

BBC Charter Review
Dept. for Culture, Media and Sport
2-4 Cockspur Street,
LONDON SW1Y 5DH

Dev Lis

18th April 2005

Re: Reflecting the UK, its nations, regions and communities

In relation to the above key question for consultation in the Charter review, I would just like to make the following comments and suggestions.

In my experience in its attempt to be "all things to all people" BBC Local Radio provides only a diluted form of programming in its attempt to reflect the essential culture and identity of the locality it serves. As a result, coverage of that culture and identity occurs principally in bolt-on extras rather than being at the heart of the majority of the programmes made and broadcast. It is my view culture and identity should become much more mainstream and thereby truly reflect the needs and aspirations of the local population.

To achieve this, I suggest there should be a properly constituted advisory group that adequately represents the arts, music, language, history and heritage of a region, and which takes an active role in the planning of programming in local radio to ensure that, not only is that culture and identity given adequate air-time but brought to the attention of a wider audience - who, in my view, are currently fed a largely uninspiring diet of froth and frippery.

There also needs to be clear channels of communication between listeners and the local radio station - maybe through the proposed advisory group (whose membership is widely publicized and whose members are accessible) - so listeners can feed in their views on programming and programme content in a much more organised and systematic way. This would give listeners more confidence in the process of consultation and increase accountability. At present my experience suggests that this process needs serious strengthening with a more clearly defined structure.

*Jane Fawcett,
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