



## **Briefing paper for the National Assembly for Wales's Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee**

Ofcom's confirmation in February that ITV's Public Service Broadcasting licences are to be renewed for a full 10-year term from the start of 2015 heralds a new period of confidence and certainty for ITV Cymru Wales.

Licence renewal - and the creation for the first time of a stand-alone Channel 3 licence for Wales - secures ITV Cymru Wales' position as a commercial public service broadcaster at the heart of Welsh life until the end of 2025. The level of programming is unchanged, comprising four hours of news and 90-minutes of non-news programming every week.

It allows ITV Cymru Wales to continue to provide comprehensive, daily coverage of Welsh news, sport and weather supplemented by a range of popular programmes across current affairs, politics, documentaries and factual entertainment - the majority shown in peak or near-peak viewing time on ITV.

This stand-alone licence for Wales (as opposed to the current "Wales and West" licence) is recognition of the distinct national agenda that has emerged to touch the lives of ITV viewers in Wales in the 14 years since devolution.

Whilst not part of our licensed service, our programming in the Welsh language - commissioned on a commercial basis - contributes to the range and quality of content on S4C.

### **Site move**

Underpinning this exciting new era for ITV Cymru Wales is the relocation of our new headquarters at 3 Assembly Square, next to the Welsh Assembly building in Cardiff Bay. The completion date for the move from our current base at Culverhouse Cross, Cardiff, is the end of June.

Around 100 ITV staff will be moving to the ground floor space of the new building. The new premises will house all of ITV Cymru Wales news, programmes and production facilities as part of a modern, integrated design.

This is a tangible outcome of the security and stability that comes from licence renewal. The move represents a once-in-a-generation activity and is a major multi-million financial investment to provide the latest HD production technologies and studio facility.

We will also upgrade our facilities within Ty Hywel as an additional production and editorial base. There will be improved technical connectivity between the two buildings, which will help to enhance our coverage of Welsh politics within news and programmes.

On 14 March, Vale of Glamorgan Council granted outline planning permission to redevelop the Culverhouse Cross site for housing. Our property team are continuing their discussions with interested developers and there will be more information from them on any sale of the site in the due course. In the meantime, our tenant businesses are in the process of relocating to alternative premises.

### **Programme performance**

Further momentum is provided by the performance of our programmes and services:

- The ITV News Cymru Wales 6pm programme with Jonathan Hill and Ruth Wignall had an impressive 2013 performance, averaging 19.2% share of the viewing audience. This represents a continuation of the sharp growth over the last few years, with the programme averaging 18.3% in 2012 and 16.9% in 2011.
- Our digital news service for mobile platforms continues to grow at a significant rate. Figures for January 2014 were up almost 300% year-on-year.
- Our new Sunday morning programme *Newsweek Wales* is attracting a new audience for news while *Sharp End*, our weekly look at Welsh politics in Cardiff Bay and Westminster, is performing well in its new Monday night slot.
- Following a highly positive response from viewers, we have re-commissioned *Coast and Country* - our new series celebrating the great outdoors - for an extended run in 2014.
- Special programming is planned for the WW1 commemorations, Dylan Thomas anniversary, the NATO summit in Newport, the Commonwealth Games, Royal Welsh Show and National Eisteddfod.
- Other programmes for 2014 include: *Wales on a Bus Pass* with Chris Segar taking the road less-travelled; documentary series following the fortunes of Cardiff Airport and the Wales Ambulance Service (*Helimed*s); and a four-part series celebrating the Culverhouse Cross studios with contributions from stars past and present and extensive use of the ITV archive.
- Many of our programmes are available to watch online at [www.itv.com/wales](http://www.itv.com/wales) and viewers are able to follow our shows on Facebook and Twitter.

There has also been recognition for our programmes with a number of industry awards in 2013 including Bafta Cymru awards for Best News Coverage (April Jones disappearance) and Best Current Affairs for *Y Byd Ar Bedwar*, plus Local Report of the Year at the Asian Media Awards for *Wales This Week*.

### **ITV Network**

*A Great Welsh Adventure with Griff Rhys Jones*, celebrating the landscapes and people of Wales, was a welcome showcase for Wales on the ITV network. The series performed well to audiences in Wales and across the UK.

We have been actively engaging with senior ITV colleagues in London to help build business relationships with the wider industry in Wales. The visit by ITV's Director of Television, Peter Fincham, to Cardiff at the end of last year helped to reinforce ITV's relationship with key Welsh independent production companies with his message that ITV is "open to ideas and business" from Wales. The message was reinforced a few weeks later by Steve November, ITV's Director of Drama, during his visit to ITV Wales.

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More recently, ITV's new Director of Factual, Richard Klein, met with our senior editors to discuss requirements for factual programming. Additionally, the *Sharp End* team is forging closer links with the network *Agenda* political discussion programme that precedes it, while ITV network news has collaborated with us on a number of major stories in Wales.

### **Financial Results 2013**

ITV Cymru Wales is part of the UK's most popular free-to-air commercial broadcaster – home to some of the biggest shows on British television. Developments in Wales are part of the overarching success story of ITV plc as the business continues to thrive both creatively and commercially. Last month, we announced our results for 2013 with group revenues up 9% to £2.39bn and EBITA up 21% to £620m - the fourth consecutive year of double-digit profit growth in an economically challenging environment. Non-advertising revenues again grew strongly as we continue to rebalance the business and grow new revenue streams.

ITV is now demonstrably a much stronger company both operationally and financially, but we know we still have much to do. Looking forward to 2014, we expect all parts of the business to see further growth as we continue to invest in creating and broadcasting high quality content both in the UK and internationally.

<http://www.itvplc.com/media/news/itv-plc-full-year-results-2013>

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*See also separate document: ITV Cymru Wales Fact Sheet*

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