



# Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

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Julian Knight MP  
Chair, Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

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Dear Julian,

I am grateful for the invitation to give evidence to the Committee's Inquiry into the Sustainability of Local Journalism earlier this week, and for the opportunity to discuss the role that the Government has in helping to support local news providers in adapting to future challenges. I look forward to the Committee's recommendations in informing our work to help support and sustain local journalism in all its forms.

During the evidence session, we discussed the position of future legislation to regulate the prominence and discoverability of UK radio services on smart speakers. As you know, the challenges the radio industry is facing from global digital platforms were considered in some detail by the Digital Radio and Audio Review, which the Government established in March 2020 and which reported in October 2021.

As we said in the Broadcasting White Paper, implementing the Review's recommendations on smart speakers raises a number of complex technical issues in relation to the scope and implementation of the measures; the extent (albeit limited) of existing Ofcom powers in this area; the interaction with the new digital markets regime; and the need to understand how listener behaviour and digital audio markets themselves may evolve in the future. We made clear in the White Paper that we needed to make more progress on these issues before we could bring forward measures, but did acknowledge a need for legislation in this area.

The Government responded formally to the Digital Radio and Audio Review in April this year and the following month DCMS officials moved forward with work to develop legislative proposals in collaboration with the radio industry (including through the establishment of a bespoke technical working group). This work has made good progress through the summer, in particular in understanding the degree to which ex-ante measures to protect radio's long-term position are needed given the complex interplay between these measures and the new regulatory arrangements to be set out in the forthcoming legislation on digital markets. We have also worked closely with industry on two collaborative research projects. The first by MTM, looks at how users interact with devices and has just been completed (and we will publish this soon). The other, which will look at the value exchange between platforms and radio, is due to report by early next year.



As I mentioned to the Committee, the above work, coupled with the fact that the Media Bill has not yet been introduced in Parliament, opens up the opportunity to include radio measures in the Bill in due course. I would like to give you my assurance that work on this continues to be a priority for me and my officials, who will carry on working closely with the radio industry and Ofcom in developing these potential measures.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Julia Lopez MP  
**Minister of State**  
**Minister for Media, Data and Digital Infrastructure**