

**Independent Panel on Charter Review**

**Seminar: Representation of Nations, Regions and Communities**

**PAPER: EXTRACTS FROM *BUILDING PUBLIC VALUE*  
(BBC, July 2004)**

## Extract from Overview & Summary

### **2. Programmes and services that build 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](http://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 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.

## Extract from Chapter 1: Why the BBC Matters

### 1.6 The BBC's social value: connecting and uniting communities

The BBC's fourth contribution to public value is in connecting people at many different levels. The BBC has a deep commitment to the UK's nations, regions and localities. Its portfolio of programmes for different audiences, its physical presence throughout the UK and its wide and fast-growing range of grass roots activities reflect the diversity of the country, foster a sense of belonging and encourage participation. The BBC also has a particular responsibility to the UK as a whole – for bringing people together to share events of national importance.

The network of shared values, traditions and experiences that people hold in common is sometimes known as *social capital*. It helps to build higher levels of trust, tolerance and shared understanding that can make many aspects of a society's operations, from business and politics to people's daily lives, easier and more productive. A recent UK study<sup>21</sup>, commissioned by the BBC from an independent economist, suggests that broadcasting in the UK may be a powerful contributor to social capital. It can attract diverse audiences by age, sex, race or class to powerful shared experiences that help to forge connections and build trust.

People turn to the BBC to share public moments they will remember all their lives. Events such as the Olympics, the Jubilee parties and the Queen Mother's funeral unite British people in a common experience. Nearly 20 million people watched the BBC's coverage of the funeral of the Princess of Wales. Over 70% of the population watched the 2002 Commonwealth Games held in Manchester<sup>22</sup>. *EastEnders* is watched by people of all ages, all social classes and, unusually compared with American TV, all ethnic backgrounds, providing a basis for talking points between groups that may otherwise lack common frames of reference. Popular entertainment programmes like *Wake up to Wogan* and *The National Lottery*, along with coverage of major sports events from the Grand National to the FA Cup, can be strong contributors to social capital for the UK as a whole.

The BBC's social role is equally important for the nations, regions and communities of the UK. In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the BBC has sought to support the new democratic and cultural needs created by the process of devolution over the past decade. It now invests some £70m more each year in the nations and regions than in 2000. Its goal has been both to build understanding of the new, devolved institutions of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and to celebrate and support each nation's rich and diverse culture – from the only Scottish soap, *River City*, to unique support for the UK's indigenous languages. The BBC runs the only national Welsh language radio service, Radio Cymru, and has a long-standing partnership with S4C in Welsh language television. It provides speech-led national radio services for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, connecting audiences and enabling dialogue across each nation. In entertainment, drama and factual programming, the BBC reflects the distinctive voices and experiences in each of the three nations.

Across the English regions, the BBC's network of 40 local radio stations and 12 full regional television services complements the private sector and is a powerful national asset. It provides civic and cultural support to communities all over the country. It helps to reflect their concerns, celebrate their cultures and build a sense of place. Reduced investment and editorial commitment from ITV in recent years mean that,

for regional television news, people turn first and foremost to the BBC.

The public nature of the BBC means it can guarantee universal access to vital information. For example, local radio teams in York and Hereford & Worcester worked round the clock to provide information and support to listeners during the floods of 2001. In the same year, BBC Radio Cumbria and BBC Radio Devon were the main means of communication for farmers in each region during the foot-and-mouth outbreak. More than ten million people listen to the BBC's local radio services across the UK every week, four million of whom listen to no other BBC radio service and two million to no other radio service at all.

The BBC's local and regional services also offer a way of giving a voice to people – through phone-ins, public events and direct involvement with local communities. Examples include local radio's *Voices* project, which involved nearly 50 communities across the UK, and the BBC's 2002 *All Together Now* initiative in which children from a primary school in a deprived area of Leeds learned radio techniques and made programmes about local issues which were then broadcast on Radio Leeds. In addition, the BBC provides 55 *Where I Live* websites which offer audiences a place on the internet to find information, news, entertainment, sport, travel and weather relevant to life where they live. The sites are safe, trusted places where users and communities can communicate with each other, connect with the BBC and publish their own content. As well as connecting local communities, the BBC hosts many communities of interest via [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk)'s online discussion boards. Millions of messages are posted every month, as people discuss topics ranging from cricket to coping with bulimia.

Through two new digital radio networks, BBC Asian Network and 1Xtra, the BBC helps to serve the needs and interests of ethnic communities in the UK. These services provide focal points for ethnic minorities, helping to reflect their culture within the context of modern UK society. They also offer forums for people to learn from and connect with each other both on air and online. Asian Network, for example, has hosted debates on subjects as diverse as the state of the Bollywood music industry and asylum seekers and the new Asian soap, *Silver Street*, will act as a test-bed for new creative writing and performance in the UK Asian community.

The BBC's challenge for the future will be to respond to public demand for even more local coverage, to provide a trusted forum for communities of interest of many sorts, and to find ways to reflect the different cultures of the UK more powerfully to a wider British audience. Again, Chapter 3 sets out our ideas for the future.