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Dear Rhona Parry,

Re: Beat Initiative, Belfast response to the consultation: Ofcom's Second Public Service Broadcasting Review - Phase One: The Digital Opportunity consultation

The Beat Initiative is a community and carnival arts production company. We operate a weekly arts activity programme and produce and produce events and performance including the annual Belfast City Carnival, involving 1,000 local participants, volunteers, artists and performers from across the city and an audience from home and abroad. It is our vision to provide projects that beneficially engage the imagination of a broad range of audience from all sections of the community and events that underline carnival's place on the creative landscape. Based in Belfast, the Beat Initiative works with people from across Northern Ireland and has performed throughout Ireland, worked with groups from England, Scotland and Wales and represented Northern Ireland in a week of performances at the London Millennium Dome.

In response to your consultation and in relation to your main objective of furthering the interests of citizen-consumers; in particular, developing "*a new broadcasting licensing regime to foster self-regulation and broaden citizen/consumer choice*" we would recommend that Ofcom considers acceptance of local community television as public service broadcasters.

As a community arts organisation, we support participatory initiatives in the arts and have first hand experience of the social benefits, which these activities deliver. "Ordinary" people becoming providers of content and creating media about local issues does constitute a public service. It enhances skills, encourages a sense of place and ownership of the city. Citizenship is served when the local community is brought creatively together through community media production with distribution via local public service television.

Regarding aspects of work required to bring about a UK map of local and community television following analogue TV switch-off post 2010, we would request your assurance that no planning, at this stage, precludes a network of local digital multiplexes.

In relation to the development of local television in Belfast, we should be grateful if Ofcom would support NvTv being carried on Freeview as a local public service broadcaster. Such a development would ensure that everyone in the city has access to a valuable local service and would support the efforts of the community arts and media sector to nurture the city's cultural and creative assets and talent.

Yours sincerely
David Boyd
Director