

Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AC/AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: P/DET/1898/19

Bethan Sayed AM
Chair
Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

21 May 2019

Annwyl Bethan,

Thank you for your correspondence dated 30 April about the change requested by the BBC to relax the current requirement for 100% speech content on radio stations between 07.30 and 08.30 on weekdays.

During recent weeks, Welsh Ministers and officials have raised this issue with BBC Cymru Wales and Ofcom Wales. We have been assured that the request has not come from BBC Cymru Wales and does not relate specifically to Radio Wales or Radio Cymru, but is intended to allow individual BBC stations across the UK more flexibility to respond to changing listener needs in different areas.

The Welsh Government believe that Welsh listeners should be able to access daily, high-quality discussion of the political and current events which shape our lives, from the BBC and other providers. We have reminded Ofcom of its obligation to hold the BBC to its Charter commitment to make provision for the UK's nations, and we will continue to monitor developments within the broadcasting sector in Wales, including radio, and will continue to raise concerns where we deem it appropriate to do so.

We have also emphasised to Ofcom and the UK Government that we would not wish to see any further relaxation or removal of the current localness rules on commercial radio. It is vital that there is an appropriate level of localness provision, in particular with regard to local news. This is even more important in Wales considering the weakness of the print media in Wales and the lack of coverage of Welsh affairs in UK newspapers.

In addition, as we have informed the Committee, when television and radio licenses for stations in Wales are awarded or reviewed, due consideration should be given to the bilingual nature of Wales and the importance of the Welsh language in the context of the Welsh Government's aim of having one million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Yn gywir,

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

Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AC/AM

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