

Submission from Dr Sonja Cameron

1. Scale and scope of the BBC

-- How should the charter reflect the BBC's priorities and output in Scotland?

The BBC in needs to be accountable to the Holyrood Committee and should have to appear before it and justify its output.

-- Should in-house production quotas and Terms of Trade allow greater competition and what impact could this have on the Scottish broadcasting industry?

More competition should definitely be encouraged to allow for greater diversity in the Scottish broadcasting industry and to allow the industry itself to grow.

-- Is the BBC's online presence damaging local and regional news outlets in Scotland? What could be done to ensure the BBC works more co-operatively with the local and regional news sector?

We should finally get a 'Scottish 6' as proposed long ago, and that output should deal with issues that are relevant to Scotland in an intelligent and informed manner.

2. Serving the interests of the Scottish audience

-- How well is the BBC serving the Scottish audience (English and Gaelic speaking) and representing Scottish issues to the wider UK audience?

The BBC appears to be serving the Scottish audience only grudgingly, if at all. Its reporting is full of errors and distortions, its online pages in Scotland cannot be commented on, meaning that the errors cannot be addressed, and its treatment of the Scottish independence referendum was demonstrably, and shamefully, biased. When presenting Scottish issues to the wider UK audience, its coverage is stereotyped and again, distorted.

-- Could Scotland receive a fairer share of BBC spending?

There is no doubt that it could, and should. BBC Scotland's budget (plus the putative cost of buying other BBC channels as for example Ireland does) comes to some £107m, and Scottish licence fee income is around £300m, meaning that £193m of Scottish licence fee money disappears to the 'general BBC' and is not spent on quality Scottish programming. This is unbalanced and unfair.

-- How well does the BBC support distinctive Scottish content and could it do more in this regard?

The BBC supports distinctive Scottish content rarely and badly. Big issues in a Scottish context, for example around Trident and nuclear waste dumped into the Clyde, are never investigated adequately.

-- How could the BBC enhance support and development of talent and skills in Scotland?

Employ people from more diverse ethnic and educational backgrounds, even in high positions. Commission more material from independent producers.

3. Governance arrangements

-- How could BBC governance be improved to enhance the Scottish voice?

The BBC should be accountable to the Scottish Government, not to Westminster.

4. Cost savings

-- What would be the impact of any further cuts to BBC spending in Scotland?

Scotland is already not getting the full value of its licence fee, so it would make no sense to make even further cuts. But to speculate, I expect further cuts would result in further dumbing-down of output and even greater reliance of BBC journalists on news created by the print media and by Labour party press releases. The BBC is already serving Scotland badly; the situation would simply be further exacerbated.

Dr Sonja Cameron