

*Championing  
excellence and diversity  
in broadcasting*



Founded in 1983 by Jocelyn Hay CBE

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## **VLV RESPONSE BBC PUBLIC INTEREST CONSULTATION: RADIO 5 SPORTS EXTRA**

**April 2024**

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE VLV**

The Voice of the Listener & Viewer (VLV) is an independent, not for profit membership-based charity, free from political and sectarian affiliations. VLV supports high quality broadcasting which maintains the democratic and cultural traditions of the UK. We support the independence and integrity of the BBC and encourage work which demonstrates commitment to the principles of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB). VLV is a charitable company limited by guarantee (registered in England and Wales No 4407712 - Charity No 1152136).

## **INTRODUCTION**

VLV works to represent citizens' interests in broadcasting. In making this submission it is primarily concerned with the impact which the proposed changes will have on listeners and what is in citizens' best interests. We welcome this opportunity to comment on the public value of the proposal being put forward by the BBC to extend the broadcast hours of Radio 5 Sports Extra on DAB.

VLV understands that the proposal is to increase the output of the existing Radio 5 Sports Extra station from an average of 56 hours per week of live sports coverage to 115 hours per week. The extended service will still focus on live sport, but will also provide non-live commentary replays and non-live sports-related content when live sporting events are not being covered.

**Question 1: What do you think about the potential public value of our proposals for extending the number of originated hours for 5 Sports Extra, including the extent to which our proposal contributes to the BBC's mission to serve all audience through the provision of high quality and distinctive output and services which informs, educates and entertains?**

VLV welcomes the proposal to extend the hours of 5 Sports Extra.

VLV considers that having a full-time station on the DAB platform will provide listeners with a more consistent service and a wider range of content on a live radio station. We believe this will increase the public value of BBC services.

We note that much of the new non-live content will already be available on BBC Sounds, but may not be heard by those who listen to live radio. This will make better use of content which has already been produced by the BBC and provide greater value for money to licence fee payers.

VLV notes that these proposals are cost effective since all distribution and operational costs are already covered by existing budgets.

**Question 2: What do you think about the benefit to audiences who will listen to the station, as well as wider potential social and cultural impacts?**

The potential benefits to audiences include the following:

- Improved value for money by reutilising content already produced but only available on BBC Sounds.
- Better representation and provision of sports content from the nations and regions.
- Increasing the range of sports represented on BBC linear audio services.
- Increasing provision for those who currently are underprovided for by BBC services<sup>1</sup>.

**Question 3: What impact (positive or negative) do you think our proposal for a full-time 5 Sports Extra might have on fair and effective competition on commercial radio stations providing sports content on radio?**

VLV considers that these proposals will potentially have a negative impact on the commercial radio stations talkSPORT and talkSPORT2. We do not believe that these proposals should have a negative impact on existing sports podcast since much of the non-live sports content the BBC will be broadcasting is already available on BBC Sounds.

VLV believes that currently there is a lack of plurality of supply of live sporting events and non-live sporting content on live audio stations in the UK, with News UK Broadcasting Ltd being the only other provider of sports content on live radio stations. In light of this, VLV considers that the potential negative impact on BBC competitors is justified by the need to ensure a better plurality of supply in this area for the benefit of citizens.

**Question 4: Are there any steps you think we could take to minimise any potential negative effects on fair and effective competition or to promote potential positive impacts?**

No.

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<sup>1</sup> Radio 5 Sports Extra: Public Interest Test consultation, BBC, 14 February 2024, paragraph 3.1