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Dyddiad | Date: 11 March 2021

Pwnc | Subject: Culture, Welsh Language and Communications annual scrutiny of the BBC

Dear Rhodri,

I wanted to thank you for attending the meeting of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications meeting on 4 March 2021 to discuss the BBC's annual report and accounts. Committee Members were also pleased to hear from Tim Davie, BBC Director General, I am copying this letter to him for information.

During the meeting you offered to provide the Committee with greater detail on a few points.

### **Diversity of the BBC workforce**

During the meeting you said that the figures for workforce diversity in the annual report are presented for the nations and regions rather than for individual nations and you offered to share the figures for the Welsh workforce with us.

I think it would be helpful if data was publicly available to scrutinise BBC Cymru Wales' performance in this regard. We would be grateful if the BBC could provide us with, and publish on an ongoing basis – either in the BBC Cymru Wales annual Management Review or Annual Report and Accounts – the current data on diversity on and off-screen. Please can you also provide targets for improving representation on and off-screen and any specific diversity targets relating to senior teams at BBC Cymru Wales.

### **Accessing BBC content on demand**

We discussed the figures for accessing BBC content on iPlayer. Given the popularity of online consumption of video content the Committee would like to be able to scrutinise the data in more depth. It would be helpful if the BBC would publish – either in the BBC Cymru Wales Management Review or Annual Report and Accounts – a variety of data to enable this performance to be independently assessed, including:



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- Year-on-year comparisons in key areas of online performance;
- Appropriate industry benchmarks to enable the performance of the BBC in these areas to be independently assessed.

### **BBC spend in Wales**

In response to a question about the fact that figures shown in the Annual Report and Accounts show that in 2019-20 the BBC spent almost 70% more on English language local content in Scotland than it did in Wales, you said:

‘We are looking at a commitment in Wales that straddles two languages, whereas in Scotland, the primary investment is all into English language TV. So, it depends how you want to look at it. If you want to look at spend per head, it is certainly the case that the expenditure in Wales is ahead of where we are in Scotland. There are many different ways of cutting it, but in terms of absolute spend, they are broadly comparable, it’s just we are obviously, serving in both languages.’

I am not convinced that assessing spend in Wales in terms of spend per head is the best way of assessing value for money for Welsh audiences. Given that the BBC has to cater for two languages, it is inevitable that resources are stretched further in Wales.

Members are eager to see this disparity reduced, and we will be recommending that a successor committee in the Sixth Senedd follows up on this issue.

Yours sincerely,



Bethan Sayed MS

Chair of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

