



# Department for Culture, Media & Sport

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23 January 2026

Delyth Jewell MS  
Chair, Culture, Communications, Welsh Language,  
Sport, and International Relations Committee  
Welsh Parliament  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff CF99 1SN

INT2026/00654/DC

Dear Delyth

Thank you for your invitation to attend a general scrutiny session on public service broadcasting in Wales in February 2026. Unfortunately, diary pressures mean I cannot give oral evidence at the current time. However, I would like to submit this letter as written evidence in the areas you are seeking views, and are highlighted in the State of Play report, including the Media Act, TV distribution, BBC Charter Review and licence fee, and S4C funding.

## General Points

The UK Government recognises the vital role that public service broadcasting plays in Wales, as well as the rest of the UK. I know that S4C in particular is central to life in Wales, providing invaluable access to the Welsh language and encouraging social cohesion through shared TV moments, for example recently through its broadcasting of the first ever co-commissioned animated Christmas film, Nolig, with BBC NI and TG4.

All PSB activities in the nations make an enormously valuable contribution to the creative economy and we want the PSBs to continue creating high quality local jobs and driving growth across Wales. My Department is leading a number of important projects to support the PSBs to deliver across the whole of the UK, which I seek to update the Committee on.

## Media Act

Firstly, the Media Act 2024 received Royal Assent on 24 May 2024. DCMS and Ofcom are now in the process of implementing the Act, including the new prominence regime.



I note the Committee's recommendation to amend "appropriate" prominence to "significant" prominence. You will be aware that Part 2 of the Act passed unamended. How prominence will be delivered will be determined by Ofcom in their Code of Practice, which they will consult on.

Once commenced, the new regime will be enforced by Ofcom and includes a backstop dispute resolution function in the event public service broadcasters and/or TV platforms wish to raise a dispute. The intention is for commercial negotiations to continue independently and Ofcom will be required to develop guidance to support effective negotiations between PSBs and TV platforms covering a range of negotiating factors.

Ofcom is required to consult on both the Code and guidance document which will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to shape and inform their approach to ensure it works for them.

## **TV Distribution and the Future of Broadcast Television**

As you may also be aware, the UK Parliament has legislated to secure the continuity of Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) until at least 2034 and a decision on the future of TV distribution beyond this has not yet been made. The UK Government Department for Culture, Media and Sport is undertaking work to evaluate the future distribution of television as the sector continues to evolve over the next decade.

Millions of households continue to rely on DTT, but at the same time, many are choosing to watch TV over the internet. This shift is resulting in more choice and a better experience for audiences, but it is also creating financial pressures for our broadcasters. The project is gathering evidence to understand how people watch television now, and through the next decade, to ensure that we have the best picture possible of how the TV ecosystem may develop. This will ensure the continuity of a sustainable TV ecosystem that works for audiences and the TV industry. As part of this process, we are considering relevant geographical issues across the whole of the UK, including in the devolved nations, and have regularly engaged with S4C within our stakeholder forum for the project.

## **Renewal of the BBC Charter**

On 16 December 2025, the UK Government launched the Charter Review Green Paper and Terms of Reference. The new Charter will formally set the terms of the BBC for the future, with a clear ambition to set it on a path to thrive until well into the latter half of this century. The public consultation, which will run for 12 weeks from 16 December until 10 March 2026, will help inform policy decisions for the next BBC Royal Charter, and we will set out our policy decisions in a White Paper later this year.

The Green Paper represents the first step on this path as we set out our vision for futureproofing our national broadcaster. Aligned with Recommendation 8 of the State of Play Report, a key objective of Charter Review will be to ensure the BBC tells a 'unifying national story' which reflects and represents all communities within the UK, including those in Wales. The Green Paper also reaffirms the UK Government's commitment to supporting minority language broadcasting, including Welsh, and considers ways in which the BBC can further support the production sector across the nations and regions. The Green Paper looks at where the BBC is commissioning productions to ensure that budgets and decision-making power for commissioners are spread across the UK and that its economic impact continues to be felt across the UK, for example, whether the 'Out of London' quotas should be amended.

## **Welsh Language Radio**

There is a need to consider whether there is sufficient plurality of Welsh language radio, noting the BBC's increase in its Welsh language programming with the expansion of its Radio Cymru 2 service in March 2024. The decision by Global to end its Welsh language programmes in January 2005 was disappointing, especially given its Capital North West Wales service station had performed well with a 13% reach/3.1% share in the North Wales market. That being said, we do not believe that introducing or increasing requirements on existing commercial radio stations to increase the availability of Welsh language programming is the right approach and could affect the viability of commercial stations in Wales and reduce the choice of services available to Welsh listeners on FM or DAB.

We agree with proposals in evidence to the State of Play inquiry that community radio could play a greater role in providing choice for listeners in Wales. My officials have held initial discussions with Creative Wales, the Welsh Community Radio Network, and Ofcom Wales to explore possible options as to how to support more community services in Wales, including services that cater for Welsh language speakers. I am very keen to support these discussions and to seek to address this as part of measures to support and strengthen community radio nationally.

## **BBC Licence Fee**

In relation to funding, the UK Government's aim is to support a sustainable and fair funding model for the BBC. This will allow the BBC to deliver for all, drive growth in creative industries, nurture talent, create jobs, and invest across the whole of the UK. I also recognise that sustainable funding is crucial to ensuring that the BBC can continue its support of minority language speakers. The State of Play report notes that the BBC's investment in Wales continues to outweigh the income they generate from Welsh licence fee payers.

We are considering a number of ways to ensure this for the long term through the Charter Review, including how the BBC can operate more efficiently, generate more commercial revenue, and how the licence fee could be reformed. We have ruled out funding the BBC through general taxation and replacing the licence fee with another form of public funding, such as a household tax or a levy on the revenues of streaming services.

In order to future proof the BBC, we must also ensure that it is on stable financial footing for the remainder of this Charter Period.

In line with Recommendation 6 of the State of Play Report, I want to reassure the Committee that we will be taking evidence from S4C as part of our consideration of the future of the licence fee at Charter Review. My Department is in regular contact with S4C on all matters related to the Charter Review and will continue to consider their views throughout.

## **S4C Funding**

S4C's activities make an enormously valuable contribution to the creative economy in Wales and we want S4C to continue creating high-quality local jobs and driving growth.

As above, we will ensure that wider considerations about the BBC's overall funding model take into account funding for minority language broadcasting, including S4C, to ensure that it can continue to play this role and that the rich linguistic heritage of our communities can continue to thrive and grow. As set out in our Charter Review Green Paper, we are considering the most appropriate arrangements for providing sustainable funding for S4C as part of the Charter Review process and will be engaging with S4C to understand its funding needs.

The Communications Act 2003 also already requires the Secretary of State to ensure sufficient funding for S4C and the government will continue its commitment to this as a clear recognition of the importance of Welsh broadcasting.

Thank you once again for inviting me to appear before the Committee. I am sorry my schedule prevented me from attending on this occasion. I will follow the Committee's work in this important area with interest.

*Yours sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Murray', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Rt Hon Ian Murray MP  
**Minister for Creative Industries, Media and Arts**