

Rhona Parry,
PSB Review,
Ofcom,
Riverside House,
2a Southwark Bridge Road,
London SE1 9HA

10th June 2008

Dear Rhona Parry

PSB Review

I write in relation to the future of ITV's regional news programming commitment in Yorkshire and Humber.

As the digital landscape changes it is vitally important that the news service provided by our regional broadcasters is both valued and protected - and re-shaped to meet the new demands and opportunities offered by the massively changing world of digital television.

ITV Yorkshire's proposal to return to the model of programming that sustained it for 38 years is supported by Screen Yorkshire, the Regional Screen Agency for the Yorkshire and Humber region.

Until January 2007 ITV Yorkshire's highly regarded news magazine programme, Calendar, covered the whole region with opted out material within the programme to provide a more local news reach for certain stories that would not fit into the pan regional programme. It is this model that the broadcaster now seeks to reinstate – one single regional news programme for Yorkshire and North East Lincolnshire

We support the move to one single ITV news programme, backed as it now is by extensive and proven on-line services, all of which can be accessed by viewers who are increasingly using some form of multi platform channel to access this content. We recognise that as we move towards digital switchover and are increasingly affected by the vast changes digital brings, there needs to be a realistic and appropriate development to ensure that we have a sustainable regional news service from ITV.

ITV Yorkshire has a great history in our region and is still fundamental not only to our industry here but to the daily lives of our citizens. We feel it is vital to democracy in the region, and across the UK, that there is plurality of supply in regional news and therefore urge Ofcom to ensure this continues long into the future.

We are fortunate to have two exceptional broadcasters – BBC and ITV Yorkshire – actively working to deliver a first class service to the region. But this is a huge geographic region - the largest county in England and with a population of over 5 million it is the same size as Scotland, Denmark, Norway and Singapore. It is also home to one of the most diverse populations in Britain and its economy reflects that: Leeds is the largest financial and legal centre outside London yet we have lower average earnings than the UK average and 86% of the region is rural.

Screen Yorkshire does not accept that one broadcaster alone can cover the new remit for an area as large and diverse as our own. I urge Ofcom to ensure regional news programming, particularly for Yorkshire and North East Lincolnshire is protected, and that there remains a plurality in delivery to ensure audiences have access to news content fit for the 21st century.

If you would like to discuss this issue in any way or at any point in the future please don't hesitate to contact me on 0113 236 8230.

Best Wishes

Sally Joynson
Chief Executive

Cc Neil Thompson – Regional Director, ITV Yorkshire