



Ein cyf/Our ref DB-PO-0085-24

Delyth Jewell MS
Chair
Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee

12 March 2024

Dear Delyth,

Scrutiny of Public Service Broadcasting

Thank you for your letter of 15 December 2023 seeking information following the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee's scrutiny of Public Service Broadcasting in Wales.

The responses to the questions you raised in your letter are set out below.

When will the Welsh Government make public a decision about the establishment of a Shadow Broadcasting Authority? If the Welsh Government does not set up a Shadow Broadcasting Authority, will it re-allocate the specific budget allocations intended for that purpose directly to other policies to improve the provision of media for Wales?

The Welsh Government's response to the broadcasting expert panel's recommendation to establish a Shadow Broadcasting Authority was published today in a [Written Statement](#).

The budgets set aside for broadcasting and media through the Co-operation Agreement will continue to be used to support those commitments and to deliver actions in line with the Welsh Government's response to the broadcasting expert panel report.

What is the Welsh Government's view on the sufficiency of the provision of broadcast media for Wales?

The Welsh Government's Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru sets out our view that the current broadcasting and communications framework is inadequate, is hampering the democratic life of our country and is not serving the needs of, or ambitions for, the Welsh language. It highlights the need to improve Welsh journalism and to tackle the information deficit. Media plurality is the backbone to any functioning, democratic society and its safeguarding is paramount to ensuring informed, balanced news provision. We are heavily reliant on broadcast news in Wales, and evidence suggests we need to do more to ensure a plurality of news and accuracy in UK level provision. For example, the 2022 Cardiff University report '*Reporting the nations and devolved issues on network news: An analysis*

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NS

Gohebiaeth.Dawn.Bowden@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Dawn.Bowden@gov.wales

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.

of television and online coverage' highlighted that, although UK news providers had enhanced their coverage of issues relating to the devolved nations, this was due largely to the reporting of rules relating to the pandemic. As was seen during the crisis, concerns were raised at the lack of difference between rules set by the UK Government and Governments in Cardiff, Edinburgh and Belfast. The broadcasting expert panel report highlighted that Non-Welsh-speaking Welsh audiences continue to be under-served by Wales-specific content.

Despite this, there are positive developments to be seen in the broadcasting sector in Wales. Creative Wales' focus on maintaining growth and positioning Wales as a top location for film and television production has attracted major productions in recent years, including Netflix's *Havoc* and Lucasfilm's production of *Willow*. Positive relationships with our public service broadcasters, including through our Memorandums of Understanding, have seen 2023 hailed as the year of Welsh drama by BBC Cymru Wales. This has supported content that reflects our Welsh life and culture both to audiences in Wales and those in other nations of the UK, showcasing our talent and landscapes. Partnership arrangements with S4C and Film Cymru are supporting more investment into Welsh film.

Our aim is to build on positive developments, highlight continued gaps and issues in provision, and target future activity accordingly, working with the new Broadcasting and Communications Advisory Body and the Wales Public Interest Journalism Working Group.

What, if any, key policy changes would the Welsh Government like to see made at either the Wales or UK level to improve the provision of broadcast media for Wales?

The Welsh Government would like to see changes that would ensure an adequate voice for Wales in decisions related to broadcasting that affect Wales and enhanced structures put in place to increase transparency and improve accountability to Wales. For example, a stronger, more formal consent role in all broadcasting appointments affecting Wales, a formal role in reviews and decisions on funding for broadcasters that impact Wales, such as the TV Licence Review and enhanced governance arrangements for broadcasters, for example through a BBC Charter for Wales. The Broadcasting and Communications Advisory Body, once established, will have an important role to provide guidance and advice to inform Welsh Government policy and identify specific actions to help improve the provision of broadcast media for Wales.

What is the Welsh Government's view on the devolution of broadcasting?

The Welsh Government's view, as set out in the Co-operation Agreement, is that broadcasting and communication powers should be devolved to Wales.

Yours sincerely



Dawn Bowden AS/MS
Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism