

Deborah Anthony

25 April 2006

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

Dear Sirs

Please take these points into account in your review of the BBC Charter.

The BBC is a globally respected organisation that belongs to the people of Britain – not the government, but those who pay the licence fee and enjoy the BBC's output. If this were truly a public consultation, all licence payers should have been requested to complete a questionnaire regarding the BBC's future.

I do not accept that Ofcom should have powers to decide whether proposed new BBC services might be 'unfair' to commercial rivals. Commercial interests are already well served by this government, often to the detriment of the public interest; why should the BBC and its viewers be subject to such decisions when the commercial rivals will not be?

I am also concerned about the suggestion that the BBC should open up to 50 per cent of its production to outside bids. This would not be in the interests of the licence payers, as the BBC already has excellent in-house production of its own, with highly trained and experienced staff – opening up to outside bids would mean that these same staff would leave the corporation, set up their own production companies, and the BBC would have to pay more for the same production from the same people. This leads to lack of continuity, variable quality, lack of training, demotivation and higher production costs in the long term.

The licence fee should not be used to fund any other channels. If this government is not keen to increase the licence fee to fund the BBC and also requires the Corporation to cut costs, then I cannot see how it could be stretched to cover another channel.

The BBC licence payers had no part to play in the government's decision to switch over from analogue to digital. However the government seems to think that we should fund the switch-over. Surely this should be achieved using the proceeds from selling off the analogue spectrum? Are other broadcasters to be asked to make the

same contribution to the switch-over? If the government expects the BBC to contribute, then the other broadcasters should also be expected to do so. The governing Trust should include listeners, viewers and people working in the public service broadcasting industry – there is no real place here for disproportionate representation by private media interests. They are a powerful lobby and naturally seek to further their own interests at the expense of others. They should have no say in what little remains of one of the last public services in Britain.

The licence fee system of funding the BBC should be retained, as it provides the public with a direct interest in their Corporation. It should not be used to fund other broadcasters, nor as an excuse for the government to manipulate the Corporation for its own ends – this money is **ours**, the BBC is **our** voice.

Yours faithfully



Deborah Anthony

Department for Culture, Media and Sport		
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