

**Independent Panel on Charter Review
Seminar: Culture**

EXTRACTS FROM 'BUILDING PUBLIC VALUE: RENEWING THE BBC FOR A DIGITAL WORLD', BBC, JUNE 2004

The BBC and public value

An effective and focused BBC, inspired by its enduring values and enabled by new technology and deeper understanding of its audiences, has a historic opportunity to increase the public value it delivers against each of its principal public purposes. We will:

Active and informed citizenship

- Recapture the full trust of audiences and participants in BBC journalism following the Gilligan/Kelly affair and implement in full the recommendations of the Neil Report; create a new college of journalistic excellence;
- Restore the prominence and appeal of serious current affairs and analysis on BBC television – including on BBC One; use schedule-busting events and specials to highlight and explore the major issues of the day;
- Use digital technology to launch highly local television news services for up to 60 cities and counties across the UK;
- Use new media and some of the BBC's most popular services to attract hard-to-reach groups, young people in particular, to an intelligent news and current affairs agenda;
- Create opportunities, especially at local and regional levels, for people to become more active citizens; encourage more open debate and public participation on radio and new media; build on the BBC's successful Open Centres and learning buses to engage people in their local communities;

British culture and creativity

- Dedicate all of the BBC's services to originality and excellence; eliminate derivative programmes and ideas from the schedules; find and then trust the best creative talent and teams;
- Maintain the creative revival of drama, focused on originality and challenge, across radio and television, with greater opportunities for single and event drama;
- Develop comedy as a unique class- and generation-spanning BBC strength; increase investment in it; build more opportunities for cross-platform development and collaboration;
- Focus on innovation and the discovery of new talent and ideas in popular entertainment and sport;
- Defy standard programme categories to open up challenging subjects to large audiences – from arts and history to science, religion and music; seek out the next generation of exceptional, inspiring presenters in each of these disciplines;
- Secure the BBC's commitment to our collective cultural heritage by maintaining investment in music-making, arts and documentary coverage on Radios 1, 2 and 3, increasing investment on BBC Four and guaranteeing a more prominent place for culture on BBC One and BBC Two; showcase the glories of our national culture in mainstream settings;

- Stimulate the creativity of our audiences, giving them a chance to tell their stories and make their own programmes; use the BBC's educational, new media and local resources to build skills in the arts and creative industries, particularly among young people;

A revolution in learning

- Launch and deliver the BBC Digital Curriculum to every school in the UK, working more collaboratively with the rest of the education sector to bring the learning revolution to every British child;
- Launch a new generation of landmark educational campaigns across all media;
- Work with outside private and public partners to maximise the impact of educational and educative initiatives;
- Use the most popular programmes and services to connect hard-to-reach audiences to educational opportunities;
- Use bbc.co.uk and interactive TV to develop new personalised formal and informal learning opportunities for different audience groups;
- Take a lead in media literacy and safety on the internet; launch BBC KidsSafe, a series of practical tools and initiatives designed to make the internet a safer place for children;
- Launch specific campaigns in partnership with others to encourage grass roots participation in sport and music, including Music For All, a multimedia project connecting schools and broadband-enabled homes to the full range of the BBC's performance and learning resources to enhance appreciation and understanding of music;

Connected communities

- Strengthen core services and create new local services within Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; extend the opportunities for national cultural expression especially in mainstream programme forms;
- Continue to invest in comprehensive coverage of the devolved institutions;
- Reinforce the BBC's commitment to the UK's indigenous languages;
- Create a full new BBC region in central England, based in Milton Keynes;
- Offer all local radio services on digital platforms and enhance the BBC's existing local websites in ways which maximise distinctiveness and minimise any adverse market impact;
- Extend the network of BBC Open Centres and BBC multimedia learning buses across the UK where local partnerships allow, focusing on cities and regions where audience need is highest;
- In network services on TV and radio, seek to foster greater audience understanding of cultural differences across the UK population – in ethnicity, faith, sexuality, ability/disability and age; show particular sensitivity in reporting issues and events which may be socially divisive;
- Faithfully reflect modern Britain's diversity in mainstream as well as specialist programmes; set new targets for the on-air portrayal of ethnic minorities, those with disabilities and those from other minorities; monitor usage of, and attitudes to, the BBC by the UK's minorities, listen to their concerns and priorities, and reflect those concerns in the future development of services;

- Ensure that as an employer and partner with the UK's creative community, the BBC is open to talent from every group in society;
- Continue to invest in the major sporting and public events – from Euro 2004 to D-Day – which bring large sections of UK society together, using the BBC's breadth of media at local, regional, UK and global levels to bring new perspectives;
- Develop more new BBC events like The Big Read or Great Britons which draw disparate groups into a shared experience;

The UK's voice in the world

- In a world of instability and mistrust, build the BBC's reputation as the world's most trusted broadcaster of news and information through BBC World Service, BBC World and the BBC's global online services;
- Use a multimedia strategy, especially the internet, to turn global broadcasting into a true global conversation;
- Work to establish a firmer financial foundation for BBC World and guarantee its delivery to global audiences in the long term;
- Extend the BBC's existing strategic joint ventures, for example with Discovery Communications, to offer better access to international markets for British talent and British culture and to return better value to the licence payer;
- Use the BBC's global presence to bring a richer international dimension to domestic programmes and to help connect the people of a multicultural UK to their international roots.

1.4 The BBC's cultural value: enriching the creative life of the UK

The BBC's second main role is cultural. Because it is free from market pressures, the BBC is able to find and nurture writers, performers, composers, producers and directors, and to give them space to create the widest possible range of high-quality, original programmes on radio, television and online. The BBC can take risks that the market cannot contemplate, and it can maintain a commitment to risk and innovation in its programmes, even in times of economic downturn.

From State of Play to The Office, The Archers to EastEnders, Glastonbury to The Proms, the BBC aims to provide memorable programmes which celebrate our culture and capture the spirit of the age. Over 85% of the BBC's output is British-made, reflecting the lives and tastes of our society.

As a result of this investment, the BBC is one of the UK's major cultural forces – in some fields the major cultural force. It supports and nourishes many forms of artistic endeavour. Alongside Arts Council England, the BBC is the biggest patron of the arts in the UK. The BBC also has an enduring commitment to new writing, and commissions more new works than any other organisation in the UK. Under Milk Wood, Shadowlands, Truly Madly Deeply, Pennies from Heaven and Billy Elliot all started life as BBC commissions. The BBC employs more actors, directors and writers than any other British organisation.

"I owe my career to the BBC, which provided the stability, continuity and opportunities I needed when I was developing as a film director."

Stephen Frears, film director, 2004

Radio 3 is the biggest commissioner of new music in the world. In recent years Radio 1 helped launch the careers of artists such as Coldplay, The Darkness and Franz Ferdinand, and is the only UK radio station to offer a comprehensive advice and information service with its One Music website. BBC music events – from the BBC Young Musician of the Year to Radio 3's Awards for World Music and Radio 2's Folk Awards – celebrate new talent and honour established composers and performers. In addition, the BBC supports five orchestras across the UK.

Drama series like EastEnders, The Archers and Casualty are a vital part of the UK's popular culture, opening up opportunities for new writers, actors and directors. They are part of a long-standing tradition of well-made, well-loved programmes that are relevant to the lives of a wide range of diverse audiences. They frequently tackle important social issues in a responsible and accessible way.

People value popular, entertaining programming highly and consider it one of the two key elements of public service broadcasting, alongside news. They value a 'balanced diet' of programming on public service channels, of which entertainment is a key part. BBC programmes aim for a spark of difference by encouraging talent to take creative risks, developing new formats, such as Strictly Come Dancing and The Weakest Link, harnessing new technologies, such as Test the Nation and Celebdaq, and using entertainment skills to broaden the appeal of other genres, such as Have I Got News For You.

The BBC makes a particularly important contribution to British comedy. Comedy is a difficult genre in which to succeed – the level of risk involved makes it a challenging area for commercial broadcasters. Because of its freedom from commercial pressures, the BBC can stick with slow-starting comedies, such as Only Fools and Horses, or back an unlikely-sounding idea such as The Office. The BBC invests over £80m a year in British comedy – during one week in November 2003, 15 out of 18 scripted comedies showing on UK terrestrial television were on the BBC. From Hancock, Steptoe and Son and Till Death Us Do Part to My Family, I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue, Absolutely Fabulous and Little Britain, BBC comedy has entered our language and provided shared reference points.

"Here's the thing – the BBC's record in acted comedy has been, and still is, miraculous ... the history of British TV comedy really is very nearly the history of comedy on the BBC."

Richard Curtis, writer Love Actually, Four Weddings and a Funeral, The Vicar of Dibley, The Guardian, 2000

The BBC brings British history, art, drama and literature alive for mass audiences. Classic adaptations like Pride and Prejudice, Wives and Daughters, The Old Curiosity Shop and The Pallisers; the Radio 3 Shakespeare season; poetry on Radio 4; Simon Schama's A History of Britain and Andrew Graham-Dixon's A History of British Art, all refresh the cultural memory of the UK by opening up our heritage to successive generations. Radio 3 and BBC Four regularly partner with theatres to widen the audience for award-winning productions by broadcasting plays like Medea, Copenhagen, Elmina's Kitchen, Richard II and The Permanent Way.

3.3 Programmes that enrich our lives and culture

One of the BBC's most important priorities for the next Charter period will be to lift the creative ambition, quality and innovation of its programmes. Change and fragmentation in the media markets mean that high-quality UK programmes will become harder to make for many broadcasters. At the same time, the demands are growing from today's increasingly diverse audiences for a rich mix of surprising, enjoyable and memorable programmes.

In many areas, the quality and range of the BBC's programmes are second to none. People judge BBC One and BBC Two to have a better range and quality of programmes than ITV1, Channel 4, five and Sky One in 17 out of 22 genres⁶¹. Its best programmes continue to capture the imagination of millions. But, as noted in Chapter 1, there is more to do. Audiences tell us that they want a wider range of more imaginative programmes. They want a richer mix of programmes at the heart of their schedules, in home-grown drama and comedy in particular. This is the creative challenge of the next decade, and we intend to rise to it.

We will dedicate all the BBC's services to originality and excellence.

Initiatives will include:

- ***Eliminating derivative programmes and ideas from BBC schedules.*** Audiences want and expect greater innovation from the BBC. We will avoid ideas and formats that are derivative or copied, and eliminate programmes that are tired and lacking in originality.
- ***A broader search for the UK's most talented writers and producers.*** We will build on the success of initiatives such as BBC Talent, which has discovered many new writers, directors and performers since its launch in 2000. For example, Lee Edmenson exchanged life as a welder for the IExtra radio studio where he is now a producer, and Linda Thompson, a former administrator, now writes for BBC One's Doctors series. Our writing initiative, writersroom, currently works with more than 3,500 aspiring writers and receives over 10,000 unsolicited scripts every year.
- ***More freedom for creative risk-taking.*** Audiences want the BBC to play less safe. To do this, we will support in-house and independent programme makers in taking more creative risks. We will amplify the importance of programme reach over share as the headline performance measure for BBC programmes, and help to lead an industry-wide initiative to develop new audience indicators that capture the memorability and appreciation of a programme.

The BBC will defy standard programme categories to open up challenging subjects to large audiences – from arts and history to science, religion and music.

Some of the most exciting recent programmes have sprung from ground-breaking collaborations between different programme-making departments. Dunkirk, for instance, brought together the differing skills of documentary and drama to great effect, and Eroica combined classical music and drama. The BBC will increase its investment and risk-taking in cross-genre productions.

We will fund and support the next generation of high-quality British comedy, entertainment and drama. Audiences particularly want the BBC to offer great British

comedy and drama. One of the challenges will be to strike the right balance between programmes that reflect the growing diversity of the UK, like *Babyfather*, *Monkey Dust*, *Silver Street* and *Burn It*, with an ongoing desire for programmes that create shared experiences, like *The Archers* and *EastEnders*. We will aim to provide a rich mix – popular and minority, challenging and relaxing, innovative and reassuring. Not every one will succeed – the creative process will never be that predictable – but all our programmes will aim for an edge of ambition and originality to provide quality and distinction overall. Initiatives will include:

- ***Using the BBC's radio and digital TV channels – particularly BBC Three – as test beds for innovative comedy and drama.*** Radio 4 has always been recognised as a valuable nursery slope for new comedy and drama talent, with programmes such as *I'm Alan Partridge*, *Dead Ringers*, *The League of Gentlemen*, *Little Britain* and *Goodness Gracious Me* all beginning life there. The BBC has now also begun to incubate riskier shows on its digital TV channels. Successes like *Nighty Night* and *3 Non-Blondes* started there and have since been shown on BBC One and BBC Two.
- ***Strengthened commitment to comedy.*** The growing diversity of UK society is making successful comedy even more challenging. Many broadcasters will have no choice but to fall back on importing good US comedies. From *Fawlty Towers* to *The Office*, comedy has been a powerful expression of British culture, and the BBC remains fully committed to creating the next generation of British programmes that make the nation laugh.
- ***Entertainment programmes with modern appeal.*** The BBC will broaden its range to cater for all tastes as audiences become increasingly sophisticated in their expectations of entertainment programmes. We will strive for unpredictability, freshness, edge and talent with strong flavours and inclusive appeal.
- ***A greater range of single dramas to reflect the complexity and reality of life in the UK today.*** Ever since ITV's *Armchair Theatre* and the BBC's *Play for Today*, single dramas have always held a special place in UK broadcasting. They can make a powerful statement about life in contemporary Britain. Unfortunately, they risk disappearing from today's broadcast media as familiar series come to dominate many parts of the schedule. The BBC's ambition is to revive the success of the single play on television, as it has done already with *Home*, *This Little Life* and *Flesh and Blood*. For listeners, Radio 4 will continue to air a wide range of single plays and Radio 3 will continue to commission original drama like *The Wire*, ambitious and challenging in scale.
- ***A range of British feature films to complement drama output.*** With several Academy Awards to its name, BBC Films is building a strong reputation as a creative leader within the film community. The BBC is committed to co-producing six to eight feature film projects per year. They will reflect the cultural diversity of modern-day Britain and will be produced in partnership with other leading British and international film producers, including the UK Film Council.

We will seek to bring our shared historical and cultural heritage alive for a modern audience. A striking feature of the past few years has been the growing passion of UK audiences for understanding the past through popular programme initiatives such as A

History of Britain and Meet the Ancestors. More recently, this has been seen in the fascination among all age groups inspired by Dunkirk, which reviewed the extraordinary events of that epic rescue through the eyes of those who were there. In the next decade, the BBC will increase its commitment to making sense of the past in order to illuminate the present. We will increase investment on BBC Four and guarantee a more prominent place for culture on BBC One and BBC Two. Initiatives will include:

- **Bringing the past to life.** The BBC will develop a new range of ambitious history programmes such as those marking the 60th anniversary in June 2004 of the D-Day landings. These programmes were broadcast on radio, television and online, in a collaboration that included a mix of individual eyewitness accounts, social, political and military history, drama, documentary and opportunities for audiences to contribute.
- **Making the good popular** – our literary and artistic tradition made accessible to all. Even some of the more challenging parts of the world’s heritage can be brought to life with the right kind of imagination and creativity. Series like Canterbury Tales can open up classic stories to a new generation – in this case, over half the British public had never heard of them. The BBC will aim even higher in the coming years. For example, during the Athens Olympics in 2004, Radio 4 will broadcast a dramatised version of Homer’s *Odyssey*. In 2005, the BBC, in partnership with other organisations including the RSC, will create a ground-breaking, cross-media Shakespeare project, as part of which the BBC will make its large Shakespeare archive available online to individuals, schools and colleges.

We will support creativity across the full range of British music-making. Music touches almost everyone in some way and is an important means of bringing people together from different backgrounds. However, 52% of adults feel that there are not enough specialist music programmes on television⁶³. The BBC will continue to champion the broadest range of music genres, put into context by presenters with knowledge and conviction, and to bring outstanding live music to television and radio. As part of this, the BBC’s role in supporting new creative talent and commissioning new work will be more important than ever. Radio 2 will continue to support young musicians through initiatives such as the Young Folk awards, Young Chorister of the Year and the Young Brass Soloist awards. BBC television and Radio 3 will run the Young Musician of the Year and BBC Singer of the World competitions and Radio 1 will continue to support new musicians through the variety of its music broadcasting and commitment to new bands.

“The BBC has supported British composers who have had their music performed worldwide, and it’s given everyone the chance to listen to great music. That’s something that’s needed now more than ever – to let a new generation hear those fantastic sounds that will draw them into music for life.”
Sir Simon Rattle, Music Director of the Berlin Philharmonic, 2004