

## **McCARTHY MICHELLE**

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**To:** j.handford@btinternet.com  
**Subject:** BBC Charter Review: 04/02720

### **BBC Charter Review**

**Our Ref: 04/02720**

Dear Mr Handford

Thank you for your email to Tessa Jowell dated 26th February 2004, which was recieved on the 7th May 2004.

On 11 December 2003 Tessa Jowell launched the BBC Charter review with a wide-ranging industry and public consultation. This consultation is supported by a package of survey research and direct engagement with viewers and listeners.

We intend to publish a Green Paper around the turn of the year, which will bring together the results of the consultation and other strands of work to form policy options for further consideration. We are grateful for the comments you have made about the BBC and have fed them into the Charter review process.

May I take this opportunity to apologise for the delay to your response and thank you for your interest and contribution to BBC Charter review.

Michelle McCarthy  
BBC Charter Review

**CHAPMAN, Duncan**

→ DEMS

**From:**  
**Sent:** 26 February 2004 20:49  
**To:** jowellt@parliament.uk  
**Subject:** BBC Charter Renewal

MM

Dear Mrs Jowel,

In relation to the BBC's Charter renewal I would like to make the following comments:

The BBC has traditionally been under attack by the government of the day. Recent attacks by the Labour party, over the Iraq weapons controversy, echo previous attacks by the Conservatives over bias. I believe the public trust the BBC precisely because it is not afraid to expose and report controversial issues which run counter to the wishes of whichever government is current. It is trusted world-wide - despite the Hutton report - far more than any government or political party could ever be.

The licence fee structure coming under regular attack over the years, is another example of a threat to the BBC's independence and quality. Not only does the licence fee ensure the absence of commercial bias but it also provides a financially efficient way of funding a high quality BBC. Most people live in ignorance of the higher cost of commercial programmes funded through advertising and the necessary inflated price of goods and services needed to pay for a commercial basis to programme funding. They actually believe it's free! Far from it. The extent of commercial funding (consumer cost) is hidden from the general public by the disseminated nature of multi-tiered profit mark-up. It is estimated that commercial funding of broadcasting costs three to four times the cost of broadcasting via the licence fee. The licence fee is far more efficient, which is precisely why the BBC has been able to afford to provide the funding of digital and internet services, as well as it's traditional output.

The idea of abandoning these groundbreaking, world renowned and efficient achievements, to the spoiling influence of the commercial profit motive by breaking up the BBC or making it a subscription service, shows the woolly and jealous thinking of self interested political bias.

Any party that upsets the delicate balance that currently ensures the BBC's reputation and quality will be blamed by the British public for many years to come. As a Frenchman said: The BBC is the most beautiful gift to the world. Don't dispose of the gift for a want of re-packaging! Leave well alone.

Yours sincerely,

John Handford

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| <b>Department for Culture, Media and Sport</b> |                      |        |
| DATE RECEIVED: - 7 MAY 2004                    |                      |        |
| Treat Official (TOs) Correspondence            |                      |        |
| Deadline:                                      | 04/06/04             | (Tick) |
| Action   | Treat Official Reply | ✓      |
| Bl.  | Treat As Appropriate |        |
|  | For information only |        |
| PCU REF:                                       | 04/02720             |        |