

Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

16th February 2004

Dear Sirs,

BBC Charter Review Consultation

With changing technology providing wider and wider choice of formats for information and entertainment, the current position of the BBC as a major corporate provider has become highly anomalous. It is nonsensical to levy a "television tax" when soon many, if not most, people will be using the BBC for only a small part of their requirements.

Nevertheless, I and many others, value aspects of the BBC's service and would be sorry to see it abolished or sold off to a commercial organisation. To achieve a reasonable future I would suggest that the BBC be handed over to a trust which would operate in the style and form of the National Trust, i.e. with income derived from voluntary subscriptions, donations and bequests, and management in the hands of a committee selected by members, possibly with additional representation from a small number of other bodies determined by the members, but without political input.

Clearly this would result in a much reduced BBC service - perhaps one TV and one radio channel. This should, however, not be feared in an age when greater choice is becoming widely available - radio by internet, and shortly, no doubt, films and old TV programmes on demand by cable or other format. The BBC's archives should indeed provide a rich source of income to the National Broadcasting Trust.

The above covers national coverage. Similar arrangements could, of course, also be put in place locally if there is any substantial demand for local programmes.

I recognise that the above proposal would result in a major reduction in current BBC staffing and hence a very significant requirement for redundancy payments by displaced staff. Many front line broadcasters are, however, I believe on contracts and so a five year transitional period, during which there would be direct, but reducing, state aid, should overcome this. Current BBC assets not sustainable in the new NBT would be sold off to other media organisations to again help with transition costs.

Yours faithfully



(W F Bland)