



Nottinghamshire, Mansfield & Nottingham Trades Union Council

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Ofcom
Riverside House
2a Southwark Bridge Road
London
SE1 9HA

10th October 2008

Dear Ofcom,

Plans to cut the regional news in the East Midlands.

I am writing on behalf of the Notts., Nottingham and Mansfield Trades Council over plans to cut the regional news in the East Midlands. We are deeply concerned over the proposal and by the impact this will have on the coverage of local news for this region.

We believe the decision to axe the Central News programme in this area is a retrograde step. The East Midlands will only have a six-minute pre-recorded segment in a programme which will be dominated by items about the West.

We recognise that ITV is undergoing financial difficulties, which is blamed on a reduction in the advertising revenue. ITV has argued that by reducing its regions from 17 to 9 this will save the company 40 million pounds. But the redrawing of this map will result in a loss in identity for this region: a region which came about following a vociferous campaign in the 1970's by local M.P.'s.

Already this region has experienced significant cutbacks before last week's announcement. Four and a half years ago, the Lenton Lane studio was closed with the loss of two hundred jobs. A slimmed down operation was established in Chilwell following a joint campaign, by the broadcasting unions, local politicians, and key organisations. Now, the majority of those staff face the prospect of losing their jobs.

We understand that half the jobs across the Midlands will go leaving just ten people operating out of Chilwell. These ten: reporters, camera crews and editors will work towards the main programme as well as the dedicated six minute slot.

At the same time, this region has already experienced a reduction in the production and transmission of current affairs programmes.

We believe these actions have not been in the best interest of the East Midlands and ITV has sadly shown that it is not committed to public service broadcasting.

[Cont...

President: Eric Eaton (NUM)

Secretary: Richard Buckwell (UNISON)

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We urge Ofcom, the industry's regulator to urge ITV to think again about its plan to axe East Midlands as an ITV region. We also believe that Ofcom should insist that ITV continues its public service broadcasting commitments beyond 2012 with the introduction of digital television networks.

Yours sincerely



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