

Ken Livingstone to join LBC as presenter

Former Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, will be viewing the media world from the other side of the fence now he's joined London's LBC Radio as a presenter.

During a two-hour stint every weekend, Livingstone hosts conversations with guests and chat to callers live on air.

Livingstone admitted his biggest fear is being unable to keep listeners from falling asleep. "I have no idea how it will go, to be honest," he said before he started. He began by standing in for Jeni Barnett on her weekday afternoon show because "I need to learn the ropes before they let me loose on my own show."



He said he has no intentions of sitting on the fence. "The press can say nasty things and get away with it," he pointed out. "I will certainly be making my political affiliations clear. Why else would they get me on the show?" He says he thinks the BBC is too "risk-averse", stating that the organisation "didn't go near him" after he lost out to Boris Johnson in the London mayoral election. "The commercial sector came straight to me with offers of work, but where was the BBC? It's a very cautious place."

He also spoke out about the state of UK radio, saying he feels it "lacks diversity", with most of its "individual, niche broadcasters," lacking the healthy audience-figures they deserve.

Before going on air, the ex-Mayor is drew up a wish-list of guests, citing Robert Tuttle (who refused to pay the congestion charge), Alastair Campbell and Andrew Gilligan as people he'd love to interview. At the top-spot, though, is actress Keira Knightley, who Livingstone would love as his inaugural guest on the show. "You don't ask, you don't get," he said.

LCB - which stands for London's Biggest Conversation - is arguably running a risk by putting such a polarising figure on air. But he's sure to create debate, which is surely the purpose of big Conversation!

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