

BBC Charter Review Consultation
Department for Culture, Media and Sport
2-4 Cockspur Street
London SW1Y 5DH

Dear Sir

I submit the following answers to your questions regarding the BBC Charter Review.

1. What do you most value about the BBC. The BBC's independence and impartiality on news coverage but above all am keen to see the high standards one has long associated with this institution maintained; it should not be allowed to continue the dumbing down which has been encouraged by management and government over the last few years.
2. How should the BBC adapt to cope with changes in technology and culture. Whilst it must keep up with the pace of new technology there is no need for it to be a pioneer in new fields for it should keep in mind that most of the public are not interested in constantly updating their equipment.
3. What do you think of the television, radio and online services the BBC provides. The BBC provides many services, that is its overall function and strength and should be encouraged to continue. However the BBC should be mindful that it would be unwise to take on too many new commitments which might lead to curtailing established programmes through lack of finance.
4. Should the BBC run commercial services. I am not against the BBC running commercial services and should be encouraged to generate revenue wherever possible. I think there is great potential in this field which has so far not been exploited. However, I would be against interruption of programmes for advertisements, something I find extremely irritating on the current commercial channels.

5. How should we pay for the BBC. I see no reason to abolish the licence fee, though it might be reduced if the BBC was encouraged to expand funding itself.

6. Is the BBC organised in the most effective and efficient way. This is not an easy question to answer even by those in the broadcasting industry let alone an outsider, but one thing is true of all large organisations and that is there is no perfect solution other than being aware that when problems arise they are dealt with immediately and without causing great upheavals. For over 70 years the BBC has been the envy of the world and it would be a disaster to listen to those who advocate its removal or complete reorganisation through envy or jealousy.

7. How should the BBC be run. How should it be regulated.

I think we must accept that the current method of governing and regulating the BBC should be redesigned though I am against it coming under Ofcom. I would like to see the board of governors replaced by a board of directors drawn from a much wider cross section of society and to include at least two members of the general public. (How do you find such people? advertise and then test them on their knowledge and commitment to the welfare of the BBC).

8. How do we ensure that the BBC is properly accountable to the public and parliament. The BBC must take more account of the public, after ALL THOSE WHO PAY THE PIPER SHOULD CALL THE TUNE. Make the BBC accountable by a public annual general meeting with management and the governing body taking questions from the floor. Another innovation might be the board and management to be elected or dismissed by licence holders at such a meeting.

If this method were to be adopted there would be no need for the BBC to be answerable to parliament for no matter what politicians would have us believe they do have an insatiable desire to use the BBC for their own ends.

There is a point I would like to make not covered by the questions listed and that is that in future the Editor in Chief should not be the Director General but whoever is Head of News.

Yours sincerely


Janet Aldridge