The Londonderry Chamber of Commerce welcomes the opportunity provided by the BBC to make comments on BBC output. This is the considered response of the Chamber to the BBC’s consultation exercise. We would appreciate our comments being communicated to BBC Northern Ireland, BBC Radio Ulster and BBC Radio Foyle.

1. The Londonderry Chamber of Commerce is very appreciative of the high quality of content from the BBC, through its national and regional TV; national, regional and local radio; and online content.

2. We support the structure of the licence fee as a means of paying for the BBC’s services.

3. We are appreciative of the high quality output from BBC Radio Foyle and BBC Radio Ulster. We recognise that we benefit from particularly high quality output in our region, which seems to us to be of a higher standard than in many other parts of the local BBC network.

4. We are concerned that on a national basis, BBC news output seems to have become less challenging and more docile in recent times, in particular during the run-up to decisions being taken on the future of its accountability structure and funding mechanisms. As consumers of media, our Chamber’s members are keen that the BBC news output is of high quality, objective, challenging to authority and contains appropriate investigative input.

5. We are keen that Radio Foyle has a more diverse news content, in terms of covering national and international news stories as well as local stories, but also greater input of business and economic news.

6. The Londonderry Chamber of Commerce is keen to work in partnership with Radio Foyle, including by introducing existing and trainee journalists to the local business environment and to key local businesses. We believe that the Chamber can be of assistance in widening the Radio Foyle’s newsroom’s network of contacts in the business community and with economic academics and business analysts in academia.

7. The Chamber is keen to increase the amount of business and economic input into the Radio Foyle, Radio Ulster and BBC TV News content.

8. We are keen for there to be more positive business news stories to be covered on Radio Foyle. We believe that if more time were made available on Radio Foyle for business and economic stories, then there could be a more relaxed tone in the coverage of the stories - which would enable more positive aspects of the stories to emerge. On occasion, as a result of the short time provided for these stories, the emphasis can seem more negative than positive, even when there are good stories emerging.

9. We are concerned that the existing dedicated content on Radio Foyle of business news which comes from Radio Ulster tends to drown out local business content from the North West. We are keen for more business news from the North West to be covered on Radio Ulster.

10. We strongly believe that Radio Foyle must provide additional content to the Northern Ireland BBC radio coverage. It must not be used by Radio Ulster as a reason for it to provide less coverage of the North West. We fear that the North West is under-covered on Radio Ulster because of the existence of Radio Foyle. This can disadvantage the messages from the North West on Radio Ulster.

11. We would welcome the strengthening of aspects of the online news coverage of the North West. Most news and business news stories do not make the online section: those that do tend to stay there for several days. We would also like to see a dedicated NI Business section online, in the same way that there is a NI politics section.
12. We would encourage the BBC in Northern Ireland to spread the benefits of its partnership with Screen NI. We would be keen to see more independent productions, for example of television and radio documentaries. We would also like to see more transparent arrangements to enable a wider diversity of input into the making and content of documentaries.

13. We are concerned that the BBC is not maximising its use of social media. We are keen that programmes (tv and radio) are retained longer for availability through i-player and that the search functions be optimised to support students in particular finding relevant content online.

Question: **BBC Radio Ulster/Foyle’s remit is to:**

- provide accurate, impartial and independent news;
- report and scrutinise political and social issues in Northern Ireland
- carry extensive sports coverage;
- support music and arts in Northern Ireland
- provide programming in the Irish and Ulster Scots languages, reflecting the needs and interests of these communities
- fully reflect the diverse faiths, cultures and communities of Northern Ireland
- provide programming specifically for audiences in the North West on Radio Foyle
- provide opportunities for informal learning across a wide range of subjects
- encourage participation from the audience.

How well do you think BBC Radio Ulster/Foyle does this?

We believe that the two stations are excellent examples of BBC regional and local output. We have specific proposals for improvement, which we outlined in our previous answer. (See above.)

Question: What do you think about BBC news and current affairs on television in Northern Ireland?

We believe that these programmes are excellent and are of higher quality than much of the GB output of BBC TV.

Question: What do you think about the BBC’s online site for Northern Ireland or the news for Northern Ireland that you can choose to get through the BBC’s News app?

We have concerns that the BBC website is not sufficiently comprehensive. (See our earlier answer.) We would like a larger library of older programmes to be available on i-player, with these fully referenced through online search facilities. We would like a BBC Northern Ireland business section to be established on the website, comparable to the BBC NI Politics section. We would like more of the local and regional stories to be published on the BBC NI website and we would like the online news stories for NI to be refreshed more frequently.

Question: What do you think about the news and information available from BBC Northern Ireland through social media sites, such as Twitter or Facebook?

This is improving.