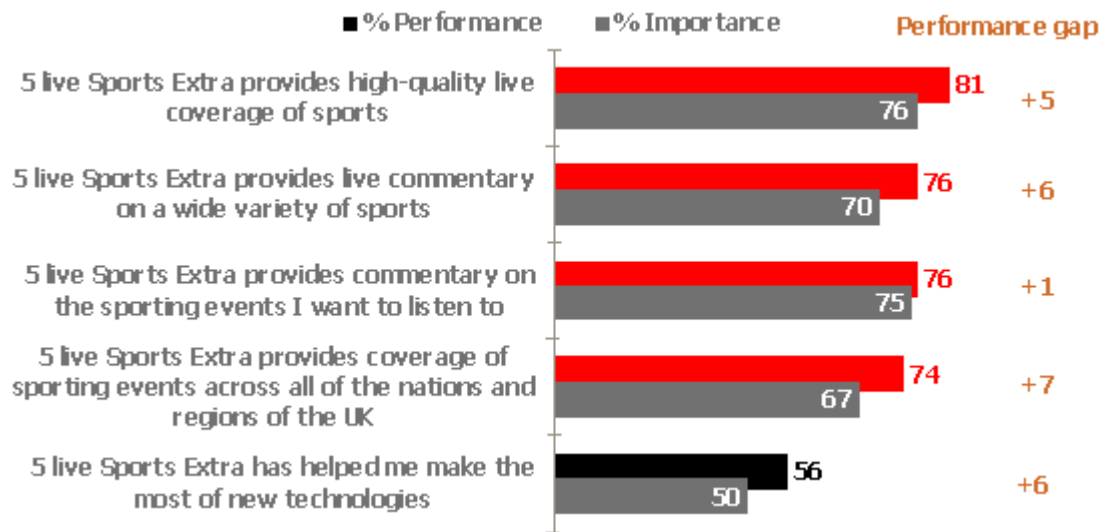
## Annexes

### 1. Performance and importance scores from quantitative audience research



Note the colours on this chart relate to the public purpose which the statements apply to.  
 KEY: CITIZENSHIP, NATIONS, REGIONS & COMMUNITIES, CREATIVITY, EDUCATION, GLOBAL

Base: All adults aged 15+ who have listened to BBC Radio 5 live in the last month (601)



Note the colours on this chart relate to the public purposes which the statements apply to.  
 KEY: CITIZENSHIP, **NATIONS, REGIONS & COMMUNITIES**

Base: All adults aged 15+ who have listened to BBC Radio 5 live Sports Extra in the last six months (454)

## 2. Summary of service licence amendments

This annex sets out the sections of the 5 live service licence that we have amended as a result of this report

### Radio 5 live

Current service licence	Amendment	Paragraph reference
<p>1. Remit*</p> <p>The remit of BBC Radio Five Live is to be BBC Radio's home of continuous news and live sports coverage. It should aim to bring its audience major news stories and sports events as they happen, and provide context through wide-ranging analysis and discussion.</p>	<p>The remit of BBC Radio 5 live is to <u>provide live news and sports coverage</u>. It should be <u>BBC Radio's main outlet for breaking news by bringing its audience major news stories as they happen</u>. It should <u>provide context to its news and sports coverage through wide-ranging analysis and discussion</u>.</p>	64 to 68
<p>4. Overview of aims and objectives*</p> <p>Much of BBC Radio Five Live should be broadcast live and <u>its schedule should be flexible enough to allow the station to respond to events as they happen</u>.</p>	<p>Much of BBC Radio 5 live should be broadcast live and <u>the station should respond to events as they happen</u>.</p>	64 to 68
<p>4. Overview of aims and objectives*</p> <p>It should seek to blend its news and sports programming in ways that <u>help to draw a younger and more diverse audience to BBC's news coverage than other parts of the BBC</u>.</p>	<p>It should seek to blend its news and sports programming in ways that <u>help to draw in a broad range of listeners</u></p>	38 to 39
<p>4. Overview of aims and objectives*</p> <p>It should offer commentary on major sports events and provide news and other programming on a broad range of sports <u>from around the world, including minority sports from time to time</u>.</p>	<p>It should offer commentary on major sports events and provide news and other programming on a broad range of sports, <u>including those of minority interest in regular programming</u>.</p>	127 to 134
<p>4. Overview of aims and objectives*</p> <p>Broadcast programming should be enhanced online, including the use of some visual enhancements, and <u>BBC Radio Five Live</u></p>	<p>Broadcast programming should be enhanced online, including the use of some visual enhancements, and <u>BBC Radio 5 live should</u></p>	173 to 177

<p><u>should host online communities for listeners to debate areas of interest.</u></p>	<p><u>use its website to present and enhance debate in areas of interest amongst listeners.</u></p>	
<p>5.1. Sustaining citizenship and civil society</p> <p>Around three quarters of its output across the year should be dedicated to news programming, <u>including the weekday peak hours at breakfast and drivetime</u></p> <p>(Service Licence Condition)</p> <p>BBC Radio Five Live should ensure that: News represents around three-quarters of output each year</p>	<p>Around three quarters of its output across the year should be dedicated to news programming <u>and current affairs. The weekday peak hours at breakfast and evening drivetime should comprise high-quality news programming covering the main news agenda of the day.</u></p> <p><u>In addition to the regular bulletins and reporting, 5 live can approach news through other formats such as topical debates and discussion, with contributions from journalists, presenters, guests and listeners. News programming can feature a broad range of subject matter that is of concern, relevance or interest to the 5 live audience. Discussion and other feature items should have a clear news or topical impetus. There will also be times when 5 live will set, rather than follow, the news agenda through its original approach. All 5 live news programmes should clearly reflect the BBC's mission to provide the best journalism in the world.</u></p> <p>(Service Licence Condition)</p> <p>BBC Radio 5 live should ensure that: News <u>and current affairs programming</u> represents around three-quarters of output each year</p> <p><u>Footnote to condition: This will be monitored on a programme by programme basis.</u></p>	<p>96 to 102</p> <p>96 to 102</p>
<p>5.1. Sustaining citizenship and civil society</p> <p>The service should <u>host online communities where</u> participants can discuss the news and set their own agenda</p>	<p>The service should <u>use its website to enable</u> participants to discuss the news and set their own agenda</p>	<p>173 to 177</p>
<p>5.2. Reflecting the UK's nations,</p>		

<p>regions and communities</p> <p>(Added)</p>	<p><u>BBC Radio 5 live should offer live commentary, as well as news and other programming, on at least 20 sports from around the world across the year. Coverage should be a mixture of one-off events and regular programming. Sports output – including in peak listening hours – should aim to cover a wide range of sports, including those of minority interest.</u></p>	<p>127 to 134</p>
<p>5.3 Bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK</p> <p>The BBC Radio Five Live audience should be given the opportunity to debate and share knowledge with people from around the world – for example through phone-ins, simulcasts, live link-ups with outside broadcasts <u>and through its online communities</u></p>	<p>The BBC Radio 5 live audience should be given the opportunity to debate and share knowledge with people from around the world – for example through phone-ins, simulcasts <u>and live link-ups</u> with outside broadcasts.</p>	<p>173 to 177</p>

\*These are changes to part 1 of the service licence (key characteristics). However, these are changes to clarify the station's commitments and do not reflect any change to the service itself. For this reason we do not assess the significance of these changes.