Mr Tim Davie

BBC Director General

BBC Broadcasting House

Portland Place

London

W1A 1AA

Dear Mr Davie,

We write to express our deep concerns about the cuts to our local radio station, BBC Radio Derby and to state our dismay over the service reductions announced in October, to the 39 BBC local radio stations, as part of an effort to refocus the broadcaster on a digital-first, multimedia strategy.

At current, we understand that BBC Radio Derby will no longer be a local service after 2 pm on weekdays or at the weekend, becoming instead a more generic, regional offering. As it stands, none of this shared programming will come from Derby. To the best of our knowledge, at no time were listeners or staff consulted on this plan, and no evidence has been shown of any research into its effects and impact.

Because of the reduction of shows, we have come to learn that long-serving, highly experienced and much-loved broadcasters are being made redundant in Derby and around the rest of the country. Loyal presenters are feeling that they have been treated unfairly and have informed us that they have all had to reapply for their jobs by producing demo tapes and undergoing interviews.

Furthermore, we understand that following this process, they have been left for protracted periods of uncertainty. Talented and skilled journalists and producers are still under the provisional notice of redundancy and will have to reapply for or move into re-defined roles with little regard to their expertise, which they inform us has been seriously damaging to people’s mental health.

BBC Radio Derby trains and mentors’ new talent. With reduced services and less demand for local radio presenters, they feel that this will greatly impact the training of the next generation of top-flight journalists.

Sense of place in public services matters greatly. BBC Radio Derby features stories that are unlikely to find a platform anywhere else, stories which have great meaning and value to local communities. Constituents in Derby may not directly relate to stories shared from Nottingham, Stoke or Leicester. Also, reduced to a two-shows-a-day satellite service means that BBC Radio Derby will be severely diminished and the damage to the communities of Derbyshire and East Staffordshire cannot be overstated.

Furthermore, socially not everybody is up to date with new technologies as some of our constituents may lack access to smartphones and high-speed broadband and therefore value a live stream broadcast like BBC Radio Derby. BBC Radio Derby is a significant presence in community cohesion, charity promotion, debate, and discussion.

In our own experience, we know that local BBC presence is valued all-year round, especially in times of local crises – from weather emergencies to the COVID pandemic and elections. These are times in which local radio could never be replaced.

There is no evidence to show that local radio services are being abandoned as a medium. According to the industry recognised RAJAR figures overall radio figures aren’t declining and are growing. 5.7 million people listen to BBC Local Radio services. Many more in times of emergency or large local occasions, and BBC Radio Derby has a more than 10% share of listening in its market, a reach of more than 18%, which commercial operators would be happy to achieve.

We are united in our view that the BBC needs to reconsider the cuts to local BBC services that are valued and needed in our communities.

Yours sincerely,

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