



10th June 08

Rhona Parry,

PSB Review,
Ofcom,
Riverside House,
2A Southwark Bridge Road,
London,
SE1 9HA.

Dear Rhona Parry,

Re: Spectrum Centre, Belfast response to the consultation: Ofcom's Second Public Service Broadcasting Review – Phase One: The Digital Opportunity Consultation

The Spectrum Centre is a community-led multi-purpose arts, cultural and conference venue which serves corporate, community and educational needs within the Greater Shankill area of Belfast and beyond. Throughout the year it facilitates a number of community development and local regeneration projects in the Shankill area. This area of the city is also the most socially deprived ward in Northern Ireland.

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. We have worked closely with Northern Visions/NvTv on a wide variety of television programming including documentaries, local news pieces and popular entertainment. We are very aware of the social benefits that community media and local television can deliver. Empowering citizens to become content providers and creating media which reflects and raises awareness of local issues and interests constitutes a valuable public service. It enhances skills, encourages a sense of place and ownership of the city and has the potential to foster greater citizenship.

Central funding provisions have been made in the Communications Act for community radio and local digital television. Ofcom should consider a fund, which could potentially be drawn from the licence fee and from top-slicing commercial broadcasting licences or other central government sources. 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, it would bring the voice of marginalised communities and those at greatest disadvantage into the mainstream 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

Bobby Foster
Centre Manager