

20 June 2008

Rhona Parry
PSB Review
Ofcom
Riverside House
2A Southwark Bridge Road
London
SE1 9HA

Dear Ms Parry,

OFCOM's SECOND PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING REVIEW

We would like to take the opportunity to briefly respond to Ofcom's consultation on its Second Public Service Broadcasting Review.

We believe that as digital broadcasting provides opportunities for greater public choice in programming, this opportunity should be used to expand public service broadcasting, and particularly more local based programming.

In our view this is supported by the public response in our constituencies to ITV proposals to scrap the Border region 'Lookaround' news programme. There has been widespread opposition to the plans which would see the ITV "local" news programme for Dumfries and Galloway being broadcast as a six-minute opt-out to a news programme being broadcast from Newcastle. The opposition to this has clearly underlined that people in our constituencies value local programming, and wish to have more, not less available to them.

However, we are concerned that while the switchover to digital broadcasting provides a unique opportunity to expand local public service broadcasting, the extra frequency capacity created by the switchover could be lost to commercial television providers who will likely be able to outbid public service broadcasters for this capacity. Hence we have lobbied the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to consider reserving some of this extra capacity solely for local public service broadcasting.

For these reasons we urge Ofcom to take the opportunity during this review to:

- 1) reject ITV's proposals which will massively reduce the volume of local news broadcasts in Dumfries and Galloway, elsewhere in the Border region, and in other regions of the UK; and
- 2) lobby the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to consider reserving some extra frequency capacity created as a result of the switchover to digital television for local public service broadcasting.

Yours/ ...

Yours sincerely



Russell Brown
Member of Parliament for
Dumfries and Galloway Constituency



Elaine Murray
Member of the Scottish Parliament
for Dumfries Constituency