




Department for Culture, Media and Sport

BPD6/1/2/13



To Secretary of State cc Patricia Hewitt  
 From  Kim Howells  
 File Ref  Andrew Ramsay  
 Date 27 February 2002 Bill Bush  
 Ruth MacKenzie  


RESTRICTED - POLICY**Media Ownership - Meeting of Secretaries of State, Thursday 28 February**

We met yesterday to finalise the details of the draft letter to the Prime Minister on media ownership. A revised draft will be ready for the weekend box, so that the letter can be sent on Monday. Before that draft is finalised, there are some issues that remain for you to discuss further in your meeting with Patricia Hewitt. They are listed here as a reminder.

1. The two options for reform of the newspaper regime.
2. The idea of expanding the plurality test in the newspaper regime to apply to all mergers (including cross-media mergers) that involve newspapers. Separate notes are provided to explain how this could work.
3. The radio ownership rules - should the rule be '3+1' or '2+1'. The suggestion at yesterday's meeting was that the rule could be set at '3+1', given that it will be reviewed within 3 years and might be altered to '2+1' at that stage.
4. Cross-ownership of ITV and newspapers at the regional level. A regional 20% rule currently exists, in parallel to the national 20% rule, preventing joint ownership of a regional ITV licence and more than 20% of that region's local press. Do you want to keep this rule, retaining the same limit on plurality at national and regional level (the regions in essence include Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland)? The alternative would be to raise the limit, possibly allowing monopolies of TV and newspaper ownership in some cities.

