



Ofcom's Second Review of Public Service Television Broadcasting Terms of Reference

Flybe welcomes the opportunity to respond Ofcom's terms of reference for the second review of public service television broadcasting.

Flybe is Europe's largest regional low cost airline operating from across the UK regions. We are the biggest private sector employer headquartered in the South West. We operate 157 routes from 23 UK and 34 European airports with passenger numbers expected to top 10 million by the end of 2008.

Based in Exeter, the Flybe business model is focused on providing low cost point-to-point air travel between Britain's regions, with more than 70% of routes operating between UK domestic airports.

Flybe is a low cost airline proudly serving the regions of the UK. We are maintaining and expanding the domestic air network to connect Britain's regions, and reduce the dependence on London as the dominant transport hub for domestic and European links.

Flybe contributes to the regeneration of the UK regions by removing the discrimination faced by transport-disadvantaged regions such as the South and South West, East Anglia, the north of Scotland and Northern Ireland, facilitating point to point travel that alleviates the need to travel via London.

Flybe has two key concerns.

Firstly, the withdrawal of programme making and in particular the reduction of regional news coverage. The loss of this service will reduce the identity and distinctiveness of life outside London and the major cities. The potential closure of the both Plymouth and Exeter facilities will reduce the access local businesses will have to take part in news stories. The Southwest is a distinct region and has little or no links with Bristol. To suggest otherwise shows a completely London Centric perspective.

Secondly weather sponsorship. Flybe already has an extensive sponsorship programme across the UK regions, sending nearly £1m annually. In the south west we sponsor both HTV and West Country and would be concerned at the loss of our ability to target locally and with that the potential loss of opportunities.

Flybe look to Ofcom to protect the provision of public service broadcasting across the UK. We accept the commercial challenges facing broadcasters but there is a need for competition to raise standards and increases choice.