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Radio execs team up in licence bid

John Plunkett
Tuesday February 7, 2006

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Two former executives from Capital and Virgin Radio have joined forces to bid for a new radio licence in the south-west of England.

Former Capital group head of programmes Clive Dickens will bid for the Bristol FM licence with Jason Bryant, the former development director at Virgin Radio and the Wireless Group.

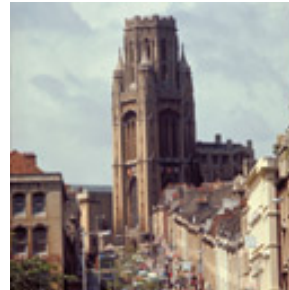
Mr Dickens is the programme and operations director of radio investment and consultancy group Absolute Radio International.

Mr Bryant now runs Town & Country, the lead shareholder in a group running six stations around the UK, including four in Wales.

Town & Country's most recent licence win was in Swansea in November last year.

"This is the first time we have worked together and we may well work on other stuff as well," said Mr Bryant.

"We have got some interesting thoughts on the format - the existing players in the Bristol market are all pretty mainstream," he said.



Bristol: Dickens and Bryant have found common ground in a bid for the south-west licence

"The BBC enjoys a mighty 63.5% share of all radio listening [in Bristol]. This vibrant city deserves better from its local commercial radio stations."

Mr Dickens said ARI would carry out a "full market consumer study to pinpoint the best new format for the market".

"Existing local commercial services achieve less than 30% of all listening in Bristol, with the BBC more dominant in the city than across similar markets in the UK," he said.

The Bristol licence, broadcasting on 106.5FM, will cover Bristol and the surrounding area, including Chipping Sodbury and Keynsham.

It is to be advertised by Ofcom next month and is expected to be awarded in the spring or early autumn.

Mr Bryant left Talk Radio in 2001 when it was still run by Kelvin MacKenzie.

He spent three years at Virgin Radio, where he will continue to work on a consultancy basis.

Mr Dickens left Capital six years ago and established ARI with former Capital and RTL executive Donnach O'Driscoll in 2001.

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