

20 April 2005

Dear Sir

Review of BBC's Royal Charter

I am a member of the Voice of Listeners and Viewers and Support Charter 88. My experience of broadcasting services is limited to BBC TV 1, 2, ITV1 and Channel 4 together with R4 Radio Norfolk, Five Live, World Service, R3 and Classic. From this experience and the contents of the Green Paper, I am troubled to find on page 33, there is no mention of:-

1. Stimulating public engagement with regional issues.

Here in East Anglia, we have a formidable shoreline management problem together with the prospect of river valley/Broads/Fens flooding. There have been no programmes to educate us on these issues. Similarly there is widespread concern in East Anglia about the expansion of housing as shown in the East of England Plan. The BBC could contribute towards citizens' education by broadcasts on these issues. It would then counter public apathy in local democracy. We need more than a slot in Look East News. I have the impression that BBC Scotland and Wales spend more broadcasting time on national items. Why does not receive equitable treatment?

2. Interaction with Communities

Radio Norfolk conducts phone-ins daily, usually following entertainment topics. Whereas Five Live attempts to create debate on more serious items

through the host questioning experts in the studios. The
● BBC should initiate dialogue with local authority organisations on publicising community issues. Such a dialogue would be pertinent with the arrival of community radio e.g. Norwich City Council's transport strategy.

Then pages 35 and 41 there is no mention of promoting closer links between the BBC local stations and their universities and colleges of further education, especially those with media study faculties. In rural Norfolk, it is difficult to persuade the public to travel up to 50 miles to a meeting whereas many would travel up to 10 miles to participate in a video linked conference. The video linking could then provide useful practical training for the college students.

By taking such initiatives, the BBC could then demonstrate the application of public service broadcasting to community involvement & local democracy.

At the other extreme, the BBC does not re-broadcast World Service programmes on R4. Quite rightly R4 material and presenters broadcast on the World Service but does nothing in reverse. I have never heard any trailers or promotional material for the World Service on R4. Why not open it up to more than the innocuous in the UK?

I have not found any mention of national sporting events in the Green Paper. Are any, like the

FA Cup Final, protected for public service broadcasts? (3)

- I fear that if the BBC has to bid against Sky for all sporting events, too much of its budget will be taken in bidding for them. Consequently the amount left for broadcasting initiatives will be so curtailed that the BBC will no longer enjoy public willingness to pay the licence fee

Yours faithfully

R Walpole