[GB] ITC Decides Granting a Licence Will Not Operate Against the Public Interest despite Cross Ownership

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By the provisions of the Broadcasting Act 1990, Part 4, Schedule 2 (as amended), The Independent Television Commission has a duty to consider whether the provision of a digital programme service could be expected to operate against the public interest, in circumstances where the licensee is, or is connected with, the owner of a relevant local newspaper. The Commission proceeds by way of a public consultation, and then makes its decision. The responses to the consultation are available for the public to view, unless a respondee requests confidentiality. Any decision should take account of several factors: plurality of ownership; diversity in sources of information available to the public; any relevant economic benefits; and any likely effect on the broadcasting or newspaper markets' operation. Recently, the ITC made a decision concerning the application by Scottish 2 Television to run a digital programme service in areas of Scotland. It is a subsidiary of the Scottish Media Group, which owns two local newspapers in the area of the proposed coverage. The ITC decided that the granting of a licence would not be expected to operate against the public interest. In particular it was satisfied concerning Scottish 2's editorial independence from other elements of the Scottish Media Group.

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