

ESSENTIAL

Assessing the likely impact of ITV's regional news proposals

Final Report



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Executive summary

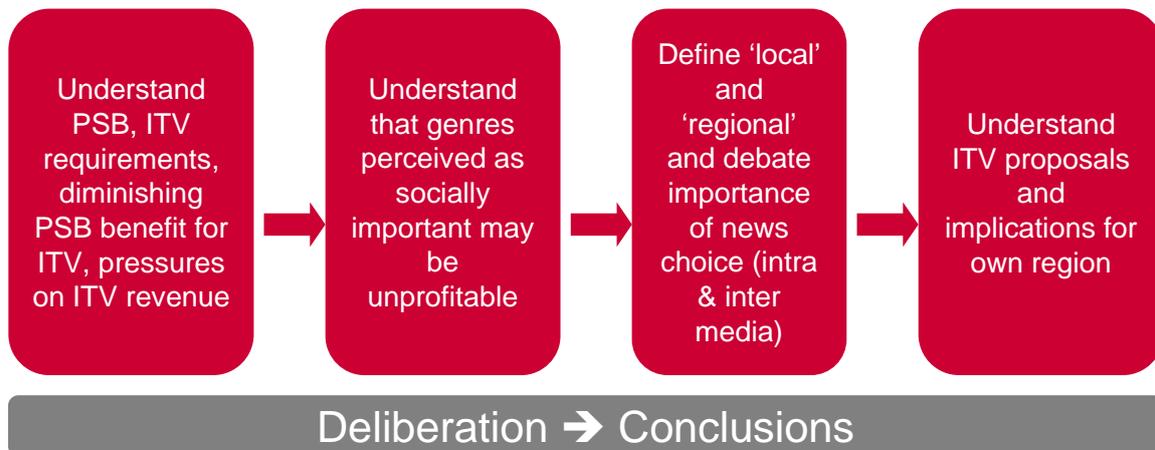
Background and context

Ofcom is currently undertaking its 2008-09 review of Public Service Broadcasting. Alongside this review, ITV submitted proposals to Ofcom advocating revised national and regional services on ITV1 which it stated would achieve the savings required for it to make a new generation of sustainable regional services.

Essential Research was commissioned to undertake deliberative research with respondents in ITV Regions likely to be affected by the proposals; the primary objective of the research was to assess the likely impact of ITV's proposals for regional news provision on citizens and consumers. It is important to note that the deliberative research was designed to explore participants' reactions to a version of ITV's regional news proposals that ITV has subsequently modified.

A deliberative approach was used as it required respondents to consider different perspectives from their own, to digest new, often complex information, and to discuss this with their peers before forming a judgment. Information was provided at key points throughout the sessions, either as briefing notes or presentations, paper surveys were also used to strengthen the weight of evidence.

The deliberative method may be summarised as follows:



Recruitment and methodology

Respondents were recruited on a balanced profile for each of the broadcast regions selected, with specific quotas placed on demographic characteristics, media platform ownership and consumption. The sessions were held between 16 April – 2 May 2008.

The findings from the topics covered are summarised below.

Public Service Broadcasters

Respondents received information regarding Public Service Broadcasting.

- Prior to this, the vast majority of respondents had only a vague prior understanding of PSBs

- Once informed, respondents regarded PSB regulations as positive and necessary
- ITV's PSB status came as a surprise to most, especially in terms of its requirement to provide regional news.
- The majority of respondents felt that ITV was performing well on its drama, entertainment and national news PSB obligations, and on its UK-made content; opinion was divided on its current affairs programming.
- ITV was broadly felt by the majority of respondents to be performing poorly on its regional news obligations.

Programming preferences, costs and profitability of programme-making

Respondents ranked 11 programme types in terms of their personal and societal importance.

- Across the sample, national news ranked first and religion last in both exercises
- Regional news ranked highly in terms of societal importance (2nd), slightly less so in personal importance (4th).

Respondents were given information on the cost and relative profitability of programme-making for ITV, and listened to a presentation briefly outlining the increasing commercial pressures on ITV, and the diminishing monetary value of their PSB benefits.

- Many observed that the programmes they considered important for society (including many PSB programmes) were relatively unprofitable for ITV.
- There was spontaneous discussion in several places as to whether it was in ITV's interests to retain its PSB status.

Localness, regionality and news

Respondents were asked to define their local area and region, and briefly discuss news sources for each.

- 'Localness' was generally more easily definable than regionality
- Local news was of greater personal importance to the majority of respondents than regional news.
- Local news was most commonly sourced from newspapers and TV, and regional news from TV.
- Only a minority used the internet for local and regional news.
- Only a small number of respondents had heard of ITV Local, and fewer had used it

Choice of news providers

- In theory, respondents believed that choice and plurality of news sources was a good thing, from the consumer and citizen perspective. In practice, the perceived amount of choice and plurality of local and regional news varied considerably from one location to another.
- Most believed that there should be a choice of providers of local and regional news, both for convenience and accessibility.
- Most respondents expressed an appetite for a choice of regional TV news providers, as the different editorial angles and presentation style of ITV and BBC news appealed to different tastes. In practice, very few watched regional news from more than one provider.

Impact of proposed changes

The deliberative research was designed to explore participants' reactions to ITV's proposals for regional news. These involved a plan to trim £40m a year from the regional budget by reducing the number of regional news programmes from 17 to 9 from 2009, while continuing to provide localised (or sub-regional) 'opts' within these news

programmes from 2009. A reduction of regional news minutage obligations was also proposed. The details of the ITV proposal have changed since the research was conducted. The revised proposals now include a greater degree of local newsgathering and some changes to the sub-regional structure. However, the overall proposal of reducing the number of regions to 9 remains as before. As an alternative, ITV put forward a proposal to continue to deliver the same number of services as at present but at lower resource levels.

The proposals explored in this research detailed changes that differed in each location, with some involving merging of 'sub regions' and merging of entire news regions in others (see Figure 1, p20). A reduction to the hours of news output was also explored in the research in each workshop, primarily by dropping mid-morning bulletins on weekdays and mid-afternoon bulletins on weekends. An alternative cost saving scenario was put forward to participants as an alternative to the merger proposals explored, which would see savings made within the current regulatory framework.

Commonly, respondent reactions were broadly influenced by:

- their perceptions of ITV
- satisfaction with the existing footprint of ITV regional news
- satisfaction with the quality of ITV regional news
- satisfaction with the equivalent BBC regional news service or footprint
- their level of engagement with regional news.

Responses to the proposed mergers explored and the alternative cost saving measures varied considerably across the sites, and no two locations were the same. It would therefore be misleading to report on voting statistics across the whole sample regarding the proposed mergers and the alternative cost saving option.

Across all locations the vast majority approved of the proposal to reduce the hours of output.

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A summary of final voting figures from each location is provided in the table below which provides an *indication* of those for and against the merger explored, reduction in hours and reactions to the alternative cost saving scenario presented. Detailed responses to the proposal explored in each location are provided in the Location Summary for each area.

Location	Merger tested			Reduced hours		Alternative cost saver			
	For	Against	Indiff	For	Against	Indiff	For	Against	Indiff
Bedford (ITV Anglia)	12	7	4	19	0	4			
Bath (ITV West)	11	9	3	18	5	0	9	13	1
Torquay (ITV Westcountry)	15	4	1	15	1	4	5	13	2
Oxford (ITV Thames Valley)	1	19	5	16	4	5	21	0	4
Darlington (ITV Tyne Tees)	7	10	4	19	0	2	16	2	3
Penrith (ITV Border)	3	19	2	16	3	5	14	4	6
Dumfries (ITV Border)	12	5	4	13	2	6	9	1	11
Galashiels (ITV Border)	0	21	2	11	2	10	11	8	4

Note: ITV has modified its proposals for regional news provision since this research took place.

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1 Introduction

Ofcom (the Office of Communications) is the regulator for the UK communications industries, with responsibilities across television, radio, telecommunications and wireless communications services.

Ofcom has a legislative requirement under Section 264 of the *Communications Act* to assess the designated public service broadcasters (PSBs), taken together, in terms of their delivery of the public service purposes set out in the Act. Each PSB has a specific remit as set out in Ofcom's 2004 Review of Public Service Broadcasting.

ITV1's remit is to focus on news and high production value origination from around the UK, with special additional responsibility for the provision of regional news, current affairs and other regional programming.

The objectives of Ofcom's 2008-09 PSB Review are:

- To evaluate how effectively the public purposes of public service broadcasting are being met by the public service broadcasters, particularly in light of changes in the way audiovisual content is consumed and delivered
- To assess the case for continued intervention in the delivery of audiovisual content to secure public service purposes
- To consider whether and how the emergence of new ways of delivering content to consumers and citizens might require change in the regulatory framework for public service broadcasting; and
- To assess future options for funding, delivering and distributing public service broadcasting, in the context of the uncertainty established in the first PSB Review about the sustainability of traditional funding models.

Research into these objectives is underway with final reporting scheduled for early 2009.

Alongside the 2008-09 PSB Review, ITV submitted proposals to Ofcom advocating revised national and regional services on ITV1. ITV put forward three routes for change, which it stated would achieve the savings required for it to make a new generation of sustainable regional services.

The first of these options was rejected by Ofcom and Members of Parliament. While understanding the economic pressures that ITV is under, Ofcom asked whether greater localism or sub-regionality could be incorporated into ITV's proposals. The second and third options addressed these concerns and these were the subject of the deliberative research on which this report is based.

Specifically, ITV's second proposal was to reduce the number of regional news programmes from 17 to 9, while providing 18 localised (or sub-regional) 'opts' within these news programmes from 2009. A reduction of regional news minutage obligations was also proposed.

ITV's third proposal was put forward as an alternative to regulatory reform, as a way of making the necessary savings under the current rules. In essence, this proposal was to continue to deliver the same number of services as at present but at much lower resource levels, stripping out cost in every area across the board.

Research objectives

Ofcom commissioned Essential Research to carry out eight deliberative sessions with respondents in ITV Regions likely to be affected by the proposals suggested at the time by ITV¹. Prior to this research study, a similar research project was commissioned by ITV and carried out by Opinion Leader Research (OLR), involving three deliberative sessions in Wolverhampton, Southampton and Newcastle.

The primary objective of this research was to assess the likely impact of ITV's proposals for regional news provision on citizens and consumers, as described at the time of research.

The qualitative component of the research was designed to explore **specific** impacts on consumers within relevant regions, namely:

- Anglia
- West and Westcountry
- Tyne Tees and Border
- Thames Valley

The key questions for citizens/consumers to be addressed through the research were:

- What do they think of ITV's role with regard to news?
- What do they think of ITV's proposals?
- How do they think the proposed changes would affect them personally?
- How do they think they might affect society as a whole?
- How might they respond to these changes (eg identifying alternative sources)?
- What are their priorities in terms of regional content provision?
- What do they think are the priorities for society as a whole?
- How to the relative cost of these services affect their views of the proposals?
- How are respondents' views affected when they are forced to choose between different available options?
- How do they think ITV provision should be structured in the future?
- Do these views vary by region, demographic or other factors?

Ofcom has commissioned a concurrent quantitative study involving a 15 minute survey of UK adults, representative of ITV regions across broad demographics such as age, gender and socio-economic group. The findings of this study are being published separately.

¹ ITV has subsequently modified its proposals since this research took place. See Executive Summary for details.

Methodology

A deliberative approach was used in this research, which followed that used in the study commissioned by ITV and conducted by OLR where appropriate. The deliberative methodology is suited to projects which require respondents to consider different perspectives from their own, to digest new, often complex information, and to discuss this with their peers, before forming a judgment.

Locations

Eight deliberative sessions were held in six ITV regions:

- Bedford (ITV Anglia)
- Bath (ITV West)
- Torquay (ITV Westcountry)
- Oxford (ITV Central licence area; ITV Thames Valley news service)
- Darlington (ITV Tyne Tees)
- Penrith (ITV Border)
- Dumfries (ITV Border)
- Galashiels (ITV Border)

The sessions were held between between 16 April – 2 May 2008.

Recruitment

Each session involved 21-25 members of the television viewing public. Respondents were recruited according to a balanced profile for each of the broadcast regions that were selected, and other selected characteristics relating to media platform ownership and consumption.

Quotas were placed on:

Age	Employment status
Gender	TV / internet usage
SEG	TV platform (Sky, Freeview, terrestrial)
Ethnicity	Frequency of ITV consumption
Location (urban / rural)	Frequency of ITV local programming consumption

Demographic quotas were set according to Census and BARB data and all participants completed screening questions to check their eligibility. Please see Appendix A for all recruitment documents.

Format of the sessions

Each session lasted 6 hours, which allowed sufficient time to explore attitudes, consider information and explore trade-offs. Following on from the approach used by OLR, deliberative research facilitated a deeper and more informed debate of PSB, regionality and ITV's proposed changes to its regional service. Information was provided at key points, either as briefing notes or presentations. Paper questionnaires were also used to stimulate discussion and provide quantitative data to strengthen the weight of evidence.

The format for the sessions included a mix of 'all-in' discussions, facilitated table discussions and self-facilitated tasks and questionnaires. Respondents sat in mixed groups comprising people from a range of backgrounds, ages and TV consumption, to encourage a 'citizen' perspective that took into account the needs and opinions of others with different backgrounds or habits.

In the facilitated table discussions, respondents worked in groups of around eight, each with a moderator who facilitated the discussion and captured themes on flipcharts and notepads. Ofcom staff and note-takers were also on hand throughout each of the sessions to record themes and relevant quotes. Tasks were designed to ensure respondents thought about their own personal perspective, but also from the 'citizen' perspective, taking into account society's interests as a whole. Handouts were lay-friendly and, in addition to the presentations, provided information at key points.

Respondents periodically reconvened to hear presentations and also to feed back on the results of their own deliberations.

An outline of the deliberative session structure is provided on the following page. All stimulus materials used in the course of the sessions are attached at Appendix B.

Outline of the deliberative session structure

Welcome and introduction by Essential Research
Table discussion : Perceptions of terrestrial channels
Info handout : Explanation of Public Service Broadcasting
Table discussion : Understanding and expectations of PSBs, ITV as a PSB.
Ofcom presentation and info handout : ITV and its PSB obligations, changing market context
Self-complete questionnaire : Personal and societal programming preferences
Table discussion and citizen exercise : Societal programming priorities
Info handout : Cost of ITV programme-making, profitability rankings
Table discussion : compare cost and profitability rankings, personal and societal programming preferences
Table discussion and consumer exercise : Output and consumer priorities
Table discussion : Regionality and regional news
Self-complete questionnaire : Consumption of local and regional news
Table discussion : Choice of news providers
Table discussion : ITV's regional role
Essential presentation : ITV's proposed regional news changes
Table discussion : Reactions to proposed changes
All-in : Reactions to proposed changes
Voting exercise : Response to proposed changes

2 Overall findings

The morning sessions covered the same content across all locations and were designed to equip respondents with the necessary information to make informed assessments of the proposed changes presented in the afternoon sessions. Respondents' observations from the morning sessions are reported at an overall level in the following sections of this report. Location-specific responses are reported in detail in the individual location summaries attached to this report.

Public Service Broadcasters

The day began with a warm-up session focussing on ITV's role compared to other PSBs. ITV was most readily associated with UK-entertainment, soaps and drama, national news and regional news. To the layman, ITV's purpose was to be the mainstream, populist broadcaster, and was contrasted, for better or for worse, with the more 'intellectual', 'serious' BBC.

Respondents were provided with a handout containing basic information about PSB purposes, the PSB broadcasters and their obligations. Prior to this, the vast majority of respondents had only a very vague understanding of PSB and were unaware of the specific PSB purposes, rules and practical implications, each PSB's individual remit and ITV's specific PSB obligations.

In general, respondents regarded PSB regulations as positive and necessary, and interpreted these rules as ensuring minimum amounts of specific programming among the major broadcasters. Several observed that the presence of PSB rules among the major broadcasters set an example for programming across the board, raising the bar for the non-PSB channels.

'It's about a breadth of programming' (M 50s Bedford)

'It forces a balance to be maintained' (F 40s Torquay)

'PSB rules lay down the guidelines about what's expected from each company' (M 20s Darlington)

'They're not just chasing the majority, there's programmes for people who like particular sort of things' (F 40s Penrith)

'It's good, it means there's are programmes from the UK, they're not all just from America. There's jobs here for our industry' (F 40s Penrith)

Without these regulations, respondents felt that the standard of programming in the UK would most likely drop.

'It'd go to the lowest common denominator – it'd be all soaps' (M 20s Bedford)

'We might miss out on educational programmes and documentaries' (F 20s Bath)

'It'd go outrageous, it'd be a free for all' (M 40s Darlington)

Several respondents queried whether regulation could control the quality of PSB programming or govern minimum standards.

'Who is the arbiter for quality?' (F 70s Bath)

ITV as a Public Service Broadcaster

Following the information handout regarding PSB rules and broadcasters generally, Ofcom representatives delivered a short presentation regarding ITV's PSB obligations, its role as a commercial broadcaster and the impact of the changing market context on profitability. A short table discussion followed.

ITV's PSB status came as a surprise to most, especially in its role as a key provider of regional TV news. Many assumed that national and regional news were staples of ITV's programming schedule that it would wish to produce regardless of regulatory obligations. The deliberative methodology was crucial in apprising respondents of this key aspect of ITV's purpose.

Reactions to the presentation varied:

- Most felt that ITV played a valuable role in providing a variety of programmes to suit a range of viewers, and that PSB programmes were an important part of this

'ITV have a good balance of soaps, news, current affairs, things like that' (M 20s Torquay)

- Several respondents expressed doubt that ITV's declining audience share was purely due to the changing market context, attributing much of this instead to poor quality programming.

'It just devalues the whole thing' (M 50s Bedford)

'If ITV had better quality programmes then maybe their share wouldn't drop so much' (M 30s Darlington)

- A small number were suspicious of ITV's claims regarding its falling profits and its financial position

'I don't believe their profits are falling as much as they say, they still seem considerable to me' (F 30s Penrith)

- Some spontaneously suggested that ITV may reconsider its PSB status in the face of declining profits

'ITV should do away with being a PSB and leave it up to the BBC' (M 30s Oxford)

- Others felt that, if ITV were to continue with its PSB obligations, there needed to be some control exercised over the quality of its PSB programming

- Regardless of profit and other business considerations, most respondents felt that ITV should continue to have a news presence, as this helped to define it as a popular national channel.

'It's not a question of profitability, providing the news' (M 40s Darlington)

On a broad assessment of its performance against PSB obligations, ITV was felt to be performing well on its drama, entertainment and national news programming, and particularly well on its contribution to UK-made content. Opinion varied on ITV's current affairs offering; while Trevor McDonald received consistently positive mentions, there was less agreement on ITV's other current affairs programmes. ITV was broadly felt to be performing *poorly* on its regional news obligations (although the extent of this differed across locations – see individual location summaries for details) and on its children's programming which many felt had declined over time.

There was little or no awareness of other ITV regional programming output:

'What other regional programming is there?' (M 40s Galashiels)

Awareness of ITV's religious programming was low, making it difficult to assess ITV's performance in this respect.

Programming preferences

Respondents individually undertook two paper questionnaire exercises, which required them to rank 11 different programme types according to their *importance to their household* and their *importance to society* (with the most important genre ranked first, and the least important ranked 11th). For the second of these exercises, respondents were asked to take a 'citizen perspective', considering what was important or of value to the whole of society and not just based on their personal tastes.

Respondents approached the question of what is 'important to society' in various ways, considering programmes that:

- are informative or educational (for example news and documentaries/factual)
- entertain, relax, or encourage escapism (e.g. soaps, dramas, entertainment, comedy, sport)
- bring the nation together (e.g. sport)
- stimulate new interests or hobbies, or broaden viewers' horizons (e.g. documentaries/factual, sport, entertainment)
- address 'life issues' through stories (e.g. dramas, soaps, daytime)
- have broad or popular appeal (e.g. sport, soaps, entertainment, dramas).

Several also commented that the *quality* of programmes transcends considerations of genre, and that poor quality or 'trashy' programmes are unimportant to society regardless of their programme type.

The overall rankings taken across the sample are provided below, along with their average ranking score.

Table 1 : Programme rankings

Importance to your household			Importance to society	
Rank		Average ranking score (1 = highest)		Average ranking score (1 = highest)
1	National News	4.1	National News	2.3
2	Drama	4.3	Regional News	3.9
3	Documentaries/ Factual	5.0	Documentaries/ Factual	4.9
4	Regional News	5.2	Sport	5.9
5	Comedy	5.3	Children's	6.1
6	Soaps	5.6	Soaps	6.2
7	Sport	5.7	Drama	6.2
8	Entertainment	5.9	Entertainment	6.3
9	Daytime	8.1	ComedyDrama	7.3
10	Children's	8.1	Daytime	8.5
11	Religion	9.0	Religion	8.5

Results are indicative only.

Rankings for programmes of importance to individual households varied widely, as reflected in the average ranking scores. There was greater consensus regarding types of programmes considered important to society, particularly those in the top three: national news, regional news, documentaries/ factual.

While regional news ranked slightly lower in terms of its importance to households (4th), it ranked only second to national news in terms of its importance to society (2nd). Respondents commented that:

'It's important to know what's going on in your area – especially if you've got kids'
(F 20s Torquay)

'Regional [news] is important – the community want to know what's going on, the weather, the roadworks' (F 40s Torquay)

'Regional news is important for keeping you up to date with local developments'
(M 60s Galashiels)

Of the 11 programme types listed, religious programming ranked lowest in importance to households and importance to society. Most respondents commented that they were not personally religious, and were not really aware of the content of religious programming on TV. The assumption for most was that religious programmes largely focussed on the Church of England to the exclusion of other religions; many felt there was little value in this type of broadcasting:

'If you want to be religious go to church' (F 40s Darlington)

During discussions there were several mentions of the value of programmes that educated viewers about a range of different religions. Respondents indicated that they did not think of these types of programmes as 'religious programming', but rather

grouped them in with 'documentaries/ factual', and attached value and worth to these types of programmes.

Programme-making and profitability

Respondents were given a handout illustrating the real costs to ITV of producing certain programme genres, and the relative profitability of each. The figures for this handout were taken from the OLR research, and were originally been supplied by ITV. Respondents compared the profitability of these programme genres to the rankings they had recorded in the previous exercise, and discussed any implications that arose.

Respondents expressed surprise at the cost and relative profitability of a number of these programme types. Many observed that programmes they considered important for society were not the most profitable and that PSB programmes overall were relatively unprofitable for ITV.

'The ones that are less beneficial for society make more money' (M 40s Oxford)

'I have expensive tastes, it seems' (F 50s Oxford)

'The things I classed as more rubbish seem to be more profitable' (F 50s Galashiels)

Several respondents expressed particular surprise at the relative cost of producing regional news, prompting some discussion about whether ITV should continue to produce it. In locations where the majority of respondents perceived their main ITV regional news programme to be of poor quality, some commented that ITV could 'cut its losses' and cease production.

'Do away with ITV regional news, let the BBC do it' (M 40s Bath)

'You'll see the important stories on the national news' (M 50s Bedford)

'If regional news was that important it would come up on the national news ... and the quality is not that brilliant anyway' (F 40s Torquay)

However, most expressed discomfort at the prospect of losing ITV's regional news programming, commenting that they would rather keep it but see an improvement in quality.

'Regional news perhaps needs a big overhaul but it must not be dropped' (M 40s Darlington)

'It's important to hold onto [regional news], but it's important that it's improved – then they might get bigger audiences' (M 40s Galashiels)

'They should keep regional news, national is looked after everywhere else' (M 50s Bath)

'When something happens locally it's nice to hear it locally' (F 40s Bath)

Should ITV be a Public Service Broadcaster?

Discussions regarding falling profitability and increased financial pressure prompted many to question whether it was in ITV's interests to retain its PSB status. The broad arguments put forward each way are summarised here:

- ITV should *continue* as a PSB because its PSB programmes are important to society and reach a large proportion of the population, and they give the channel a positive halo

'ITV have a responsibility to serve everyone' (M 30s Darlington)

'Profit has got to be the number one thing, but if they're a PSB they've got an obligation to the public' (M 50s Bath)

'They should keep being a PSB, it keeps up the quality of their programming, keeps viewers coming back' (M 20s Penrith)

- ITV should *only* continue being a PSB if it improves and revitalises its PSB programming – respondents reasoned that improved quality would increase audience share and consequently profitability

'Be a PSB 100% or not at all' (F 40s Bedford)

'Why can't they make programmes that are good for society and people like to watch?' (F 50s Oxford)

- ITV should *discontinue* being a PSB and just concentrate on broadcasting entertaining programmes that make money – respondents reasoned that television is an entertainment industry, and ITV should just be allowed to concentrate on entertainment as this is its key strength.

'ITV basically started off as an entertainment channel, that's what they should focus on' (M 50s Dumfries)

Several respondents also wondered whether Ofcom could consider relaxing the PSB rules for ITV, for example allowing it to broadcast its PSB programmes on its digital channels rather than its flagship channel (post-DSO), relaxing scheduling rules to allow PSB programmes to be broadcast at different times, or allowing ITV to narrow its PSB portfolio and concentrate on a smaller number of programme types.

3 Localness, regionality and news

In the afternoon sessions respondents were asked to define and describe localness and regionality, to list sources of news at each level, and to discuss the issue of choice as it related to news providers. A central purpose of this exercise was to assess whether consumer definitions of regionality loosely matched their regional news footprints. Paper surveys were also used to provide further data from these sessions. Survey responses are attached at Appendix C.

Localness and regionality

Discussions revealed that, in general, 'localness' was somewhat instinctive and easy to define, with a number of tangible and intangible elements called upon as evidence of localness. Respondents could list various elements in their area that aided their definition of localness, such as sporting teams, festivals, cultural events, historic sites, nearby towns and villages, local attractions, local industries, cultural, linguistic, political or historic identity, and historic rivalries with neighbouring towns. On most occasions, respondents could reach some consensus as to what they regarded as 'local'.

'Local is whatever you can relate to' (F 40s Oxford)

'It's towns near me. Or where I can walk, without getting in the car' (F 60s Darlington)

Defining 'the region' was less clear-cut for most and generally involved rationalisation, rather than instinctive reaction. Many commented that the distinction between 'local' and 'regional' was an arbitrary one:

'Although the telly differentiates the two, we don't really differentiate them' (M 30s Bath)

More often than not, respondents referred to imposed definitions such as counties, political or electoral boundaries, practical or administrative boundaries (e.g. *'the phonebook!'*), or definitions offered by regional TV news coverage from ITV or the BBC. As a result, discussion regarding the suitability of regional news footprints were often circular as descriptions of regions were often, by definition, TV regions.

Regional identity

There were some locations where there was a relatively strong sense of regional identity. Those in the north were particularly strong (Darlington in Teesside, Penrith in Cumbria, and Dumfries and Galashiels in Southern Scotland), and Torquay respondents conveyed their regional identity as being distinctive from the surrounding areas.

'We as North Easterners are very interested in what is happening in the North East' (F 50s Darlington)

'I'd say we're from the Peninsular, but we're not like the Cornish. We like to know what's going on in our patch here' (F 50s Torquay)

There was some sense of regional identity among respondents in Bedford and Bath, although this was not particularly unifying as for some other locations. Regionality was

an issue of some difficulty in Oxford, a location which has been allocated various regional definitions in different contexts over time.

ITV's regional news footprint

The ITV regional news footprint broadly matched consumer definitions in Darlington (Tyne Tees), Bath (ITV West), Torquay (ITV Westcountry) and Bedford (East Anglia), as respondents' spontaneous descriptions of their regions generally reflected their current regional news footprint.

ITV's regional news footprint did not match consumer definitions in the Borders region locations of Penrith, Dumfries or Galashiels, as respondents in each location described their region as being separate from the others and, in many cases, excluding the others. Regional distinctions in these locations were either based on nationality (English v Scottish locations), municipal boundaries, and a suggested regional rivalry (Scottish Borders different to Dumfries & Galloway).

In Oxford, discussions regarding regionality and the suitability of the current ITV news footprint were inconclusive, owing to its uncertain regional identity.

Interest in local and regional spheres

In terms of interest in local and regional issues, respondents tended to be more interested in their immediate surroundings than happenings in the broader context of their region.

'You're more interested in what's going on around you than 20 miles down the road' (F 70s Bath)

'Things from further away don't interest me as much' (F 20s Torquay)

'It's better to have national and local news than national and regional' (M 30s Oxford)

In terms of interest in news coverage on TV from the local area or region, opinion was often divided on preferences for more localised content (which was often perceived to be dominated by 'softer' or human interest stories), or content from a larger area (with stories perceived by many to be more 'newsworthy'). In locations where there was felt to be little 'hard' news to report on a regular basis, some respondents expressed dissatisfaction with news content they described as 'padding' or 'fluff'.

'It's a bit drawn out – it could be more concise' (M 50s Bedford)

'There's a lot of padding in the news today – some non-stories' (M 20s Penrith)

Others argued that it was better to include positive stories in the local or regional news, leaving the 'doom and gloom' for the national news. This theme often recurred in deliberations regarding ITV's proposed changes to its regional news; relevant comments are reported in the location summaries.

Local and regional news: importance and satisfaction

Responses to the questionnaire on local and regional news were aggregated, and responses regarding local news were compared to those for regional news. These findings suggest that:

- *Local* news was of greater personal importance to respondents than *regional* news (86% net importance local news, 78% net importance regional news)
- Satisfaction with coverage of important aspects and issues were similar for local news (51% net satisfaction) than regional news (49% net satisfaction)
- The amount of available news and information across all sources was *about right* for the majority of respondents at the local and regional levels (69% for each).
- On balance, the remainder tended to think there was *too little* information at the local level (26%) and regional level (22%), rather than *too much*.

Satisfaction levels regarding the *amount* and relevant *coverage* of regional news were lower in the northern locations and Oxford (see Appendix C).

- Low satisfaction with the amount of local news was recorded in Galashiels, Dumfries, Darlington and Oxford
- Lower satisfaction with the amount of regional news was recorded in Galashiels, Penrith and Darlington
- Lower satisfaction with the coverage of local *and* regional news was recorded in Galashiels, Dumfries and Darlington.

Sources of local and regional news

Across the sample, questionnaire responses indicated that respondents most commonly sourced local news from newspapers (85%) and TV (78%), and regional news from TV (88%).

Table 2 : Sources of local and regional news

Local news		Regional news	
Newspaper	85%	TV	88%
TV	78%	Newspaper	53%
Radio	45%	Radio	44%
Other	29%	Internet	15%
Internet	22%	Other	10%
Rarely/never use local news	6%	Rarely/never use regional news	8%

Q. 'How do you normally get your [local / regional] news and information?' Results are indicative only.

Radio was also a common source of local and regional news across the sample, with the exception of Dumfries where consumption was considerably lower (see Appendix C).

In rural communities and locations where respondents felt under-served, word of mouth was frequently mentioned as a bona fide source of news.

'The jungle drums, the gossip – this is a close knit community' (F 50s Galashiels)

'Word of mouth is better than radio, TV...the lot!' (M 60s Galashiels)

More than 1/5 of respondents claimed to use the internet for local news (this was higher in Oxford and Bedford). Use of the internet as a source for regional news was notably lower (1 in 7). However, qualitative discussions suggested that the majority of those who went online for news tended to access national and international news stories rather than local and regional ones.

'I use the internet for national news, but not local... I don't think it'd be specific enough' (M 50s Bath)

In locations where respondents felt underserved by local and regional news generally, alternative sources were mentioned more frequently. In Oxford, Dumfries, Galashiels and Darlington in particular, respondents mentioned a broader range of sources, including online access, Ceefax, Teletext, red button services and, less commonly, RSS feeds, Google email updates and mobile news services. Respondents using these alternative sources varied in age, gender, socioeconomic group and technical competence, and were motivated by an interest in local and regional events that were not adequately covered by traditional news sources.

'People go to the internet or Teletext now' (M 40s Darlington)

'[Teletext] makes it easier to control which stories you read. You can just read the ones that are local to you.' (M 50s Oxford)

ITV Local

Only a small proportion of respondents across the board had heard of ITV Local, and fewer had used it. Among those who had accessed the site, most had done so in passing, with very few frequent visitors. One or two respondents commented that it provided an invaluable service, and used it daily. One respondent expressed doubt at the ability of a national brand to deliver a truly local service, and had shied away from the site on this basis.

Attitudes to accessing local news online

Attitudes towards accessing local and regional news online were mixed. In the main, responses to a move towards online local news were determined by age and internet usage, with younger and more experienced internet users more amenable to the idea.

'With internet TV, you can get anything you want, and it's for free' (M teens Galashiels)

'[Online news is good] because you can choose your story' (M 20s Bath)

While young people (aged 18-30) were more receptive to the idea of a shift from TV towards the internet for local or regional news, they were also the group who were least engaged with news generally. Those in their 30s and 40s were more likely to be regular and comfortable internet users and many were already accessing news online, but expressed greater interest in accessing national and international stories, rather than local or regional stories.

'Online is good if you want to catch up on something but it's not the first place I would go to' (M 30s Penrith)

Respondents in their 50s and above were the group who were the most engaged with news (including local, regional, national and international news), but in general were the least comfortable and most infrequent internet users. The older cohort were more likely to use traditional news sources as their first port of call (e.g newspapers, TV and radio) rather than the internet.

In the short term, many rejected the idea of a wholesale shift from linear TV towards the internet for local news, expressing a preference to use the internet as a *supplementary* source of news, or because of 'citizen' concerns for those who did not have internet access, such as elderly people. Many referred to TV news as a social experience and a family institution, and conveyed some discomfort with a transfer towards the internet, the use of which was regarded as a solus experience:

'Regional news is a necessity, and I don't have the internet at home' (F 40s Darlington)

'Not everyone has internet access but the older folk are more involved in the area' (M 40s Galashiels)

'Not everyone can use the internet' (F 20s Torquay)

'TV is an age old tradition – you sit down at 6 o'clock and watch the news' (F 30s Penrith)

'Yes, TV is family time, you sit down together and it gives you something to talk about' (F 40s Penrith)

'[If it's not on TV] it's not water-cooler stuff then is it?' (M 30s Darlington)

'Online might suit the younger people but it's no good for older people' (F 40s Penrith)

'I think they've got to wait a few years, it's not mainstream yet' (F 30s Penrith)

4 Choice of news providers

Importance of choice

Issues of choice and plurality were raised both spontaneously and as prompted in discussions. In theory, respondents believed that choice and plurality of news sources were necessary and positive from both the citizen and consumer perspective. Some commonly mentioned reasons were that:

- A choice of news providers creates competition, mitigating against distortions of stories or facts by providing more than one opinion, and preventing the overall quality of news from stagnating

'If there is choice then there is competition which will improve the journalism' (M 50s Bath)

- Different news sources caters to those with different needs, ensuring equitable access to news - for example those with visual or hearing impediments, language or literacy difficulties, those who are housebound or immobile

'You have to think about blind people and deaf people, people who have trouble reading, not everything suits them' (M 40s Galashiels)

- Different news sources caters to consumers' various lifestyles and working hours, allowing them to choose sources according to their preference

'You can pick the format that's most convenient to you' (F 50s Galashiels)

- Different news sources can have different agendas or angles on a news story, by exercising choice consumers can make up their own mind as to the real facts and implications

'Its good to have different perspectives from different sources' (M 30s Bath)

- Choice of news sources, and the freedom to exercise choice, were mentioned as markers of a healthy democratic society, setting Britain apart from countries where there was governmental control over information (current examples given were China and Zimbabwe)

- A variety of news sources on different platforms can serve complementary purposes; as one group explained, TV sensationalises stories and draws the attention of a range of people; newspaper provides details and in-depth coverage; radio provides immediacy and updated news; and the internet provides a wide range of information.

Some respondents commented that choice should not be confused with replication, and that it was more important to have different perspectives on one story than to see the same story in different formats:

'Different angles can be more important than choice per se' (M 50s Bath)

Choice of local and regional news providers

Most believed that there should be a choice of news providers at both a local and regional level, for both individual convenience and citizen accessibility.

In practice however, perceived choice and plurality of local and regional news varied considerably from one location to another. Regarding TV news, respondents in locations with differing news footprints for BBC and ITV regional news felt they did not have a choice of providers as the two programmes were essentially covering different content.

'BBC covers a number of regions whereas ITV Border is more local' (F 30s Penrith)

Respondents generally indicated an appetite for a choice of regional TV news providers, because the perceived editorial angles and presentation styles of the BBC and ITV appealed to different tastes:

'The BBC's for the older generation' (M 20s Torquay)

'ITV feels less formal and more friendly' (F 40s Torquay)

'BBC's a lot slicker' (Bath F 20s)

'ITV's more fun than the BBC!' (Bedford M 30s)

'The BBC regional news feels more personal' (M 30s Oxford)

Discussion also turned to the issue of whether local and regional news should necessarily be provided on TV, or whether it was sufficient to turn to other sources. While respondents could access local news from other mainstream sources (e.g newspaper, radio, online, word of mouth) and alternative sources (e.g. Teletext, Ceefax, red button services), there was some objection to the notion of being *forced* to seek news from sources that were less readily available and accessible than TV.

'TV is for everyone' (F 70s Penrith)

'[TV is] instant, it's the medium most people use' (F 20s Bath)

5 Impact of proposed changes - summary

The final session of the day involved extensive discussion and debate regarding ITV's proposals for change, as described at the time of research².

Representatives from Essential Research presented ITV's proposals for change, and respondents were given opportunities to ask further questions of Ofcom representatives. The proposals for change differed for each location, with some involving merging of 'subregions' and others involving merging entire news regions. In each location, it was proposed that there would be a dedicated 6-minute sub-regional 'opt' within the main news programme, and a dedicated late evening bulletin for those sub-regions.

Figure 1 (over page) summarises the current ITV regions and their respective regional news programmes and opts, and news regions and opts proposed by ITV at the time of research. ITV also proposed a reduction to its hours of output, primarily by dropping mid-morning bulletins on weekdays and mid-afternoon bulletins on weekends.

After presenting and discussing the proposed mergers and reduction in hours, respondents were presented with an alternative cost saving scenario, which would see savings made within the current regulatory framework, through a reduction in outside broadcasts, specialist reporters, studio and graphic design and so on. This scenario was presented as a strict alternative to the main proposal for subregional or regional mergers.

Following table discussions regarding the proposed changes, respondents convened for an all-in discussion of findings from each table. Respondents then completed an individual voting card indicating their preference for each element of the proposals.

² ITV has subsequently modified its proposals since this research took place.

Figure 1 : Current regions, proposed regions and sub-regional opts (as at the time of the research)

ITV Region	Main news programme	Additional opts	Proposed region	Proposed sub-regional opts
1. Meridian	Meridian Tonight (South East) Meridian Tonight (South) Thames Valley Tonight	Pen-regional at weekends for S/SE Sub-regional weekday bulletins for S/SE Sub-regional bulletins for TV	1. Meridian	Meridian South East Meridian South Thames Valley
2. Westcountry	Westcountry Live	20 mins for Barnstaple 20 mins for Exeter 20 mins for Plymouth 20 mins for Truro	2. South West	Cornwall Devon/West Dorset/West Somerset Current ITV West region
3. West	The West Tonight	-		
4. Central	Central Tonight (East) Central Tonight (West)	Sub-regional weekday bulletins Pan-regional at weekends	3. Central	Central East Central West
5. Anglia	Anglia News (East) Anglia News (West)	-	4. Anglia	Anglia East Anglia West
6. Yorkshire	Calendar North Calendar South	All other bulletins pan-regional	5. Yorkshire	West Yorkshire East Yorkshire
7. Tyne Tees	North East Tonight (North) North East Tonight (South)	All other bulletins pan-regional	6. Tyne Tees/ Border	Cumbria South Scotland Current Tyne Tees region
8. Border	Lookaround	40 mins for English Borders 40 mins for Scottish Borders		
9. London	London Tonight	-	7. London*	
10. Wales	Wales Tonight	-	8. Wales*	
11. Granada	Granada Reports	-	9. Granada*	

**ITV has proposed no change to the Granada, Wales and London services. ITV1's news in Northern Ireland, Central and Northern Scotland, and the Channel Islands is provided by broadcasters other than ITV plc.*

Overall response

Responses to the proposed mergers and the alternative cost saving measure varied considerably across the sites, and no two locations were the same. It would therefore be misleading to report on voting statistics across the whole sample regarding the proposed mergers and the alternative cost saving option.

However, across all locations the vast majority approved of the proposal to reduce hours of output. Table 3 presents the results from voting across the sample.

Table 3 : Proposal to reduce hours

	Number of votes	%
For	127	71%
Against	17	9%
Indifferent	36	20%
Total	180	100%

Results are indicative only.

A summary of final voting by location is provided in Table 4 (over page), which provides an overall indication of participants' views.

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Table 4 : Summary of reactions to proposals (as described at time of research)

Location	Satisfaction – current ITV news footprint	Satisfaction – quality of ITV news	Merger explored	Reduced hours		Alternative cost saver	
				For:	Against:	For:	Against:
Bedford	Satisfied	No major issues	For: 12 Against: 7 Indiff: 4	For: 19 Against: 0 Indiff: 4	For: 19 Against: 0 Indiff: 4	For: 19 Against: 0 Indiff: 4	
Bath	Satisfied	No major issues, like different styles of BBC and ITV news	For: 11 Against: 9 Indiff: 3	For: 18 Against: 5 Indiff: 0	For: 18 Against: 5 Indiff: 0	For: 9 Against: 13 Indiff: 1	
Torquay	Sometimes satisfied, coverage patchy but accepted due to low pop'n	No major issues, like different styles of BBC and ITV news	For: 15 Against: 4 Indiff: 1	For: 15 Against: 1 Indiff: 4	For: 15 Against: 1 Indiff: 4	For: 5 Against: 13 Indiff: 2	
Oxford	Disillusioned with historical changes. Dissatisfied, ITV Thames Valley region too large.	No major issues	For: 1 Against: 19 Indiff: 5	For: 16 Against: 4 Indiff: 5	For: 16 Against: 4 Indiff: 5	For: 21 Against: 0 Indiff: 4	
Darlington	Satisfied, prefer ITV news footprint to BBC	Majority feel quality poor	For: 7 Against: 10 Indiff: 4	For: 19 Against: 0 Indiff: 2	For: 19 Against: 0 Indiff: 2	For: 16 Against: 2 Indiff: 3	
Penrith	Satisfied, prefer ITV news footprint to BBC	No major issues	For: 3 Against: 19 Indiff: 2	For: 16 Against: 3 Indiff: 5	For: 16 Against: 3 Indiff: 5	For: 14 Against: 4 Indiff: 6	
Dumfries	Dissatisfied - feel underserved by both ITV and BBC	Majority feel quality very poor	For: 12 Against: 5 Indiff: 4	For: 13 Against: 2 Indiff: 6	For: 13 Against: 2 Indiff: 6	For: 9 Against: 1 Indiff: 11	
Galashiels	Dissatisfied - feel underserved by both ITV and BBC	Majority feel quality very poor	For: 0 Against: 21 Indiff: 2	For: 11 Against: 2 Indiff: 10	For: 11 Against: 2 Indiff: 10	For: 11 Against: 8 Indiff: 4	

Results are indicative only.

Factors driving responses to the proposed mergers

There were some common factors that broadly influenced reactions across the locations, which included:

- Perceptions of ITV
- Satisfaction with the existing *footprint* of ITV regional news
- Satisfaction with the *quality* of ITV regional news.
- Satisfaction with the equivalent BBC regional news service or footprint
- Their level of engagement with regional news.

Across the locations, there were some common sentiments among respondents who were for, against or indifferent to the proposed merger in their area. These are summarised in turn below.

Among those who were **in favour** of the proposed merger in their area, respondents commented that they:

- currently received little or no local TV news coverage, and thought they would most likely receive more coverage under the 6 minute opt specifically dedicated to their area
- were only interested in news about their area, and liked the prospect of a 6-minute, clearly signposted, scheduled opt
- thought their current TV regional news provision was very poor, and saw the proposed changes as an opportunity for improvement
- did not think their current regional news was engaging, relevant or sufficiently important and that news from a larger region would be more interesting, or would contain bigger and more important stories
- perceived that the cost savings would continue to be invested in quality programmes, such as UK-made dramas

Among those who were **indifferent** to the proposed mergers, respondents commonly mentioned that:

- although interested in local and regional news, their current TV regional news provision was very poor which had already pushed them to find news from other sources and platforms
- they did not currently watch much regional news anyway
- they already had a preference for BBC news, and did not often watch ITV's regional news programme
- they were not terribly interested in news about their local area or region
- they thought it was likely they would continue to get the same news about their region under the new proposal as under their current arrangements
- they would switch to BBC regional news instead.

Those who were **against** the proposal commonly felt that:

- their current regional TV news provision was very poor, and the proposed changes would make it even worse
- the coverage of regional news on ITV was quite adequate, and they objected to losing such an amount of dedicated coverage for their area
- they currently appreciated having a choice of regional TV news programmes, but felt that the proposal would mean they would watch BBC news only

- ITV regional news provided more localised coverage than the alternative BBC news programme, and the proposed changes would make their news less local
- the proposal amounted to a decrease in choice, and choice is important to society
- they were not interested in watching news from further away within their regional news programme, as they had no affiliation with that area
- they felt their area would receive little or no news coverage under the new proposal (even with the dedicated 6-minute subregional opt)
- ITV could potentially make cost savings in other areas, rather than altering its regional news offering
- they did not believe the cost savings would be invested in quality TV.

Majority approved reduction of hours

The proposal for reduced hours was presented as involving the dropping mid-morning bulletins on weekdays and mid-afternoon bulletins on weekends. This proposal was met with very little opposition across the board, as:

- very few respondents claimed to personally watch bulletins broadcast at these times
- few believed that the content of bulletins changed significantly throughout the course of the day
- in locations where the quality of ITV's regional news was felt to be poor, some felt that a reduction in the amount of news was overdue
- few felt that the bulletins provided any substantive news

'Those bulletins are only a taster anyway – they're not the whole story' (M 20s Oxford)

Taking the citizen perspective, some respondents mentioned the interests of those who may watch news during the day, such as the housebound, shift workers, retirees and others. But taking a view of the wider picture, it was felt that these people were a minority, they could access local and regional news from other sources if necessary, and that bulletins were probably 'overkill' anyway.

'If you're in all day, you don't want news on all the time' (F 40s Bath)

'You've always got the radio for updates' (M 40s Torquay)

Alternative saver helped crystallise response to main proposal

Reactions to the proposal for alternative cost-saving measures ultimately served as a valuable exercise in crystallising sentiments towards the proposal for regional or subregional mergers. Reactions to this alternative option varied by location.

In some sites, respondents reacted to the proposal with suspicion, commenting that this option seemed an illogical course of action for ITV to take.

'Aren't you going to lose viewers to the other side?' (M 40s Oxford)

'That deliberately sounds worse than the other proposal' (M 40s Bath)

'It affects the viewing pleasure' (M 20s Oxford)

For many, poor quality perceptions of regional news meant that this option was seen as either a welcome simplification or a laughable alternative to their current programme:

'It couldn't get any worse' (Darlington F 30s)

'It's low quality anyway, and you don't need 2 presenters in the studio, all that chat is distracting' (F 40s Darlington)

'It sounds like an improvement!' (F 50s Dumfries)

In some locations however, this option was actively considered as an option, or was regarded as an improvement on the current offering:

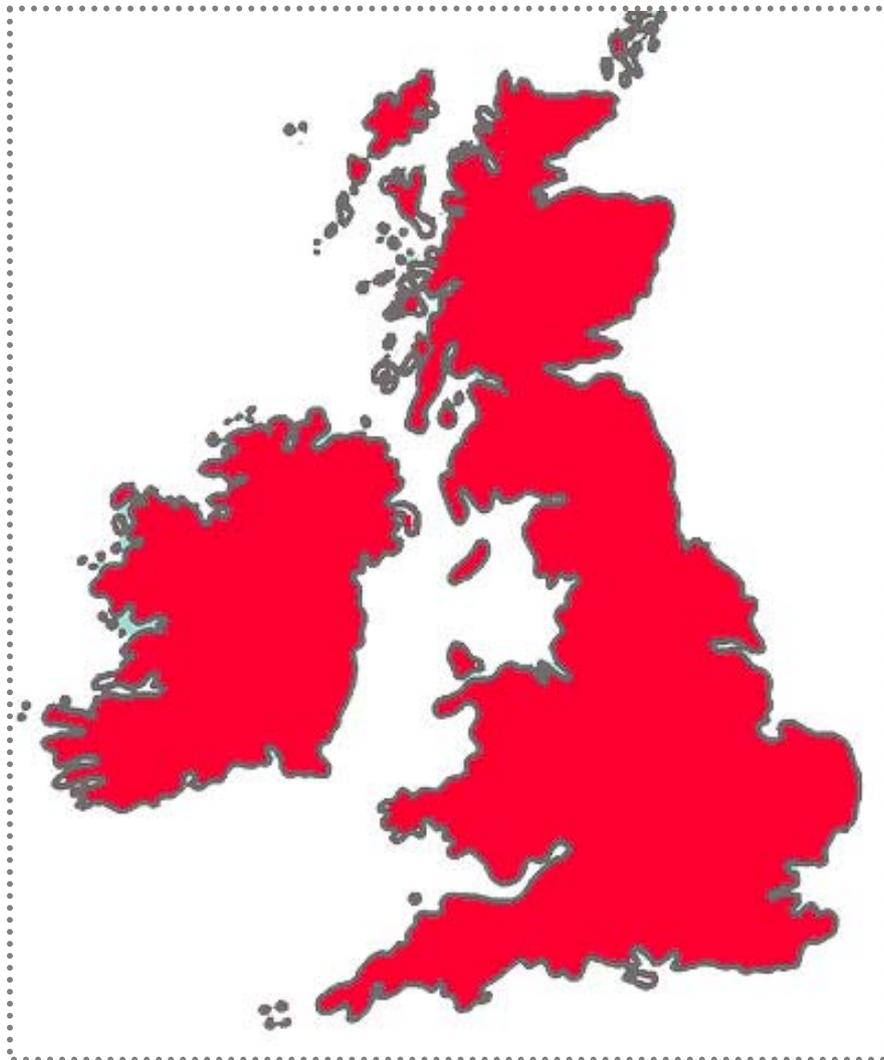
'Relevance to my area is more important than quality, that's what they need to fix' (M 50s Darlington)

'The news doesn't need to be fancy - cardboard cut outs would be OK as long as we get our news' (F 40s Dumfries)

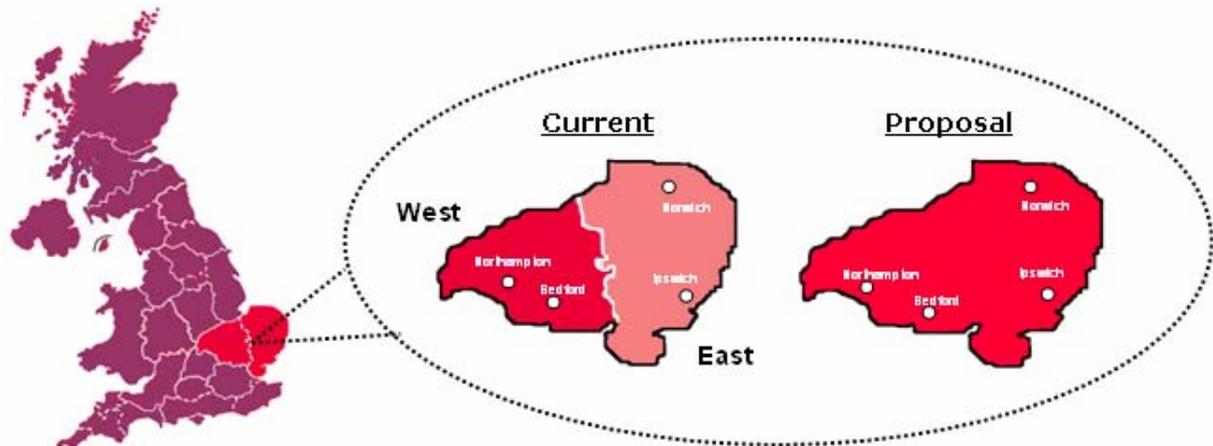
Detailed responses to the proposals in each location are provided in the following section.

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Location summaries



Bedford (ITV Anglia)



Proposal explored in the research: To phase out full sub-regional services within ITV Anglia region, but retaining East/West Anglia sub-regional opts at key times of day.

Localness and regionality

Respondents at the Bedford deliberative session included a mix of long-term dwellers and those who commuted out of the area to work. Many spoke of provenance or family ties in neighbouring counties, or the Midlands.

Respondents defined their local area as the Bedford town centre, Bedford, Bedfordshire, Shelton and Roxton, or anywhere within a 30 mile radius for commuters. Some observed that their notion of what was 'local' was defined by media – *'where the local paper covers'*.

The region was more difficult to define, although most referred to the area defined by regional TV news providers – Anglia and BBC East. Others felt it stretched to the border of East Anglia, the East Midlands and as far as Greater London; or Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Kettering, Luton, Peterborough and Milton Keynes. No real consensus was reached on this point.

ITV as a PSB

There was some confusion as to what the PSB rules meant, but a basic understanding emerged of the commercial pressures on ITV –

'They need to cut their costs or show more adverts' (F 40s)

Some expressed little sympathy for ITV's position however.

'It's reality, they have to roll with it' (M 20s)

Some spontaneously commented that it might be in ITV's best interests to consider dropping its PSB obligations altogether. Outside of these discussions, there were a significant number of respondents who watched few ITV programmes and had little concern for the future of the broadcaster.

Programming priorities

At the conclusion of the consensus exercise, all three tables placed regional news in the top 5 programme types of importance to society, consistently following national news in the rankings.

Regarding the programme types ITV should continue to make, there was debate surrounding the inclusion of regional news. One table felt that it was acceptable to drop regional news from the rankings as

'National news is more important' (M 20s)

'You'll see the important stories on the national news' (M 50s)

Another table debated the comparative importance of national or regional news, and was undecided as to which of these belonged in the top five rankings. The third table commented that, if ITV needed to save on costs it could consider dropping its national news rather than regional news, as there were only two broadcasters showing regional news, but several showing national news.

Choice

Overall there was relatively low engagement with regional news among Bedford respondents.

Respondents generally considered choice of news providers to be important as it stimulated competition and increased quality, and meant people with different access needs and personal tastes were catered for.

Choice was felt to be more important at the regional level than the local level as local news tended to be less controversial. However, at the regional level few believed they had an extensive choice of providers. Local news sources cited were predominantly local newspapers and the BBC's local radio and website; few additional news sources were mentioned beyond these. Many valued the functional aspect of local news, such as traffic and weather reports before the human interest and 'softer' stories; all agreed that more detail at the local level would be welcome.

Regional news was felt to be of more importance to older people in the population; for the remainder there was little preference shown between regional or local news.

ITV & BBC

Overall there were no major criticisms regarding quality or coverage of ITV or the BBC's regional news programmes. Amongst those who watched both there was general agreement about the differences between the two programmes' tone and focus; ITV's coverage was seen as more lively, with more human interest stories -

'it's more fun than the BBC' (F 40s)

But some preferred the BBC's *Look East* programme -

'BBC's got the edge' (M 50s)

Accessing local news online

There were isolated mentions of use of online news sources, although these tended to be for national or international news, rather than local or regional. Those who did claim to be accessing news online liked the convenience and greater detail offered by this medium, but did not express any real appetite for online local news.

Reaction to the proposed changes

1. Merger with Anglia West

Most respondents were either in **favour** of or **indifferent** to the merger explored in the research for a variety of reasons, including:

- low engagement with regional news generally
- low engagement with ITV news
- a belief that the merger did not represent a serious threat or change to the status quo
- hope that the proposed changes would lead to improvement of ITV's current programme with less 'fluff' and more concise news
- the BBC already broadcasts a pan-regional programme with sub-regional (East and West) opts – although few clearly understood the specifics of this.

'You'd hope there'd be less mundane local crap' (M 50s)

Respondents assumed that ITV would make the merger work as it was not in their interests to lose viewers. The merger was generally approved on the condition that the new framework would deliver a good quality news programme with important stories, rather than human interest or 'fluffy duck' stories -

'As long as the important stories are the focus' (M 50s)

Younger people, who tended to be less engaged with news generally, suggested even more radical reductions than those proposed -

'They could do 60 second bulletins of important stories from the region, like the BBC does' (M 20s)

Those **against** the merger objected on the grounds that the merged region and resulting programme would no longer be a 'regional' programme -

'Norwich isn't local' (F 30s)

'That's five big towns they're merging' (F 40s)

Some also queried whether a 6-minute opt would be sufficient to cover stories of importance to the sub-region.

'They could balance the minutes back towards Anglia West' (F 60s)

Other concerns related to potential job losses in the area, and questions about where the cost savings would ultimately be spent – for example, whether it would be invested back into programme-making, distributed to shareholders, or paid to senior ITV executives. Most wished to see evidence of investment from savings made into better quality programming on ITV -

'Will other programmes be better as a result?' (M 30s)

Several respondents wanted some assurance that the resulting programme from the merged subregions would be of a high standard, and wondered how this could be ensured.

Final voting on the proposed merger are summarised in the table below.

For	12
Against	7
Indifferent	4
Total	23

Results are indicative only

2. Reduced minutage

Respondents broadly agreed with the proposed reduction, as it was likely to have little or no effect on them personally. Some felt that it might affect shiftworkers and those who only watched daytime bulletins, but on a 'majority rules' argument it was felt that this small minority could find their news from other sources if they so wished.

As above, respondents tended to agree with the proposed reduction in principal, but expressed some concern that these cost savings would simply contribute to ITV profits, and not quality programme-making.

Final voting on the proposed reduction in minutage are summarised in the table below.

For	19
Against	0
Indifferent	4
Total	23

Results are indicative only

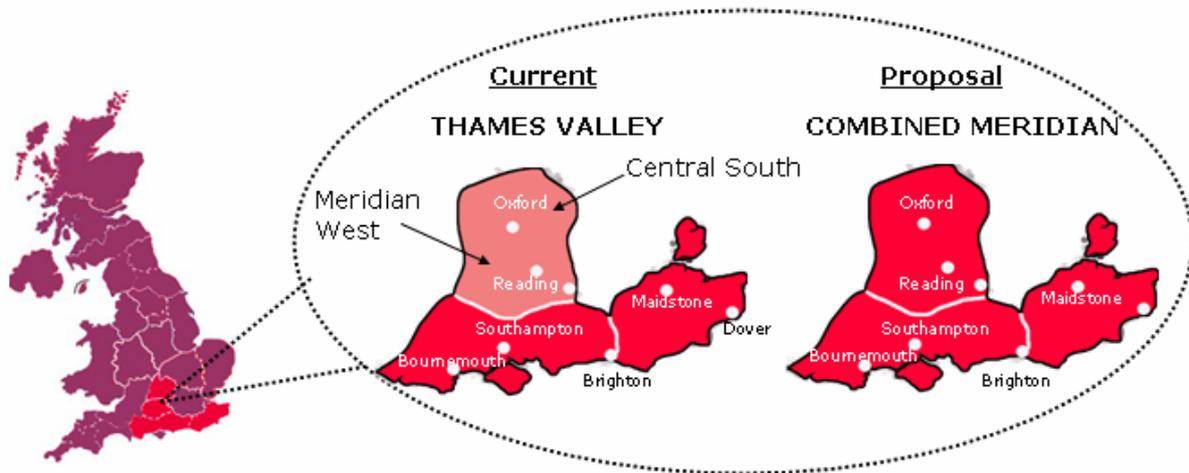
3. Alternative cost saving option

The alternative cost saving option was not squarely rejected as in some other locations, although there was some ambivalence about this option. On the one hand, it was conceded that ITV could do as they pleased, but that viewers would desert them if the resulting programme was of poor quality. (Respondents seemed unconcerned about the implications for choice here.) Others felt that the standard of production was already quite poor, so this option would make scant difference.

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At its conclusion, most respondents preferred the merged region to the alternative cost saving option. Many felt that the resulting news programme would be likely to 'drag on' with few stories and unattractive visual presentation.

Oxford (ITV Thames Valley)



Proposal explored in the research: To discontinue the separate ITV Thames Valley service, (comprising the Oxfordshire part of ITV Central and Meridian's 'west' sub region) and to merge this with Meridian's South and South East sub regions, creating a single Meridian region with sub-regional opts including Thames Valley

Localness and regionality

Oxford is an unusual location in that it has been grouped into various regions over time, by both ITV and the BBC as well as geopolitically. There was relatively high awareness of the various changes that have taken place; some respondents could recall belonging to the Central and Meridian ITV regions and the BBC South region prior to the Oxfordshire opt. Many commented that the changes to their ITV region had caused them to migrate to the BBC's regional news programme.

Oxford respondents conveyed a strong sense of local identity, and defined 'local' to mean Oxfordshire – including Oxford, Banbury and Abingdon.

'Local is whatever you can relate to' (F 40s)

There was an uncertain regional identity however, as the region was not consistently defined geographically, politically or culturally. No consensus emerged on a regional definition, although suggestions included Thames Valley, Central, the South East and the South Midlands.

In terms of local and regional news, local issues were generally regarded as more important than regional ones. Oxford residents named several reliable local news sources, and a significant number mentioned that they had departed from the more traditional news sources and were exploring alternative local news sources - for example Google updates, online newspapers, RSS feeds from the BBC and Teletext.

ITV as a PSB

ITV was felt to be performing well in terms of producing British-made content, but was not felt to be meeting its PSB obligations relating to regional news, described by many as being good in the past but of a poor quality currently. There was some spontaneous suggestion that, in light of perceived poor quality PSB programming, growing commercial pressures and the diminishing benefit of allocated spectrum space, ITV may consider ceasing to be a PSB.

'ITV should do away with being a PSB and leave it up to the BBC' (M 30s)

Others were more positive however, some respondents agreed that by continuing its PSB obligations ITV was showing respect for its viewers by broadcasting a cross-section of programme types.

Programming priorities

In terms of viewing priorities, regional news was broadly felt to be important to society, consistently ranking in the top five programme types in the consensus exercise. However respondents tended not to list regional news in the top 5 programme types that ITV *should continue to make*, suggesting that viewers could find this content elsewhere if it were no longer available on TV.

Several felt that ITV should challenge its PSB requirements and ask to reduce or dilute the types of programmes it was required to make. Many suggested for example that it could leave children's programming up to the BBC, use its digital subsidiary channels to broadcast less profitable programmes, or possibly consider making less regional news but of a better quality. Others suggested that ITV programming needed a general shake-up, and that it should invest in new programming and better quality PSB programmes that struck a balance between benefiting society and being programmes people wanted to watch.

Choice

Oxford respondents appeared to be reasonably satisfied with *local* news provision, mentioning several reliable news sources. Newspapers and radio stations were the dominant sources of local news, but Teletext and websites were also mentioned frequently. Most expressed a preference for BBC's regional news programme over that of ITV, with isolated mentions of local TV station SIX TV as a source of local news. Local news sources were felt to compensate for the lack of a consistently reliable source of regional TV news.

Respondents generally believed that *local* news and issues were of greater personal importance and relevance than regional news. This appeared to be partly due to the lack of strong regional identity generally, but also disengagement from regional news owing to the history of changes to TV news regions.

ITV & BBC

Several respondents referred to the differences between ITV and BBC news footprints for this area, and there was some debate as to which best served Oxford. Some claimed that the BBC's 10-minute opt for Oxfordshire makes its regional TV news more relevant and local; others preferred ITV, seeing its smaller regional news footprint 'Thames Valley' as

more relevant than the BBC's, where Oxfordshire is part of the BBC's wider 'South' service.

'The BBC regional news feels more personal' (M 30s)

Accessing local news online?

Oxford respondents were much more likely than respondents in other locations to mention online and other alternative news sources - some respondents ventured that online sources were the future of local news delivery although, as in other locations, a number of respondents expressed concern that this would exclude those without internet access from receiving a good local news service.

Although some had heard of and used ITV Local, this was mostly in passing. One respondent observed that ITV was attempting to reach local audiences, but rejected this on the grounds that they are a national brand, and therefore not truly 'local'.

Reaction to the proposed changes

The proposed changes were met with a combination of resignation and indifference at the prospect of yet another change. Respondents were opposed to any merger, whether it be with the Meridian or Central region³.

1. Merger with Meridian

The main objections to the proposal related to the size of the newly merged region, and the fact that Thames Valley currently receives an entire news programme which would be reduced to a 6-minute sub-opt.

'It's like going from a 3 course meal to a McDonalds, it won't satisfy you' (M 20s)

Respondents were critical of the proposed region as being too large to continue to be relevant to those living in Oxford. Many felt that the new region was not relevant to them as they had a greater affinity with the ITV West region, including Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Bristol.

'Now it's even less local' (F 50s)

'This is too large an area to be regional' (M 40s)

'They are being cheeky really' (F 30s)

'That's not far off the National News!' (F 40s)

'That sounds more like the London news, I'd rather move rural' (M 40s)

Many expressed disappointment that the 6 minute opt would be shared with Thames Valley, rather than being devoted to Oxfordshire.

³ Note that in the Central merge scenario, respondents were told that the sub-regional opt would be for Central West (as opposed to Central South, or Thames Valley) and this led many to fear that such a service would be dominated by Birmingham, to the exclusion of Oxford.

Respondents compared the proposed provision of a 6-minute opt for the Thames Valley region with the BBC's 10 minute opt for Oxfordshire, which was felt by many to be adequate to address local news and issues.

Many felt that the move from a full programme to a 6-minute opt would mean losing human interest news and softer stories about the local community, in favour of more irrelevant stories from further afield.

'We'll lose some of the local community stuff, like the stories about local fire stations and things' (F 40s)

'Some of the local stories are educational, they can raise your awareness about local things, like making pubs and clubs more accessible to disabled people' (M 40s, carer)

'It's not just about the bigger stories but the little stories' (F 40s)

Others were concerned that the proposals would lead to a steep decline in viewing of ITV's regional news and an over-reliance on the BBC, with implications for choice of news providers.

Final votes on the proposal explored in the research are summarised below.

For	1
Against	19
Indifferent	5
Total	25

Results are indicative only.

2. Reduced minutage

There was very little disagreement with the proposal to reduce minutage.

However, a handful of respondents expressed concern that this initial reduction might be the beginning of a 'slippery slope'.

Final votes on reduced minutage are summarised below.

For	16
Against	4
Indifferent	5
Total	25

Results are indicative only.

3. Alternative cost saving option

Although less than ideal, this option was preferred as it would mean a continued focus on the Thames Valley.

'I'd rather keep what we have and have ITV cut costs elsewhere' (F 50s)

Some were sceptical that this option would really happen, as they felt viewers would simply desert and move to the BBC, leading to a further decline in ITV advertising revenue.

'Aren't you going to lose viewers to the other side?' (M 40s)

'It affects the viewing pleasure' (M 20s)

As in some other locations, there were positives attached to this option, as it was perceived to mean fewer 'unnecessary' graphics or live reports -

'I don't really need the fancy graphics' (F 40s)

Some suggested ITV should explore other cost-saving alternatives, such as cutting costs on programmes that were expensive to make, relatively unprofitable and poor quality (e.g. comedy drama).

Results of the final voting on the alternative cost saving option are summarised below.

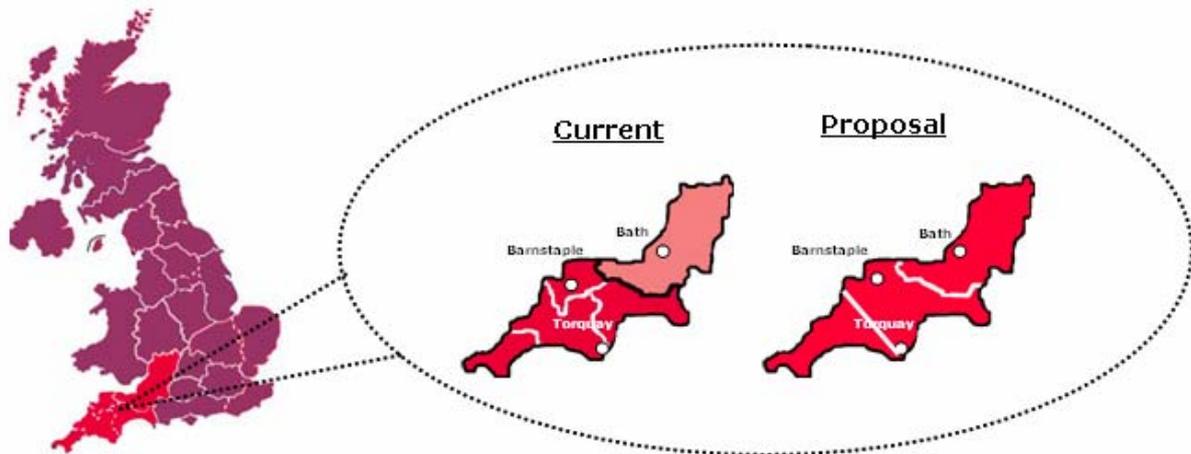
For	21
Against	0
Indifferent	4
Total	25

Results are indicative only.

4. Alternative merger

As an alternative, we explored whether a merger with Central would be preferable, with a 6 min opt for 'Central west' (incl Birmingham and Oxford.) This was unanimously rejected, with the assumption that Oxford news would be lost in a sub-regional opt dominated by Birmingham.

Bath (ITV West)



Proposal explored in the research: To merge ITV West and ITV Westcountry regions, with sub-regional opts at key times of day

Localness and regionality

Respondents in Bath expressed pride in the local culture and history, and spoke positively of the Bath lifestyle

'It's like a mini-London' (F 40s)

A number drew favourable comparisons between the Bath lifestyle as against 'urban' London and 'downmarket' Bristol. Attachment to and interest in the town and surrounding villages outweighed interest in the wider region. Bath was felt to be slightly unusual in the region, in that most people tended to live and work in the town, rather than commuting elsewhere. This was felt to create a greater sense of togetherness and community, and to stimulate active local interest in city affairs and commercial developments.

The local area was defined as being Bath and surrounding villages; with Bristol being too close to be discounted:

'It's Bath, Bristol and the villages' (F 40s)

Some struggled to identify where 'local' stopped and 'regional' began, suggesting that these geographical areas were defined to some extent by media – such as the Bristol Post, BBC Bristol and regional TV programmes.

'Although the telly differentiates the two, we don't really differentiate them' (M 30s)

The region was defined as Bristol, the South West, Somerset/North Somerset and nearby villages such as Glastonbury. Some expressed confusion over the exact boundaries

'It used to be Avon' (M 50s)

'Westcountry' was mentioned only occasionally as being part of the region, Cornwall was firmly excluded.

ITV as a PSB

ITV was generally perceived to be doing a good job of providing soaps, sports, entertainment, dramas, national and regional news.

'I don't think ITV [national] news is too bad at all' (F 20s)

'It's quite slick, quite professional' (F 40s)

'The newsreaders seem quite normal and approachable' (M 20s)

There was some criticism of ITV's regional news programme however -

'It's not always accurate' (F 20s)

'There seems to be a bit of repetition between the national news and the regional news' (F 70s)

'It's not in-depth enough' (M 40s)

Respondents were split on their preference for BBC or ITV news, but generally appreciated having a choice between the two.

'[ITV] should keep regional news, national is looked after everywhere else' (M 50s)

Discussion regarding ITV's PSB programming turned to issues of quality broadcasting. While it was broadly understood that PSB rules related to quotas regarding hours of programming, some respondents queried whether there were any guarantees of minimum standards or quality -

'Who is the arbiter for quality?' (F 70s)

Programming priorities

Regardless of profit considerations, respondents expressed a desire for ITV to continue making regional news. At the conclusion of the consensus exercise, all three tables placed regional news in the top 5 programme types ITV should continue to make.

Choice

Locally, respondents listed an ample number of news sources; press publications were frequently mentioned, as were Bristol-based radio stations, magazines and newspapers. Those living in the surrounding villages named noticeboards and gossip as sources of news. Some mentioned using web searches for news, but no dedicated local websites were cited. Unlike respondents in Torquay, there was little evidence to suggest that Bath respondents felt under-represented by regional TV news.

There was slightly greater interest in maintaining choice at the regional level as these stories tended to carry more weight:

'There's so little news to report locally' (F 40s)

'You hear things through word of mouth anyway' (F 50s)

'We'd know first-hand if a local story wasn't accurate, but we wouldn't necessarily know at a regional level' (F 70s)

Regarding TV news providers, there was no clear preference among Bath respondents for either BBC or ITV's regional news. Those who watched little of either tended to confuse Points West with the West Tonight programme. The two programmes were described as taking different angles on the news; the BBC was described as slightly *'stuffy, boring, but professional'*, whereas ITV applied a 'magazine' style to its reporting, described as being *'a bit more down to earth really'* (F 40s)

'[ITV] regional news is more of a magazine type programme' (F 30's)

'There is lots of padding in the ITV news' (M 50s)

Accessing local news online?

On the issue of accessing local and regional news online, respondents broadly rejected a shift away from TV and towards an online offering

'[TV is] instant, it's the medium most people use' (F 20s)

Among internet users, there were some comments that it was not a preferred source of local news -

'I use the internet for national news, but not local... I don't think it'd be specific enough' (M 50s)

Reaction to the proposed changes

Several respondents were sympathetic to ITV's position and increasing financial pressures, evidenced by responses to the morning presentation. However there was some criticism of ITV's reasons for proposing changes to its regional news offering -

'It's cutting costs for ITV but it's not benefiting the public' (F 40s)

1. Merger Westcountry and West

Opinion was split on whether respondents approved of the proposed merged.

Those **in favour** of the proposed merger took a pragmatic view, assuming that the interests of those Bath and Bristol would most likely be looked after under the new arrangements -

'They cut costs, we get news in general, then a bit for us. We won't lose out much' (F 60s)

'Bath and Bristol are big cities so we'll get the main stories anyway' (M 40s)

'It seems quite sensible to me' (F 60s)

Some others were hopeful that the change would bring about improvement, and viewed the proposed changes as an opportunity to invest in the quality of news.

'We may get better presenters and service if the regions are merged' (F 30s)

'It might make the news more interesting – the last 10 minutes is usually complete drivel' (M 40s)

'We must see a positive benefit – a newer and more professional image' (F 40s)

A minority were **indifferent** to the proposal, admitting they thought it was a foregone conclusion, and therefore not worth worrying about.

Those **against** the proposal felt that the sheer size of the proposed new region would be too large to be truly 'regional', or relevant.

'The relevance of the stories in our area isn't very clear at the moment, with the merge the area will be even bigger so it will be worse' (M 30s)

'They don't realise how big a region we are talking about – Plymouth to Bristol is the same as Bristol to London' (M 40s)

'It's quicker to drive to Manchester than to Cornwall' (F 40s)

'If we wanted to know about the news in Cornwall and Devon, we could go on the internet' (M 30s)

'the Cornish won't be happy – the Newquay subregion will really miss out' (M 40s)

Others predicted that the 6-minute sub-opt would be inadequate -

'6 minutes isn't a lot of time for such a large area' (F 50s)

Some felt the merger would mean losing choice between ITV and BBC news programmes, as the footprints would then differ -

'BBC & ITV are striking that balance between stories and issues...we'd lose that' (F 40s)

Other minor concerns related to the weather coverage and potential job losses in Plymouth.

Final votes on the merger proposed in the research are presented below.

For	11
Against	9
Indifferent	3
Total	23

Results are indicative only.

2. Reduced minutage

No significant concerns were recorded regarding the proposal for reduced minutage -

'6 hours sounds a lot in the first place' (F 50s)

Final voting on reduced minutage is presented below.

For	18
Against	5
Indifferent	0
Total	23

Results are indicative only.

3. Alternative cost saving option

The alternative cost-saving option was squarely rejected in light of comments that ITV news was already of a low standard -

'The quality isn't that great at the moment' (F 40s)

'The quality is already bad enough, if it got worse it would be unwatchable' (M 50s)

Some were unconcerned about this option, or did not regard it as a serious alternative.

'You don't need two presenters in the studio, all that chat is distracting' (F 40s)

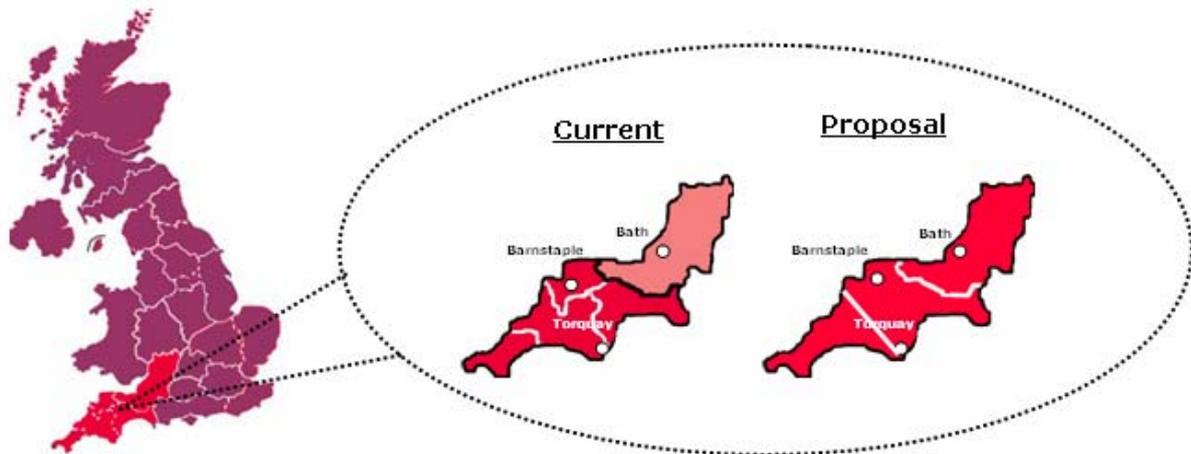
'That deliberately sounds worse than the other proposal' (M 50s)

Final voting on the alternative cost saving option is presented below.

For	9
Against	13
Indifferent	1
Total	23

Results are indicative only.

Torquay (ITV Westcountry)



Proposal explored in the research: To merge ITV West and ITV Westcountry regions, with sub-regional opts at key times of day

Localness and regionality

Torquay is a small seaside town in South Devon, described by respondents as a quiet area and a nice place to live. Respondents pointed out that Torquay is a place where 'not much happens', and were conscious of the effect of this on the news coverage they received.

'Torquay is very small, we can't expect to get much coverage' (M 60s)

The local area was defined as 'South Devon' and included the towns immediately surrounding Torquay - Torbay, Paington, Dawlish and Brixham. There was some debate regarding the inclusion of Plymouth and Exeter in the definition of 'localness', although these towns were certainly felt to be part of the region.

The region was defined as the 'South West' or the 'peninsular', with some debate over the inclusion of Cornwall in the regional definition. It was unanimously agreed that the region did not extend north east towards Bristol and Gloucestershire

ITV as a PSB

ITV was generally felt to be doing well at producing programmes that appealed to people of all ages, and family orientated programmes.

'ITV have a good balance of soaps, news, current affairs, things like that' (M 20s)

There was some sympathy to ITV's position in the face of increasing financial pressures -

'They're really struggling' (F 40s)

'You could see it coming – the only winner is the BBC' (M 30s)

'Younger people are watching digital channels now anyway' (M 40s)

Some openly wondered whether it was in ITV's best interests to continue on as a PSB, with respondents generally concluding that they would like ITV to retain its PSB status as in order to counterbalance the BBC. Some respondents feared that, were it to withdraw from its PSB obligations, its programming quality and production of UK-made content might decline:

'Maybe they would lose quality dramas' (M 20s)

There was some suggestion that the PSB rules for ITV should be relaxed, allowing them to cut some of its weaker programme types and concentrate on its strengths.

'ITV could lose current affairs as it isn't as good at them' (M 40s)

Programming priorities

In the consensus exercise only a minority of respondents argued for regional news to be included in the top five programme types of importance to society.

'It's important for everybody's own region' (M 30s)

'Regional is important – the community, we want to know what's going on, the weather, the roadworks' (F 50s)

National news was generally regarded as being more important to society than regional news.

'National news is more important to me – I have family all over the country' (M 30s)

It was broadly felt that regional TV news in Torquay was of such poor quality, and was so readily available from other sources, that it could rank lower in the societal ranking.

'I can read the Herald for my regional news' (F 20s)

'If regional news was that important it would come up on the national news...and the quality is not that brilliant anyway' (F 40s)

Following this exercise, there were some spontaneous suggestions that ITV could consider cutting costs on its regional news output, for example by reducing the number of newsreaders, or reducing the hours of regional news. Respondents added that there were other available sources for regional news to serve in the place of TV news.

Choice

Respondents gave a sense of being satisfactorily served on a local level – although in practice some admitted that their actual consumption of local news was low.

'It's all there if you want it' (F 20s)

Sources of local news mentioned were radio and Teletext, and word of mouth was also felt to be important in this relatively tight-knit set of small communities.

The primary source of regional news was television, although there were also several mentions of red button usage for BBC news.

Respondents were conscious that they lived in an area where very few newsworthy events occurred – indeed the low crime rate and absence of major catastrophes were part of the appeal for living in the area.

'There's never a lot of local news' (F 40s)

The range of available sources was limited but valued, with most responses pointing towards newspapers and local radio. There was relatively low internet use, those accessing online news only tended to do so to find detail on international events.

In general, respondents expressed greater interest in local than regional news:

['Regional news is] halfway to national' (F 40s)

'It's irrelevant half of the time' (M 40s)

'Things from further away don't interest me as much' (M 50s)

Respondents also conveyed that local news needed to be more personal and detailed than regional news, and expressed relatively high interest in 'softer' local news stories compared with respondents in other locations.

'It's nice to know about people in your area' (M 70s)

'It's more personal' (M 20s)

ITV & BBC

There were no significant objections regarding either ITV or BBC regional news, although neither were felt to be of a particularly high standard. There was broad acknowledgement of the impact of a lack of newsworthy issues and events in the area on news reporting:

'It's hard for them because not that much happens round here' (F 40s)

All observed distinct differences in *style* between BBC and ITV's approach, with each broadcaster catering for different people at different times.

'ITV feels less formal, more friendly' (F 50s)

'BBC's for the older generation' (M 50s)

'ITV's good on the morning news, a lighter tone, a bit of banter' (F 20s)

Accessing local news online?

There was some distinct opposition to the notion of shifting local and regional news online, with these respondents adopting a societal view:

'Not everyone can use the internet' (F 20s)

'If ITV went online it'd show they're not thinking about their wider audience' (M 20s)

Alternative suggestions offered included ITV using red button services for regional news, or a reduction of news broadcasts down to short bulletins, similar to those offered by Channel Five.

Reaction to the proposed changes

Respondents understood the expense associated with producing regional news –

'Because it's broken up, dedicated to each area' (M 20s)

1. Merger Westcountry and West

The large majority of respondents accepted the merger, indicating that they thought the 6-minute opt may force ITV to produce more relevant and interesting news with less 'filler'. Some pointed to the existing low news coverage in Torquay, suggesting that the proposed changes would make little difference –

'I don't know why we're moaning, even now Torquay hardly gets mentioned' (F 40s)

'It is so minimal what we get now that I probably wouldn't notice' (F 30s)

'It'll be the same, just a wider area' (M 30s)

There were those who felt that their poor news coverage would deteriorate even further with the proposed merger –

'At the moment we're not adequately catered for by the news, this will only get worse' (F 20s)

'It's got to be a cut in quality cos you're not devoting as many minutes for your local area' (F 40s)

Those who **rejected** the merger were in the minority, but expressed strong opinions on the matter. These arguments were driven by an assumption that the main body of news would be dominated by Bristol, and that the 6-minute sub-opt covered too large a region, making it unlikely that news from Torquay would bear a mention.

'Bristol would take more news cos there's more crime' (F 40s)

'Stuff that's important to us might get missed out because there's something bigger happening in Bristol' (M 20s)

'It seems unfair for us to be lumped in with so many other towns' (M 20s)

'The subregion's still quite large, 6 minutes isn't long enough' (M 20s)

Others observed that the new proposed region seemed illogical, from the perspective of both merging regions –

'We're not that interested in what's going on in Bristol, and they're not that interested in news from us' (M 20s)

'Bristol and Gloucester are beyond our comfort zone' (F 40s)

A small number were able to see some logic in it however -

'Lots of people live in Torbay, but work in Bristol' (M 50s)

A strong sense of attachment to the softer and truly local news and stories influenced responses to the proposal for some -

'We want our local news to be local - big stories from elsewhere can come up on the national news' (F 40s)

'It's Torbay we're interested in' (F 50s)

'Local and national are more important than regional' (F 40s)

For many, the proposal confirmed a larger problem that their area, and the whole of South West, was being slowly ignored by broadcasters and others.

'There's a movement away from Devon and Cornwall' (M 40s)

A handful of respondents objected to the merger on the grounds that it would force certain groups (e.g. the elderly, disabled and those with mobility problems) to seek out local news from other sources, when previously TV news would have been the easiest and most accessible option.

Final voting on the merger explored in the research is presented below.

For	15
Against	4
Indifferent	1
Total	20

Results are indicative only.

2. Reduced minutage

The issue of reduced hours was met with minimal resistance, some even indicated that they felt bulletins were overkill, and that they occasionally felt 'bombarded' by news. In this respect, cutting bulletins felt to respondents like a good option as a way of saving money:

'I didn't even know there was a weekend bulletin' (M 40s)

'They're only repeating themselves' (M 30s)

'Evening news is the best time to get regional news' (F 40s)

'You've always got the radio for updates' (M 30s)

'It's a good idea to cut the schedule down – it's more than adequate' (M 40s)

Again, a handful of respondents mentioned the interests of shiftworkers who may need to access their news outside of the primetime news slots. This was less objectionable however, as these types of workers could easily seek local news from other sources.

Final votes on reduced minutage are presented below.

For	15
Against	1
Indifferent	4
Total	20

Results are indicative only.

3. Alternative cost saving option

The cost saving option was the least favoured of the three, and was rejected as it was not felt to be a reasonable alternative. Most simply did not believe that it would save ITV much money, and doubted whether it would risk making the saving at the expense of losing viewers. Most indicated that they could be happy to have the news presented by one newsreader, but would wish to retain live reports where possible, or else risk losing the most engaging aspects of regional TV news -

'You might as well listen to the radio' (M 50s)

'They could cut down on presenters anyway' (M 30s)

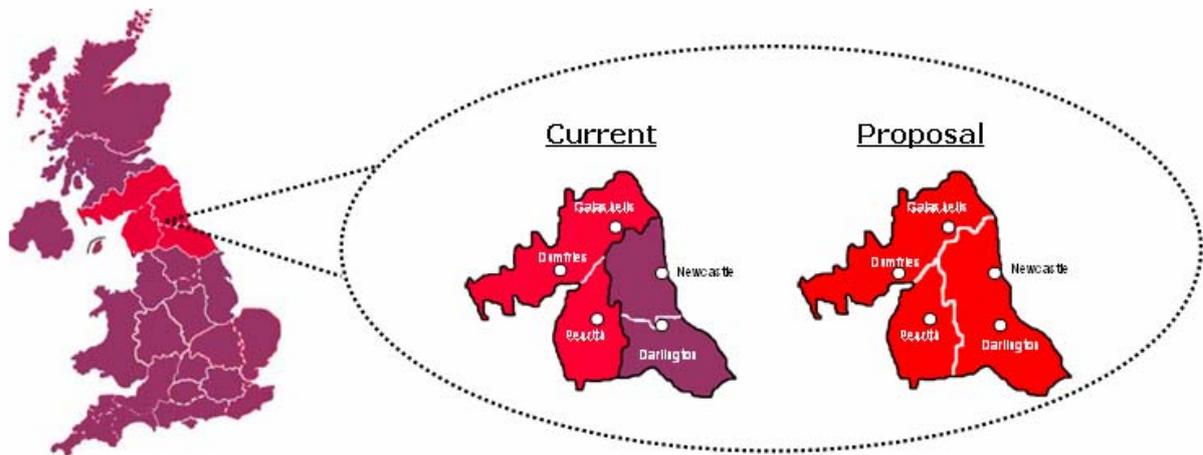
In the event that the proposed merger went ahead, respondents pointed to the need for a clearly signposted sub-opt, with guarantees that it would contain news that was local and relevant to the Torquay-Torbay area.

Results from final voting on the alternative cost saving option are presented below.

For	5
Against	13
Indifferent	2
Total	20

Results are indicative only.

Darlington (ITV Tyne Tees)



Proposal explored in the research: To merge ITV Tyne Tees region with ITV Border region (Border England and Southern Scotland), with sub-regional opts at key times of day)

Localness and regionality

Darlington respondents described a strong sense of community and cohesiveness in the North of England, which they felt distinguished them from those in the South. A strong sense of regional identity was conveyed:

'We as North Easterners are very interested in what is happening in the North East' (F 50s)

Respondents in Darlington found it difficult to draw a distinction between that which is 'local' and 'regional', often viewing them as one and the same thing.

There was a general feeling that Newcastle received a disproportionate amount of media attention - notwithstanding its place as the major metropolitan centre in the region, it was felt that other towns and villages received inadequate news coverage. This was true for ITV's regional news with many agreeing that *'it's all about Newcastle'*.

There were early isolated mentions of a rumoured merging of news region with Leeds, although the source of this information was not clear.

'They're dropping the news, broadcasting out of Leeds' (F, 30s)

ITV as a PSB

Respondents were generally quite warm to ITV in this location, most commented positively on the variety the channel offered, and watched a substantial volume of its soaps, dramas, sport and news programming. Its regional news programme was broadly

very poorly perceived however, with numerous negative remarks regarding its poor presentation style and the inadequacy of some news readers.

Programming priorities

For the consensus exercise, all three tables placed regional news in the top five programme types of importance to society. Unlike other locations, there was serious debate in Darlington regarding the comparative rankings of national and regional news, with a significant number arguing that regional news should outrank national news in importance.

'Regional first because you're probably more interested in your local area' (F 50s)

'Regional news grabs your interest in your own area and then you can go national' (M 50s)

Several respondents also debated the importance of international news within the national news programme as they had little interest in these stories. Debate eventually concluded with national news narrowly taking preference in the rankings.

'National news – it's important to tell people what's going on in the country, if there was an emergency or something' (F 40s)

Only a minority of respondents placed regional news in the top five programme types ITV should continue to make. Respondents either felt that the quality of the Tyne Tees programme would need to improve drastically were it to continue, or that it should consider cutting its regional news altogether.

'Tyne Tees is dead compared to Sky – everything here [on handout] we can get on Sky. And now there's that Virgin On Demand' (M 30s)

Choice

Many respondents claimed there was no choice of TV news providers in Darlington, for two reasons:

- *Different news footprints* – ITV's news programme covers Tyne Tees, whereas BBC Look North covers the North East and most of Cumbria. Thus many described ITV's news as *local*, and the BBC's as *regional* - meaning there was no real choice at either level.
- *No quality choice* – some referred to the differing quality between the BBC and ITV's news programmes, with the BBC delivering a superior product. Consequently ITV's poorer product was not felt to be a true alternative.

The majority of respondents indicated a preference for BBC regional news over ITV, as the BBC produced a better quality but also more localised and relevant service than ITV, even though it covers a larger geographical area.

'The BBC just do a better job' (M, 50s)

'People think Tyne Tees is more local, but in reality BBC is better' (F 40s)

'BBC is more professionally done' (M 20s)

Complaints regarding the quality of ITV news included:

- The dominance of Newcastle in news coverage, and inadequate coverage of stories in and around Darlington –

'Priority is their problem; you'll choose Newcastle over Bishop Auckland' (M 40s)

- The unsuitability of some of its newsreaders, who were not local and frequently mis-pronounced the names of places and people
- Poor visual presentation –

'It feels like someone's done it in their bedroom' (M 30s)

- A condescending tone of news –

'[ITV presenters] talk down to us' (M 20s)

- Declining credibility as a news source:

'Tyne Tees is a mish mash – it's lost credibility' (M, 30s)

'Boring, gets on my nerves' (M 50s)

'Tyne Tees news doesn't change between GMTV in the morning and the news at night' (M 40s)

As a result, some were already using alternative sources to regional ITV news, prompting debate about whether it needed to be broadcast on television:

'People go to the internet or Teletext now' (M 40s)

ITV's reasons for the proposed changes

Respondents broadly understood ITV's arguments regarding the high cost of producing regional news:

'Because you've got all these different studios and reporters' (M 30s)

However some rejected ITV's arguments outright:

'It's just a cost-cutting measure' (male 50s)

'News should have nothing to do with profit' (F 50s)

'PSB is meant to be all about minorities' (M 40s)

Several respondents also felt ITV's declining audience share to its programming, which was not of a consistently high quality. These respondents thus rejected ITV's arguments for the need for cost-cutting in production of news.

'If ITV had better quality programmes then maybe their share wouldn't drop so much' (M 30s)

Reactions to proposed changes

In general, respondents' perception of the poor quality of ITV's regional news output tempered reactions to the proposals. A significant number commented that the news was in need of substantial improvement, many hoped that the proposed changes might bring this about.

Reactions to the proposed mergers were tested in stages – the mergers with Tyneside (i.e. a pan-North East service), Cumbria, and Southern Scotland. Voting results presented below are for the proposed merger in its entirety – including Tyneside, Cumbria and Southern Scotland.

For	7
Against	10
Indifferent	4
Total	21

Results are indicative only

1. Merger with Tyneside

This sub-regional merger was broadly accepted as it was felt to be very similar to the current news offering. Respondents indicated that they are used to seeing very few stories about Darlington on ITV news, so this did not entail much of a change.

'We weren't mentioned locally a lot anyway' (F 50s)

'At the moment it's not that regional anyway' (M 40s)

'You only get news from Newcastle anyway' (F 60s)

'Newcastle people will be more miffed than us because they're used to getting all the news' (M 50s)

2. Merger with Cumbria

The merger with Cumbria was generally accepted, albeit with some opposition. Those who **favoured** the merger commented that:

- It would create a new 'North' region, resembling the BBC's news footprint and thus creating competition and choice where currently none existed. This was good news for consumers as it would allow them to exercise their personal preference for BBC or ITV regional news.

'A north of England region makes sense' (F, 30s)

- News from a wider area may amount to more interesting news, and the 6-minute subregional opt would force ITV to produce more interesting and concise news than at present

'It's too long anyway, there's so much filler' (F 30s)

'We only get 6 minutes of intense news on ITV as it is' (M 30s)

'The 6 minutes could be better, covering events in the region' (M 20s)

- This was also a comfortable merger for many who expressed affinity and warmth to the neighbouring region:

'It's a place you take your holidays' (F 50s)

'Good for weather at the weekends' (M 40s)

'I don't mind because I work in these areas – up as far as Gretna' (M 40s)

Those **against** the Cumbria merger argued that:

- News from the merged regions would not be local enough, and local and relevant stories for those in Darlington would not be adequately covered – although others responded that this was already the case, and had prompted them to look elsewhere for news.

'It's not the end of the world' (M 40s)

- It would force them to make a wholesale switch to the BBC, when they actually preferred to watch ITV.

3. Merger with Cumbria and Southern Scotland

Respondents were split on their reaction to the merger with Southern Scotland.

Those who **favoured** the merger observed that Tyne Tees would most likely continue to receive adequate news coverage, and would probably dominate news content owing to the greater population density than that in the Border region.

Those **against** the merger argued that:

- Geographically, it was too great a stretch:

'That's miles too big – we could do Tyne Tees and Cumbria, but Scotland..?' (F 50s)

'Workington's not regional, but it's more regional than blimmin Dumfries' (M 40s)

- It was impractical to combine regional news from across two nations:

'Scotland have a different Parliament – we don't want to hear about them' (M 50s)

'The Scottish won't be interested – it's a vast divide' (M 50s)

'It feels like it's halfway between regional and national news – it's like subnational news' (M 30s)

- News coverage for Darlington would ultimately suffer as a result of merging with such a large area.

4. Reduced hours

Few objections were registered to the proposed reduction of hours, as most felt that the existing bulletins were not well used as it is. There were some citizen concerns for the elderly and housebound who may rely on these bulletins, but supplementary news sources such as newspaper, radio and Teletext were felt to be adequate replacements.

Voting for reduced hours is presented below.

For	19
Against	0
Indifferent	2
Total	21

Results are indicative only.

5. Alternative cost saving option

Respondents broadly favoured the cost saving option over the merger with ITV Border, commenting that the news was already of such poor quality that it would entail little change. These respondents expressed a preference for *localness* over *quality*:

'Relevance to my area is more important than quality, that's what they need to fix' (M 50s)

However there was a general feeling that this option would be entirely pointless, that ITV's news would cease to have any interest for them whatsoever, and that it would push even more viewers towards the BBC.

'It'd be boring, you'd just end up changing channels to the BBC' (M 40s)

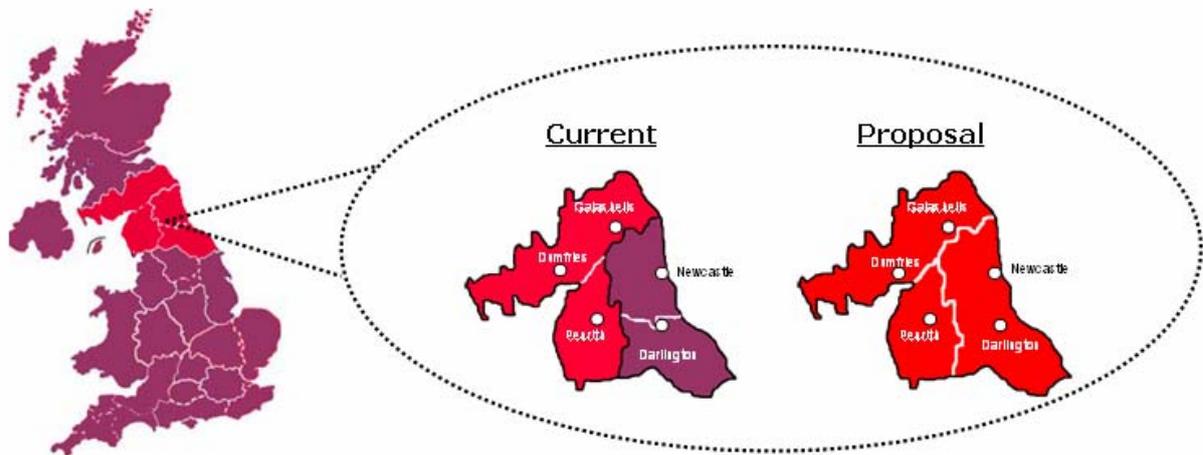
If forced to choose, respondents broadly expressed a preference to merger with Cumbria rather than with the entire ITV Border region, creating comparable (and therefore competitive) news footprints between the BBC and ITV.

Voting for alternative cost saving option is presented below.

For	16
Against	2
Indifferent	3
Total	21

Results are indicative only.

Penrith (ITV Border)



Proposal explored in the research: To merge ITV Tyne Tees region with ITV Border (Border England and Border Scotland sub-regions), with sub-regional opts at key times of day.

Localness and regionality

Penrith is a rural area in close proximity to the Lake District, a major tourist attraction and a source of pride for those in the region.

Respondents in Penrith described their local area as being *'anywhere you can drive in half an hour'* (M 20s), and listed a cluster of close by towns and villages – including Glenridding, Allendale Town, Appleby, Kirkby Stephen, Alston and Lowther. Alternatively, the local area was described as the Eden District or Eden Valley. Carlisle was described as being part of the region, but was not unanimously felt to be 'local'.

Respondents defined their region first and foremost as 'Cumbria' and 'Border England'. Discussion about secondary regional allegiances or orientation produced no real consensus: some respondents suggested that the northern part of Cumbria might look towards Southern Scotland and the south to Lancashire and Granada; many felt greater commonality with the rural Southern Scotland region than metropolitan Granada or the North East; others distinguished the Border England region from Southern Scotland citing separate parliaments and domestic political issues. These respondents were more likely to orientate towards the North East, describing the 'North of England'.

There were some allusions to Cumbria as a 'forgotten' region; respondents spontaneously referred to the state of local economic decline evidenced by closures of high street shops in Penrith, and references to inadequate news coverage within the BBC's regional news programme.

ITV as a PSB

ITV was broadly perceived to be meeting its PSB obligations, with the exception of its children's programming and Cumbrian regional news - perceived by many to be of poor quality. Regardless of this, respondents valued ITV's regional news programme for its localised news service, particularly in comparison to the BBC equivalent programme. Respondents referred to the comparative news footprints for the BBC (covering the North East as well as a portion of the North West) compared to ITV (covering Cumbria and Southern Scotland).

Choice

Penrith respondents felt that they received good coverage of local news and issues through their local press, citing a number of examples of newspaper publications available in print and online. Some had used the internet to find news stories of interest, and some local online news sources were mentioned. In general though, as elsewhere, respondents using the internet for news were not seeking *local* news.

'Online is good if you want to catch up on something but it's not the first place I would go to' (M 30s)

With regards to TV news, respondents indicated that a choice of providers was broadly positive, referring to the different news presentation styles of ITV and BBC. ITV was described as taking a 'lighthearted' approach, whereas the BBC conveyed a more 'professional' tone. In terms of their specific regional news programmes however, most felt that there was not a true choice of TV news providers, as ITV and BBC news covered different areas. The majority of respondents expressed a preference for the BBC's style of news presentation, but complained that it leaned towards the North East in its news coverage –

'BBC news is mostly about Newcastle, it's very urban news. There's not much about the North West' (F 40s)

'I'd say 75% is about the North East' (F 30s)

'Look North – just includes too much of Newcastle. It's the other side of the Pennines – a completely different place' (M 20s)

'It's more town news – this side is more rural' (F 30s)

The value of ITV's news programme for respondents in Penrith was that it upheld the regional identity of Cumbria by showing more localised news content, and stories that were relevant to their area and way of life.

'If you didn't have ITV it would only be about the North East' (F 60s)

'BBC covers a number of regions whereas ITV Border is more local' (F 30s)

'Border is more about rural news, the North East is about urban and city stories' (M 50s)

'Lookaround is more about the North West because they broadcast from Carlisle' (F 50s)

'Its good when they cover things like the Cumbria show' (F 40s)

A small group of respondents on one table felt that Southern Scotland received disproportionate attention in ITV's Border news -

'ITV concentrates more on what is going on over the Border' (F 30s)

There was not unanimity on the value of localised content however. While there were those who enjoyed watching news stories with familiar presenters, local people they knew, and 'lighter' content about their region, others (particularly younger respondents) found this off-putting, describing ITV's news programme as amateurish, boring and not worth watching -

'They must struggle for news sometimes – there's not enough going on' (M 20s)

Accessing local news online

The notion of local or regional news online acting as a substitute for TV news was broadly rejected in the short term. Many respondents conceded that this was something that would most likely occur in the future, but said they were not ready to make this move just yet –

'Online might suit the younger people but it's no good for older people' (F 40s)

'I think they've got to wait a few years, it's not mainstream yet' (F 30s)

Programming priorities

When asked to prioritise the top five programme types for society, two out of three tables listed regional news. The remaining table rationalised that the main purpose of TV is entertainment and escapism, their top five programme types reflected this.

When asked to list the top five programme types that ITV should *continue to make*, all tables agreed that ITV should continue to 'do what it's good at', and in particular continuing with its tradition of making high quality UK-made dramas and entertainment programmes. Regarding its news output, two out of three tables listed regional news in their top five ITV programme types, with the remaining table commenting that ITV should cut costs by cutting its regional news offering altogether.

Reaction to the proposed changes

A number of respondents queried ITV's reasons for the proposed changes to regional news, expressing some suspicion -

'Why have they decided to cut costs on news?' (F 30s)

'What are they going to do with the money they save?' (F 30s)

'Where is all the money going? Is it going to come back to us?' (M 50s)

1. Reaction to merger with Tyne Tees

The majority rejected the merger with Tyne Tees presented in the research, although some felt that a 6-minute sub-opt would most likely be sufficient to cover stories from the Border region. A caveat was reserved for coverage of significant events such as natural disasters.

Objections to the merger largely related to the reduced volume of news. Many commented that merging the sparsely populated, rural Border region with the densely populated, metropolitan Tyne Tees region would mean stories from Tyne Tees (particularly Newcastle) would dominate, and local stories from Cumbria would gradually be squeezed out.

'We'll be swamped' (F 40s)

'We won't have big enough stories' (M 30s)

'We don't want a news flash, we want a news programme' (F 30s)

'You'll probably only get about 10 seconds of the Cumberland show' (F 40s)

'Would the coverage of the floods in Carlisle have been so good if it [new programme] was all based in Newcastle?' (F 40s)

This was felt to mean losing coverage of the stories, issues and events of particular importance to people in the Cumbria region, and a loss of the local 'positive' flavour they had been used to seeing in their news. Many also felt that a merger with the North East would mean losing their sense of localness and local identity which was currently upheld by ITV's *Lookaround*:

[It means] losing our identity - we would just become 'The North' (F 50s)

Many respondents also predicted that introducing stories from an industrialised, metropolitan region would equate to an increase in 'bad news':

'There's more positive things that happen over this way, we don't want to hear all the bad things from over East' (F 70s)

'I'd rather hear good news from around here than about murders in the cities' (F 40s)

'I'd rather hear about a local show than a murder over East' (F 40s)

Respondents referred to experience with the BBC's *Look North* programme as evidence of this:

'We have already lost enough - when we were merged with Tyne Tees [BBC news] we were just a forgotten region and that's what is going to happen with this' (F 40s)

'It's going to do what the BBC are doing' (F 30s)

'Compared to Look North we'd get even less news than we currently do, and even that's not enough' (F 40s)

'We are happy with what we have – we don't want two Look Norths' (F 40s)

Respondents also expressed concern about the possible economic consequences of merging news from a rural, farming region with a commercial, industrial region, pointing to the importance of news coverage to their local industry and livelihood.

'When there's something big like foot and mouth it's more important to get rural news' (M 70s)

'It's another nail in the coffin' (M 50s)

Some respondents spontaneously mentioned a possible loss of news from Southern Scotland, but expressed little concern at this prospect as they felt it was declining in relevance:

'The political part of the news is mainly about Scotland - it's like chalk and cheese and not relevant to us at all' (M 20s)

Among those who were undecided or **indifferent** to the proposed merger, most suspected that they would be likely to make a switch to the BBC.

Young people at the session were the exception to the rule – indicating that they thought the proposed merger would bring about an improvement in ITV's regional news offering. It was felt that news from a wider region, with a 6-minute sub-opt for Border England would mean more interesting news, and a more professional-looking product.

'You can do a lot in 6 minutes - you only want the big stories, there's a lot of padding in the news today – some "non-stories" ' (M 20s)

'Cut down to 6 minutes and give me the big stories' (M 20s)

The table below presents the results of the final voting on the proposed merger.

For	3
Against	19
Indifferent	2
Total	24

Results are indicative only.

2. Reaction to merger with Granada

On one table, respondents spontaneously mentioned a rumoured proposal of a merger between Cumbria and Granada. Some discussion of this possibility was held, with respondents concluding that this option was even less preferable than a merger with Tyne Tees.

'We will be the little bit that is forgotten about if we are taken over by Manchester or Newcastle. We have heard about this on the local news – they are trying to do away with Border news – merging with Manchester.' (F 30s)

'We have as much in common with Manchester as we do with Newcastle – nothing' (F 20s)

'God that's even worse' (F 40s)

3. Reduced minutes

There were no significant objections to the proposal for reduced minutage. One table prioritised the late evening bulletin over the others, indicating that they would rather lose mid-morning and weekend bulletins over this bulletin.

'We'd rather have two good informative news shows than four semi-good ones' (F 30s)

The table below presents results from voting on reduced minutage.

For	16
Against	3
Indifferent	5
Total	24

Results are indicative only.

4. Alternative cost saving measure

This option was preferred to the proposed merger with Tyne Tees, as most respondents expressed a preference for local content over quality. Again, young people were the exception to the rule; they observed that the cost cutting measures would mean losing the interactive and engaging elements of TV news.

Other respondents commented that they thought this option would involve minimal change, given that they thought *Lookaround* news was already of a poor standard, or cost relatively little to produce.

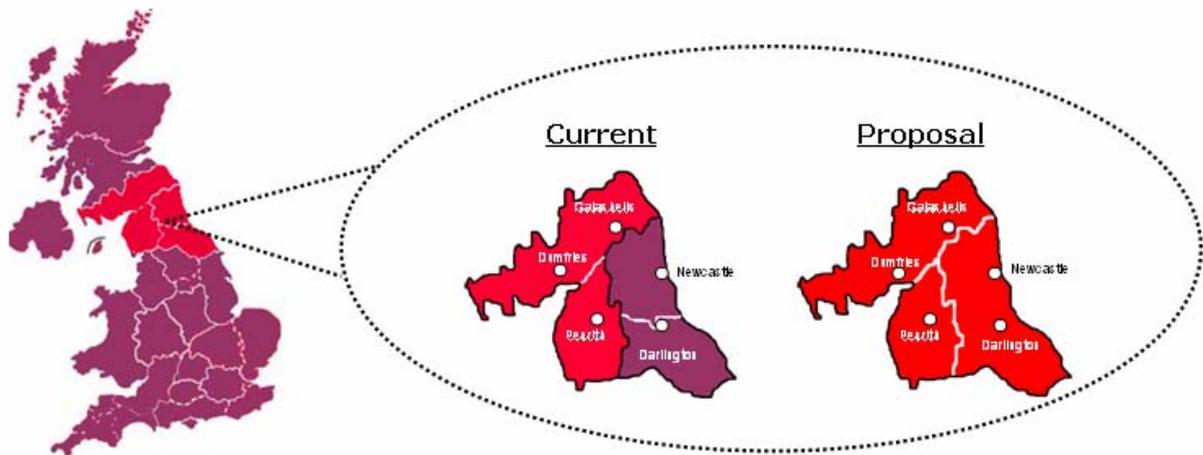
When faced with a choice between all options presented, the most reluctant respondents indicated that they wanted no change at all or, in the event of any ITV merger that resulted in an enlarged news footprint, thought they would simply switch their viewing to the BBC.

The table presents results from voting on the alternative cost saving measure.

For	14
Against	4
Indifferent	6
Total	24

Results are indicative only.

Dumfries (ITV Border)



Proposal explored in the research: To merge ITV Tyne Tees region with ITV Border region (Border England and Southern Scotland) with sub-regional opts at key times of day.

Localness and regionality

Dumfries is located in South West Scotland and within the ITV Border TV region, with a local economy based largely on agriculture and forestry. Respondents defined their local area first and foremost as 'Dumfries and Galloway', i.e. the local council/administrative area.

'Dumfries and Galloway has an identity in itself' (F 50s)

Defining their region was slightly more difficult, due to an overlap of what could be considered local and regional. Regardless of definition, respondents were comfortable naming towns and villages that they identified with as being their 'patch' – all of which belonged to the western part of the ITV border region within Scotland (Stranraer, Langholm, Castle Douglas, Annan and Lanarkshire. Towns in the Scottish Borders (Melrose, Selkirk, Hawick, Galashiels) were not mentioned as being part of the region.

There was broad agreement about towns and regions that should *not* be considered part of their region - namely Cumbria, Carlisle, Berwick and the major centres forming the Central Belt of Scotland (Edinburgh, Dundee and Glasgow).

Through the course of discussions, respondents conveyed an occasional sense of being 'cut off' from other regions; they did not hold allegiances with Border England, nor did they feel they were sufficiently accounted for in Scottish news, which they felt focused on the Central Belt and above. Dumfries respondents felt highly underserved by Scottish and British news sources, and particularly TV news.

ITV as a PSB

ITV was broadly felt to be delivering on its PSB obligations, with broad satisfaction around its ability to cater to a wide audience and provide a variety of programmes.

But ITV Border was felt to be performing extremely poorly on its regional news output in Southern Scotland, with spontaneous early discussions regarding inadequate coverage of local stories. Respondents criticised its reliance on texts and phone-ins, felt to be highly inadequate sources of 'news'.

Several respondents gave examples of important news stories that had not been covered – including progress on local commercial developments and the success of the Queen of the South Football Club in the Scottish Cup.

'I hear things word of mouth before they make it to the TV' (M 30s)

'We're not getting our big issues on TV, they're not being covered' (F 40s)

'ITV Border news is poor quality and not focused on us' (M 40s)

'It is important for those times when a story about us does occasionally come up' (F 70s)

Respondents were highly complimentary of ITV's coverage of the foot and mouth outbreak in the region however.

In the course of discussions about ITV's role as a PSB, some respondents spontaneously suggested that ITV might cease to be a PSB altogether; although this was not a favoured outcome.

'I don't think it's a good idea to have a single news broadcaster' (M 40s)

'I would miss Lookaround as it really focuses on the local area' (F 40s)

'If ITV were to tell the government that it no longer wanted to be a PSB, it wouldn't make a great deal of difference to people's viewing' (F 50s)

Programming priorities

In the consensus exercise, national and regional news consistently featured in the top five programme types of importance to society. The majority also felt that regional news was a programme type ITV should continue to make. A minority indicated their disillusionment with the perceived poor quality of the regional news programme, and felt that ITV should cut its losses and cease making the programme altogether. These respondents felt they could find regional news from other sources if necessary, listing local newspapers, radio stations and Teletext services.

Criticisms of ITV's regional news programme largely centred on its poor editorial quality and an excessive amount of 'filler' content -

'On Lookaround, only about five minutes of that is really news. The rest is about turnips and things like that' (M 40s)

'Regional news is quite scarce so they often repeat the same old things, so they could cut the time' (F 30s)

Choice

Discussions around choice of local and regional news providers were vexed in Dumfries; many respondents felt highly underserved by TV news and thus did not have choice. The main sources of local news listed were newspapers, and many respondents commented on the absence of a strong radio presence, with only '10 minutes on Radio Scotland'. There were some mentions of Teletext services, and isolated mentions of websites.

ITV was listed as the only provider of regional news on television, as the BBC produces a pan-Scotland news programme *Reporting Scotland* but no dedicated regional programme for the region covered by ITV Border. Respondents generally perceived that the lion's share of news coverage in the ITV Border region went to Cumbria, mostly because it was broadcast from Carlisle. There was also a perception that *Reporting Scotland* focuses mainly on the central belt of Scotland and northwards, leaving Dumfries and Galloway out of the picture.

'When I watch the Border news it hardly ever mentions Dumfries and Galloway' (F 40s)

'ITV Border's all about Carlisle, it's all Cumbria' (M 40s)

Accessing local news online

There was some appetite for provision of local and regional news online, some liked the convenience of finding news in this way, as it allowed them to find greater detail than TV news could supply. One or two respondents had come across ITV Local, one elderly man had used it extensively and was an avid user.

Reaction to the proposed changes

In general, reactions to the proposed changes were coloured by respondents' perception of the poor standard of *ITV Lookaround*.

1. Proposed merger with Tyne Tees

Those **in favour** of the proposed merger with Tyne Tees indicated that they thought the resulting news programme would make little difference to them, or may in fact result in improvement. Respondents hoped that the merger would produce a better quality programme with more relevant news, as well as more interesting news from a larger area:

'The news in Newcastle is more likely to be interesting as it's a city, I'd be more interested to watch it' (F 30s)

The notion of a 6-minute sub-opt within the wider programme was appealing to many; most felt that this would be sufficient to cover news stories from Dumfries and Galloway (as there was often felt to be little to report anyway):

'6 minutes seems like a reasonable amount of time, it's rural, there's not a lot of news' (M 40s)

Some reasoned that it would remove the need for 'fillers' required to make a full-length news programme about the Border region:

'6 minutes – if they cut the waffle out it could probably get all the news of the day' (M 20s)

Others commented that their current news programme was mostly made up of news from elsewhere, so the change would make little difference to the small amount of news they receive about the locality.

'A bigger region won't make much difference, I'm only really interested in the local stuff anyway' (F 30s)

There was low awareness of the sub-regional opt they currently receive in *ITV Lookaround*. It was thus suggested that such an opt under the proposed changes should be clearly announced and signposted, enabling respondents to make an appointment to view.

This signposted 6-minute opt was the most suitable compromise between those who were *for* and *against* the merger – on the condition that ITV delivered on its promise to produce 6 minutes of high quality, relevant content from Southern Scotland.

Reasons for **indifference** to the proposal were varied:

- Some mentioned national identity, and a preference for news that was from and about Scotland

'I live in Scotland and I prefer Scottish news. If the format changes drastically I'll just change the channel' (F 40s)

- Some expressed a preference for the BBC's programme *Reporting Scotland*:

'I'd watch it out of interest then go back to the BBC for news from Glasgow, I just think the BBC is more professional' (M 50s)

- A minority felt that the BBC's programming actually delivered more localised news from Dumfries and Galloway than *ITV Lookaround*, despite having a larger news footprint:

'When I'm watching Reporting Scotland there's more stories about Dumfries than there are on Lookaround' (M 40s)

Those **against** the proposed merger voiced strong opposition, expressing distrust and suspicion of ITV's claims about their future news provision. Objections to the proposed merger were largely based on the assumption of reduced news coverage, which was already insufficient, and the irrelevance of the North East of England to many respondents.

'I'd rather have fewer minutes of news that's about Border Scotland than more about the North East of England' (M 40s)

'That proposal seems like another way to separate us from the Central Belt' (F 50s)

Some conceded that the proposed changes were likely to result in a better quality programme output, but were not convinced it would mean better or more relevant news coverage for those in Dumfries and Galloway.

'It might be a better quality programme, but it still wouldn't be about us here' (F 40s)

As mentioned in Penrith, respondents pointed to the different local industries in Tyne Tees and Border. Tyne Tees was described as being densely populated and industrialised, whereas Border Scotland was sparsely populated and rural.

Regardless of ITV's claims, those who rejected the merger did not believe they would maintain a network of journalists across the region, and felt that, if news were broadcast from Newcastle the emphasis of news coverage would shift even further away from them than it currently was. Some also placed importance on the newsreaders' origin and their accent should the proposed merger go ahead – registering some objections to news read in a Tyneside accent.

The table below presents results of voting on the proposal.

For	12
Against	5
Indifferent	4
Total	21

Results are indicative only.

2. Merger with STV

Spontaneous discussion arose about alternative routes to regional mergers, with respondents preferring a merger with STV instead to a merger with Tyne Tees. This option was also given to all respondents in the final voting phase.

'We're getting lumped in with someone who's nowhere near us, culturally they're nothing to do with us in Newcastle. It'd make more sense if we were lumped in with Ayrshire and Lanarkshire, geographically and culturally they're closer to us' (F 40s)

'I could go for that, it'd be my first choice' (M 40s)

'Yes, as long as there was a dedicated 'x' minutes per week [for our region]' (F 50s)

3. Reduced minutage

There was little concern at the prospect of reduced news minutage, for differing reasons:

- Some were broadly unconcerned about any proposed merger, suggesting they would be happy with even shorter news bulletins (as short as 60 seconds) - as long as they were relevant, concise and directly concerned Southern Scotland
- Others who objected to any merger were content to lose some bulletins on the condition that the news region stayed as it was.

The table below presents results on voting on reduced minutage.

For	13
Against	2
Indifferent	6
Total	21

Results are indicative only.

4. Alternative cost saving option

This proposal for an alternative cost saving option was met with considerable suspicion by many:

'That proposal seems like a veiled threat' (F 50s)

'How much lower quality can it get?' (F 40s)

Faced with a choice however, respondents tended to favour this option over the merger with Tyne Tees, indicating that they were prepared to accept a further reduction in quality if it meant keeping their regional news. These respondents were less concerned about the *quality of presentation than relevant editorial output* -

'It doesn't matter what the news presenters look like' (F 40s)

'The news doesn't need to be fancy' (F 30s)

'Cardboard cut outs would be OK as long as we get the news' (F 40s)

The remainder were largely indifferent to this option, suggesting they would switch to the BBC –

'I wouldn't bother watching it if that's what we were getting' (M 40s)

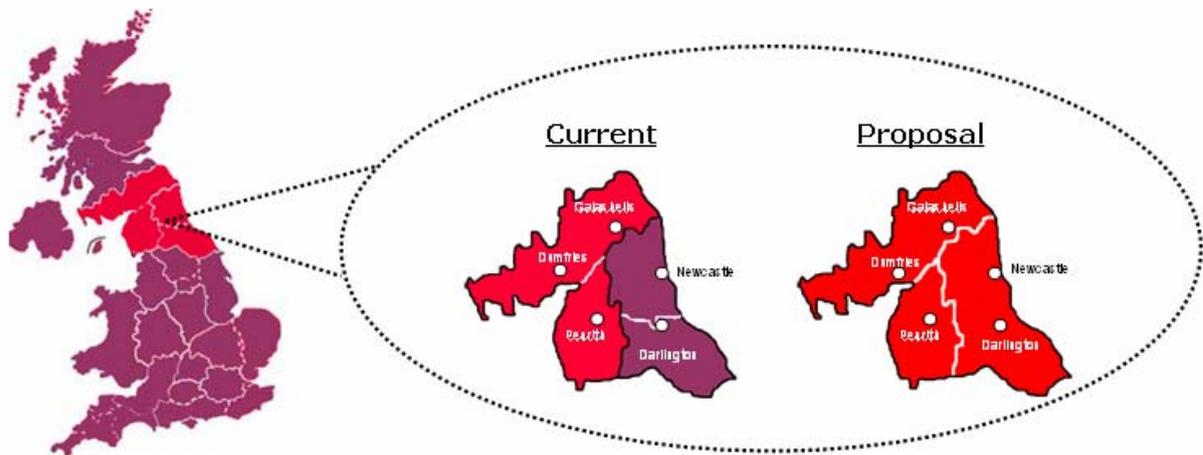
The majority felt that the ideal solution therefore (if a change were forced) would be to merge with STV, retain a 6-minute sub-regional opt for Southern Scotland which would be clearly announced during the programme, and ensure that the opt was high quality, relevant news for the region.

The table below presents results on the voting on alternative cost saving option.

For	9
Against	1
Indifferent	11
Total	21

Results are indicative only

Galashiels (ITV Border)



Proposal explored in the research: To merge ITV Tyne Tees region with ITV Border region (Border England and Southern Scotland) with sub-regional opts at key times of day.

Localness and regionality

Galashiels is a rural community in the Eastern part of the Border Scotland region. Respondents described it as a close-knit, tranquil community, free from stresses of the Central Belt of Scotland and the larger towns.

'It's a low-crime area – people leave doors unlocked and windows open' (F 50s)

There was a sense of connection with the area's history amongst older respondents, who referred to the Abbey festivals held in the summer. Each town was also felt to have its own distinctive sense of identity, with local sports clubs adding to this.

Respondents defined the 'local' area as encompassing the Border towns, and anywhere within a half hour drive – specifically Melrose, Galashiels, Selkirk, Kelso, Jedburgh, Hawick and the Tweed tributaries.

The 'region' was difficult to define for some, as it was indistinguishable from the local area. However most referred to the municipal area known as Scottish Borders.

Beyond their region, respondents mentioned a greater affinity with Edinburgh than Glasgow, and mentioned that the road infrastructure in Scotland favoured the North-South journey over the western roads.

Debate also turned to political matters, and whether respondents felt greater allegiance to the Scottish Parliament or Westminster. This was not pursued to any sort of conclusion, but did establish the strength of feeling around Scottish politics.

Numerous respondents conveyed a sense of their local area being somewhat removed from Scotland and rest of Britain:

'We are kind of like the land that time forgot' (M 60s)

'We get left out of an awful lot of things in this area' (F 60s)

ITV as a PSB

ITV was felt to be performing well in its production of soaps, dramas and entertainment – the types of programmes traditionally associated with the broadcaster. There was some dispute regarding ITV's representation of UK cultural identity, with respondents commenting that it was not doing enough to protect and support cultural identity, and seemed to be concentrating too strongly on the negative aspects of UK life.

ITV's regional news and other regional programming was met with stringent criticism in this location; it was felt that ITV was performing extremely poorly in its PSB obligations in this regard.

'What other regional programming is there?' (M 40s)

ITV's regional news programme was particularly criticised for its poor and inadequate coverage of news from the area, and poor quality presentation.

'They don't know what 'local' is' (M 60s)

'Local news comes from too large an area' (M 30s)

'We get our regional news from the Lakes and Carlisle!' (M 50s)

'The regional news stops at the English side' (M 60s)

'Very amateur, like they just took the presenters off the street, shocking' (F 40s)

Respondents conceded that they lived in a sparsely populated area with a relatively low occurrence of events considered newsworthy.

'There's not the population for a start' (M 40s)

'There's not much to report on - it's a vicious circle, we don't get much local coverage' (M 40s)

'Only when there's a car crash' (F 40s)

But most complained that, even when there were bigger news stories to cover, Scottish Borders was not being reached by journalists or covered in the news. Some ventured that 'smaller' stories from Carlisle often took preference over 'larger' stories from the Scottish Border region.

At this point in the discussions there were spontaneous, albeit isolated suggestions that ITV's regional news programme should be cut altogether due to its poor quality. This was largely met with discomfort however, with most indicating that they still thought regional news was an important programme type for ITV to continue to deliver.

'We're not getting much regional coverage, I think they could do away with it' (M 50s)

'Yes, or it really needs to be improved' (F 50s)

'It's important to hold onto [local news], but it's important that it's improved – then they might get bigger audiences' (M 40s)

Programming priorities

In the consensus exercise, regional news generally did not feature in respondents' top five programmes of importance to society. Several respondents commented this was because the regional news was of such poor quality it did not register on their TV viewing 'radar'.

Commenting on the cost of output handout, respondents expressed surprise at the relative expense associated with producing regional news, observing that the resulting programme did not appear as though it cost very much to produce.

For the consensus exercise regarding the programme types that ITV should continue to make, there was some debate as to whether ITV should consider cutting its regional news offering altogether, as it seemed unlikely that ITV would invest more money in a relatively expensive and unprofitable programme type.

'You wouldn't miss it' (M 40s)

'Lets face it, why spend the money if it's not worth it and it's not relevant?' (M 50s)

Choice

Respondents in Galashiels indicated a relatively high appetite for regional news. Access to a choice of providers was important to this community-minded group, with the exception of young people who displayed low engagement with local and regional news -

'it's not high quality, I've got a low attention span, I'll watch the Simpsons instead' (M teens)

Whilst acknowledging that they lived in an area with a low incidence of crime and other newsworthy events, respondents in Galashiels felt highly underserved by news providers generally.

'Word of mouth is better than radio, TV...the lot!'" (M 60s)

'When the flooding happened, Radio Borders barely covered it, yet it affected so many people in Selkirk, and only a small article in the Southern' (M 40s)

'[The local crime wave] should have been covered but if you blinked you'd have missed it' (F 50s)

'[The crime spree] should have been on the local news, the paper is only weekly. That information should have been given to the local population, but it wasn't' (F 40s)

'We don't need any more providers, we just need better quality, better coverage'
(F 50s)

Respondents indicated low satisfaction with ITV and BBC as providers of news, with the footprint and focus of both news providers felt to be unsuitable. Similarly to respondents in Dumfries, those in Galashiels commented that the BBC's footprint was meant to be pan-Scotland, but did not give adequate focus to the Borders region:

'Reporting Scotland is for all of Scotland – but little for us!' (F 60s)

On the other hand, ITV's Borders programme was felt to focus too heavily on the Southern Borders and Carlisle:

'They do National news quite well but they don't do a lot for the regions. Border seems to stop at the English Border' (M 40s)

'News is about Cumbria not South Scotland' (M 30s)

This contributed to the general sense of disenchantment with regional news:

'As soon as the regional news comes on, I just change the channel' (F 40s)

'Do they look hard enough for news?' (M 60's)

The poor quality of regional TV news in this location had motivated many to seek out news from other sources – those mentioned most often included newspapers and word of mouth, with some mentions of online sources and Teletext.

'The quality of [TV] stories is poor, local paper is crap, I have to look up stuff on the web' (M teens)

'[There's] the jungle drums, the gossip – this is a close knit community' (F 50s)

However newspapers were mostly weekly publications, ultimately felt to be too infrequent to be useful.

Accessing local news online

There was some active opposition to shift to online access for local or regional news, largely based on awareness of the needs of the elderly in the population -

'Not everyone has internet access...yet older folk are more interested in the local area' (F 60s)

Reaction to the proposed changes

1. Proposed merger with Tyne Tees

The proposed merging of regions was roundly rejected in Galashiels, with stronger opposition expressed here than in any other location. Reactions to the proposed merger were largely based on the assumption that the resulting news programme would be worse than the current offering. When considering the proposal, some practical thinking was applied – respondents acknowledged the low population base in their area, and felt it was unlikely that ITV would plough any additional money into a region such as this.

Respondents understood the per capita argument being put forward by ITV in this regard, but rejected it:

'It's not fair to people in the region, they're not getting their personal news' (F 50s)

'It proves they're not interested in the Central Borders' (M 60s)

Respondents also considered the logistics of transporting journalists and news trucks to their region to cover news stories, pointing out that the transport road from Carlisle is possibly the worst in the country. In this regard, there was some sense in receiving news broadcasts from Newcastle, as Scottish Borders was more easily accessible from Newcastle than from Carlisle. Regardless of this, it was maintained that residents in Galashiels really had nothing in common with those from Newcastle, Penrith or Carlisle.

Respondents feared that the main body of news would be dominated by stories from larger metropolitan centres, and that even Carlisle would eventually be excluded.

'Less than 5% of the population of that area lives in Scotland, we won't get any of the news' (M 40s)

'Carlisle will be swamped by Newcastle – news will be dominated by cities' (F 40s)

'All the news will come from Newcastle, there's a higher population there, more crime' (M 40s)

'If they're going to [merge us with Tyne Tees] they might as well give it away altogether' (M 60s)

Respondents also predicted that the 6-minute sub-regional opt for Southern Scotland would be dominated by Dumfries and Galloway, and that there would be even less news for their part of the region than at present. Many expressed genuine irritation at the inclusion of Dumfries and Galloway with the new 'Border' sub-regional opt proposal:

'Dumfries and Galloway is a separate council, but it's covered in Border News' (M 40s)

'At the moment we have 30 minutes and we still don't get a mention' (F 30s)

A handful of responses suggested that the Tyne Tees dialect can be hard to understand, and would therefore be unsuitable for this region. A minority of respondents claimed **indifference** to the proposed changes, indicating that they were resigned to receiving a poor quality news service. Alternatively, others suggested that they would simply cease watching ITV news if the merger were to occur.

The table below presents the results from voting on the proposed merger.

For	0
Against	21
Indifferent	2
Total	23

Results are indicative only.

2. Merger with STV

The discussion about the proposed merger with Tyne Tees prompted spontaneous calls for an alternative merger option 'upwards' with STV, as there was greater interest in Scottish programming than English.

'Wouldn't it be better just covering north of the Border and going up to Edinburgh?' (M 60s)

'STV's much more relevant to us than Tyne Tees' (F 50s)

'It's daft- why aren't they going up into Scotland?' (M 60s)

'We are in Scotland and we don't even get Scottish television!' (M 50s)

This merger option was unanimously preferred to the Tyne Tees merger, in the event that respondents were forced to choose between merging regions.

'At least it would be of interest to us then' (F 50s)

The table below presents results from voting on the proposed merger with Tyne Tees and the alternative suggestion of merging with STV.

Merger Tyne Tees	0
Merger STV	23
Don't know	0
Total	23

Results are indicative only.

3. Reduced minutage

In general, there were no concerns with the prospect of reduced hours. Some respondents mentioned they would like to keep the bulletin after the 10pm news however, as it was often the only regional news they had the opportunity to watch.

'I never watch it in the day anyway' (M 60s)

The table below presents results from voting on reduced minutage.

For	11
Against	2
Indifferent	10
Total	23

Results are indicative only.

4. Alternative cost saving option

The alternative cost saving option was actively considered as preferable to any regional merge, despite it being a poor option.

Those arguing in favour of this option mentioned that

'It's probably more favourable, it means no news from Newcastle and Darlington' (M 50s)

'I doubt it would make any difference to the news' (F 50s)

Many favoured this option as they assumed it would mean a minimal change – these respondents expressed doubt that the quality of the programme could decline any further:

'[It] would be reducing quality of an already poor quality programme' (M 40s)

'It doesn't sound like a cost-cutting measure, it sounds better' (F 50s)

'Let's face it – it's Toytown enough already' (M 30's)

'There's no graphics now!' (M 20s)

'They can't have less experienced reporters- they'll be in the pram!' (F 50s)

If forced to choose, respondents unanimously preferred the merger with STV over the merger with Tyne Tees.

The table below presents results on voting on the alternative cost saving option.

For	11
Against	8
Indifferent	4
Total	23

Results are indicative only.



Appendices

Appendix A: RECRUITMENT SUMMARY

Recruit 25 for 21 respondents in each location

- None to work in advertising, market research, marketing, PR/media, TV, journalism, for ITV or BBC
- None to have attended a market research group in last 12 months
- All to watch TV (any channel) at least once a week

1. Bedford (Anglia)			Wednesday 16 April, 10.00-4.00		
Total	Gender	Age	SEG	Urban/ suburban/ rural	Employment
25 ppl	12x male 13x female	4x 18-24 9x 25-44 7x 45-64 5x 65+	6x AB 8x C1 4x C2 7x DE	Urban x16 Rural x9	Employed x11 Unemployed x3 Student x3 Retired x5 Home/family x3
	Ethnicity	Use internet (home or work)	TV platform	Frequency of ITV consumption (<i>from Ofcom</i>)	Frequency of ITV local programming consumption (<i>from Ofcom</i>)
	At least 3x BME	16x yes 9x no	12x Digital TV 8x Freeview 5x Terrestrial only	Max 5 to watch 'never/once a week or less' At least 16 to watch 'at least twice a week'	At least 14 to watch 'never/once a week or less' At least 4 to watch 'at least twice a week'

2. Bath (HTV West)			Friday 18 April, 10.00-4.00		
Total	Gender	Age	SEG	Urban/ suburban/ rural	Employment
25 ppl	12x male 13x female	4x 18-24 8x 25-44 8x 45-64 5x 65+	6x AB 8x C1 4x C2 7x DE	Urban x16 Rural x9	Employed x11 Unemployed x3 Student x3 Retired x5 Home/family x3
	Ethnicity	Use internet (home or work)	TV platform	Frequency of ITV consumption (<i>from Ofcom</i>)	Frequency of ITV local programming consumption (<i>from Ofcom</i>)
	No quota (small BME pop'n)	16x yes 9x no	12x Digital TV 8x Freeview 5x Terrestrial only	Max 5 to watch 'never/once a week or less' At least 16 to watch 'at least twice a week'	At least 14 to watch 'never/once a week or less' At least 4 to watch 'at least twice a week'

3. Torquay (Westcountry)			Monday 21 April, 10.00-4.00		
Total	Gender	Age	SEG	Urban/ suburban/ rural	Employment
25 ppl	12x male 13x female	4x 18-24 7x 25-44 8x 45-64 6x 65+	5x AB 8x C1 4x C2 8x DE	Urban x16 Rural x9	Employed x11 Unemployed x3 Student x3 Retired x5 Home/family x3
	Ethnicity	Use internet (home or work)	TV platform	Frequency of ITV consumption (<i>from Ofcom</i>)	Frequency of ITV local programming consumption (<i>from Ofcom</i>)
	No quota (small BME pop'n)	16x yes 9x no	12x Digital TV 8x Freeview 5x Terrestrial only	Max 5 to watch 'never/once a week or less' At least 16 to watch 'at least twice a week'	At least 14 to watch 'never/once a week or less' At least 4 to watch 'at least twice a week'

4. Oxford (Central)			Wednesday 23 April, 10.00-4.00		
Total	Gender	Age	SEG	Urban/ suburban/ rural	Employment
25 ppl	12x male 13x female	4x 18-24 8x 25-44 8x 45-64 5x 65+	5x AB 7x C1 5x C2 8x DE	Urban x16 Rural x9	Employed x11 Unemployed x3 Student x3 Retired x5 Home/family x3
	Ethnicity	Use internet (home or work)	TV platform	Frequency of ITV consumption (<i>from Ofcom</i>)	Frequency of ITV local programming consumption (<i>from Ofcom</i>)
	At least 3x BME	16x yes 9x no	12x Digital TV 8x Freeview 5x Terrestrial only	Max 5 to watch 'never/once a week or less' At least 16 to watch 'at least twice a week'	At least 14 to watch 'never/once a week or less' At least 4 to watch 'at least twice a week'

5. Darlington (Tyne Tees)			Friday 25 April, 10.00-4.00		
Total	Gender	Age	SEG	Urban/ suburban/ rural	Employment
25 ppl	12x male 13x female	4x 18-24 8x 25-44 8x 45-64 5x 65+	5x AB 7x C1 4x C2 9x DE	Urban x16 Rural x9	Employed x11 Unemployed x3 Student x3 Retired x5 Home/family x3
	Ethnicity	Use internet (home or work)	TV platform	Frequency of ITV consumption (<i>from Ofcom</i>)	Frequency of ITV local programming consumption (<i>from Ofcom</i>)
	No quota (small BME pop'n)	16x yes 9x no	12x Digital TV 8x Freeview 5x Terrestrial only	Max 5 to watch 'never/once a week or less' At least 16 to watch 'at least twice a week'	At least 14 to watch 'never/once a week or less' At least 4 to watch 'at least twice a week'

6. Penrith (Borders England)			Monday 28 April, 10.00-4.00		
Total	Gender	Age	SEG	Urban/ suburban/ rural	Employment
25 ppl	12x male 13x female	3x 18-24 8x 25-44 8x 45-64 6x 65+	5x AB 7x C1 5x C2 8x DE	Urban x16 Rural x9	Employed x11 Unemployed x3 Student x3 Retired x5 Home/family x3
	Ethnicity	Use internet (home or work)	TV platform	Frequency of ITV consumption (<i>from Ofcom</i>)	Frequency of ITV local programming consumption (<i>from Ofcom</i>)
	No quota (small BME pop'n)	16x yes 9x no	12x Digital TV 8x Freeview 5x Terrestrial only	Max 5 to watch 'never/once a week or less' At least 16 to watch 'at least twice a week'	At least 14 to watch 'never/once a week or less' At least 4 to watch 'at least twice a week'

7. Dumfries (Borders Scotland)			Wednesday 30 April, 10.00-4.00		
Total	Gender	Age	SEG	Urban/ suburban/ rural	Employment
25 ppl	12x male 13x female	3x 18-24 8x 25-44 8x 45-64 6x 65+	4x AB 6x C1 5x C2 10x DE	Urban x16 Rural x9	Employed x11 Unemployed x3 Student x3 Retired x5 Home/family x3
	Ethnicity	Use internet (home or work)	TV platform	Frequency of ITV consumption (<i>from Ofcom</i>)	Frequency of ITV local programming consumption (<i>from Ofcom</i>)
	No quota (small BME pop'n)	16x yes 9x no	12x Digital TV 8x Freeview 5x Terrestrial only	Max 5 to watch 'never/once a week or less' At least 16 to watch 'at least twice a week'	At least 14 to watch 'never/once a week or less' At least 4 to watch 'at least twice a week'

8. Galashiels (Borders Scotland)			Friday 2 May, 10.00-4.00		
Total	Gender	Age	SEG	Urban/ suburban/ rural	Employment
25 ppl	12x male 13x female	3x 18-24 8x 25-44 8x 45-64 6x 65+	4x AB 6x C1 5x C2 10x DE	Urban x16 Rural x9	Employed x11 Unemployed x3 Student x3 Retired x5 Home/family x3
	Ethnicity	Use internet (home or work)	TV platform	Frequency of ITV consumption (<i>from Ofcom</i>)	Frequency of ITV local programming consumption (<i>from Ofcom</i>)
	No quota (small BME pop'n)	16x yes 9x no	12x Digital TV 8x Freeview 5x Terrestrial only	Max 5 to watch 'never/once a week or less' At least 16 to watch 'at least twice a week'	At least 14 to watch 'never/once a week or less' At least 4 to watch 'at least twice a week'



RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Q.1 How long have you been a resident of the UK for?
UNDER 3 YEARS [] **CLOSE**
OVER 3 YEARS [] **CONTINUE**

ALL RESPONDENTS SHOULD BE A RESIDENT OF THE UK FOR THE LAST 3 YEARS, AND HAVE A GOOD COMMAND OF ENGLISH i.e EASILY UNDERSTANDABLE

Q.2 When did you last take part in a market research interview?
NEVER [] **GO TO Q.5**
MORE THAN 12 MONTHS AGO [] **GO TO Q.3**
WITHIN THE LAST 12 MONTHS [] **CLOSE**

Q.3 How many times have you taken part in a market research interview or group?
ONCE/TWICE [] **GO TO Q.4**
MORE THAN TWICE [] **CLOSE**

Q.4 What subjects have you been interviewed on before?
WRITE IN SUBJECTS.....
CLOSE IF SUBJECTS ARE IN ANY WAY RELATED TO THE RESEARCH TOPIC

Q.5 We are carrying out some research on (READ OUT TOPIC ON INVITATION CARD.) Do you or any of your close relatives or close friends work in any of the following industries (now or in the past)?
ADVERTISING [] PUBLIC RELATIONS []
MARKETING [] MEDIA []
MARKET RESEARCH [] BBC/ITV EMPLOYEE []
JOURNALISM []

CLOSE IF ANY TICKED

Q.6a What is the occupation of the head of household/chief income earner?
WRITE IN.....

What is your occupation?
WRITE IN.....

NONE TO WORK IN TV, JOURNALISM, OR BE AN ITV OR BBC EMPLOYEE

EMPLOYMENT STATUS
WORKING FULL TIME []
WORKING PART TIME []
STUDENT/ SCHOOL []
LOOKING AFTER HOME/FAMILY []
RETIRED []
UNEMPLOYED []
OTHER (please specify) []

SOCIAL GRADE

- A []
- B []
- C1 []
- C2 []
- D/E []

Q.6b AGE

- UNDER 18 []
- 18-24 []
- 25-44 []
- 45-64 []
- 65+ []

Please can you tell me your exact age?

.....
(write in)

PLEASE ENSURE A MIX OF AGES WITHIN EACH BRACKET ARE REPRESENTED

Q.6c GENDER

- MALE []
- FEMALE []

Q.6d ETHNICITY

- | | | | |
|------------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| WHITE BRITISH | [] | INDIAN | [] |
| WHITE IRISH | [] | PAKISTANI | [] |
| OTHER WHITE BACKGROUND | [] | BANGLADESHI | [] |
| MIXED – CARIBBEAN | [] | OTHER ASIAN BACKGROUND | [] |
| MIXED – AFRICAN | [] | CARIBBEAN | [] |
| MIXED – ASIAN | [] | AFRICAN | [] |
| OTHER MIXED BACKGROUND | [] | OTHER BLACK BACKGROUND | [] |
| CHINESE | [] | OTHER-NOT LISTED | [] |

Q.6e Please can you describe the area you are currently living in?

- a) URBAN – ie city of major town []
- b) TOWN/SUBURB – ie smaller town/outskirts of a city []
- c) RURAL – ie village, in countryside []

Q.6f Please can you tell me whether you have access to the internet either at home and/or at work?

- a) YES []
- b) NO []

Q.7 Now thinking about main television set at home, please can you tell me which type of television you have currently?

- a) TERRESTRIAL ONLY (No more than 5 channels) []
- b) FREEVIEW []
- c) DIGITAL TV (Sky, Virgin Media (previously NTL and Telewest), or Tiscali (previously Homechoice) []



Q.8 And please can you tell me how often you watch TV (any channel)?

- a) At least once a week []
- b) At least once a month but
not less than x1 a week [] **CLOSE**
- c) Never [] **CLOSE**

ALL RESPONDENTS MUST BE WATCHING TV (ANY CHANNEL) AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK AND CODE a) TO CONTINUE

Q.9 Now can you please tell me how often, if at all, you watch ITV1

- a) At least twice a week []
- b) Once a week or less []
- c) Never []

Q.10 And can you please tell me how often you watch ITV [*regional news*] at 6:00pm?

- a) At least twice a week []
- b) Once a week or less []
- c) Never []

Q.11 Lastly can you please let me know if you have any special dietary requirements, or whether you will require any special assistance at the event (eg disabled access, hearing loops etc)?

.....
.....

RECRUITER – PLEASE INFORM OF ANY SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

CHECK ALL OTHER CONTROLS AND RECRUIT IF ELIGIBLE

NAME, ADDRESS AND CONTACT DETAILS (PLEASE WRITE CLEARLY IN CAPITALS):

MR/MRS/MISS/MS

ADDRESS :
INCLUDING
POST CODE:

PHONE NUMBER: (DAY TIME)

PHONE NUMBER: (EVENING)

MOBILE NUMBER:

BEST TIME AND
NUMBER TO USE
FOR PRE-CHECK:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

Appendix B: Info Handout 1 Public Service Broadcasting

What does it mean?

Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) refers to programmes that the five main channels are required to make and broadcast. These regulations exist because there are types of programmes that are felt to be important to society as a whole, but may not be commercially attractive for broadcasters to make.

Some of these programmes may be watched by small numbers of viewers - meaning they may attract low advertising revenues and profits, or may be expensive to make, given the numbers of people who watch them.

Therefore, in a free and competitive market (without regulation) certain types of programmes may not be provided.

Examples of specific PSB programmes include **international, national and regional news; current affairs; serious factual programmes, children's programmes and documentaries.**

PSB also includes all programmes which:

- **inform people's understanding of the world**
- **increase people's knowledge and help them learn new things**
- **reflect the UK's cultural identity**
- **represent alternative viewpoints and diversity of opinions.**

PSB programmes tend to include new programmes made for UK audiences by UK broadcasters (as opposed to programmes bought from abroad.)

Which channels are PSBs?

The PSB channels have different and complementary PSB roles

They do not have to do exactly the same thing with respect to their PSB obligations. Their different roles are described below:



BBC is the cornerstone of PSB and must provide a wide range of PSB programming for all audiences, across all its channels, including BBC One, BBC Two, BBC Three and BBC Four. Its programmes are funded by the licence fee.



ITV1 is designed to appeal to a broad audience. Its PSB role is to focus on national and regional news, and new British-made programmes including high quality soaps and dramas.



Channel 4's role is to provide edgy and challenging programmes, as well as news and factual programmes, and it has a particular focus on youth.



Five's PSB role is to provide news and UK-made programmes.

Appendix C: Stimulus materials



Info Handout 2 ITV as a Public Service Broadcaster



What's in it for ITV?

ITV1 enjoys certain privileges like:

- discounted spectrum from the Government
- a good position on digital TV programme guides
- listings in newspapers and magazines

These mean that its programmes are easy to find and watch, and it can sell more advertising.

What is ITV's role as a PSB?

In return for these privileges, **ITV1's** role is to make high quality programmes from around the UK, including UK news, regional news, drama, entertainment, children's programming, current affairs and other national/regional programming.

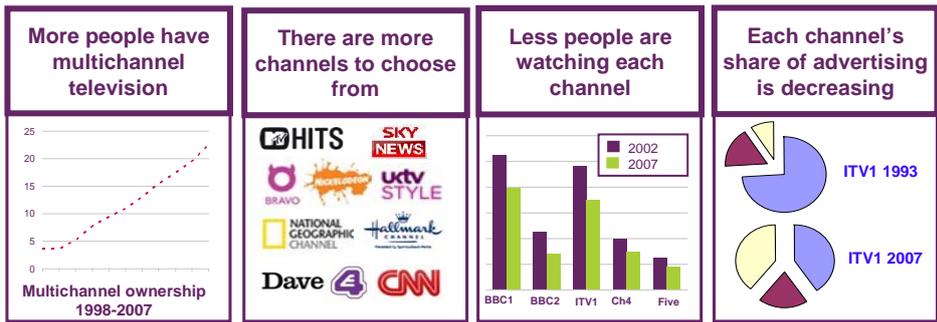
ITV must provide a set number of hours of:

- national and international news
- regional news
- other regional programming
- current affairs.



But the television landscape is changing

The commercial PSB channels (ITV, Channel Four and Five) are under increasing financial pressure as:



There is also competition on advertising revenues from other sources (esp online).

What does this mean for today's session?

The commercial PSBs (ITV, Channel 4, and Five) are under **increasing financial pressure** and find it harder to make a profit.

These channels are reviewing their businesses and looking at ways to **streamline costs** and become more efficient – whilst balancing their viewers' interests.

ITV have asked Ofcom to **consider some changes to its PSB obligations** and this is what you will be considering later today.

ESSENTIAL

Appendix D: Questionnaire 1

Name _____

Table number _____

ESSENTIAL

Questionnaire 1

There are 11 types of programme so please put them in order, where **1 is the most important** to you and **11 is the least important**.

Programme types	Examples	Column1 Personal Rank in order (1-11)	Column2 Society Rank in order (1-11)
Daytime	Jeremy Kyle, Trisha, This Morning		
Soaps	Eastenders, Coronation St		
Drama	Trial & Retribution, Life On Mars, Cranford, Skins		
Entertainment	X-Factor, Celebrity Big Brother, Strictly Come Dancing		
Documentaries/ Factual	Who Do You Think You Are, Cutting Edge, Britain's Favourite View, The Gadget show		
Children's	Bob the Builder, In the Night Garden, Tweenies, Charlie and Lola, Dora the Explorer		
National news	BBC Ten O'Clock News, ITV Evening News, Channel 4 News		
Comedy drama	Benidorm, Shameless,		
Religion	Acts of Worship, Songs of Praise, The Moral of the Story		
Sport	UEFA Champions League, Channel 4 Racing, World Rally Championship, Match of the Day		
Regional news	[<i>ITV programme</i>], [<i>BBC programme</i>]		

Appendix E: Info Handout 3: Costs of programme making

The cost for broadcasters of creating high-quality, new programmes can be high. In general, buying UK or US repeats is far cheaper.

1. Cost		
Programme type	Av cost/hour on ITV1	Examples on ITV1
Drama	£750k	Kingdom, Trial & Retribution, Doc Martin
Comedy drama	£675k	City Lights, Benidorm, Bad Mother's Handbook
Entertainment	£400k	X-Factor, Dancing on Ice, Britain's Got Talent
Sport	£400k	Formula One, UEFA Champions League
Soaps	£375k	Coronation St, Emmerdale, The Bill
Regional news	£280k	[<i>ITV regional news programme</i>]
Documentaries/ Factual	£170k	Sunday Edition, Tonight with Trevor McDonald, Trinny and Susannah Undressed
Children's	£100k	Jim Jam & Sunny, Art Attack, Horrid Henry
National news	£100k	ITV lunchtime News, News at Ten
Daytime	£35k	This Morning, Jeremy Kyle, Loose Women
Religion	£30k	Acts of Worship, The Moral of the Story

2. Profitability		
Genre	Programme	Profitable?
Drama	Doc Martin	+ + +
	Kingdom	+ +
	Miss Marple	+ + +
	The Royal	+ +
Comedy drama	Benidorm	-
	City Lights	-
Entertainment	Dancing on Ice	+ + +
	X-Factor	+ + +
Sport	Formula One	-
	Rugby World Cup	-
Soaps	Coronation St	+ + + +
Children's		E
Daytime		+ + + +
Documentaries/Factual		+ +
Regional news		-
National news		E
Religion	Acts of Worship	-

Key:
 + + + + Highest profit
 + + + Medium profit
 + + Low profit
 E Break even
 - Unprofitable



Appendix F: Info Handout 4

Name _____

Table number _____

1. Profitability

Below is a table which shows the profitability of making one hour of each ITV programme type.

Some programme types provide greater returns than others. This means that they make more money (eg from advertising).

2. Rankings

Programme types are listed below according to their profitability – with the most profitable at the top, the least profitable at the bottom.

For each programme type, please fill in your rankings according to their importance to you and your family (from Column 1) and their importance to society (from Column 2).

A short discussion will follow.

Table with 4 columns: ITV Programme type, Profitability, Personal preference (Column 1), Importance to society (Column 2). Rows include Daytime, Soaps, Drama, Entertainment, Documentaries/Factual, Children's, National news, Comedy drama, Religion, Sport, Regional news.

PROFITABILITY

- ++++ High profit
+++ Medium profit
++ Low profit
E Break-even
-- Unprofitable



Appendix G: Questionnaire 2

Name _____

Table no _____

Local news

1) How do you normally get your local news/information? (Tick all that apply)

- TV (please specify channels/programmes).....
- Radio (please specify channel/programme).....
- Internet (please specify website/s).....
- Newspaper (please specify title).....
- Other sources (please specify).....
- I rarely or never use local news

2) How often do you read, watch or listen to local news/information? (Tick one)

- Daily
- More than once a week
- At least once a week
- Less than once a week
- Less than once a month
- Never

Regional news:

3) How do you normally get your regional news/information? (Tick all that apply)

- TV (please specify channels/programmes).....
- Radio (please specify channel/programme).....
- Internet (please specify website/s).....
- Newspaper (please specify title).....



Other sources (*please specify*).....

I rarely or never use regional news

4) How often do you read, watch or listen to regional news/information? (Tick one)

Daily

More than once a week

At least once a week

Less than once a week

Less than once a month

Never

About your local news/information

5) How important is local news/information to you personally?

Extremely important

Very important

Quite important

Not very important

Not at all important

6) How important do you think local news/information is overall to people in your local area? (Tick one)

Extremely important

Very important

Quite important

Not very important

Not at all important

7) Thinking about the amount of available news and information relating to your local area (from all sources – TV, radio, internet, newspapers and other sources). **Would you say there is:**

Far too much news/information

Too much news/information

About the right amount

Too little news/information

Far too little news/information

8) How satisfied are you that news and information covers all the aspects that are important to people in your local area?

- Highly satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Highly dissatisfied

About your regional news/information

9) How important is regional news/information to you personally?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Quite important
- Not very important
- Not at all important

10) How important do you think regional news/information is overall to people in your region? (Tick one)

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Quite important
- Not very important
- Not at all important

11) Thinking about the amount of available news and information relating to your region (from all sources – TV, radio, internet, newspapers and other sources). Would you say there is:

- Far too much news/information
- Too much news/information
- About the right amount
- Too little news/information
- Far too little news/information

12) How satisfied are you that news and information covers all the aspects that are important to people in your region?

- Highly satisfied
- Satisfied



- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Highly dissatisfied



Appendix H: Voting

Name: _____

Table Number: _____

Merge regions?

For

Against

Indifferent

Reduce hours?

For

Against

Indifferent

Alternative cost saving option?

For

Against

Indifferent

Appendix I: Discussion Guide

<p>10.00-10.30 (30 mins)</p>	<p>> All Arrival & registration (25 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants register, receive name badge, table number (broad mix of demographics at each table) <p>Welcome, introduction – Stuart/Luca (5 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce Essential Research – explain role, MRS checklist (confidentiality, anonymity, bound by guidelines) Here on behalf of Ofcom – explain their role, why it's important to consult the public etc Ofcom will be listening occasionally and explaining any factual points that are not clear. They are impartial observers. THIS IS A CONSULTATION – your views count Format of the day (mix of presentations, table and all-in discussions, scheduled breaks) Basic rules (no right/wrong answers, everyone to have a say) Housekeeping (mobile phones, drinks, toilets, fire exits)
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SESSION ONE – TERRESTRIAL CHANNELS & PSBs	
<p>SESSION ONE 10.30-11.25 (50 mins)</p>	<p>> Tables (20 mins)</p> <p>Warm-up (10 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paired introductions (first name, background, who live with, how much TV watched, favourite TV show – report back to table) How has your TV viewing changed over past few years? How will it look in future (say 5 years time)? <p>Perceptions of terrestrial channels (10 mins)– [CAPTURE ON FLIPCHART]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce 5 main channels (BBC, BBC2, ITV, Ch4, Five) Focus on 2 broadcasters at each table (ITV+C4, ITV+BBC, ITV+5) – what type of programmes do you associate with each one? – what does each do well? Badly?
	<p>> Tables (10 mins)</p> <p>Understanding and expectations of PSB – [CAPTURE ON FLIPCHART]</p> <p><u>INFO HANDOUT 1– PSBs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a minute to read it Initial reactions: what stands out? What does it mean to you (in your own words)? How important is it? (<i>probe: which aspects in particular?</i>) Who is it for? Who does it affect? (<i>probe: future generations</i>) Which broadcasters do <u>you</u> regard as PSBs? (<i>probe: role of ITV as a PSB versus other channels</i>)



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thinking about changes in the media environment (eg more choice, more competition) – do you think this impacts on Public Service Broadcasting? How?
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SESSION ONE 10.30-11.25 (cont'd)	> All (15 mins) Essential: introduce purpose of sub session: Focus on ITV and its role as a PSB provider OfCom presentation – ITV and PSB obligations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ITV’s role as commercial broadcaster and PSB Impact of changing market context
	> Tables (10 mins) <u>HANDOUT 2: ITV as a PSB</u> Feedback/reactions to presentation – [RECORD VERBATIMS] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any questions about the presentation/ handout? Initial reactions to the presentation - anything interesting? Surprising? From what you know of ITV – do you think they deliver on their PSB obligations? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are they doing a good job on them? Are they doing more/less/same as you might expect? What should ITV concentrate on specifically? Is there anything you’d be happy for ITV <u>not</u> to do?

11.25-11.40 (15 mins)	TEA/COFFEE BREAK
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SESSION TWO – PROGRAMMING PREFERENCES	
SESSION TWO 11.40-12.40 (60 mins)	> Tables (10 mins) Essential: introduce purpose of sub session – Focus on the different types of programmes

Personal household priorities for programming

	<p>are least important to your household. Please concentrate on the programme types and not the specific examples – they're just to give you an idea of what we mean.</p> <p>Please fill in Column 1, leave Column 2 blank. This is about ranking 1st, 2nd, 3rd etc and is not a scale of 1-11.</p> <p><u>QUESTIONNAIRE 1: (column 1) rank importance of programme types to your household</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss answers (10 mins) [CAPTURE ON FLIPCHART] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which programme types ranked highest? Why? - Which ranked lowest?
	<p>> Tables (10 mins)</p> <p>Societal priorities for programming</p> <p><i>Script: Now we'd like you to take the 'citizen perspective' – so we want you to think about what's important or of value to the whole of society That means everyone in the UK, not just you personally.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What sort of programmes do you think might be important to the whole of society? <p>[if struggling] <i>Imagine you work for Ofcom and you have to decide which programmes are most important or valuable for everyone in the country. What types of programmes are most important or valuable? Least important?</i></p> <p>Please fill in Column 2</p> <p><u>QUESTIONNAIRE 1 (column 2): ranking importance of/vaqlue of programme types to society</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss answers (10 mins) – [CAPTURE ON FLIPCHART] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which types ranked highest? Why? - Which ranked lowest? Why? - Were there any differences between your personal and societal preferences? Why is that? Which types differed? <p><i>As a group, you now have to reach consensus on top 5 programmes to society [CAPTURE ON FLIPCHART]</i></p>

<p>SESSION TWO 11.40-12.40 (cont'd)</p>	<p>> Tables (10 mins)</p> <p><u>INFO HANDOUT 3: real costs of programme-making</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short explanation of cost of outputs, profitability/sustainability issues, market pressure
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you notice?- Any surprises?- How did your personal and societal preferences compare to the profitability rankings?• What stands out?• What do you think the issues are here? <p>> Tables (15 mins) Prepare for all in – [CAPTURE ON FLIPCHART]: Thinking now as citizens (so about the whole of society and everyone in the UK), and balancing society's interests against profitability considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you think ITV <i>absolutely, definitely must do</i> in terms of the types of programmes it makes?• Sum up in one sentence – '<i>ITV should...</i>'• What are the top 5 programme types that ITV should produce? (<i>You must reach consensus as a group – vote if necessary</i>)• Where does regional news/information fit? <p>[Nominate a spokesperson from each group]</p>
	<p>> All in (15 mins) [FLIPCHART] Discussion from output & consumer priorities exercise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What did your table decide ITV must do, and why?• What was your table's top 5 programme types?• Where does regional news/information fit?• Why these priorities?

12.40-1.25 (45 mins)	LUNCH BREAK
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SESSION THREE – REGIONALITY & REGIONAL NEWS

**SESSION
THREE**
1.25-2.35
(70 mins)

Essential: review content covered in the morning (PSBs, role of ITV as a PSB provider, cost of programme making vs importance to viewers).

Introduce next session: focus on regionality/regional news

> Tables (15 mins)

- Thinking about your local area – what do you think of as ‘local’?
- Which media give you news and information at a local level?
(*probe for cross platform*) [CAPTURE ON FLIPCHART]

QUESTIONNAIRE 2: fill in questions 1 & 2 only

- Thinking about your region - what do you think of as ‘regional’?
- Which media give you news and information at a regional level?
(*probe for cross platform*) [CAPTURE ON FLIPCHART]

QUESTIONNAIRE 2: fill in questions 3 & 4

Then..

Instruct re local & regional questions 5-12

Questions 7 & 8, and 11 & 12 are about the citizen perspective –all the people in your local area/region, not just you personally.

- Where do you mostly get your local news from?
- Where do you mostly get your regional news from?
- Does local news/information need to be provided on TV? What do you think about other sources (*probe internet, radio, newspaper, other?*)
- Does regional news/information need to be provided on TV? What do you think about other sources (*probe internet, radio, newspaper, other?*)
- Who does the best job of providing regional news and information? Worst?

SESSION THREE
1.25-2.35
(cont'd)

Tables (10 mins) [CAPTURE ON FLIPCHART]

CHOICE

- Thinking about news in your local area and region, how important is it to have a choice of -
 - local news (TV, then other)?
 - regional news (TV, then other)?
 - Why do you say that?
- How has your consumption of news changed over time (*probe for local and regional news*)
- For whom is local/regional news particularly important?
- How important is local news to society? What about regional news?

> Tables (10 mins)

- **ITV's regional role** – [CAPTURE ON FLIPCHART]
 - Now thinking specifically about ITV – how significant is ITV's regional broadcasting role compared to other providers/sources? (rank if necessary)
 - How does the quality of programming compare?
 - What does ITV do well? What needs improving?
 - Have you heard of ITV Local?
 - Have you used it?
 - If so, what do you think of it?

> All (10 mins)

- Local news - summarise
 - importance (*who is it particularly important to?*)
 - satisfaction with amount and quality
- Regional news
 - importance (*who is it particularly important to?*)
 - satisfaction with amount and quality
- Who does a good job of delivering regional news?
- Does the regional news you watch/consume match your own definition of your region?
- What do you think of ITV regional news?
- What does it do well? What could be improved?

> All (15 mins)

Essential to recap pre-lunch session:

- * Cost of programme making vs value to audience;
- * Market pressure (reduced profits due to proliferation of channels, changes to the advertising based funding model)
- * Changes have led broadcasters to review their businesses and seek cost efficiencies

	<p>Essential to introduce next session.</p> <p>Essential to give presentation (10 mins) * existing situation in your region * proposals for change</p> <p>* Need someone to summarise the changes back to the presenter to make sure they're understood</p> <p>Ofcom to field questions (10 mins)</p>
	<p>> All (5 mins) Discussion - spontaneous reaction to proposed changes</p>

2.35-2.40	5 minute break
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SESSION FOUR

<p>SESSION FOUR 2.40-3.45 (65mins)</p>	<p>> Tables (35 mins) Reaction to scenarios – [CAPTURE ON FLIPCHART]</p> <p>INFO HANDOUT 5 – Regional presentations (existing situation in your region, proposals for change)</p> <p>1. MERGING SUBREGIONS (15 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think about ITV's <i>reasons</i> for the proposed change? • What do you think about the proposed change itself? • Do you have any concerns about it? Why? (<i>Who in group rejects proposal?</i>) • Why do you think there are differences in opinion? (<i>Probe: differences in life stage, media habits, interests</i>) • How much difference do you think the changes will make nationally?
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..... to you personally? (probe & challenge responses. refer back to ranking exercises, sources of local/regional news mentioned)

Essential Research Ltd, 8 Elysium Gate, 126-128 New Kings Road, London SW6 4LZ
 - who in society will be most/least affected? 020 7384 1297 F 020 7731 3067

- (For those who have concerns) What could be done to alleviate your concerns?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have any concerns about it? • Who might be affected? <p>3. OTHER COST SAVING OPTIONS: (10 mins) <i>Regions & subregions would stay as they are, but other cost saving options would be tried out for example single newsreader only, no specialist/sports reporters, no 'live' reports, less experienced reporters, no graphic design)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you feel about this option? • How does this compare to the first proposed change (ie merging subregions)?
	<p>> Tables (10 mins) Considered response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for all-in (5 mins) – [CAPTURE ON FLIPCHART] - Summarise reaction to proposal - merging subregions - Reaction to proposal re reduced <i>amount</i> - Reaction to proposal re reduced <i>quality</i> - Top 3 ways that proposal could be more acceptable - [Nominate a spokesperson]

	<p>> All (20 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of reactions and reasons • Any lingering questions? • What if any conditions would need to be met for proposed changes to be acceptable?
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<p>3.45-4.00 (15 mins)</p>	<p>Thank and close</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline next steps • Hand in worksheets/q'aires • Incentives
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Appendix J: Results from voting

Q1: local news sources		Location								
		Total	Bedford	Bath	Torquay	Oxford	Darlington	Penrith	Dumfries	Galashiels
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Q1. How do you normally get your local news/information?	Total	181	23	24	20	25	21	24	21	23
	TV	141	16	18	18	17	20	19	16	17
	Radio	104	11	11	14	16	13	14	8	17
	Internet	40	10	4	5	10	1	4	4	2
	Newspaper	154	12	23	18	23	17	20	19	22
	Other	53	5	11	4	8	5	5	7	8
	I really or never use local news	11	4	0	3	1	0	1	1	1

Q2: local news consumption frequency		Location								
		Total	Bedford	Bath	Torquay	Oxford	Darlington	Penrith	Dumfries	Galashiels
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Q2. How often do you read, watch or listen to local news/information	Total	181	23	24	20	25	21	24	21	23
	Daily	96	8	11	14	14	14	13	10	12
	More than once a week	37	5	6	3	4	5	4	6	4
	At least once a week	35	5	4	3	5	2	6	4	6
	Less than once a week	7	2	3	0	1	0	0	1	0
	Less than once a month	4	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Never	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

Q3: regional news sources		Location								
		Total	Bedford	Bath	Torquay	Oxford	Darlington	Penrith	Dumfries	Galashiels
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Q3. How do you normally get your regional news/nformation	Total	178	23	24	20	25	20	24	20	22
	TV	159	19	22	19	22	19	21	19	18
	Radio	80	9	11	12	10	9	11	6	12
	Internet	27	8	5	2	5	2	2	3	0
	Newspaper	96	8	13	13	12	12	11	13	14
	Other	18	0	2	2	3	4	1	4	2
	I really or never use regional news	15	3	0	2	4	0	2	1	3

Q4: regional news consumption frequency		Location								
		Total	Bedford	Bath	Torquay	Oxford	Darlington	Penrith	Dumfries	Galashiels
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Q4. How often do you read, watch or listen to regional news/information	Total	179	23	24	19	25	21	24	20	23
	Daily	86	6	11	13	9	14	14	10	9
	More than once a week	39	2	8	3	7	6	3	6	4
	At least once a week	28	9	2	3	3	1	4	1	5
	Less than once a week	15	4	2	0	2	0	2	2	3
	Less than once a month	9	2	1	0	3	0	0	1	2
	Never	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0

Q5: personal importance of local news		Location								
		Total	Bedford	Bath	Torquay	Oxford	Darlington	Penrith	Dumfries	Galashiels
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Q5. How important is local news/information to you personally?	Total	180	23	24	20	24	21	24	21	23
	Extremely important	41	3	2	3	5	9	6	7	6
	Very important	59	7	11	10	8	6	4	5	8
	Quite important	55	8	10	4	6	5	11	5	6
	Not very important	23	4	1	3	5	1	3	4	2
	Not at all important	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Q6: societal importance of local news		Location								
		Total	Bedford	Bath	Torquay	Oxford	Darlington	Penrith	Dumfries	Galashiels
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Q6. How important do you think local news/information is overall to people in your local area?	Total	179	23	24	20	24	20	24	21	23
	Extremely important	34	1	4	1	6	7	7	5	3
	Very important	96	13	12	10	12	9	11	11	18
	Quite important	47	9	8	9	4	4	6	5	2
	Not very important	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0

Q7: amount of local news		Location								
		Total	Bedford	Bath	Torquay	Oxford	Darlington	Penrith	Dumfries	Galashiels
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Q7. Thinking about the amount of available news and information relating to your local area (from all sources - TV, radio, internet, newspapers and other sources). Would you say there is:	Total	180	23	24	20	24	21	24	21	23
	Far too much news/information	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
	Too much news/information	7	2	2	3	0	0	0	0	0
	About the right amount	124	17	20	16	16	13	20	14	8
	Too little news/information	44	4	2	0	7	8	4	6	13
	Far too little news/information	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2

Q8: satisfaction with local news		Location								
		Total	Bedford	Bath	Torquay	Oxford	Darlington	Penrith	Dumfries	Galashiels
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Q8. How satisfied are you that news and information covers all the aspects that are important to people in your local area?	Total	180	23	24	20	24	21	24	21	23
	Highly satisfied	7	1	1	1	1	0	2	1	0
	Satisfied	85	13	14	15	13	7	13	7	3
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	60	7	7	4	8	8	8	8	10
	Dissatisfied	25	2	2	0	2	6	1	5	7
	Highly dissatisfied	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3

Q9: personal importance of regional news		Location								
		Total	Bedford	Bath	Torquay	Oxford	Darlington	Penrith	Dumfries	Galashiels
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Q9. How important is regional news/information to you personally?	Total	179	23	24	20	25	20	24	21	22
	Extremely important	23	2	2	2	2	5	5	3	2
	Very important	45	5	7	8	4	8	5	4	4
	Quite important	72	9	12	9	12	5	10	8	7
	Not very important	36	6	3	1	7	2	4	6	7
	Not at all important	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

Q10: societal importance of regional news		Location								
		Total	Bedford	Bath	Torquay	Oxford	Darlington	Penrith	Dumfries	Galashiels
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Q10. How important do you think regional news/information is overall to people in your region?	Total	178	23	24	20	25	20	24	20	22
	Extremely important	16	0	1	1	2	3	6	1	2
	Very important	70	8	13	6	8	13	9	5	8
	Quite important	81	13	9	11	13	3	9	14	9
	Not very important	11	2	1	2	2	1	0	0	3

Q11: amount of regional news		Location								
		Total	Bedford	Bath	Torquay	Oxford	Darlington	Penrith	Dumfries	Galashiels
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Q11. Thinking about the amount of available news and information relating to your region (from all sources - TV, radio, internet, newspapers and other sources). Would you say there is:	Total	180	23	24	20	25	21	24	21	22
	Far too much news/information	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Too much news/information	15	2	3	3	2	2	1	1	1
	About the right amount	124	18	20	16	19	13	16	16	6
	Too little news/information	38	3	1	1	3	6	7	4	13
	Far too little news/information	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

Q12: satisfaction with regional news		Location								
		Total	Bedford	Bath	Torquay	Oxford	Darlington	Penrith	Dumfries	Galashiels
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
12. How satisfied are you that news and information covers all the aspects that are important to people in your region?	Total	180	23	24	20	25	21	24	21	22
	Highly satisfied	7	0	0	2	1	0	3	1	0
	Satisfied	82	13	15	11	15	8	12	5	3
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	64	9	6	7	8	10	7	8	9
	Dissatisfied	24	1	3	0	1	3	2	7	7
	Highly dissatisfied	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3