

Individual 7

From: Ann Irving [REDACTED]
Sent: 19 April 2013 16:48
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Publicity Code consultation

Attachments: Response_form_-_Publicity_Code_Consultation personal.doc



Response_form_-_
Publicity_Code...

Dear [REDACTED]

My personal response to the consultation is attached. I accept that some councils might overstep the acceptable mark, but to legislate for all is more than too top-heavy and probably unnecessary. Appropriate wrists can surely be slapped.

Regards

Ann Irving

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Response form

Publicity Code Consultation 2013

About you

i) Your details

Name:	Ann Irving
Position (if applicable)	
Name of Organisation (if applicable)	
Address:	[REDACTED]
e mail:	[REDACTED]
Telephone Number:	[REDACTED]

ii) Are the views expressed on this consultation an official's response from the organisation you represent or your own personal views?

Organisational response

☐

Personal views

☒

iii) Please tick the box which best describes you or your organisation:

District council	
Metropolitan district council	
London borough council	
Unitary authority/county council/county borough council	
Parish council	
Membership organisation	
Newspaper proprietor	
Newspaper staff	
Business	
Councillor	
Member of the public	√
Other	

(please comment):	
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Questions:

1. Views on the proposed legislation are invited, and in particular do consultees see the proposals as fully delivering the commitment to give greater force to the Publicity Code by putting compliance on a statutory basis?

I think it is anti-localism.

Councils comprise members of the public who are elected to represent them. If there is a contentious issue and a majority of those elected members find that their constituents have a particular view, then I cannot see why central Government should legislate to prevent this being aired. Either we live in a democracy or we don't. If the Secretary of State doesn't like something, he has the right to say so. But not to legislate to prevent a local community from offering an alternative view.

2. If there is alternative to the power of direction, how will this meet the aim of improved enforcement of the code?

The code is a code and ought to remain so. The phrase "improved enforcement" is inappropriate and smacks of a police state. What is actually meant is gagging.

3. This consultation invites evidence of the circumstances where the code was not met and the implications of this on competition in local media

I believe that to curb a local authority's publicity in favour of local media is an example of anti-competition. The two sectors should be left alone to fight it out between themselves, locally, without the intervention of big brother. They are grown up enough to have that discussion. There are many reasons why local media are struggling – to pin down local authorities as a prime reason is poor quality thinking.

In my area, local media have been starved over a number of years and so they don't have enough news gatherers to go out to their community to gather all the stories. They instead rely on the public to inform them.

But the wider picture shows that our multiple-media society gives people many more channels of information e.g. I buy our local weekly paper, but also read the local broadcast news on my computer. Is the Secretary of State going to stop TV and radio from local reporting? Will he require them to always provide balance? Has he commissioned any research to find out why the local media are struggling, or read any research that has already analysed this?