

C03/08000/04689/pa

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18th September 2003

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Simon Duffy'.

CARRIAGE OF NEW BBC CHANNELS ON ANALOGUE CABLE

Thank you for your letter of 18 July responding to the points I raised in my letter of 18 June.

I am pleased to say that, having considered your comments and sought further advice from officials, I now intend to agree to the variation of the BBC new services approvals so that the BBC's new channels can be carried on analogue cable.

I am satisfied that this will not conflict with the Government's objectives on digital take-up and, indeed, hope that it will have a positive effect. I have also noted your confirmation that the introduction of the new BBC channels will not (in itself) require the removal of any existing commercial channels.

My officials will consult the BBC on the precise wording of the variations, but you should be aware of the following:

- The variations will permit all the BBC's existing digital services, which were not already approved for carriage on analogue cable to be so carried.
- There will be a condition to ensure that the services can be provided to an analogue cable company only if the services are available to all such companies (even if some companies choose not to take them on the basis on which they are offered).



- The variations will recognise that the BBC will remain free in making the services available to cable companies in analogue form. A condition will be imposed that all the services are in fact carried on any network on which any are carried (i.e. that cable companies will not be free to 'cherry pick', but must carry all the services or none of them).
- The variations will require the BBC to withhold the services from any analogue cable company, which imposes any additional charge to its viewers.
- The variations will acknowledge that the BBC will be under no obligation to make any payment for the carriage of the services on analogue cable.
- The variations will acknowledge that it will not be technically possible to offer any interactivity, digital text or audio description services to analogue cable customers. (and it will be for cable operators to explain to their analogue customers that they cannot receive interactive, digital text and access services and that this is due to the method of the distribution and not to any choice made by the BBC).
- There will be a condition that the variations will be subject to review.

You will need to liaise directly with the BBC about the logistics of how quickly they would expect to be able to make the services available on analogue cable once the actual variations have been approved. The authoritative text of the variations will be published in due course, after we have consulted the BBC on the wording, and you should at this stage regard the information given above about them as being for general guidance only.

- > I am copying this letter to the BBC and arranging for its publication on the Department's website.

Yours

Tessa Jowell

TESSA JOWELL