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4 December 2008

**RE: Ofcom's Second Public Service Broadcasting Review – Phase 2**

**To Whom It May Concern:**

Dear Sir / Madam

I write in my individual capacity as MLA for West Tyrone.

I believe that the proposals contained in Ofcom's Public Service Broadcasting Review (Phase 2) do not address the particular circumstances of this part of Ireland.

Ofcom needs to act to protect and promote diversity of local broadcasting in the future, both in terms of quality and quantity. I have made my views known about these matters in a recent Assembly Debate on Monday 24 November. Please click on the following link to access this debate:

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/record/reports2008/081124.pdf> (page 206).

Ofcom should not be reducing the minimum requirement for News and Current Affairs in UTV. BBC needs UTV and RTE to ensure plurality and proper competition which can only serve to increase standards in news and non-news output.

There needs to be a much greater portrayal of local communities and local issues on the wider BBC and UTV networks.

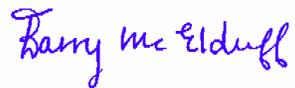
Promotion of Irish language broadcasting is referred to specifically in the Good Friday Agreement. I wish to hail the Irish Language Broadcasting Fund (ILBF) as an outstanding success. Irish language broadcasting forms a crucial part of Public Service Broadcasting.

As the motion before the Assembly on Monday 24 November said, I express serious concern at Ofcom's proposals for a diminution in the public service obligations of UTV. I regret that Ofcom is not prepared to extend the consultation period of this review until Spring 2009 and I would ask Ofcom to emphasise to UTV Television that this is a genuine consultation on the part of Ofcom.

Ofcom should communicate to UTV Television that it must not use a consultation exercise as an excuse for cutting jobs within UTV. I wish to emphasise that the motion put before the Assembly was passed by the entire Assembly. I was happy to table this motion along with my party and MLA colleagues, Raymond McCartney and Francie Brolly.

I support the idea of establishing a Local Broadcasting Commission and I will be advancing this argument as a member of the Culture Arts and Leisure Committee. I do appreciate the willingness of Senior Ofcom officials based in Belfast to engage with Elected Representatives on broadcasting and other matters.

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Cllr Barry McElduff MLA