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Department for Culture, Media and Sport	
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BBC Charter Review - KEY QUESTIONS To help people think about the BBC, we have drawn up a list of key questions. We want you to send us your responses to them. They are:
f What do you value most about the BBC? For example, is it the news, sports, arts or educational coverage? How well does it serve different nations, regions and communities throughout the United Kingdom? What subjects does it cover less well? I think that factual programmes Science and natural history are particularly good. Educational programmes are good and I believe that public broadcasting should focus on this area and not try to compete with commercial channels. The argument that all the talented people will go to commercial corporations doesn't stand up since the BBC is a world leader in this type of programme. I think the BBC as a public broadcaster should look at the gaps and excel in this niche market. Let everyone else churn out the reality TV and soaps. I enjoy comedy, some drama and ! some sport. I would have to say

that I no longer feel that current affairs and politics are handled well. The BBC doesn't hold a neutral position, it may manage this in simple political terms giving equal airtime to left and right and but it is not neutral on the wider political scale. It makes programmes from a particular viewpoint, which is getting increasingly narrower as more of the same types of people with the same type of ideas produce the same type of output. At times the BBC simply doesn't seem to understand some areas of life e.g. religious perspectives, Christians, Muslims and other groups. They try to filter all of life through their rationalist, humanist, critically analytical model and it doesn't work. News is handled particularly badly. The BBC mainstream news has followed a tabloid approach in the amount of time spent on an increasingly narrow agenda with a vast increase in speculation and opinion on air (justified by being from "experts"). They are attempting to create the news rather ! than report it. Radio4 and TV!

news are particularly bad at this. News coverage works from a sensationalist and negative viewpoint. Murder rape, other crime, sleaze, while important, should not be covered as much as they are. They create an unrealistic perception in the viewer that this sort of thing is happening more than it is. These events are rare. News should find interesting positive stories and the BBC could I believe take a less cynical view point and report on achievement and success far more than it does without becoming uncritical. The World Service does achieve this sort of news coverage to greater effect and I would commend this sort of clever, well researched, well presented reporting. The BBC and our citizens need more of a global perspective. f

How should the BBC adapt to cope with changes in technology and culture? For example, how should it take account of the rise in use of the Internet or digital television? Coping is surely the wrong word. Technology gives you fantas! tic opportunities. People should

pay a license fee. They should probably pay more than they do but the BBC should focus on public broadcasting which educates in the broadest sense. Produce programmes that inspire rather than degrade. Don't pander to the lowest common denominator. Let the public buy into that if they want through the available technology. f What do you think of the television, radio and online services the BBC provides? What changes, if any, would you like to see? Comprehensive. Local radio quality is a bit low. Perhaps organize local radio on a regional basis with community programmes at the local level. Have you considered TV made by interest groups with no particular media skills? The BBC could facilitate new programmes made by people with particular interests? The best of these could be screened nationally. Diversify your opinion and culture, find some people to balance the BBCs current perspective. f Should the BBC run commercial services? The BBC produces magazines like The ! Radio Times and DVDs of popul!

ar programmes like The Office. Its main commercial arm, BBC Worldwide, put £123m back into public services in 2002/03. Do you think the BBC should continue running commercial operations? DVDs CDs and such like would be fine. I would like to see more material like this from the BBC archives available in this format and also downloadable on-line for a realistic fee. f How should we pay for the BBC? Is the

licence fee the best method or can you suggest any alternative? Bigger license fee and don't worry about what commercial radio and TV thinks about it. We need a public broadcaster that is truly independent. Sadly it isn't politicians who are likely to compromise that independence it is the commercial sector and pandering to the perceived unimaginative and boring desires of the population at large. When you put good stuff in front of them they sit up and watch/listen. f Is the BBC organised in the most effective and efficient way? Is it set up to provide the very best services for the public?

I can't comment with any real knowledge. My guess is that editors and the people making programmes should be given the opportunity to be bold. f How should the BBC be run? How should it be regulated? The BBC's Governors currently have a dual role. First, overseeing how the BBC is run internally. Secondly, regulating it on behalf of the public interest - for example, making sure it meets standards on accuracy, impartiality and fair trading. Is this the best approach? I am not too keen on censorship. Let people look at what is being presented and make up their own minds. Unfortunately the growth of pornography on the Internet and in broadcasting is a disappointing trend in public consumption. I would want to see some regulation of this if at all possible, simply on the basis that there are better things to do not because it is any more offensive than some other areas of life. f How do we ensure that the BBC is properly accountable to the public and Parliament? Should the public have a

greater say and influence on the BBC? If so, how? I think we can worry about this overmuch. Complaints by the BBC that the government (Alistair Campbell in particular) bully and bullied journalists are a bit thin in my opinion. It seems to me that they should stop complaining about it and find other ways of finding out what they want to know. In some ways government briefings are too easy. Of course a government will want to put what it is doing in the best light it can. The BBC needs to take this as a given, get on with the job and not make news out of something, which is so blatantly obvious. I want to see a BBC which is diverse, controversial, confident, seeking to represent things truthfully and an organization that makes you think.

The sender left the following as their name and address:

John Andrews
