

To: PSBReview
Cc: local.tv@virgin.net

FAO Ofcom PSB Review

I write to express serious concern that unlike the First Review of PSB the Terms of Reference proposed for the Second Review do not look at local television. This is contrary to the evidence of demand for Local TV as public service as universal service found in the DDR (Digital Dividend Review) research.

The absence of Local TV ignores the regulator research of three decades calling for a more local rather than regional TV news to be provided on TV and the work of the ITC (2003) which found viewers wanting a high quality local TV service in place of regional ITV – should ITV withdraw.

The recent Local TV Stakeholder meeting at Ofcom committed the Second Review to explore further the case for public funding for Local TV having drawn attention to Ofcom's Policy on Local TV which identifies the need for Local TV to be (at least) an element of DTT in order to satisfy reach and impact.

In the communities in which I work via local media agency Somerset Film / the Engine Room, there is a real and growing demand for local media production and a proper public service local TV platform on which to show the work, to facilitate dialogue and with which to counter isolation and the multitude of problems associated with the rural predicament. I appreciate and understand that most of Ofcom's thinking around local TV has been focused on the larger urban areas, but must confess to experiencing something close to desperation at the continuing lack of meaningful response to the many critical voices, of which mine is but one. We are expressing real concerns about the health and vitality of UK broadcasting, if as seems likely you make no appropriate intervention to safeguard local TV as a universally accessible public service.

I appreciate that local TV might not be seen as being not as sexy as HD, or as commercially robust as radio mikes, but by denying proper provision you will be failing to meet a real human need. History will judge this to have been a flawed process, predicated unduly and needlessly in favour of an insatiable and unaccountable market.

Phil Shepherd
Facilitator, Somerset Film and Video
Chair of Council, Community Media Association