

25 September 2008

Dear Sirs,

Public Service Broadcasting Review - Phase 2 With particular reference to North Oxfordshire.

Further to your review findings published today, I am particularly concerned about your findings regarding ITV's Thames Valley regional news service.

Here in the Banbury area of North Oxfordshire, this is currently our most important way to see local news on TV. The BBC's coverage is very poor, comprising only 10 minutes per show from BBC Oxford in the evenings, without anything at weekends or in the morning.

The suggestion that ITV Thames Valley and Meridian be merged with only a 15 minute combined Meridian South/Thames Valley opt-out is totally inadequate.

This would result in the main bulletins covering a huge area, stretching from Oxfordshire in the north to Kent in the South East, which could hardly provide local coverage.

Even the 15 minute opt outs would be totally inadequate, covering it would seem an area from Oxfordshire down to the South Coast, it must be around 100 miles from Banbury to Southampton and Portsmouth, and yet this would be deemed local news. This is fact would appear to shadow the BBC's main South region, which is already infamous around here for totally ignoring Oxfordshire.

Therefore I must object to the plans and would suggest that the following must be better options:

- 1) Merge Thames Valley into Meridian news, but give the old Central South areas in Thames Valley their own opt-outs (i.e. not combined with Meridian South).
- 2) Merge Thames Valley North (old Central South) area back into Central and give a 15 minute Central South opt out.

The second option would I feel particularly benefit those of us in North Oxfordshire, who tend to feel more part of the Midlands than the South, and it would give viewers in Oxfordshire a choice of Oxford/South England news (BBC) or Oxford and Midlands news (ITV)

I hope you will take note of my comments, as I am deeply concerned about the future of local TV news in the Banbury area.

Yours sincerely