

Rhona Parry,
PSB Review,
Ofcom,
Riverside House,
2A Southwark Bridge Road,
London,
SE1 9HA.
PSBReview@ofcom.org.uk

June 11th 2008

Dear Rhona Parry,

**Re: Coiste na n-Iarchimi response to the consultation:
Ofcom's Second Public Service Broadcasting Review – Phase One: The Digital
Opportunity consultation**

Coiste na n-Iarchimi is the umbrella organisation in Ireland encompassing groups and individuals working for the social, economic and emotional well being of current and former republican prisoners and their families. We work to secure the full integration of the republican former prisoner community, facilitate republican former prisoners in deepening and developing their contribution to justice and peace in Ireland and we co-ordinate the efforts of our members in an atmosphere of self-help, encouragement and mutual aid.

In response to your consultation and in relation to your main objective of furthering the interests of citizen-consumers; in particular, developing "*a new broadcasting licensing regime to foster self-regulation and broaden citizen/consumer choice*" we would recommend that Ofcom considers acceptance of local community television as public service broadcasters.

We have worked with Northern Visions/NvTv on a series of programmes on the interfaces in Belfast and have first hand experience of the social benefits that community arts and community media can deliver. It is important to create forums for sharing knowledge, experience and opportunities in the post conflict period in Ireland. Empowering citizens to become content providers and creating media which reflects and raises awareness of local issues and interests constitutes a valuable public service. It enhances skills, encourages a sense of place and ownership of the city and has the potential to foster greater citizenship.

Regarding aspects of work required to bring about a map of local and community television following analogue TV switch-off post 2010, we would request your assurance that no planning, at this stage, precludes a network of local digital multiplexes.

In relation to the development of local television in Belfast, we should be grateful if Ofcom would support NvTv being carried on Freeview as a local public service broadcaster. Such a development would ensure that everyone in the city has access to a valuable local service and would support the efforts of those of us who are working to ensure a socially inclusive society.

Yours sincerely

Michael Culbert

Director