

Agenda – Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

Meeting Venue:	For further information contact:
Committee meeting via Zoom	Rhys Morgan
Meeting date: 28 January 2021	Committee Clerk
Meeting time: 09.30	0300 200 6565
	SeneddCWLC@senedd.wales

Pre-meeting registration

(09:00–09:30)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

2 Inquiry into who gets remembered in public spaces

(09.30–10.30)

(Pages 1 – 9)

Jane Hutt MS, Deputy Minister and Chief Whip

Uzo Iwobi – Specialist Policy Adviser on Equalities

Emma Bennett – Head of Equality

3 Paper(s) to note

3.1 Correspondence with the Welsh Government on support for news media

(Pages 10 – 16)

3.2 Arts Council of Wales response to the report on the live music inquiry

(Pages 17 – 20)

3.3 Correspondence on Devolution of Broadcasting inquiry

(Pages 21 – 25)

4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the remainder of the meeting



5 Private debrief

6 Inquiry into who gets remembered in public spaces: consideration of the evidence

(10:30–11:00)

Document is Restricted

Dafydd Elis-Thomas MS

Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism

11 December 2020

Dear Dafydd,

Support for news media

Following your appearance at the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee on 17 September 2020 at which you said ‘we are trying to look at the situation where Creative Wales might be able to become an arm’s-length body that could support further independent publication’, the Committee decided to gather further evidence on this topic.

As you know, Committee members have been concerned about declining revenues for news journalism and the potential implications this has for an informed electorate, particularly with regard to devolved matters and the lowering of the voting age. We invited academics and journalists to contribute to the conversation about the future of news media, and how best the proposed fund might be used, at our meeting on 12 November.

Those who took part were:

- Emma Meese, Director of Community Journalism at Cardiff University and, Director of the Independent Community News Network (ICNN);
- Karin Wahl-Jorgensen, Professor in the Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Culture, and Director of Research for the Centre for Community Journalism;
- Nick Powell, Chair of the Welsh Executive Council of the National Union of Journalists;
- Dr Rachel Howells, National Union of Journalists and
- Dr Ifan Morgan Jones, Course Leader of the BA in Journalism at Bangor University;

This is a summary of the issues raised in our meeting. All those who spoke to the Committee welcomed your announcement of public funding to support independent news



gathering, I hope this letter can be used to inform your thinking on the size and nature of the fund.

I have also included requests for additional information on the proposed fund. I would be grateful if you could answer these questions to inform the work of the Committee and allow up to answer queries from our stakeholders.

The need to ensure any fund operates at arms-length from Government

Those who contributed to our discussion urged the Welsh Government to ensure the fund is established on an arm's-length principle. For instance, Ifan Morgan Jones told the Committee:

‘everyone has agreed—that that funding needs to be at arm's length, because, even if journalists are entirely independent in their own thinking, are entirely unbiased, they would still be accused of bias, and that would be used to undermine their work.’

This is a principle I know you agree with.

Please can you provide more details on the operation and governance of the fund as these are decided?

Public sector spending on notices and advertising

Stakeholders called for the public notices to be advertised more widely. Independent community news outlets described this revenue as ‘crucial’, saying it would enable them to reach a wider audience and level the playing field with established printed titles for Government spend. The Committee heard that digital titles command the biggest audiences in terms of numbers, reach and engagement and therefore it does not make sense to continue to concentrate public sector spending on newspapers.

Emma Meese suggested the Government facilitates a brokerage agreement between the Independent Community News Network (ICNN) and the Government's media buying agency, Golley Slater.

There was a discussion on the Government's public health campaign on the coronavirus. Given that ICNN members reach a third of the population of Wales, Emma Meese questioned why independent community news publishers were not included in the public health campaign when community radio stations were. She said that the Caerphilly Observer, for instance, was excluded, yet it is the only publication covering the entire county borough of Caerphilly, which was the first area of Wales to enter a second lockdown.



There was also a call for wider access to Government briefings for independent community news outlets.

Please can you let the Committee know if there will be a shift in the approach to Government spend on statutory notices and public health campaigns towards news publications and publishers, rather than purely newspapers?

The nature of the proposed fund to support independent publications

Ifan Morgan Jones suggested that rather than supporting new news services, which he thinks there are plenty of, and which will compete against each other to provide the same information to the same readership, funding should be targeted where there are gaps in the journalistic provision such as the lack of funding for investigative journalism. He said funding should be used for:

‘journalists to focus on local news, courts in certain areas, local councils, the Senedd, the Welsh Government, so that they would then have the time, the freedom, to pursue stories, rather than there being so few of them that what they truly produce is just press-release based content.’

Rachel Howells was in favour of using the funding for independent community news. She said:

‘community journalism outlets are frequently started up in areas that have been abandoned by other news organisations due to the collapse of the local news industry. What that means is that they're only sources of news and the only way of holding local authorities to account.’

In terms of administering the funding, she suggested a good starting point would be to build on the existing hyperlocal journalism fund.

She reiterated her suggestion of establishing publicly-funded news hubs across communities in Wales which she made to the Committee during our inquiry into news journalism in 2018.

She also suggested the Welsh Government might like to consider the Missouri model, with a college or academy acting as ‘a teaching hospital but for journalists’ where learners produce a newspaper. There may be merit in considering this model as part of the curriculum in one of Wales’ existing journalism training courses.



She also highlighted the simplicity of the subsidy for media outlets in Norway. As long as they have a certain threshold of subscribers publications are provided with a half-salary for one member of staff, administered by one person in sixth months of the year.

Emma Meese offered this eligibility criteria for the funding:

‘Grant funding should be made available to relevant start-up media enterprises in areas where the withdrawal of established journalism from Welsh communities has been most acutely felt, with sufficient and ongoing support, and to established organisations that have a proven track record of reaching audiences and producing contemporaneous public interest news.’

Ifan Morgan Jones also suggested that funding decisions should be informed by expertise in journalism and measuring the success of the grants should include measuring how successful journalists have been in creating new content and reaching new audiences. To do this he suggested either ‘a specialist body of journalists and editors, or to ensure that you have the expertise within the bodies already in existence.’

Nick Powell argued that newspapers should be treated as community assets. He proposed that funding should be used to assist communities to run local newspapers if one is in danger of closing.

Will the Welsh Government rely on the existing expertise within Creative Wales to make decisions on funding and key performance indicators? Or will you seek additional expertise from digital and print media to inform funding decisions?

Please can you update the Committee with the eligibility criteria for accessing funding?

Size and source of the funding

Emma Meese said the existing hyperlocal journalism fund had had an incredible impact. She called for the continuation of this fund, saying:

‘[it] would be hugely beneficial, but would need to include capital expenditure if it was to be as successful as possible.’

She explained that small, independent titles would benefit from funding to provide the stability of employing another person, perhaps in the form of an apprenticeship or internship.

In terms of raising the funds for support for news media, Nick Powell urged the Welsh Government to add their voice to those calling for tech giants to ‘pay their way’. He spoke



about the NUJ's news recovery plan which calls for a 6 per cent windfall tax on the tech giants, and then a levy linked to their profits to fund public interest journalism.

Please can you confirm how much money will be available to support news media via Creative Wales?

Vouchers for young people

Nick Powell and Rachel Howells endorsed a proposal from the NUJ for a voucher scheme aimed at young people. The vouchers would be used to pay for a subscription to a news or current affairs publication or website. Given that the voting age has been lowered, it is vital that 16 and 17-year-olds are well-informed about democratic institutions and those in power and they should be encouraged to get their news from reliable sources.

I would be grateful if you could consider these suggestions and comments on the proposed funding as you take this project forward. I know that you share the Committee's concerns about the contracting of the sector and the potential danger which can arise from misinformation arising from unregulated digital media.

I think Karin Wahl-Jorgensen summed up the situation accurately when she said: 'supporting the sustainability of these news organisations, but also encouraging future growth in the sector, is essential both to democratic life and the economy of Wales'.

The Committee welcomes your intervention in his field. It would be helpful if you could answer the questions in this letter by 21 December 2020.

Yours sincerely,



Helen Mary Jones

Chair of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee





Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref

Helen Mary Jones MS
Chair
Culture, Welsh Language and Communications
Committee

20 January 2021

Dear Helen,

Thank you for your letter of 11 December 2020 regarding support for news media.

During the scrutiny session on the 17 September I noted my decision to task Creative Wales with exploring how Welsh Government might further support independent publication, to strengthen and diversify the provision of news in Wales. Creative Wales has been exploring options in relation to this request and a number of discussions have been held with stakeholders over recent months.

These discussions have raised issues around the relatively weak indigenous media infrastructure in Wales, a lack of plurality of news and examples of misreporting. Stakeholders have highlighted the importance of the independence of media activity from government and stressed that any solution would need to be arms-length, have an appropriate governance structure and safeguard editorial independence.

Options for intervention were discussed at the December meeting of the Creative Wales Non-executive Board. The Board noted significant challenges associated with addressing issues in the media sector and advised caution in relation to any intervention that has the potential to distort and imbalance the media market. The Board recommended that further discussions take place on options with industry experts.

On 11 January, Gerwyn Evans, Deputy Director, Creative Wales attended the Institute of Welsh Affairs Cardiff Media Summit 2021 as a panellist. The event was the first in a series of four events focusing on the new landscape for media in Wales, to consider the headline findings from the IWA's 2020 media audit. Creative Wales will continue to engage with the IWA as this work progresses to ensure latest findings and evidence is factored into any future activity.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

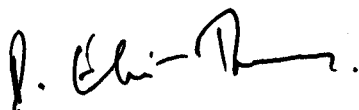
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

At present, no decisions have been taken on any approach to supporting media. Creative Wales has a dedicated budget to deliver programmes and projects to support priority sub-sectors and activity. The 2021/22 budget, which will run from April 2021, is currently being discussed to agree the best use of the Creative Wales financial allocation. There will be an opportunity cost associated with the allocation of funding to support media that will need to be considered carefully. The purpose of any intervention would be to address the perceived lack of availability of quality and relevant public interest news in Wales, and the most practical solution to this failure may not be the introduction of a grant scheme. In exploring options, it will be important to consider opportunities to ensure existing funding streams are accessible to media organisations to maximise funding available from sector neutral sources. There will also be opportunities associated with external funding sources and activity that supports the longer term sustainability of media infrastructure in Wales such as skills development and apprenticeship funding.

In relation to your question on any shift in approach to Government spend on statutory notices and public health campaigns, we welcome the committee's ongoing interest and scrutiny in this area. Throughout the pandemic, we have used all available channels, including community and hyperlocal, to reach people with the key public health messages they need to keep themselves and Wales safe. Community publications and hyperlocals have participated in the nationally-televised Welsh Government press conferences, meaning key local issues can be raised directly with Ministers, and further raising people's awareness of them. Our public health campaign work has also utilised a wide range of channels and outlets; the breakdown of spend with community radio and press from April 2020 - January 2021 for the Keep Wales Safe campaign shows a total spend of approximately £160k, including more than £3,200 with Golwg and more than £6,400 with Bro Radio. The Welsh Government's media buyer Golley Slater has worked with the Books Council of Wales to support such ventures and ensure that these publishers have access to Welsh Government campaigns and income.

Statutory Notices are required to be placed in the newspaper with the highest circulation in the geographical areas of concern, which means it is less straightforward to vary the approach in this area. We understand the importance of advertising income that regional press derives from statutory notices. This is why Welsh Government notices are booked with local media representation as far as possible and practical to maintain jobs locally. When Golley Slater book an advert for the Cambrian News for instance, they speak to their team in Aberystwyth. In doing so they help sustain those roles in the local communities they serve, as opposed to booking through their media representation in London or Manchester (called Mediaforce). This is true of most notices placed in the Welsh press.

Yours sincerely,



Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AS/MS

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism

Turn up the volume: an inquiry into the live music industry

Senedd: Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

A response from the Arts Council of Wales

The Arts Council of Wales welcomes the Committee's inquiry. We recognise the importance of live music to our nation and we want people in Wales to be fully able to make, participate in or experience live music on their own terms. Black Lives Matter, #weshallnotberemoved, economically disadvantaged communities and the inequalities exacerbated by the Covid pandemic have highlighted that this is not the case.

This inquiry focuses on one particular and important area of the music industry. But live music comes in many types and forms and happens in many places. There are voices and activity not represented in this report. And we need to be conscious of this as we move forward.

As an organisation we ourselves are reflecting and acting on how we can address this. Our goal, through our funding and support, is to ensure absolutely that equity and diversity are central to our work. As well as maintaining and building on the assets we already have, we need to look at what is not being supported, who is not benefiting. Better meeting their needs will be fundamental to ensuring an inclusive approach to supporting live music.

We know that our colleagues in the Welsh Government's newly formed Creative Wales team are similarly minded to put diversity at the centre of their work and to give more emphasis to under-platformed and supported music. We'll continue to work closely with them on our mutual investment in music in Wales.

In doing so we'll recognise our respective roles. This means being clear about where each of us can best focus but also understanding how our complementary activities can piece together and where there are areas around which we can specifically collaborate. For example, Creative Wales lead on music venue business support, but venues can also apply to the Arts Council for projects that demonstrate a clear cultural and public benefit. We're mindful that this needs to be done with the widest definition of the sector – industry and musicians – working with them to support their work, rather than being dictated by us. We'll be working to pull these strands of activity into an action plan that is clearly communicated so that opportunities are easier to navigate.

The inquiry report includes recommendations addressed to Arts Council of Wales as a public funder which we respond to below.

Recommendation 4

Public funders should tailor the support they provide to the industry to encourage people to provide some Welsh language music at predominantly English language gigs. Creative Wales should work to bring different language and genre communities together to encourage collaboration.

We're passionate about the development of work in the Welsh language. We want to invest in projects that develop the capability and skills of artists, musicians and professionals wanting to work in Welsh. This ambition underpins the delivery of our strategy and our funding and is included as assessment criteria in our funding programmes.

We expect people to be able to engage with the arts in the language of their choice, whether as audience, participant or artist. We see this realised in funded projects such as Forte, Horizons/Gorwelion and FOCUS Wales. All of these work with artists making music in both languages equitably and interchangeably.

Our "Noson Allan" scheme supports community groups to promote their own shows in their local venues, including Welsh language music. Before the pandemic we were working with PYST and Dydd Miwsig Cymru to encourage use of the scheme by young Welsh language music promoters. We hope to pick this up again when circumstances allow.

The Arts Council's Welsh Language Committee scrutinises the range, impact and effectiveness of our Welsh language activity. It reflects on our work to date and setting priorities for future work. This includes examining our funding data which is published in our Welsh Language Annual Report.

We also recognise that nearly 80% of Welsh speakers live in economically disadvantaged communities. When thinking about supporting access, it's important to acknowledge that many experience additional barriers to accessing music/arts due to poverty.

Recommendation 10

Many buildings – including arts centres – outside of urban areas receive public funding, either from local authorities or agencies such as the Arts Council. Funding-providers should consider attaching conditions to this funding so that, where possible, these spaces are opened up as rehearsal spaces for musicians.

The venues that we fund as part of our revenue-funded Arts Portfolio Wales are more than just buildings. The teams that run them work closely with their communities to ensure their often unique facilities best serve them. We've seen this in action even within the restrictions of the pandemic.

They also need to generate income from their resources, including more commercial room hires. There's a delicate balance to strike. When there's demand from the community for a service and there are no other suitable facilities, we'd encourage the venue to find ways to support this need. However, this needs to be done alongside the needs of other groups within their communities and

within what's financially and practically feasible. There are (sometimes significant) costs attached to opening doors and making space available.

As we support and monitor venues in the Arts Portfolio Wales, we'll continue to ensure that they're fulfilling a progressive and enabling role as a creative hub for their community, of which providing rehearsal space could be part.

Recommendation 11

Support and mentoring for young people in the live music industry – like that previously available through the Forté Project and Young Promoters' Network in south Wales – should be available for the whole of Wales and should include professions such as managers, promoters and agents. The Arts Council of Wales should strongly consider funding such a nationwide organisation during its investment review.

We've regularly supported Forte Project, (and its parent programme, Sonig which includes the Young Promoters Network). This support has been channelled through Rhondda Cynon Taf Borough Council since the project's inception.

We supported the Research & Development costs of looking at a Wales-wide model (Beacons), as have our colleagues in Creative Wales. Our focus has been led by those that run Forte, centring on the artist development and wellbeing and the opportunities and impact this has on the young people involved either directly as an artist or in the artist's team.

In the Autumn we'll be starting our Investment Review process. This is our five-yearly exercise to invite applications from organisations wishing to apply to become revenue-funded members of the Arts Portfolio Wales. It's not appropriate for us to pre-empt that process and its outcome, but equalities, diversity and reach will be central.

It's also worth noting that within the currently funded Portfolio, Community Music Wales, National Youth Arts Wales, Canolfan Gerdd Wiliam Mathias, Ty Cerdd, Live Music Now and Trac support music development opportunities for young people, in specific ways.

Recommendation 12

The Horizons programme should be expanded so that artists receive more career development advice and support to help them take their careers to the next level.

Arts Council of Wales established Horizons with BBC Cymru and have since funded the project annually. This year in particular we've seen the scheme support a record number of black and ethnic minority artists and MOBO genres. We've endeavoured to maintain funding levels when our partner has not been able to match. This year we increased the ring-fenced funding awarded

to Horizons for the “Launchpad” initiative. This included further grants to support emerging music talent and to enable all recipients to attend industry training.

We’re delighted that Creative Wales are also supporting Horizons this year and will be continuing discussions regarding future support, particular focussing on industry connections.

Until this year we’ve also partnered with the Welsh Government in supporting the PRS Foundation Momentum scheme for ‘tipping point’ artists. Whilst Creative Wales have rightly taken lead on this, we’ll continue to explore other ‘pathway’ options that enable us to maintain our work with both partners. Again, we’ll be looking to reflect our priorities of equalities and “reach” in any funding we commit.

As a general response to the other recommendations, such as a web portal for music, we’d like to highlight the work AM. Supported by Welsh Government it’s developing a platform for digital and online arts, including music, that’s building a growing ‘native’ audience. We’d also observe that rather than creating a new platform, we need to support music creators to better utilise platforms that music fans and audiences are already using.

Finally, the Committee will no doubt be aware that as it stands, the post-Brexit UK/EU Trade Deal doesn’t allow for frictionless artist mobility. This will make touring in Europe far more complex and expensive and this will inevitably impact on music talent and the range artists able to perform in music venues in Wales. Our colleagues in Wales Arts International are working closely with the other UK Arts Councils and sector bodies to advocate for change and provide practical information. An important part of this work is the establishment of a visa “Infopoint”.

Arts Council of Wales
January 2021

Dafydd Elis-Thomas MS
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism

11 December 2021

Dear Dafydd,

Inquiry into devolution of broadcasting

The Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee is looking into whether broadcasting should be devolved to Wales.

Since the 2014 Silk Commission on Devolution in Wales published its report into the legislative powers of the National Assembly in Wales, which included a chapter on broadcasting, there have been a number of key changes to the regulation of broadcasting as it relates to Wales. Given that the broadcasting landscape is rapidly changing, as viewing and listening habits are adjusting to the widespread availability of digital media content, the Committee found it appropriate to gather new evidence.

As part of our inquiry I was hoping to invite you to discuss the following questions with Members at a Committee meeting. However, we have had to substantially alter our work programme to accommodate work on the effect of the pandemic on organisations in our remit. We no longer have time during this Senedd to do this work in the way that we planned.

We have been consulting our stakeholders on whether Wales should have greater powers in this area and how that might be achieved.

I would like to include the Welsh Government's position in our report, I would be grateful if you could reply to let the Committee know:

What, if any, aspects of broadcasting should be devolved to Wales, and how would this benefit Wales and Welsh audiences. Areas you may like to give attention to include:

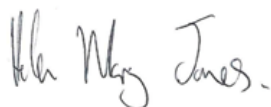
- The BBC, including its governance and funding.
- S4C, including its governance and funding.
- Other public service broadcasters (ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5).
- Regulatory functions currently carried out by Ofcom.
- Commercial and community radio services.



- How any changes proposed align with the shift to digital media consumption.
- How any changes proposed would impact on the media production sector.

In addition, we would be grateful if you could set out how you think media provision for Wales should be improved. In order to progress our report, please can you respond by 15 January 2021.

Yours sincerely,



Helen Mary Jones

Chair of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee





Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref

Helen Mary Jones MS
Chair
Culture, Welsh Language and Communications
Committee

22 January 2021

Dear Helen,

Thank you for your letter of 11 December 2020 regarding your inquiry into the devolution of broadcasting.

Devolution of broadcasting

The view of the Welsh Government remains that broadcasting or elements of broadcasting should not be devolved. We recognise the fundamental shift in the broadcasting landscape and the pace at which changes to viewer habits and content consumption are taking place. As the broadcasting environment and digital innovations continue to rapidly evolve, we do not believe the system would be strengthened at present by dividing up the overall responsibility for broadcasting. A UK approach enables joint consideration of the significant challenges facing broadcasters. It supports coordination and a strength in approach to identifying solutions to global issues and a consistency for those operating across the four nations. Retaining responsibility at the UK level also provides greater financial stability, with no guarantee that budgets would be transferred alongside responsibilities.

The Welsh Government recognises the importance of broadcasting to Wales. The crucial role that public service broadcasters play in informing, entertaining, educating and creating a common cultural citizenship has been particularly apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic. Broadcasters are also vital contributors to the growth of our creative industries and the Welsh economy, sustaining the development of content in Wales by our independent production companies. In addition, effective broadcasting is essential to devolution and sustaining and growing the Welsh language.

We are clear, therefore, that although overall regulation of broadcasting should remain with the UK Government, this does not mean that there should not be greater accountability to

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Wales. Wales must have a strong and compelling voice in any debate on broadcasting issues so that we can protect, maintain and further Welsh cultural, linguistic, social, economic and democratic interests.

In recent years there have been significant developments. The current BBC Charter, as a result of the WG involvement in the Charter process, gives the BBC a much stronger public purpose to reflect, represent and serve the diverse communities of Wales and provides greater accountability for the BBC to the Senedd. Subsequently, as a result, the WG has a direct role in the appointment of a Non-Executive Director for Wales to the BBC's unitary Board. The appointment of a member for Wales to the Ofcom Board in 2019 by the Welsh Government introduces for the first time a voice for Wales on the main Ofcom Board, and improves the Board's ability to represent the voices of people in Wales. The WG continues to be represented on the selection panel for S4C Unitary Board members. Given the significance of broadcasting to our devolved circumstances we must maintain momentum and build on these developments.

There is little doubt that broadcasting structures are experiencing a fundamental evolution. Many of the challenges facing PSBs are highlighted in Ofcom's *Small Screen; Big Debate* consultation document published in December, alongside options for modernizing the current framework. We must establish structures that give Wales an adequate voice in these developments so that we can be proactive in this debate and ensure that any changes proposed to the current regulatory arrangements protect and serve the best interests of the people of Wales.

As government responds to upcoming key developments, we will seek to influence governance arrangements and promote Welsh interests. This includes our response to the Small Screen: Big Debate consultation this year and championing Welsh circumstances as part of any associated proposed changes to legislation and regulatory arrangements. The BBC mid-Charter Review in 2023, the end of the current licencing period for Channels 3, 4 and 5 in 2024 and developments relating to the funding of broadcasters such as discussions on new business models and on the future of the TV licence fee are also hugely important to the delivery of services for Wales. With broadcasters facing significant budgetary and revenue cuts there is a risk that economic considerations will take precedence over content and policy considerations, compromising the ability of PSBs to understand, represent and address Wales' interests.

The establishment of Creative Wales in 2020 presents an opportunity to build on our relationships across the four nations and with stakeholders on broadcasting issues, with both the media policy and screen sector development functions embedded in its structure. A key role of Creative Wales is to develop a positive and constructive dialogue with officials both in the UK Government and the devolved nations on key issues related to broadcasting, to influence greater accountability to Wales in UK policy decisions. This will support a coherent approach to increasing awareness of the needs of Wales at a UK level. Creative Wales is also building on the good relationships the Welsh Government has with the PSBs in Wales and is exploring options to develop Memorandums of Understanding to help to maximise economic, cultural, linguistic, social and democratic advantages to Wales from PSB activity.

We will continue to work closely with Ofcom to consider more directly the demands and the needs of the people of Wales. We will be shortly writing to the Senedd regarding opportunities to strengthen the MOU with Ofcom as part of the planned review of the document.

Media provision for Wales

Broadcasters in Wales play an essential role in the provision of news. Given Wales' relatively weak indigenous infrastructure for news via print media, coupled with a lack of significant coverage in UK media, there is an over-reliance on TV news services in Wales relative to other parts of the UK. This is highlighted in the Media Nation 2020 Wales report, which shows TV Channels BBC One and ITV Wales are the most used news sources for the people of Wales.

As noted in my recent response to your letter of 11 December on support for news media, stakeholder feedback from discussions with Creative Wales on this matter has highlighted issues related to both a lack of plurality of news and examples of misreporting of Wales circumstances.

It is essential that Wales has its fair share of news coverage by public service broadcasters and that our distinct language, culture, identity and politics are given sufficient prominence. Steps should be taken to protect existing news services, increase the provision for Welsh news where possible and ensure the accuracy reporting of the Wales context in UK wide news reporting.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Elis-Thomas'.

Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AS/MS

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism