

12th October 2008

Mr. A. Bridge
Ofcom
London

alistair.bridge@ofcom.org.uk

Dear Mr. Bridge

Ofcom Consultation - Citizens, Communications and Convergence

As a participant in the ongoing consultation process in advance of the allocation of digital spectrum, the Fife and Tayside Local TV Working Group (FT-TV) welcomes this further opportunity to comment on the above consultation as to the role of Ofcom in furthering the interests of citizens.

FT-TV is not a TV station in itself. It is a network of, and forum for, groups, individuals and consortia in Fife and Tayside that are interested in the future development of local TV. It includes companies seeking to operate local TV services, companies that create content, and groups such as academic, business and cultural, interested in the opportunities that local TV can bring for promotion, audience and business development. FT-TV is coordinated by FifeScreen & TayScreen, the screen agency for the Councils of Angus, Dundee, Fife and Perth & Kinross.

Clearly citizens are key stakeholders for any council, including the Council partners in FifeScreen and TayScreen and Councils carry significant responsibilities towards citizens.

FT-TV supports the introduction of local public service television in which it is proposed that citizens would service expectations equal to or beyond those of consumers. The public purpose of such a local service is evidenced in the FT-TV submission to the DDR: Interleaved Awards consultation on 21st August 2008

As has been stated in all our submissions including the latter, FT-TV believes that local TV is about access and communication – about cultural diversity, inclusion and ambition beyond borders. With regard to the interests of citizens, the available and developing media are being reviewed to develop a future strategy and best practice for communication with citizens and providing opportunities for citizens to participate in such communications.

It is acknowledged that local TV has significant potential to get people involved in their communities, facilitate media access and political and social engagement and promotes and raise awareness of information and projects.

/Page2

We note the recent resolution of the European Parliament driven by many of these issues and emphasizing the issue of media pluralism and community media:

"a concept that involves citizens' access to a broad variety of information sources on a broad range of content that enable them to form their opinion without the undue influence of one dominant, opinion-forming power. As such it is considered an important element in a democratic society and is therefore also enshrined in Art. 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights."

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A6-2008-0263+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN#title2>

We reiterate that there is highly varied access to media, whether broadcast or broadband, in the Fife and Tayside area. With regard to broadband, this is typical of many areas of Scotland that are a mix of urban and rural in that many people have limited or no access. At the same time, demographically and culturally, there is a demand for media that is pushed, as in TV broadcasting, as well as pulled, as in webcasting and the internet, with opportunities for significant synergy between both as is demonstrated by the experience of the UK's major broadcast networks. In responding to the needs and entitlements of citizens, the importance of a coherent broadcast and broadband strategy is recognized.

Thank you for your time. We should be most grateful if you might confirm receipt and let us know if it will be possible to see responses to this consultation online. Certainly we should appreciate it if this response might be included in this process.

Yours sincerely



Julie Craik
For Fife and Tayside Local TV working Group