

17 March 2004

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

Dear Sir/Madam

Here is my response to the DCMS leaflet 'Your BBC Your Say' taking the eight questions in turn.

**1. WHAT DO YOU VALUE MOST ABOUT THE BBC?**

It's non-commercial, genuinely public service purpose and the news services the corporation provides.

**2. HOW SHOULD THE BBC ADAPT TO COPE WITH CHANGES IN TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE?**

Be a presence in whatever new fields of broadcast mass-communication exist.

**3. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE TELEVISION, RADIO AND ONLINE SERVICES THE BBC PROVIDES?**

The services must have as much distinction from commercial radio and TV as possible and I would urge the BBC not to emulate Channel 4 as some have suggested either in style or 'publisher broadcaster' status.

**4. SHOULD THE BBC RUN COMMERCIAL SERVICES?**

Yes - to support licence-fee income and fully exploit output.

**5. HOW SHOULD WE PAY FOR THE BBC?**

I believe the licence-fee (perhaps adjusted to reflect the radio it pays for) is eternally justifiable. If broadcasting was newly invented today and a means of funding it was required - this method of making the broadcaster wholly accountable to the audience by taking from all receiving households an equal sum 'locks in' the BBC to the public - everyone knows exactly how much the BBC has cost them and all have a right to feel well served whatever their needs and interests, by some of the BBC's huge output. The licence fee guarantees uncompromised motivation for the BBC and ensures the burden of expectation falling on the corporation falls from the public - as it should.

**6. IS THE BBC ORGANISED IN THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT WAY?**

As far as I can see, yes.

**7. HOW SHOULD THE BBC BE RUN? HOW SHOULD IT BE REGULATED?**

The BBC should be self-regulating certainly to the degree that it already is. I feel strongly that the corporation must not come fully under the regulatory responsibility of OFCOM - it is not just another brand on the supermarket shelf or broadcasting, but a unique public institution with it's own responsibilities and purpose.

**8. HOW DO WE ENSURE THAT THE BBC IS PROPERLY ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PUBLIC AND PARLIAMENT?**

One way is by having as direct a means of communication as possible between public and BBC (not at arms length through call centres run by Capita in Glasgow and Belfast).

Finally I wish to state I believe the BBC is a vital public institution from which we all benefit both as a nation and as individuals. Twenty years after I first made the point I still feel deeply grateful that we have at the centre of our culture this provider of everything from Local Radio to Breakfast Television, all for the price of a licence fee and without a commercial in sight (or sound). Above all I want to feel the BBC is one corner of the broadcast landscape that is forever public service, you don't threaten that - you cherish it.

Yours Faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robin Vanags". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Mr ROBIN VANAGS