

**Matthews B (Barry)**

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**From:** Dave Rushton [local.tv@virgin.net]  
**Sent:** 29 March 2007 13:21  
**To:** Matthews B (Barry)  
**Subject:** Culture Bill Response



ILTCulture Bill.pdf  
(163 KB)

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Dear Barry

Please find attached Institute of Local Television response to the Culture Bill

Regards,

Dave Rushton  
Director

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## DRAFT CULTURE (SCOTLAND) BILL - CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

If there are any other points you would like to make please feel free to make them.  
Local cultural entitlements

### 1. Do you think that developing local cultural entitlements will help to increase participation in cultural activities?

This Bill is intended to empower communities and residents with distinctive forms of cultural access according to local preferences and activity. Several of the Scottish councils are auditing cultural expression in 'pathfinder' assessments and perhaps for the first time will become obliged to construct local cultural 'maps' of access and delivery.

Clearly the availability of local broadcasting within each area in Scotland will benefit from broadcasting licenses being made available to Local Authorities (and brought by the Culture Bill into line with the rest of the UK as below).

But as yet local authorities everywhere are a largely uninvolved broadcasting 'stakeholder' and have still to be appraised of how they might acquire or invest in or in other ways encourage local channels to address local news and (for Scotland) 'cultural entitlements'.

A new entitlement to *locally broadcast on a municipal scale* would not only help access cultural activity but encourage debate and exhibition but also an on-going assessment of priorities in each area.

Voluntary arts and crafts practice is one of the major ways people choose to participate in cultural activity – with over half the adult population in the UK doing so – well over 2 million people in Scotland. In research undertaken for the Cultural Commission in Scotland, it was identified that the voluntary cultural sector offered over 100 opportunities per day for people to take part in the arts and crafts, and there are at least 263,400 volunteers giving their time to do so. These activities are available throughout the country - and in rural areas, frequently the only regular form of cultural activity is provided by voluntary effort.

It is important that any broadcasting channel reflects the society it is part of. This includes the voluntary effort that goes into providing cultural activity as well as other important services and accessibility by relevant communities. In Scotland local television will be able to play a significant role in supporting these developments – especially if the local authority broadcasting part of the Culture Bill is passed. The societal value of ensuring that at least a portion of the spectrum to be made available is used for public services has the potential to be immense.

*Fiona Campbell, Executive Officer, Voluntary Arts Scotland. ACTO 32 (<http://www.maccess.org.uk/members/ilt.html>)*

### 2. If you believe further or alternative measures are necessary, what are they?

**We believe the support for local broadcasting (especially television) will make an important contribution to the engagement and representation of culture in Scotland.** Explicit in much of the independent Local TV research conducted since 1984 and the Cable and Broadcasting Act (Section 7) has been the question and at times the claim that 'local channels should be under local control'. Not least this claim has been made in order to acknowledge Lord Hunt's ambitions to ring-fence as must-carry *distinctive local community and voluntary channels* on what was envisaged to be an extensive local cable network of 180 plus stations following the 1984 Act.

For example, well before the 2003 Act and Media Literacy *local control* features in Anna Melina (ed) *Local Channels under Local Control*, ILT (1995) and more recently in the CMA's *Airflash* Issue 92 (page 16) as well as SCVO's *View* - Issue 6 (both published in Summer/Autumn 2006) and also title 'Local Channels under Local Control'.

A paper published by the Edinburgh based John Wheatley Centre in 1995 had explored local control in 'Should broadcasting be devolved to Scotland?'

Devolution as well as subsidiarity in broadcasting can also be found in Baroness Dean's House of Lords' amendment supporting local Broadcasting Trusts which formed part of the Opposition Lord's interventions in the 1995 Broadcasting Bill.

The regulators' own research ranges across the ITV and BBC regions and has sampled viewers employing a variety of criteria. These studies have examined closely points of view and when taken together over several decades reach much the same conclusions, if sometimes in an implicit rather explicit way:

*that regional TV occupies a space where Local TV ought to be.*

These studies at publication on occasion offer evidence of alteration to skew findings (see especially the ITC's *Pride of Place* of June 2002) while in earlier years evidence was simply ignored in order to fit the delivery platforms to the ambitions of the then Government or regulator (the preference to stay with large regions for the ITV auctions in the early 1990s, or a willingness to bow to pressure from London Weekend Television to exclude competition from a city based Channel 5, in the mid 1990s).

The tendency of the regulator or broadcaster (or both) to make the necessary cultural adjustments to research in favour of the 'central' preference or to accommodate pressures on a broadcast service rather than to meet viewer demands is most clearly represented in how language is interpreted in many of these studies.

The impact over thirty or more years has been to dismiss the importance and weight of the 'viewer's' own evidence which has consistently favoured a smaller broadcast scale that regional television within which viewer's seek and can expect to receive greater identification and representation.

In 1974 the Independent Broadcasting Association in one of their regular *Attitudes to Broadcasting* surveys found viewers wanting a more 'locally enhancing' programming – from an area smaller than the large regional television services could deliver. In particular the IBA found demand acute in the second-city part of each ITV region – cities ideally suited for the delivery (some years later) of a Channel 5 city service (as proposals then noted).

More recently we can find explicit evidence of a steer away from Local TV in the ITC's *Pride of Place* study undertaken by Jane Sancho in July 2002.

We find the BBC recasting the 'delivery' of Local TV when addressing its own findings from BBC Scotland's *Journalism Review*.

To look at this one example in more detail you'll find our emphasis in italic-bold to highlight the shift from 'local' to 'regional' and from 'TV' to 'text' as the form of resolvable delivery.

#### **Local Bulletins on TV**

Most notably, there was a strong demand across the board for 5 – 10 minutes of **local television news** within the 6- 7pm news hour on BBC1 (81% interested, only 8% not interested). Geographically, the strongest level of interest in this option was in East Central Scotland. The very highest levels of interest at 91% were from those who were also Radio Scotland listeners and, at 89%, from those who considered themselves "BBC advocates". (p13 *Journalism Review* 2003 BBC Scotland)

We then find that subsequent interpretation increasing the scale to more readily delivered dimensions:

The introduction of **regional text services** in April 2006 marked a significant step on the route to new services for the regions of Scotland. This had been identified as an audience priority in the findings of the 2003 *BBC Scotland Journalism Review*, which had been scrutinised and approved by the Council. Further enhancement of this service is a priority for the year ahead.

So far as published in the 2003 *BBC Scotland Journalism Review* regional text services were not the priority.

The unexpectedly high demand for **local news on television and radio** was one of the key messages to emerge from this review. BBC Scotland will now examine how it might provide a stronger **regional news service** considering the options for all services – radio television and online. (p13)

These findings do chime with observations in other media about a strong sense of **regionalism** within Scotland, and perhaps an anxiety that the M8 corridor and the pull of Glasgow and Edinburgh is dominating the Scottish news agenda at the expense of other, distinctive parts of Scotland. At a UK level, similar themes also emerged in a recent report on Rural Affairs for the BBC Board of Governors. (p14) Jeremy Peat, BBC National Governor for Scotland, *2005/6 Annual Review*.

The common feature of much of the research into viewers's views on regional television is the slippage of 'local demand' into 'regional supply'.

But Ofcom's research by MORI – *Programming in the Nations*, 2005 makes some assessment in Dumfries and Galloway of the news-needs required from overlapping or large as well as small areas – news or information areas that fluctuate in scale with inner boundaries providing local information as well as outer boundaries embracing news supplied for neighbouring communities. MORI note too that different age groups have differing demands for a news range reaching out into other local (urban) areas.

3. How do you think the Scottish Executive and local authorities can best utilise the influence and impact of cultural activity

4. Do you think the initial draft guidance under this Part of the Culture Bill is clear and helpful? Is there anything else it should contain?

Creative Scotland

5. Do you agree that there should be a single national cultural development body?

6. Do you agree with the remit proposed for Creative Scotland? Has it the right powers and functions?

The scope of this unified body should be drafted to encourage and support local public service television and community media.

7. Do you agree that Creative Scotland should work in concert with the Scottish Executive to implement national cultural policy?

National Collections

8. Do you agree that the National Collections should remain as constitutionally separate centres of excellence?

9. Do you think the powers and functions proposed for the Collections in the draft Bill are right? If not, how would you improve them?

10. What do you think of the name 'National Record of Scotland'?

11. Do you agree that the Faculty of Advocates should be able to contribute to the board of the National Library by having at least one representative?

12. Do you agree that the Collections have the appropriate powers to obtain, loan and dispose of objects for or from their collections? If not, what would you change?

Dealing in tainted cultural objects

13. Do you agree that an offence similar to that in the 2003 Act should be introduced in Scotland?

Powers of local authorities to broadcast information

14. Do you agree local authorities should have a general power to broadcast information about their activities?

Yes - local authorities should have the power to broadcast guided by the terms of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 to advance well-being and not be restricted by the powers of the Local Government England Act of 1972 either by being excluded from holding licences because they fall outside the scope of the 1972 Act or to by being restricted by the 1972 in what they might broadcast.

15. Do you think it necessary to give authorities this power in this Bill, or should local authorities be left to rely on 'the power to advance well-being' in section 20 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003?

Yes it is necessary to give this power in the Bill and to follow through with revisions to the Communications Act 2003 - but it is important to ensure that 'the power to advance well-being' informs those amendments.

DR 29/03/07