

From: John Carrington
Sent: 11 December 2003 23:48
To: BBC Charter Review
Subject: BBC Charter Review

Hi

Thankyou for the opportunity to comment on the BBC. Here are my responses to your questions.

* What do you value most about the BBC?

Quality public service broadcasting, informative, distinct programming on television and radio.

* How should the BBC adapt to cope with changes in technology or culture?

The move to digital provides endless opportunities for the commercial and public service expansion of the BBC and the promotion of the BBC brand for the benefit of the nation. The BBC should take any decisions to expand as it sees fit as a commercial decision. I particularly would like to see the BBC having a greater involvement in the British film industry. The recently introduced digital services should only continue to be provided if the BBC can secure commercial or government funding to provide them.

* What do you think of the television, radio and online services the BBC provides?

Much BBC output would exist anyway in a free market. Therefore it cannot be described as public service broadcasting. The fact the BBC exists discourages commercial media from providing minority output.

* Should the BBC run commercial services?

Yes the BBC should run commercial services, including advertising supported and/or subscription based television and radio services if it chooses to do so. The market, not the government, should regulate any commercial service the BBC chooses to provide.

* How should we pay for the BBC?

There should be no licence fee. Public service broadcasting should be funded directly by the treasury as the World Service is now. Only a proportion of BBC output should be funded by the government, that which would otherwise not be provided by open market. I imagine BBC1 as a service containing programming which can be advertising supported, perhaps BBC2 as the public station. This should not mean any reduction in quality. There is no reason why a service cannot have a remit to provide quality programming and be commercially successful, we only have to look at Channel 4 to see this. In this way of operating any broadcaster could ask for state funding to provide output which is not commercially viable, not just the BBC.

* Is the BBC organised in the most effective and efficient way?

No organisation with a guaranteed income is ever organised in the most efficient way.

* How should the BBC be run? How should it be regulated?

I like the proposal that the BBC should be regulated by the new OFCOM.

* How do we ensure that the BBC is properly accountable to the public and parliament?

See above.

I believe my proposals would make for a stronger richer BBC better able to serve the British public and also a strong and diverse independent sector. It will take a leap of faith to implement but I believe it is the only way forward for the BBC in the 21st century.

Best wishes

John David Carrington