

Independent Panel on Charter Review

Seminar: Informed Citizenship

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

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 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.

3.2 Supporting active and informed citizenship

Democratic life in the UK is changing. The growth of single-issue campaigns and special-interest groups, constitutional change, a threatening and complex global environment and low turnouts at elections are all important recent trends. At the same time, the news market worldwide is becoming more commercial and more competitive. Traditional news values are coming under strain. High-quality, impartial, in-depth and trusted news has never been more important.

As we move into the next decade, the BBC will be a guarantor of impartiality and independence, enabling people to make sense of this fast-changing agenda. It will offer a place where a plurality of voices and opinions can be given space and where rational debate can be held. And as the new technologies develop, it will provide ways for audiences to become more active citizens and contributors to the national debate.

- **The BBC will reinforce its commitment to trusted, reliable, impartial and independent journalism.** The BBC is relied on by the British public for the quality and range of its news. We will implement in full the recommendations of the Neil Report into the issues surrounding the Hutton Inquiry into Dr David Kelly's death, with the aim of recapturing the full trust of audiences and participants in BBC journalism. In partnership with others, we will support the professional education of our journalists and promote debate about editorial standards and ethics in the UK through a new College of Journalism.
- **The BBC will invest in journalism of depth and specialist expertise in all media.** The volume of news coverage has grown exponentially over the past decade, fragmenting available audiences and creating intense pressure on investment in journalism for many news providers. The BBC will maintain the range and quality of its news reporting and will continue to invest strongly in newsgathering at local, national and international levels. It will commit to keeping a broad range of specialist correspondents and foreign bureaux, prioritising expert first-hand reporting, careful verification and a comprehensive international agenda of foreign reports and analysis.
- **We will restore and sustain the prominence and appeal of serious current affairs and analysis on BBC television and radio – including on BBC One.** In an increasingly complex world, current affairs programmes aimed at explanation, analysis and seeking out the truth behind contentious issues will matter more than ever. As pressure mounts on other broadcasters to push current affairs to the margins of the schedule or make it more popular at the expense of depth, the BBC will increase its primetime current affairs output across its channels – and particularly on BBC One. We will remain committed to thought-provoking and strong investigative journalism which uncovers truth in the public interest. We will provide more major 'event' days on topics that matter to people – building on the success of days like *Your NHS*, *Cracking Crime* and *Hey Big Spender!* about debt.

- **We will offer everyone a democratic voice and a means of contributing to the national debate.** The BBC will exploit new digital technologies to encourage a wider national debate. It will develop more interactivity around programmes such as *Panorama*, *Question Time*, *Any Answers*, *Today* and the *Ten O'Clock News* in order to engage a broader audience, giving people a voice on issues on which they may feel unheard. The BBC is well placed to bring individuals from different walks of life together for the free exchange of ideas which can help to build openness and understanding.
- **We will launch a new highly local television news service for cities and counties across the UK.** Digital technologies will enable the BBC to provide broadcast news and information to people in smaller communities than has been possible before.

An ultra-local news service

BBC One's 6.30pm news programmes for the Nations and regions of the UK are the most watched news programmes in the country – over six million viewers tune in every day. However, some of these regions are too large to be supplied with truly relevant local news, and 6.30pm is not always the most convenient time for audiences to tune in to their local programme.

Our aim is now to use digital technology to launch a new highly local television news service for cities and counties across the UK. We intend to provide 50-60 areas across the UK with up to 10 minutes an hour of genuinely relevant local news and information, not just at 6.30pm but throughout the day. We will explore the relative costs and feasibility of launching this service on digital television, including Freeview, and on broadband.

We believe that this service will serve an unmet need for local TV news among UK audiences. In the BBC's technical trial of broadband local television in Hull, one of the most popular services was local news based around communities. And evidence from the US and Germany, which both have far more local television news services than the UK, confirms that localness is highly valued in news broadcasting.

The BBC's 'ultra-local' news service will harness the growing power of video journalism to cover local and regional stories across the UK. The BBC now has five times the number of cameras covering local stories compared with two years ago, and we intend to use them to provide a unique service that will reflect the lives and concerns of local communities.

- **We will create opportunities, especially at the local and regional levels, for people to become more active citizens.** The BBC will aim to give people more opportunities to engage with political and civic life. Research shows that one of the reasons for falling democratic participation is that people feel they cannot make a difference⁵⁸. To help to address this, the BBC is piloting a new web-based service, called *iCan* (see box below). *iCan* equips people with tools to influence the world around them and encourages users to join up with others seeking a common civic goal. In addition, we will continue to develop a range of initiatives with schools and colleges, such as *Schools' Question Time*, which will provide access to the BBC's news expertise and archives and encourage participation in civic life.

⁵⁸ TRBI, *Beyond the Soundbite*, 2002

BBC *iCan* – change the world around you

iCan is a unique, interactive community resource for people who want to make a difference in civic life but who are put off by traditional politics. One in four people say they would get more involved if they thought their contributions would count⁵⁹.

The *iCan* website offers its users a guide to understanding how they can make a difference to the world around them, based on their shared knowledge and expert material from the BBC and the internet.

It puts users in touch with each other, so they can maximise their influence by working together. It aims to complement existing civic resources, not duplicate them, and is working closely with others active in this field, such as the NHS and Citizens Advice. It also provides links to thousands more websites. In the first three months following the launch of the technical trial, more than 300 initiatives were started.

• **We will use new media and some of the BBC's most popular services to attract hard-to-reach groups with an intelligent news and current affairs agenda.** It is increasingly difficult for all news providers to reach some audience groups, particularly younger people. Nearly a third of those under 45 say they are not interested in current affairs⁶⁰. Only the BBC has the financial stability to experiment and go on experimenting to find new ways of reaching them. We will make news content available to younger people in the ways they want to get it, and on the devices that they use – mobiles, PDAs and broadband. We will continue to try out new styles and formats of news programming while staying true to our editorial values.

• **We will increasingly use the skills of documentary makers as well as journalists to understand the world.** Documentary is a key genre for creating programmes that relate very directly to audiences and their lives. Whether films about children in care for the BBC's *Taking Care* season, or the first-hand experience of war in *Lance Corporal Baranowski's Vietnam*, or about immigration in *Welcome to Britain*, these programmes offer a compass for viewers trying to understand society, using the personal and rich language of documentary. The BBC will expand its documentary range, finding new voices and fresh talents to reflect British society back to its citizens.

⁵⁹ TRBI, *Beyond the Soundbite*, 2002

⁶⁰ BBC News, *Usage and Attitudes study*, 2001