

BBC Public Purpose Remits: Public consultation by the BBC Trust

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1. The role of Purpose Remits in the new BBC governance framework

1.1 The BBC Trust

As a result of the Charter Review process, the governance of the BBC has changed radically and the Board of Governors was replaced by the BBC Trust on 1 January 2007.

The Trust is designed to be more clearly independent from the BBC's Executive Board which it must hold to account. The Trust aims to provide licence payers with the level of transparency and accountability that they now expect from major public organisations.

One of the Trust's roles is to ensure that the BBC delivers the best possible programming and content to promote its six Public Purposes.

1.2 The Public Purposes

The Public Purposes were first proposed by the BBC in its Charter Review submission, *Building Public Value*¹.

The new Charter established the BBC's main objective to be the promotion of its six Public Purposes² which are:

- Sustaining citizenship and civil society.
- Promoting education and learning.
- Stimulating creativity and cultural excellence.
- Representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities.
- Bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK.
- In promoting its other purposes, helping to deliver to the public the benefit of emerging communications technologies and services and, in addition, taking a leading role in the switchover to digital television.

The Agreement tasks the Trust with setting a separate Purpose Remit for each of the six Public Purposes³. Combined, these will provide a

¹ This can be found on the BBC website at www.bbc.co.uk

² BBC Charter, article 3

³ BBC Agreement, clauses 5-10

directional framework for the BBC's services and non-service activities alike. They will form a key part of the new governance and performance system and provide a core focus of the Trust's relationship with both licence-fee payers and the BBC's Executive.

In accordance with the BBC Agreement, the Trust will keep Purpose Remits under review, but in any event will subject them to a major review half way through the Charter period.

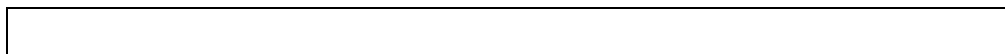
1.3 The role of Purpose Remits as part of the new governance framework

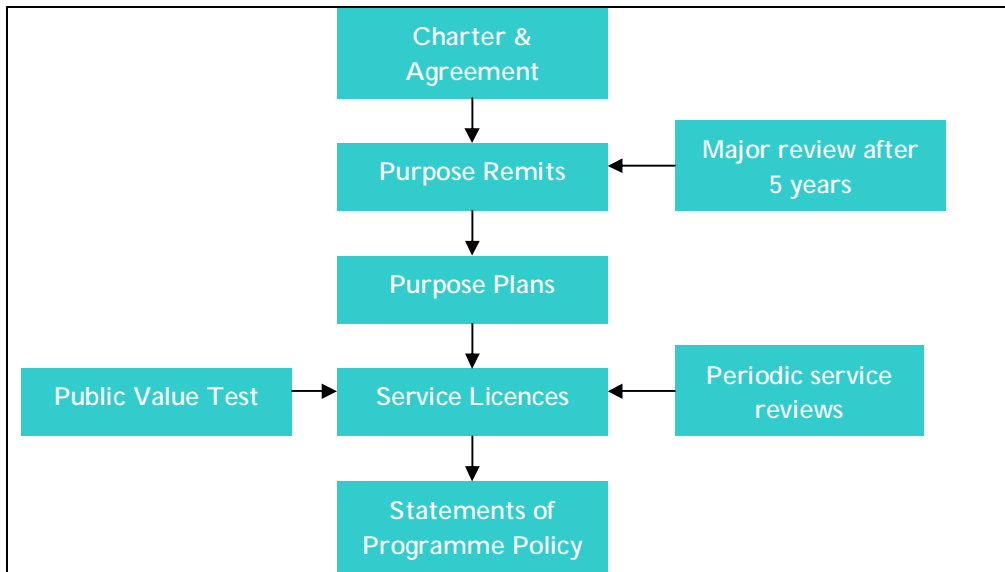
Purpose Remits are one of the several new tools of governance for the Trust. Alongside the new Charter and Agreement, the other tools for governing the BBC's UK public service are:

- The Service Licences - all BBC services will be run according to a published Service Licence which describe all of the most important characteristics of each service, including how they contribute to the BBC's six Public Purposes.
- The Public Value Test, which the Trust uses to assess the public value and, in collaboration with Ofcom, market impact of any proposed significant change to the existing UK public services, including any proposal to launch a new UK public service.
- Statements of Programme Policy, which continue to be an annual requirement under the BBC Agreement for each UK Public Broadcasting service; these will provide an update as to how each service delivers the commitments contained in its Service Licence and its editorial and other priorities for the years ahead.

The relationship of these tools is illustrated in Figure 1, below.

Figure 1: Framework for governance of the BBC's services in the new Charter





Following this public consultation, the Trust will commission Purpose Plans from the Executive. Purpose Plans are an important element of the Purpose Remit system as they will translate the high level aspirations set out in the Remits into how the priorities will be delivered at a service level and through supporting, non-service activities. Once it has approved the Purpose Plans the Trust will amend the Service Licences to ensure that they properly reflect the contribution that the services make to delivering the Purpose Remit priorities, as required by the Charter and Agreement⁴.

⁴ Agreement, Clause 17(2)

2. Scope and purpose of this consultation

2.1 Scope and purpose of this consultation

The BBC Trust has approved the six Purpose Remits for public consultation.

Purpose Remits are a key feature of the new governance system. The Charter Review process involved extensive debate and public consultation by the DCMS on the BBC's Public Purposes. This public consultation by the Trust focuses therefore not on the Purposes themselves but on whether, in the view of licence fee payers, the draft Purpose Remits capture the key activities the BBC should undertake in pursuing its mission to inform, educate and entertain.

The Trust also wishes to know how well licence fee payers think the BBC is currently performing in delivering the priorities set out in the Purpose Remits.

A full list of questions being asked by the Trust in this consultation is included in section 5 of this document.

The results of this public consultation will assist the Trust in ensuring that the Purpose Remits are appropriately aspirational and will provide valuable information to inform the Trust's assessment of the Purpose Plans that it will commission from the Executive once the Purpose Remits have been finalised.

2.2 General guidance in responding to this consultation

This public consultation will close on 10 April 2007. Details of how to respond to this consultation are given in section 6 of this document.

When reading this document and individual Purpose Remits, you may find it useful to read the Purpose Remits Operating Framework. This can be found on the BBC Trust website at www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust or printed copies can be requested from the BBC Trust Unit. Contact details are given in section 6 of this document.

3. Development, contents and status of the draft Purpose Remits

3.1 How the draft Public Purpose Remits have been developed

The draft Purpose Remits were developed by the BBC Governance Unit (now known as the Trust Unit), working on behalf of the BBC Trust.

The Trust Unit represents an important source of continuity for the Trust, in terms of being able to advise on the thinking behind the contents of the draft Purpose Remits and helping the Trust to consider any proposed changes on this basis.

The Trust has approved the six Purpose Remits in draft form for public consultation.

3.2 Contents of the Purpose Remits

The BBC Agreement⁵ states that each Purpose Remit must:

- (i) set out priorities, and
- (ii) specify how the BBC's performance against them will be judged, in relation to how the BBC promotes its Public Purposes in accordance with the BBC's mission to inform, education and entertain.

Each Purpose Remit contains the following elements:

- A brief statement outlining the BBC's role in promoting the Purpose
- The priorities identified by the Trust in consultation with licence fee payers
- Annex I which provides details of how the Trust will measure the BBC's performance in delivering the priorities
- Annex II which provides background information on the Purpose Remit, including the requirements of the Charter and Agreement, the BBC's understanding of the market context in which it is operating and its role within it and evidence of licence fee payer expectations of the BBC in delivering its purposes

⁵ Clause 5(3)

The priorities have been selected to reflect the specific requirements set out in the Charter and Agreement, particularly clauses 5-10 of the Agreement. Given that the Purposes were subject to extensive public consultation, the Governance Unit took the view that framing the priorities with reference to the requirements of the Charter and Agreement would provide the Trust with an effective way of holding the BBC to account for honouring its Charter obligations. In order to ensure that the meaning of each Purpose Remit priority was as clear as possible, the BBC Governance Unit carried out qualitative research amongst licence fee payers and the final wording of the priorities was informed by this.

Consultation questions

1. Do the priorities adequately reflect the requirements of the Charter and Agreement?
2. Do the priorities need amending in any way? If so, how? (Please answer with reference to specific priorities)
3. Are there any important priorities that have been missed?

Licence fee payers have understandably high expectations of the BBC as a public service broadcaster, particularly its role in setting standards for the rest of the media industry. The new Charter charges the Trust with the task of representing the interests of licence fee payers and ensuring that their voice is properly heard when key decisions about the BBC are made. Given the role of Purpose Remits in setting the direction of the BBC for the new Charter period, the Trust will be particularly interested to hear the views of licence fee payers on whether the Purpose Remits present the BBC with sufficient challenge in promoting the Public Purposes.

Consultation questions

4. Do the Purpose Remits present the BBC with sufficient challenge in promoting the Public Purposes? If not, how might they be improved? (Please answer with reference to specific Remits and priorities)

3.3 Measures

The measurement system which the Trust will use to hold the Executive to account in delivering the Purpose Remits is contained in Annex I of each Remit. The set of high-level, mainly quantitative measures is based

on licence-fee payer attitudes⁶ to the delivery of the Purpose Remit priorities. It is likely that the Trust will wish to supplement this with qualitative and/or deliberative research.

The measurement system and how it will be used is further explained in the Purpose Remit Operating Framework.

Consultation questions

5. In addition to the measures included in Annex I of each Purpose Remit, are there any other performance measures which the Trust should use to monitor the Purpose Remits?

3.4 Status of the draft Purpose Remits

The Purpose Remits are currently in draft form and are therefore not operational documents. The Trust has issued them for consultation only, pending any changes which it decides to make once the consultation has been completed and its results analysed.

When these changes have been made to the Purpose Remits, they will be reissued by the Trust and will become fully operational documents. The Trust aims to complete this process if possible by mid 2007 and in any event by the date specified for this purpose in the Charter, namely 31 December 2007.

⁶ Qualitative audience research was used in the development of the measurement system so as to ensure that licence-fee payers understand each of the priorities and the questions asked of them.

4. Benchmarking performance

The Purpose Remit priorities set goals for areas of activity which the BBC already undertakes. Therefore, the Trust is interested in understanding how well audiences currently perceive the BBC to be performing in these areas. This will help inform the Trust's judgement of the Executive's Purpose Plans for the delivery of the Purpose Remits.

Consultation questions

6. How well do you think the BBC is currently delivering the Purpose Remit priorities? In particular:
 - a) are there any priorities which the BBC could deliver better? If so, why?
 - b) are there any priorities which you think are being delivered well? If so, why?
- (Please answer with reference to specific priorities)

5. Consultation questions

The Trust welcomes your views on the draft Public Purpose Remits. In particular, it seeks feedback on the following questions.

These questions relate to all of the draft Purpose Remits, however, you may find it useful to refer to specific Remits and/or priorities when making your response, so that you can give examples based on individual Purpose Remits which illustrate your answers.

Please feel free to offer constructive suggestions linked to these questions, taking into account the scope of this consultation and the role of the Trust in governing the BBC's services.

Full list of consultation questions

1. Do the priorities adequately reflect the requirements of the Charter and Agreement?
2. Do the priorities need amending in any way? If so, how? (Please answer with reference to specific priorities).
3. Are there any important priorities that have been missed?
4. Do the Purpose Remits present the BBC with enough challenge in promoting the Public Purposes? If not, how might they be improved? (Please answer with reference to specific Remits and /or priorities).
5. In addition to the measures included in annex I to each Purpose Remit, are there any other performance measures which the Trust should use to monitor the Purpose Remits?
6. How well do you think the BBC is currently delivering the Purpose Remit priorities? In particular:
 - a) are there any priorities which the BBC could deliver better? If so, why?
 - b) are there any priorities which you think are being delivered well? If so, why?

(Please answer with reference to specific priorities)

6. How to respond to this consultation

This consultation closes on 10 April 2007. The results will be critical in determining the final form of the Purpose Remits and the Trust will exercise its discretion in balancing the different views expressed by licence fee payers with other relevant evidence before reaching its final conclusions.

Useful information

The BBC Trust is inviting response to this consultation between Tuesday 16 January 2007 and Tuesday 10 April 2007. If you wish to respond to this consultation, you can send your response to:

Ann Bastow
Purpose Remits Public Consultation
BBC Trust Unit
Room 211
35 Marylebone High Street
London W1U 4AA

Or by email to purposeremits@bbc.co.uk

Please complete the Confidentiality statement, shown overleaf, when you make your response.

The Trust aims to close this public consultation on Tuesday 10 April 2007.

Audio and Braille translations of this document are available upon request by calling BBC Information on 0800 068 0116

How the Trust will use your response

Responses to this consultation will be published on the BBC Trust website www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust soon after the consultation has closed.

Feedback to this consultation will be used by the Trust to consider making some amendments to the Purpose Remits, in order that they may be reissued by mid 2007.

Names and/or addresses of individual respondents will not be published on the Trust website. The Trust will publish details of organisational responses. Please copy or sign the declaration overleaf to signal that you are prepared for some or all of your response to be made public. If

you would prefer that all or part of your response is treated as confidential, please make this clear in your submission.

PLEASE PRINT AND SIGN THIS DECLARATION IF YOU ARE SENDING A HARD COPY OF YOUR RESPONSE. IF YOU ARE SENDING AN ELECTRONIC RESPONSE, PLEASE COPY THIS STATEMENT INTO THE RESPONSE AND COMPLETE IT.

If you would prefer that all or part of your response is treated as confidential, please complete the confidentiality section below.

What do you want the BBC Trust to keep confidential?

Nothing	
Whole response	
Part of it	
Which part?	[please indicate]

Name
Position/job title
Organisation
Address
Other contact details (telephone, email)

The BBC Trust will retain and use your name, address, email address and organisation you work for (if applicable) for the purposes of administering the online public consultations held on this website. You will have the option of deciding whether you want your response and name displayed on this website (all other personal information will be withheld from display). Your personal details will not be passed to any third parties for marketing purposes.

The BBC complies with the Data Protection Act 1998. For more information on BBC's Privacy Policy please refer to <http://www.bbc.co.uk/privacy/>.

The BBC is listed as a public body in Part VI of Schedule 1 to the Freedom of Information Act 2000; this means that, subject to certain restrictions, the BBC may be required to disclose information it holds to individuals and organisations making a valid request to be supplied with that information under the Act.

If you have requested that all or part of your response should be kept confidential, the BBC will take reasonable steps to maintain confidentiality of that information if a request for its disclosure is received under the Act. Please note, however, that in the event the BBC is able to withhold information under the Act, this decision may be overturned by the Information Commissioner, the Information Tribunal or the courts.

Please note that we may still refer to the contents of responses in general terms, without disclosing specific information that is confidential. We will exercise due regard to the confidentiality of information supplied.

DECLARATION

I confirm that the information I have submitted is a formal consultation response. It can be published in full on the BBC Trust website, unless otherwise specified, and I authorise the BBC Trust to make use of the information in this response to meet its legal requirements. If I have sent my response by email, the BBC can disregard any standard e-mail text about not disclosing email contents and attachments.

Name Signed (if hard copy)
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