



Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru **The National Assembly for Wales**

Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau, Cydraddoldeb a **Llywodraeth Leol** **The Communities, Equality and Local Government** **Committee**

Dydd Mercher, 2 Ebrill 2014
Wednesday, 2 April 2014

Cynnwys **Contents**

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

Sesiwn Ddilynol ynghylch y Rhagolygon ar gyfer Dyfodol y Cyfryngau yng Nghymru gydag
Ymddiriedolaeth y BBC
Future Outlook for the Media in Wales: Follow-up Session with the BBC Trust

Sesiwn Ddilynol ynghylch y Rhagolygon ar gyfer Dyfodol y Cyfryngau yng Nghymru gyda
Bwrdd Gweithredol y BBC
Future Outlook for the Media in Wales: Follow-up Session with BBC Executive

Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o'r Cyfarfod
Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from the Meeting

Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynndi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal, cynhwysir
trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd.

The proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee. In
addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Leighton Andrews	Llafur Labour
Peter Black	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Christine Chapman	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Jocelyn Davies	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Janet Finch-Saunders	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Mike Hedges	Llafur Labour
Mark Isherwood	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Gwyn R. Price	Llafur Labour
Jenny Rathbone	Llafur Labour
Rhodri Glyn Thomas	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Rhodri Talfan Davies	Cyfarwyddwr, BBC Cymru Wales Director, BBC Cymru Wales
Yr Arglwydd/Lord Hall of Birkenhead CBE	Cyfarwyddwr Cyffredinol y BBC Director General, BBC
Yr Arglwydd/Lord Patten	Ymddiriedolaeth y BBC BBC Trust
Yr Athro/Professor Elan Closs Stephens	Ymddiriedolwr y BBC ar gyfer Cymru BBC Trustee for Wales

Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol
National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance

Sarah Beasley	Clerc Clerk
Leanne Hatcher	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Rhys Iorwerth	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:18.
The meeting began at 09:18.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Christine Chapman:** Bore da and welcome to the Assembly's Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee. Could I just remind Members and witnesses that,

if they have any mobile phones, they should be switched off, as they affect the transmission? We have not had any apologies this morning.

**Sesiwn Ddilynol ynghylch y Rhagolygon ar gyfer Dyfodol y Cyfryngau yng
Nghymru gydag Ymddiriedolaeth y BBC
Future Outlook for the Media in Wales: Follow-up Session with the BBC Trust**

[2] **Christine Chapman:** Before I introduce our witnesses today, I just want to remind us all that, in May 2012, a task and finish group was set up by this committee, which published a report on the future outlook for the media in Wales. Today is our final session to follow up developments since that report was published. I would like to give a warm welcome to our first witnesses, who are from the BBC Trust. First of all, I welcome Lord Patten, chairman of the BBC Trust, and Elan Closs Stephens. Welcome to you both.

[3] **Professor Stephens:** Diolch yn fawr.

[4] **Lord Patten:** Thank you very much indeed.

[5] **Christine Chapman:** As Members have quite a lot of questions, so, if you are happy, we will go straight into questions. To start off, I just want to touch on some themes around governance and accountability. The Silk commission, as you know, recommended that a devolved BBC Trust should be established in Wales, within the wider UK trust framework. Could you give us your views on that?

[6] **Lord Patten:** Sure. Of course, the governance of the BBC, like the governance of the country, is a matter for the Government of the day and for Parliament. Sooner or later, we will find ourselves doubtless having a debate about the charter and the future governance. There were several points in the Silk commission report that were interesting, and which I am sure we would be happy to see advance. However, I did not think that the Silk commission—if I may make the point without being accused of *lèse-majesté*—understood terribly well the existing role of the audience councils and of the national trustee. Unlike the broadcasting council, the Audience Council Wales is actually established in the charter, with very specific responsibilities, and it does provide for us, not only a sounding board, but a transmission mechanism from the people who own the BBC, licence fee payers, viewers and listeners, and the BBC executive itself. To superimpose another body on top of the existing audience council and trust member would be both nugatory and unnecessary, and would risk over-bureaucratising a system that I think works pretty well. I would not argue that it is pluperfect, but during the course of this morning's discussion, which Elan and I greatly welcome, I am sure that Elan will want to draw out for you the sort of role that the audience council at present plays.

[7] We welcome this sort of session, and we welcome the discussions that we have in Wales. I do not think that anything that is ever put to us, whether about political coverage, English-language broadcasting or technical issues, ever comes as a surprise, because these are normally issues that the audience councils have expressed to us at our pretty regular meetings.

[8] **Christine Chapman:** Elan, would you like to comment?

[9] **Yr Athro Stephens:** Diolch yn fawr iawn, Gadeirydd. Rwy'n siŵr y bydd Silk yn fater o drafodaeth frwd o gwmpas y bwrdd hwn, ymysg nifer o fyrddau yn y Cynulliad ac, yn wir, y tu allan i'r Cynulliad, ac mae'n gyfraniad gwerthfawr iawn rwy'n meddwl ar
Professor Stephens: Thank you very much, Chair. I am sure that Silk will be an issue of some debate around this table, around many tables in the Assembly and, indeed, outwith the Assembly, and it is a very valuable contribution I believe to the journey towards

y siwrnai tuag at hunaniaeth y genedl hon. Fodd bynnag, rwy'n siwr y byddech yn cytuno â mi, oherwydd yr adnoddau a roddwyd i Silk a'r amser a roddwyd i'r comisiwn i wneud ei waith, mai arwyddbost oedd Silk ar y siwrnai tuag at ragor o ddatganoli, os mai dyna ydy dymuniad y Cynulliad. Felly, fel pob arwyddbost, mae'n arwyddo llwybr ymlaen, ond nid yw, yn fy marn i, ac rwy'n siwr y byddai'r comisiynwyr eu hunain yn cytuno, wedi gallu cael yr amser i wneud gwaith trylwyr ynglŷn â datgysylltu pob darn o'r dystiolaeth ar ddarlledu. Felly, mae nifer o bethau sydd yn ymddangos yn baradocsaid, er enghraifft, y dylai rheolaeth ddarlledu fod yn Brydeinig, ac, ar y llaw arall, y dylai'r £7 miliwn ar gyfer S4C gael ei drosglwyddo ac felly bod atebolrwydd yn y fan honno.

the identity of this nation. However, I am sure that you would agree with me that, given the resources provided to Silk and the time available to the commission to carry out its functions, Silk was a signpost on the journey towards further devolution, if that is the wish of the Assembly. As with all signposts, it identifies the path forward, but, in my opinion, and I am sure the commissioners themselves would agree with this, it did not have the time to carry out thorough work on decoupling every single piece of evidence on broadcasting. Therefore, there are a number of things that appear paradoxical, for example, the fact that the governance of broadcasting should be at a UK level, but, on the other hand, that the £7 million for S4C should be devolved to ensure accountability.

[10] Yr hyn yr hoffwn i ei weld yw ein bod yn gallu cael yr amser a'r math hwn a fforwm i ni drïo tynnu'r darnau o edafedd o sidan oddi wrth ei gilydd, os liciwch chi, a gweld yn union sut mae modd cyflawni hyn er budd ein cynulleidfaoedd ac atebolrwydd yng Nghymru. Rwy'n meddwl ei fod yn bosibl, ac rwy'n gobeithio na fyddech chi na ninnau am geisio gwneud hynny ar ben ein hunain; hynny yw, bod yr ateb naill ai gan y gwleidyddion neu bod yr ateb i gyd gan y darlledwyr am fod ganddynt ryw fath o orolwg broffesiynol o'r maes. Felly, mae trafodaeth eang i'w chael yn dilyn Silk, ond rwy'n falch iawn bod Silk wedi cychwyn y daith.

What I would want to see is that we could have the time and this sort of forum to try to pull all those threads apart to disentangle them and see how exactly we can achieve this for the benefit of our audience and to ensure accountability within Wales. I think that it is possible, and I would hope that neither you nor we would seek to do this alone; that is to say that the solution either sits with the politicians or entirely with the broadcasters as they have some sort of professional overview. Therefore, there is scope for collaboration and there is broad-ranging discussion to be had as a result of Silk, and I am extremely pleased that Silk initiated that journey and debate.

[11] Fel mae'r cadeirydd newydd ddweud, rwy'n gofidio braidd nad ydy pobl yn deall yn iawn swyddogaeth y cyngor cynulleidfa ac efallai nad ydynt yn deall natur yr ymddriedolaeth ei hun yn llwyr. Wedi'r cwbl, rydym yn sôn am gorff sy'n eithaf ifanc. Mae ffyrdd o gael atebolrwydd, megis, er enghraifft, cael trwydded—*service licence agreement*—i Gymru yn unig. Mae hwn yn rhywbeth rwy'n gobeithio y gallwn ei drafod yn fanwl wrth i'r cyfnod tuag at y siarter ddod i fyny.

As the chair has just said, I am a little concerned that people do not fully understand the function of the audience council and perhaps do not understand the nature of the trust itself fully. After all, we are talking about a relatively new body. There are ways of ensuring accountability, such as, for example, having a service licence agreement for Wales alone. That is something that I hope we will be able to discuss in detail as we move towards charter renewal.

[12] **Christine Chapman:** Peter, did you want to come in on that point about the audience council?

[13] **Peter Black:** Yes. When the Silk commission's broadcasting expert evidence seminar looked at these issues, it expressed criticism that Audience Council Wales was toothless and

that Welsh leverage needed to be enhanced within the BBC. I just wonder how you would respond to that. They are not my words; that is what came out of that particular evidence session.

[14] **Professor Stephens:** Could you repeat your second clause? Sorry, I did not hear it properly.

[15] **Peter Black:** Yes, the evidence that it had was that Audience Council Wales was toothless and that Welsh leverage needed to be enhanced within the BBC. Obviously, we are talking about governance here, not just the audience council.

[16] **Lord Patten:** I am not sure that I would remotely accept the adjective ‘toothless’. Speaking for the trust, we have a few bite marks on our limbs from arguments put very cogently and forcefully by the audience council, which, in my experience, has always been particularly mindful of two things. The first is our cultural responsibilities here in Wales: ensuring that we manage to sustain good broadcasting in two languages. The second is a real awareness of the additional responsibilities that the BBC has in its coverage of political and national events and more local events because of the withering of the commercial media, both written and electronic, over the last few years. I think that it places the BBC in a particularly responsible role. Those are the sorts of points that have been made regularly and forcefully by the audience council and they are the sorts of points that I think we reflect to the executive and that the executive takes account of. The limits beyond which the executive—as I am sure it will explain to you later—would find it difficult to move are largely determined by the size and scale of the licence fee. Of course, there are continuing arguments to increase the efficiency of the BBC and that is a continuing struggle. However, overall, the parameters set by the licence fee determine how much you can respond to people’s legitimate anxieties and concerns.

[17] **Professor Stephens:** I chair the audience council, of course, and am the link, as trustee, on the trustee board. There is a monthly slot where all my concerns and those of Scotland and Northern Ireland are not just listened to, but actually, I find, are listened to with a great deal of respect by fellow trustees. I would say that the proof of whether we do a good job or not is in the outcome. It is not what people think you are or what is on paper; it is whether you have delivered anything. When I look back over the last three years of my chairmanship, we have been concerned, for example, about distribution—for example, FM coverage in Wales. Radio Wales, unlike its commercial rival Real Radio, although it is doing extremely well and is neck and neck, does not reach more than 81% of the population, so it is about furthering that. We have made substantial inroads with another 80,000 on one of the transmitters. That was a response within an envelope of finance. With DAB, similarly, we have been concerned about people not being able to receive things. These are real concerns because when you are providing a service, people have to have the wherewithal to listen to it. In the matter of HD, first of all, BBC One was going to be on HD. We pushed very hard for national variance to come immediately after the HD proposition. The HD2 is now our concern and is within our sights, and we are gunning for that. Of course, when you look at the expansion in Wales of network, and the £60 million or so coming into Roath Lock from network production, then that too is something that comes because there is a real desire here to have more economic benefit from the licence fee. So, I would cite all of those and I am sure that I could cite you at least another 10 things with which we are dissatisfied. All I am saying is that this is a constant dialogue and we have had some wins.

09:30

[18] **Peter Black:** Okay. Some of those issues we raised with representatives of Ofcom last week and I think that they are legitimate concerns. May I just pick up on your point about the proof being in the outcome? Most people’s perception of the BBC is through its output

and how it treats Wales through its output. I think that, although there has been huge improvement in terms of the way that the BBC treats devolution from a few years ago, you still get issues, such as, for example, the BBC's flagship programme, *Newsnight*, treating Wales completely differently to any other part of the UK. It goes to Scotland and talks about Scottish issues. It goes to Northern Ireland and talks about Northern Ireland issues. If it comes to Wales, it will not even countenance us referring to devolved issues; it talks about English issues. People do perceive—

[19] **Professor Stephens:** Is that *Newsnight* or *Question Time*?

[20] **Peter Black:** *Question Time*; I meant *Question Time*. People do perceive that flagship programmes like that and the BBC are not sympathetic to the Welsh point of view because of that.

[21] **Lord Patten:** May I make a point on that? I sympathise with what you have said. In 2008, Anthony King, who is one of the most distinguished political scientists in the country, did an extremely good report on the extent to which news and current affairs either did or did not—and it was mostly 'did not'—adequately reflect the differences in Government within the United Kingdom. It will not surprise you that in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and particularly in Wales, the failure sometimes to meet the objectives set by Anthony King is a big issue for audience councils. It is a big issue for audiences and a big issue for elected representatives.

[22] We have made some progress. There was a very good report done by Cardiff University a couple of years back, or a year back, which noted the increase in the amount of news coverage of specifically Welsh, as well as Scottish and Northern Ireland, items in the news, and the extent to which differences, for example, in healthcare or education, had actually been noted in news and current affairs. However, it is still far from perfect and we have to make more effort, for example, through the training of journalists. It is an issue that we have to come back to with seasoned journalists again and again because it is easy for people to generalise and miss really important differences.

[23] I think—and this is a personal view of an ex-political hack—that the whole issue of devolved governance and of the way that we treat politics and administration in different parts of the country is going to be, in the years ahead, a much bigger part of our national agenda, as the United Kingdom. We have just broadcast some, I think, really interesting programmes by the historian Linda Colley on the nature and state of the union and I think that this will be a big issue for all of us, including, of course, the BBC in the years ahead. However, I just want to underline the point that questions about the extent to which the admirable objectives of the King report are not yet being fully met are wholly legitimate and we have to respond to them.

[24] **Peter Black:** Yes. I gave evidence to the Anthony King review and I think that things did start to improve in terms of mainstreaming the devolution process, but you still get, in 2014, *Question Time* coming to Newport and hardly touching on any Welsh issues. So, it has not quite spread through to the flagship programmes.

[25] **Professor Stephens:** I think that it has to be remembered that Anthony King's report was commissioned by the trust and that we have an annual update on where we think it has got to. I think that it is fair to say that we think that the labelling has improved on the whole. You know, they now talk about the English health service or the Welsh health service, for example. However, the comparators are still to be fully fleshed out. I think that there have been some wins. The issue of organ donation, I thought, was treated with a good deal of respect and interest. Mr Leighton Andrews's altercation with Mr Gove and his tensions—[*Laughter.*]—were at least flagged up very successfully.

[26] **Leighton Andrews:** May I come in on that? I hear what you say but, with all due respect, you are still pretty hopeless a lot of the time on network. The first time the BBC got into these issues was probably between 1996 and 1998 around the devolution referenda then, when there was a huge training programme undertaken a gentleman called Phil Harding on BBC news, which really did open up what the differences were going to be between the devolved administrations. Now, you have had 15 years of devolution and yet, as you referred to my altercation with Mr Gove back in 2012, the BBC website even then managed to bill his announcements on the future of GCSEs as affecting England and Wales—

[27] **Professor Stephens:** Yes, I remember—

[28] **Leighton Andrews:** It was changed when we pointed this out, but I just think that you can send foreign correspondents to do incredibly in-depth well informed reports on a whole series of countries that we are studying, but when it comes to day-to-day coverage of what has, for the past 15 years, been a core part of UK polity, there are still elementary errors being made.

[29] **Lord Patten:** I do not wish to pretend that there are not still problems. I would disagree, respectfully, on whether any progress has been made. I think that we have made progress, but I still think that there is a distance to go.

[30] **Jenny Rathbone:** On this subject, why is it not possible to educate your reporters, particularly in television, about devolution so that they are not talking about the NHS in England and the education system in England as though they were for the whole of the UK? What Michael Gove gets up to is obviously of interest, but you could actually just have a one-liner saying, 'In Wales, they are doing it differently' or at least acknowledge that there are regional Governments doing things differently. It is not clear at all why you cannot get your reporters to do this, because they are supposed to be bright individuals capable of following a brief.

[31] **Lord Patten:** They are invariably bright individuals, and, of course, it is part of the training that they get at the college of journalism. However, the situation is still imperfect; I am not going to pretend that it is not. When there are mistakes, we have to correct them as rapidly as possible. I think that we are better at that now, but it has not always been the BBC's strong point to admit that it is wrong.

[32] **Professor Stephens:** I think that this is an issue—not to duck it here—for our second session this morning with the editor-in-chief and the controller for Wales. However, I do know that there has been an awful lot of work done within the college of journalism on this issue. I think that it goes wider than the BBC. It is almost a contextual thing that, in some ways, devolution has not happened to England. It has happened to the nations and, somehow, the English structure has remained so much the same that there is a context in which people work that is, I think, detrimental to the full understanding of the constitution. That is not to excuse journalists, who should know better, but we are working within a daily context that does tend to make the nations peripheral.

[33] **Lord Patten:** May I just add one point, which I hope does not sound sanctimonious? I think that we are properly held to a higher standard than you would hold most, if not all, the written press or some other electronic news machines, and so we should be because we are the British Broadcasting Corporation, and we are owned by the people of Wales as well as the people of south-east England.

[34] **Christine Chapman:** I want to move on now. Did you have some questions on these issues, Leighton?

[35] **Leighton Andrews:** I want to ask you about your plans for transmission. Is the corporation planning to outsource its transmission arrangements?

[36] **Lord Patten:** That may be a question that you would want to address to the director general when he comes in shortly. I do not know whether Elan has an answer for you.

[37] **Professor Stephens:** I think that this arose for me in the context of a discussion recently about the relocation of S4C. It is concerned that if it moved to co-locate its transmission—and I speak now as someone who wears both hats—there would be some outsourcing. When I asked the trust secretariat about it, I was told that nothing had come to the level of any decision-making body, but there were ideas around about the actual server. Whether you think that having a server geographically placed is an important aspect or not is open to discussion. A sort of cloud arrangement is not really a geographic concern. All that I know from Rhodri—and you will have to ask him further about this—is that the whole of the presentation, the continuity, the actual process and the physical human phase of transmission will obviously have to be Wales-based.

[38] **Leighton Andrews:** Is Cardiff still the alternative centre to London in terms of emergency planning?

[39] **Professor Stephens:** You will have to ask that to the director general.

[40] **Leighton Andrews:** Okay. I will take that up with the director general. I will move back to, perhaps, more orthodox questions. May I ask you about the balance of spend between Wales and other parts of the United Kingdom, and how you see the spend in the context of how it compares with other regions or nations of the UK?

[41] **Lord Patten:** The cuts, which were a direct consequence of the last licence fee settlement, did attempt to spread the challenge of budgetary prudence across the nations and regions as fairly and reasonably as possible, although we did not, within the nations and regions, allocate the cuts in identical ways. So, for example, in Wales we tried to shelter as much as possible the coverage of news and current affairs, as against some other genres, and we also attempted to shelter content scope—this was true more generally—by taking out as much as possible from overheads and back-office costs. So far, I think that that has resulted in around 85% of the necessary cuts coming from overheads. We are about three quarters of the way through the programme of efficiency savings and cuts, but I would guess that, in the last quarter, those figures will change a bit, and slightly more would necessarily come out of content than out of overheads. By and large, looking across the country, I think that we have been pretty fair in the way that we have tried to balance things. There are one or two issues that, I think, in the original proposals we got wrong; originally, the executive had proposed too big a cut in regional and local broadcasting. The trust, with the executive, redressed that balance somewhat in the second iteration of the cuts. It is never very pleasant to have to cut things at all, but I think that we have done it as well as we could. It, of course, raises questions about what people call salami-slicing, as against lopping off whole services. Looking to the future, I think that we have got past the end of the salami, and that we will, in future, have to look at more radical surgery against the licence fee settlement that we get.

09:45

[42] **Leighton Andrews:** I am interested in what you said about local and regional services, because it has been suggested that Radio Wales and Radio Cymru took a disproportionate share of cuts against services such as Radio 4.

[43] **Lord Patten:** I really do not think—. I am sure that we can give you the percentage figures, but I do not think that that is fair. Elan, I do not know whether you want to add

anything.

[44] **Professor Stephens:** Could I just add that we were concerned with the envelope that was being passed down to BBC Wales? How BBC Wales cut that budget was up to the controller. So, if we are talking Radio Wales against Radio 4, that is a decision for the radio controller, or for Rhodri Talfan Davies and his executive group. Probably this had best been taken up. However, although we managed to have an equitable distribution of cuts—if such a phrase could ever be used—in the UK, and Wales certainly has not taken a disproportionate cut overall, I am still concerned as to the amount of funding for BBC Wales, and as BBC Wales trustee, I should be concerned. For example, in Scotland, Radio Scotland, despite the fact that it covers a greater population, has the same range and breadth of interests as Radio Wales or Radio Cymru, yet the budget in Wales has to be split 50:50 between the two services. So, obviously, Radio Scotland has a deeper offering. Now, this has not been done in ‘Delivering Quality First’ time; this is a historical process, which, perhaps, we may be able to look at at some point.

[45] There has also been the matter of trying to ring-fence as much as possible the BBC’s contribution to S4C in the 10 statutory hours, and the BBC’s contribution as trust to the maintenance of S4C. In that context, what we have also got to be careful about is that there is not an adverse effect on English-language broadcasting from Wales, because we need the sense of identity and interest in Welsh affairs throughout the whole of the population. In fact, that is a prerequisite for the sympathy and positive aspect towards S4C. So, there are some difficult problems to be looked at here in the context of the future funding of the licence fee and how much the BBC has in future.

[46] **Christine Chapman:** Rhodri, did you want to come in?

[47] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Yn y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd yn y Pierhead neithiwr, roedd Llywydd y Cynulliad yn feirniadol iawn o’r BBC oherwydd y diffyg o ran newyddion ac o ran y modd yr ymdrinnir â gwleidyddiaeth ar y BBC. Dywedoch yn gynharach yn eich tystiolaeth eich bod fel ymddiriedolaeth wedi ceisio diogelu newyddion a’r ymdriniaeth o’r sefyllfa wleidyddol o ran y toriadau, ond eto i gyd, rydym yn canfod yng Nghymru bod rhaglen *Newsnight* ar gyfer yr Alban, er enghraifft, ond nid oes un ar gyfer Cymru. A ydych yn derbyn beirniadaeth y Llywydd o’r sefyllfa gyfredol?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: In the meeting held in the Pierhead last night, the Presiding Officer of the Assembly was very critical of the BBC because of the lack of news and the way that politics is dealt with on the BBC. You said earlier in your evidence that, as a trust, you had tried to safeguard news and political coverage in terms of the cuts, but yet again we are finding in Wales that there is a *Newsnight* programme for Scotland, for example, but there is not one for Wales. Do you accept the criticism of the Presiding Officer of the current situation?

[48] **Lord Patten:** I am old enough in the tooth to know that it is never wise to criticise a Presiding Officer or Speaker, and I would not of course want to do so on this occasion. The Presiding Officer spoke—she said this, and I totally believe her—as a critical friend of the BBC. I know that she is very supportive of the institution and its independence. However, of course, friends are always encouraged to offer their criticisms, even if we prefer their friendship to their criticism. I did not, I have to say, wholly agree with what she said. However, I did agree with what she said about English-language programmes—and this was reflected just now by Elan—which I think is a real issue, and one that the director general addressed in his remarks last night. However, I do not agree with her about political coverage. I think that we provide—is it 180 hours now? I suspect that most of our viewers and listeners would regard that as pretty adequate to the task. I think that, in the reshaping of our services, we have managed, despite a net loss of jobs overall, to appoint new correspondents in a

number of areas—arts and economics, as well as coverage of politics. It is, of course, a challenge when the creation of an Assembly like this one puts an increased burden on political reporting. I think that we have risen to that challenge pretty well.

[49] I just want to add the point that I do not think that envy of Scottish *Newsnight* would necessarily be reflected in some of the views that I get in Scotland about it. It is one of the main subjects that we get criticised about, namely that it is not a good enough programme, people say—no comment; that is the criticism that we get in Scotland. I think that that is going to lead to changes in that programme in the run-up to the referendum. Here, I think that *The Wales Report*, at least judging by the size of its audience, is doing very well in the coverage of Welsh politics—certainly better than its predecessor. I think that it has an audience of about 100,000, and I think that *Newsnight* in Wales is watched by 20,000 people. Whether a special Welsh edition would be watched by many more, I am not absolutely convinced. So, I think that there are other ways of skinning the cat than thinking of a Welsh *Newsnight*. However, I think that you are entirely right, going back to what you said earlier, that whether it is *Newsnight*, *Question Time* or whatever, a programme should give proper balance in its reporting and should cover what is happening in the Assembly and what is happening in Wales in a professional, journalistic way.

[50] **Yr Athro Stephens:** Mae'n broblem i bob un ohonom beth i'w wneud gyda swm o arian nad yw'n tyfu. Pan ydych chi'n edrych ar y swm o arian sydd ar gael i BBC Cymru ac yn gwranddo ar y gynulleidfa allan yno, sef yr hyn mae'r cyngor cynulleidfa yn ei wneud yn gyson, bob mis—yn wir yn amlach na phob mis—yr hyn rydym ni'n ei glywed yw bod pobl am gael drama yn Saesneg am Gymru, rhywbeth tebyg i *Baker Boys* ers talwm, a chomedi o Gymru. Maen nhw eisiau gweld eu bywydau a'u straeon nhw eu hunain ar y sgrîn. Mewn byd delfrydol, ni ddylai fod yn ddewis—naill ai hwn neu'r llall—ond yn y byd sydd ohoni, byddem yn hoffi clywed gan gyfarwyddwr Cymru lle mae o'n gosod y pwyslais. Os mai darn penodol o arian sydd ganddo, ble byddai o'n hoffi ei wario i gael yr effaith mwyaf posibl ar ymdeimlad o hunaniaeth tu fewn i'r gynulleidfa Gymreig? Rwy'n dweud hyn o flaen gwleidyddion, sydd yn rhywbeth problematig iawn, ond efallai nad ariannu *Newsnight* fyddai ar ben y rhestr. Rwy'n gobeithio bod enw'r grŵp protest *Newsnight* Cymru yn golygu rhywbeth mwy na dim ond *Newsnight*. Efallai ei fod yn golygu mwy o sylw dyddiol i wleidyddiaeth Cymru ac felly mai slogan ydyw, yn hytrach na dyhead penodol am un rhaglen.

Professor Stephens: It is a problem for each and every one of us in terms of what we do with a sum of money that is not increasing. When you look at the funding available to BBC Wales and listen to the comments of the audience, which is what the audience council does regularly, on a monthly basis—indeed, more often than that—the feedback that we get is that people want English-language drama about Wales, similar to what *Baker Boys* used to be, and Welsh comedy. They want to see their own lives and stories on the screen. In an ideal world, it should not be a choice—an either/or situation—but in the current climate, we would like to hear from the director for Wales where he places the emphasis. If he has a specific pot of money, then where would he like to spend that for the biggest possible impact on the sense of identity of the Welsh audience? I say this in front of an audience of politicians, which is very problematic, but perhaps spending money on a Welsh *Newsnight* would not be at the top of the list. I hope that the protest group name *Newsnight* Cymru means something more than just *Newsnight*. Perhaps it means greater daily coverage of politics in Wales and, therefore, is a slogan rather than a specific aspiration for one programme.

[51] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Yn sicr, byddwn i'n derbyn yr hyn rydych yn ei ddweud ynglŷn â'r math o ymdriniaeth y byddem yn dymuno ei gweld yng Nghymru. Y ffaith amdani yw nad yw'n digwydd ar hyn

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Certainly, I would accept what you say with regard to how we would wish to see Wales being dealt with. The fact is that it is not happening at the moment. In terms of the viewing figures for

o bryd. O ran y ffigurau gwyllo ar gyfer *The Wales Report*, er enghraifft, gallech ddadlau mai'r papur newydd sy'n cael ei ddarllen fwyaf yng Nghymru yw *The Sun*, ond nid wyf yn siŵr bod hynny'n golygu bod darllenwyr yn cael ymdriniaeth drylwyr iawn o'r hyn sy'n digwydd yng Nghymru o ddydd i ddydd. Byddwn yn meddwl mai un o wendidau *The Wales Report* yw ei fod yn cael ei ffilmio, i raddau helaeth, yn Llundain a bod tuedd i edrych ar bwy sydd ar gael o wleidyddion Llundain i sylwebu ar yr hyn sy'n digwydd yng Nghymru, yn hytrach na bod gwleidyddion sy'n ymdrin o ddydd i ddydd â materion o Gymru yn y Cynulliad yn ymddangos ar y rhaglen. Felly, hwyrach bod y ffigurau wedi mynd lan, ond nid yw hynny'n golygu bod yr ymdriniaeth yn fwy sylweddol nag yr oedd yn flaenorol.

[52] **Yr Athro Stephens:** Credaf ein bod wedi ymlwybro yn awr i faterion y byddai'n well ichi eu codi gyda chyfarwyddwr Cymru, o ran naws ac elfennau golygyddol y rhaglen. Rwy'n clywed yr hyn rydych yn ei ddweud, ond credaf fod rhinwedd mewn cynnwys y nifer mwyaf posibl o bobl yng ngwleidyddiaeth Cymreig—boed hynny yn San Steffan neu yn y Cynulliad.

[53] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** A fydddech yn derbyn y feirniadaeth sydd wedi ei chyflwyno i ni mai ychydig iawn o raglenni o Gymru sy'n ymddangos ar y rhwydwaith yn gyffredinol gan y BBC, a bod angen edrych ar hynny a gweld sut y gellir cynyddu'r nifer?

[54] **Yr Athro Stephens:** Byddwn, yn bendant. Mae gwahaniaeth mawr rhwng y cynnyrch economaidd—sydd i'w ganmol, ei goleddu, a'i gynyddu—sy'n dod o Borth y Rhath sydd, fel y dywedais, werth bron i £60 miliwn, ac sy'n cynnwys rhaglenni fel *Casualty*, *Dr Who*, a hefyd *Crimewatch* o'r stiwdio yn Llandaf, a'r cynnyrch sy'n adlewyrchu Cymru. Fel y dywedais, un o'r pryderon sydd gennym yw faint o arian sydd ar gael ar gyfer y darlun hwnnw. Rwy'n cymryd mai un ffordd ymlaen fydd cydweithio agosach gyda'r rhwydwaith, fel y gwnaeth Rondo Media gyda Daytime, er enghraifft, yn achos *The Indian Doctor*, ac felly rhoi llwyfan i rywbeth sydd wedyn yn magu cynulleidfya, yn cael ei fwynhau ac yn cael ei ymestyn. Felly, rwy'n meddwl eich

The Wales Report, for example, you could argue that the most widely read newspaper in Wales is *The Sun*, but I am not sure that that means that readers have a thorough treatment of what happens in Wales from day to day. I would say that one of the weaknesses with regard to *The Wales Report* is that it is filmed, to a large degree, in London and there is a tendency to look at which politicians from London are available to comment on what is happening in Wales, rather than politicians who deal with Welsh matters in the Assembly on a daily basis appearing on the programme. Therefore, the figures might have gone up, but that does not mean that the treatment is any more substantial that it was previously.

Professor Stephens: I believe that we have drifted now to issues that it would be better for you to raise with the director for Wales, in terms of the feel of the programme and its editorial decisions. I hear what you are saying, but I also feel that there is some merit in involving the greatest possible number of people in Welsh politics, whether in Westminster or the Assembly.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Do you accept the criticism made to us that very few programmes from Wales appear on the network in general from the BBC, and that that needs to be looked at in order to see how the number can be increased?

Professor Stephens: Yes, most certainly. There is a huge difference between the economic outputs—which are to be praised, encouraged and increased—coming from Roath Lock, which, as I said, are worth some £60 million and include programmes such as *Casualty*, *Dr Who*, and also *Crimewatch*, which is broadcast from the studio in Llandaff, and output that reflects Wales. As I said, one concern that we have is the amount of funding available for doing that. I assume that one way forward will be closer collaboration with the network, as Rondo Media did with Daytime, for example, in the case of *The Indian Doctor*, thereby giving a platform to something that generates its own audience, is enjoyed and is extended. Therefore, I believe that you are entirely right

bod yn llygad eich lle i ddweud bod gwaith i'w wneud i weld sut y gellir gwneud hyn o fewn y cyfyngiadau ariannol.

[55] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Mae gennyf un cwestiwn olaf ynglŷn â'r cyfyngiadau ariannol. Sylwais, pan wnaethpwyd sylw ar y toriadau mae'r BBC yn eu hwynebu o ran y broses Darparu Ansawdd yn Gyntaf a hefyd oherwydd y drwydded—hoffwn nodi bod y drwydded yn un ar gyfer darlledu cyhoeddus yn y Deyrnas Unedig; nid trwydded i'r BBC ydyw, er mai'r BBC yn hanesyddol sydd wedi derbyn yr arian—ac ar y penderfyniad i symud BBC Three ar-lein, er enghraifft, dywedwyd bod toriadau o'r fath yn codi oherwydd y cyfrifoldeb a osodwyd ar y BBC i ariannu S4C.

[56] **Yr Athro Stephens:** Nid wyf yn meddwl ei fod wedi ei roi yn y ffordd honno. Credaf mai'r hyn a ddywedwyd oedd bod y BBC wedi gweld toriadau helaeth ers 2006, gan nad oes cynnydd wedi bod yn y drwydded, felly mae chwyddiant wedi bod yn ffactor real. Ers 2010, mae toriadau real wedi bod oherwydd cymryd drosodd y World Service, S4C, teledu lleol a monitro. Mae hynny yn osodiad ffeithiol; nid yw'n osodiad fel yr un a wnaeth Noel Edmonds yn dweud 'Ac felly, mae'n rhaid inni wneud yr holl bethau hyn oherwydd S4C'. Credaf fod y ffordd y mae'r BBC wedi ceisio meithrin y berthynas gydag S4C a'r ffordd adeiladol a chynnes y mae S4C wedi ymateb i hynny wedi bod yn esiampl dda iawn o gydweithredu. Byddwn yn grac iawn pe bai unrhyw ensyniad yn dod gan unrhyw un ar lefel arweinyddol yn dweud bod y toriadau hyn yn deillio'n uniongyrchol o ariannu S4C.

10:00

[57] **Lord Patten:** I endorse that very strongly. We have not yet received proposals from the executive about BBC Three. When we do, we will have to consider them, so this is not a done deal. We will have to consider them in the light of a public value test and a full consultation. We certainly do not think that those decisions, if they have to be made, will be a consequence of the responsibilities that we have and cherish for working with S4C, not just with the £76 million or thereabouts that comes from the licence fee, but also the amount of programming—probably worth £20 million a year—that we provide. Elan was absolutely right in pointing to the licence fee settlement, which not only set the licence fee itself at a challenging level, but also put on the BBC licence fee payer the costs of World Service, which is £250 million, the roll-out of broadband, which is £150 million, the funding of some aspects of local television, which is about £40 million, as well as S4C. So, overall, a substantial amount of additional responsibility is put on the licence fee payer.

to say that there is work to be done to see how we can move forward with this within the financial limitations that we face.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: I have one final question on the financial limitations. I noticed, when a comment was made on the cuts being faced by the BBC with regard to the Delivering Quality First process and also because of the licence—I would like to note that the licence is for public broadcasting in the United Kingdom; it is not a licence for the BBC, even though it is the BBC that historically has received the money—and the decision to move BBC Three online, for example, it was said that such cuts arose because of the responsibility placed on the BBC to fund S4C.

Professor Stephens: I do not think that it was put in that way. I believe that what was said was that the BBC had faced substantial cuts since 2006, because there has been no increase in the licence fee, so inflation has been a very real factor. Since 2010, there have been real-term cuts because of taking on responsibility for the World Service, S4C, local television and monitoring. That is a statement of fact; it is not a Noel Edmonds-esque statement, saying that 'We are having to do all of these things because of S4C'. I believe that the way in which the BBC has tried to nurture that relationship with S4C and the constructive and warm way in which S4C has responded to that has been a very good example of collaboration. I would be extremely angry should any insinuation be made by anyone on a leadership level stating that these cuts are as a direct consequence of funding S4C.

[58] That is part of the settlement up to 2016-17, and we cannot pretend that it is not. Whether, in settlements beyond that, the BBC has to continue to carry additional responsibilities on the licence fee is not a matter for us, but it will have consequences for the overall level of BBC services. We have to justify, as the trust, to people whose principal interest is watching *The Voice* or *Strictly Come Dancing* the money that we spend on broadcasting in Urdu or Hindi to people without electricity listening on short-wave radios in the middle of the Indian sub-continent. That is a responsibility that I am happy to have and happy to defend, but it does have consequences for how much you can spend on light entertainment on BBC1, or whatever. So, all we are doing is reflecting the realities of the budgetary position.

[59] I would like to go a little further than Elan did and say, in response to your earlier question about not just the programmes that come out of Roath Lock, but the BBC Wales networked programmes and the fact that they need to be increased, that I think that we can do more through collaboration. We have been very pleased by the collaboration with S4C that has produced *Hinterland*, which I think is a really excellent example of what we can do together, working as independent organisations—operationally and editorially—in ensuring that the creative talent of Wales gets the maximum exposure.

[60] **Christine Chapman:** I remind Members that we only have about a quarter of an hour left, and some Members have not had a chance to ask a question yet. If you could be concise with your questions. Mark, did you want to come in?

[61] **Mark Isherwood:** If I could, yes. You referred to the King report earlier. In terms of coverage, you gave an example of perhaps more controversial, audience-grabbing issues, such as the dialogue between respective Ministers for education. When I was recently speaking to an A-level politics group, they all thought that Mr Gove was the Minister for education in Wales. What tangible evidence do you have of progress with coverage of devolved matters in Wales? I cite the example of *Question Time*, on which my party is almost invariably represented by an MP representing an English seat, who, with the best of wills, does not know very much about politics in Wales.

[62] **Lord Patten:** That particular point is above my pay grade. [*Laughter.*] The evidence that we have is the Cardiff University report. Maybe you would like to say a bit more about it.

[63] **Professor Stephens:** I sit on the trust's finance committee, which also scrutinises the monitoring activity in terms of gender, equality, diversity and disability. It also looks at stuff such as the yearly monitoring of the King report. When you get the stats as to whether things have been labelled correctly, you will see that we are getting there. The point has been made by Leighton already that we are not as good—and we willingly say that—on the overall comparative context. Sometimes, even if we are good on screen, we miss it online, because of the diverse nature of the multiplatform offering nowadays. There is a way to go. Leighton has a very fair point when he asks why it takes so long. I hesitate to tell you to look at a particular skit on the BBC on a Wednesday evening, but sometimes things do take a long time.

[64] There is a problem about what Rhodri Morgan used to call the variable geometry of the United Kingdom and our position in it as a small player. Within the swathe of 87% of the population talking about Gove being their Minister for education, there has to be constant vigilance to remind people that this is not universally the case for the nations—for Cymru, for Scotland or for Northern Ireland. It is, and will be, a constant yearly battle for news leaders, news editors and for those who run the academy. The truth is that journalists change, programme makers change, and producers change. It is an organisation where there is sometimes quite rapid promotion—especially as we saw last year. It has to be a matter of keeping our eye on this all the time.

[65] **Christine Chapman:** Do you think that you need to be more proactive?

[66] **Professor Stephens:** Yes, indeed. The proactivity is in the yearly monitoring, but also in the reviews that we do and the service licence agreements that we have. The trust, each year, over a five-year period, has a rolling service licence, which is a major departure from what the governing body did in the past. Currently, we are looking at BBC News and the review is being done by Richard Ayre—I am sure that Leighton and perhaps Jenny would know him. I have not seen the report, or even the draft, but it will surprise me very much if this sort of thing is not a part of that trust report. We will then cascade that down to all the editorial departments.

[67] **Lord Patten:** That is not a report that is just done for us internally; it will be widely discussed from the outset.

[68] **Mark Isherwood:** I have a closed question. How do you respond to the Silk commission recommendation that public service broadcasters with content specific to Wales should provide an annual report on performance to the National Assembly for Wales, including more transparent data on trends in Welsh broadcasting output?

[69] **Lord Patten:** We answered a number of questions about the Silk commission earlier. We do have, with our annual reporting, specific sections on what is happening and what is being covered in Wales. Maybe we could look at what more information we can give. We have important annual meetings between the trust and the audience councils, and maybe we can give more publicity to those as well.

[70] **Professor Stephens:** I think that our very presence here today is—. Although we had difficulties getting all the diaries aligned, there was never any reluctance to come. This has been a journey that people want to go on. I hope that we can find a mechanism for future discussion, so that we know what the aspirations and the real touch points of the people of Wales are. I am searching for an opportunity with the audience council to think about some sort of conference as well, where population stats and trends, and viewing stats and trends and so on, can be shared more openly, so that we know where the audience is and what it is viewing.

[71] **Lord Patten:** May I make an institutional point about this? This is important because it is one that you are going to have to consider, and Members of Parliament are going to have to consider at Westminster, as well as members of other devolved parliaments and assemblies. Lord Reith would have turned in his grave, and doubtless is turning in his grave, at the sight of representatives of the BBC giving evidence to parliamentary bodies. He would have thought that it was a serious undermining of the BBC's independence. I think that it is possible for us, without undermining that independence, to be open with people who are representatives of the public, just as we are representatives of licence fee payers. I do not think that your own requests for information, and for seeing us, are in any way inappropriate. That is against a background of the BBC being called in front of 22 parliamentary select committees at Westminster in the course of the last two years, which does raise some questions about the independence of our national broadcaster. It is not a national broadcaster that should be afraid of being held accountable, but a national broadcaster that is aware of the fact that one reason why people have cherished it over the years is because it is not there to represent what politicians want it to represent necessarily, except those politicians who are only concerned about the most impartial treatment of the news and do not mind it when their own speeches are not reported. It is quite a difficult balance to strike, but one that I think we are going to have to discuss in the context of the next charter. I am appearing in front of you and I have appeared in Scotland in front of the Parliament there. I am very happy to do it, while without, I hope, sounding too much like a law lecturer, making that point about our

independence.

[72] **Christine Chapman:** We are running very short of time. Janet, did you have a question?

[73] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** They have all been answered.

[74] **Christine Chapman:** Mike, did you have a question?

[75] **Mike Hedges:** I have just one very brief one. I will preface my remarks by saying that the BBC is a trusted and well thought of institution. I have lots of questions, but I would like to say that first. Has there been any discussion between the BBC Trust and the Welsh Government on the renewal of the charter?

[76] **Lord Patten:** No, although I am sure that, between now and the end of 2017, we will want to talk to the Welsh Government and to others. I am not quite sure when the debate at Government level about the future of the charter will begin. In some senses, the debate more generally has already begun. It is there the whole time in the newspapers that Mr Murdoch owns, and it is there in Parliament at Westminster at the moment, with the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee doing a report on the future of the BBC. However, I do not imagine that the Government debate will start until after the next election.

[77] **Professor Stephens:** As you know, there is a protocol between Welsh Government and DCMS, which also covers the appointment of the national trustee as it happens, although Silk wanted to formalise that, but it is there. So, I think that there is precedence for that discussion to happen between Welsh Government and DCMS, as well as with the BBC.

10:15

[78] **Lord Patten:** I do not want to mislead the committee. I have, of course, had meetings with the First Minister, in the same way as I think that the director general will be having meetings. However, I have not had a specific discussion with him or his colleagues about charter renewal.

[79] **Gwyn R. Price:** Just touching on charter renewal and S4C, could you tell me the extent to which S4C itself will be part of the negotiations as charter renewal gets closer?

[80] **Lord Patten:** I cannot believe that it would not be a voice in the debate, and it certainly should be, both because of its output and because of its funding. Its funding is now intimately tied up with the licence fee, and I am sure that licence fee obligations to S4C will continue after this charter is a thing of the past. I cannot believe that that is going to change, although if it does, I am not sure where the money would come from. Elan, who is on the S4C board, would maybe add to that, but I am sure that the First Minister, the Secretary of State and politicians in London would want to hear the voice of S4C when considering what should happen after 2016-17.

[81] **Professor Stephens:** If I may, I will disentangle the two things: one is the licence fee settlement and the other is the charter. When the last charter was being put to bed in 2006, I was still the chair of S4C. Of course, we were fiercely independent in wanting to negotiate on our own behalf with DCMS. I would imagine that S4C, as an independent body, would still like to have the discussion with DCMS, especially as to the continuation of DCMS funding. However, it seems to me inconceivable that the present partnership should not allow for a very frank and full discussion about the aspirations of S4C, both in terms of the settlement and in terms of its place within the charter.

[82] I was very interested to see the evidence that the chair, Huw Jones, gave to you last week, where he was signalling, really, that there was good deal of—I would not say contentment—a sort of realisation that being with the BBC was not a bad place to be, but that the absolute essence of the matter was the settlement. If I can extrapolate from that and leave you with a few thoughts, then that is also a concern for the BBC—not just how much money it can give to S4C and English-language programming, but how much money it has to do all the wonderful things that it does going forward. So, the actual settlement will be a matter of considerable concern to all of us, and I hope that it will be a matter of concern for you too.

[83] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. Jocelyn, did you have a question?

[84] **Jocelyn Davies:** No, I think that the point has been covered.

[85] **Jenny Rathbone:** On your proposal to relocate BBC Cymru Wales from Llandaff to somewhere in the bay, could you tell us how you think that that would provide value for money for licence fee payers?

[86] **Professor Stephens:** I am sure that you can delve into this with Rhodri, in terms of the actual value for money and the financing. However, because of the value of the sums, I have been across it as a member of the trust's finance committee. It is not about a desire to relocate so much as the fact that Llandaff was built, as I remember it, in the early 1970s. In terms of its information technology, its infrastructure and what it can deliver in the current multimedia, fast-moving newsroom requirement, it is not a building that is fit for purpose. So, the decision is whether you move the whole operation out and refit the building or whether you move and build elsewhere. That was the decision, really, and that is what is behind the relocation, rather than any grandiose ideas simply to relocate for the sake of relocating.

[87] **Jenny Rathbone:** On the proposed move of S4C to Carmarthen, what does that mean in terms of possibilities for the BBC and S4C to maintain relationships with independent producers, because a lot of independent producers are co-located at the moment in the S4C building?

[88] **Professor Stephens:** Some service providers are co-located there, I would say, rather than the big indies. The big indies have their own headquarters. I have no idea; this is up to the management and to the executive of S4C. Some may want to move to Carmarthen and some may not. The idea at the moment is that considerable savings can be made by co-locating transmission between S4C and the BBC, and any savings we can do together would be welcome. Any savings that S4C does will go back to the S4C coffers.

[89] **Christine Chapman:** I do not think that there are any other questions from Members. So, I thank Lord Patten and Elan Closs Stephens for attending this morning. I think that it has been very informative, and we have had a good discussion on the issue. We will send you a transcript of the meeting so that you can check it for factual accuracy. Once again, thank you for attending.

[90] **Lord Patten:** Thank you very much indeed. We are very grateful, and I hope that we can come here again.

[91] **Christine Chapman:** Good. We will look forward to that.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10:21 a 10:33.
The meeting adjourned between 10:21 and 10:33.*

**Sesiwn Ddilynol ynghylch y Rhagolygon ar gyfer Dyfodol y Cyfryngau yng
Nghymru gyda Bwrdd Gweithredol y BBC**
Future Outlook for the Media in Wales: Follow-up Session with BBC Executive

[92] **Christine Chapman:** We are looking at the future outlook for the media in Wales and this is a follow-up session with the BBC executive. Welcome to Lord Hall of Birkenhead, the director general of the BBC and Rhodri Talfan Davies, the director of BBC Cymru Wales. Welcome to you both. We have some time for questions today so, if you are happy, I will go straight into questions. First of all, I want to ask you some questions about governance and accountability. You will be aware that there was criticism by the Institute of Welsh Affairs that

[93] ‘in its decision-making the BBC remains a highly centralised organisation that has yet to adjust fully to the new shape of the United Kingdom.’

[94] Could you respond to that?

[95] **Lord Hall:** I will just say a few words about that. The governance and the shape of governance is clearly not for me. I respond to their wishes and discuss with them what we are trying to do together. I would say this: I think that in terms of the way that the audience council and the way that the trustee for Wales handles herself in all the sessions that I have been to, talking about our broader issues of the coverage of the BBC and where we are going to go, the system seems to me to work very effectively in the sense that you get very direct feedback on what audiences in Wales are wanting and thinking, and also very good feedback, I have to say, on broader issues that are affecting the whole of the BBC.

[96] My hope is that, when we come to talking about the charter, and the licence fee discussions that will go on with that, it will not all be about governance, although I completely accept that that is really important, but really is about the programmes and services that we offer to people right across the UK, and particularly in Wales. If I may, I would just say that, coming back to this organisation—it is exactly one year since I rejoined the BBC, having had 12 years away in the land of song and dance—I really do see the most enormous progress, particularly in Wales. I see that both in terms of BBC One Wales and its performance, which I think is remarkably good, and of the news—right across the UK, the regional and national news is doing phenomenally well—but also in terms of Radio Wales and Radio Cymru. I am trying to spend at least a day a week going out around the organisation meeting people, and I think that what Radio Cymru has undertaken on behalf of listeners, rethinking what it is doing, is a lesson for all sorts of other parts of the organisation. Likewise, I think the network production review, which was way before my time, but which I think the then trustee for Wales, and certainly the current trustee for Wales, have had real influence in shaping, has led to Roath Lock. Exactly a year ago—well, not quite exactly a year ago; maybe three days later—I came here. This was my first visit to the nation. I wanted to come to Wales and see it because as a consumer I had seen so much of what has been done here. I think it is remarkable, and an enormous achievement by everybody, to see *Doctor Who*, *Sherlock* and everything being done—well, not *Sherlock* exactly; that is being filmed elsewhere—from Roath Lock.

[97] **Christine Chapman:** Would you say that the pace of change is about right, or could it be increased?

[98] **Lord Hall:** I am always impatient for change, but change while hanging on to what really matters to you and not jettisoning the values and the standards and the things that you stand for. I do think—listening to your session just now with the chairman—that the more the BBC can join together to think collectively about what is good, both for the constituent parts

of the UK, but also for the whole, the better: that is really important. For example, I am a complete fan of *Hinterland*, and I think it is the most wonderful series, not just because of the way it is scripted and acted, but because—and I have not just come here to praise you—it is set in the most glorious scenery, a bit like *Shetland* for BBC Scotland on the network. I think the more we can plan with what resources we have collectively to think not just of Wales, Scotland and England, but together what we are trying to do for the whole of the UK, pulling in all those various talents from around the constituent parts of the UK, the better. To answer your question, is there enough being done on that? I am always impatient for more, and I think there is more that we can do. I am sure about that.

[99] **Christine Chapman:** Did you want to come in on that, Rhodri?

[100] **Mr Davies:** Yes. May I just make one observation? You made the point earlier about levels of centralisation; I think actually, in the BBC, centralisation and local autonomy co-exist. For example, in terms of the English-language portfolio for Wales, that is very much shaped by BBC Wales. We took the decision two years ago to fundamentally review the way that we deliver Welsh-language online services. We did that autonomously, and you will see the results of that in the next month or so. On the other hand, whatever the imperfections of our news coverage, with regard to the scale of the BBC's news operation, both here in Wales and across the UK, much of the strength comes from that scale, and the ability to offer a comprehensive service. I think about the work that our local orchestra does in Hoddinott Hall, married with the work that BBC Radio 3 does. It is very easy for us to be glib about centralisation, but, with the ability to pull the BBC together at times, not least with the upcoming Dylan Thomas season, there are moments where, if you can orchestrate the BBC and bring all the constituent strands together, you can actually achieve quite special things.

[101] **Christine Chapman:** Rhodri, did you have a question?

[102] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Dim ond sylw ar yr hyn a ddywedasoch yn gynharach wrth sôn am gyfresi fel *Doctor Who* a *Casualty* sy'n cael eu ffilmio yma yng Nghaerdydd. Wrth gwrs, rydym yn gwerthfawrogi hynny. Mae gwerth economaidd iddo ac mae gwerth iddo o ran statws i'r BBC yng Nghymru, ond nid o ran y rhaglenni sy'n cael eu darlledu. Nid yw'n adlewyrchiad o Gymru mewn unrhyw ffordd. Roeddech chi'n cydnabod neithiwr yn y Pierhead bod angen gwneud mwy o ran rhaglenni am Gymru, o Gymru, yn arbennig yn Saesneg, a bod diffyg mawr yn y fan honno. A yw'r un peth yn wir am y cynnyrch ar y rhwydwaith? Mae *Shetland* yn mynd allan nawr ar y rhwydwaith ar BBC One ac fe fydd *Y Gwyll* yn mynd ar BBC Four, rwy'n credu. Felly, er bod pawb yn canmol *Y Gwyll*, eto, dim ond i gynulleidfa gyfyngedig ar BBC Four y bydd yn mynd.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Only a comment on what you said earlier, mentioning series such as *Doctor Who* and *Casualty* that are filmed here in Cardiff. We appreciate that. There is an economic value to it and a status value to it in terms of the BBC in Wales, but not in terms of the programmes that are broadcast. It is not a reflection of Wales in any way. You acknowledged last night in the Pierhead that more needs to be done in relation to programmes about Wales, from Wales, especially in English, and that there was a big deficit in that area. Is the same true about programmes on the network? I know that *Shetland* is going out now on the network on BBC One and *Y Gwyll/Hinterland* will be going out on BBC Four, I think. So, even though people are praising *Y Gwyll/Hinterland*, it will only be broadcast to a limited audience on BBC Four.

[103] **Lord Hall:** But an important and good audience on BBC Four. However, let me stand back and say two things about your question. First of all, last night, I was trying to say what I think that we all know, which is that the BBC and BBC Wales Cymru have been coping with declining budgets. I am happy to go on about the reasons for that, but I am kind of assuming that you kind of know what those are. The decisions were right to say that,

actually, we should concentrate on those things that only the BBC can do to the quality and the scale that the BBC can offer. That is predominantly news and current affairs.

[104] However, my own view is that, going forward to a debate about what the BBC is for in the coming charter, we should be thinking more broadly about what it is that supports both national cultures and the culture of the UK as a whole. As I said to you, I spend at least a day a week going around the nations and England. What strikes me—and you kind of know this because it has happened in Wales in a large way—is how the BBC has become, since the time that I left it 12 years ago, more important, not less, because commercial operators in either the press or radio are not doing what they used to be able to do for purely commercial reasons. I see that mirrored in different ways in Scotland and Northern Ireland, but also in very different ways around England too, where I think that the issue there is more one of locality.

[105] I think that national identity is not just about—and I am preaching to people here who know more about identity than I do—the news and information that you get. That is important because that brings you together and binds you together. However, it is also about your comedy; it is also about your drama; it is about your entertainment and it is about a kind of reflection of what is happening. I will speak more about other things soon, but I was really keen to put arts up there on the BBC's agenda. We do a lot, but there is so much more that we can do. What I see when I go around the UK is incredible things happening at a local level, which I would like the whole of the UK to be able to enjoy. That is why we announced the partnership that we have with Hay—I know that it is just on the border, but it is in Wales. That is an international festival of real renown and I want us to be able to demonstrate its importance to the whole of the UK, working with partners there.

[106] So, what I am hoping for is a discussion and debate about what it is that we expect from the national broadcaster, the BBC, coming up to charter, to help to showcase, emphasise and draw out national characteristics, but also, in England, regional or local characteristics too. It strikes me that that is a really important role for the BBC. However, I go back to what I was saying last night; it is not just about news and current affairs, although that is where I come from and that is really important, but it is also about other things as well. Celebrating that to the whole of the UK, I think, is really important. To answer your question, 'Are we doing enough?' No. You can never do enough, but I hope, on what I said about arts last week, that we can really reach out and Dylan Thomas, I think, will be a wonderful celebration and it is wonderful to be working with the National Theatre Wales too. I think that Hay is another example.

[107] I am going to say something about music in the next five to six weeks that, again, I hope, will kind of pull together a lot that will show off what is happening around the UK to constituent nations of the whole of the UK. Do you want to add something?

[108] **Mr Davies:** May I just add one point? Rhodri raised the issue of network drama and whether there is enough that says something about this place where we live. I think that what is vital for the drama production from Wales is that we have the space to explore universal themes, like *Doctor Who*, and to explore programming and material that says something about Wales. It is not either/or; we want our cake and we want to eat it.

10:45

[109] I think that it is not just about economic benefit. I think that, actually, what has been achieved in the past 10 years is an extraordinary story because, actually, we have a world-class production centre here in south Wales now, and that is not just about economic benefit; it means that some of the very best creative talent, brought up, home-grown here in Wales, can pursue their careers in Wales without being drawn to London or to Los Angeles. They can actually pursue their careers here, and that is a huge creative story. We were nowhere 10

years ago, nowhere, and now we are the largest BBC UK production centre for drama.

[110] **Lord Hall:** There is also Pinewood.

[111] **Mr Davies:** You are absolutely right that we need more projects that say something about Wales, but we should never limit ourselves to just drama that speaks for Wales.

[112] **Christine Chapman:** I have a supplementary question from Jocelyn.

[113] **Jocelyn Davies:** The English-language version, *Hinterland*, has some Welsh in it, with subtitles. When you broadcast it on BBC Four, is that how it is going to be broadcast?

[114] **Lord Hall:** Yes, that is right.

[115] **Jocelyn Davies:** Does that feed in to this idea that you can share together, but you can still have the Welsh content?

[116] **Lord Hall:** Yes, and it struck me that it added a lot to the drama. I think that the notion that we cannot take subtitles disappeared a very long time ago. It seems thoroughly natural to me. I think it adds to the enjoyment of the drama—

[117] **Jocelyn Davies:** Well, we are used to it now, are we not?

[118] **Lord Hall:** I think that we are used to it, yes. Also, by the way, it is a little bit of one in the eye for the Danes and the Swedes who produce an awful lot of this sort of stuff, and we can do it just as well.

[119] **Mr Davies:** Curiously, we are used to it in daily life in Wales, but we have not been used to it in our broadcasting. I think that, actually, we need to find more projects on what we have traditionally seen as our English-language services that explore this bridge between the two languages—

[120] **Jocelyn Davies:** We are watching whole series now that are from abroad with subtitles and, after a while, you do not even think about it.

[121] **Mr Davies:** Absolutely.

[122] **Lord Hall:** That is exactly right.

[123] **Peter Black:** I think that, first, I would want to resist any attempt by England to claim the Hay festival, which is quite distinctively a Welsh festival. In terms of the output of the BBC and how the BBC reflects Wales in its network output, we all acknowledge the huge investment that the BBC makes in Wales, and, in fact, we challenged ITV last week to match it—it would be nice if it did. However, in terms of the network coverage—and I asked this question in the previous session—and how Wales is perceived when you look at flagship programmes such as *Newsnight* and *Question Time*, you get *Question Time* coming to Newport but very rarely mentioning Wales and any attempt to talk about devolved subjects being cut off. It is a different story when you go to Scotland and it is a different story in Northern Ireland. How is the BBC going to start adjusting its coverage to try to reflect the fact that it is time to treat Wales on an equal basis with other parts of the UK?

[124] **Lord Hall:** Let me talk about some of the difficulties but, also, the aim. Again, I am not being complacent—I really am not—or, I hope, not at all arrogant. However, again, it is interesting coming back after 12 years, and I think that there is a lot that has been got so much more right, or, so much better—sorry about that—than it was a decade ago. I really think that

the connections now—and they are not perfect—

[125] **Peter Black:** No.

[126] **Lord Hall:** The connections between the network news and what is happening in the nations and regions are so much better. My aim should be what I think we all want, which is for us to really build on what has been done and learn the lessons of what has not been got right. However, the strength of the BBC is that we are local, regional and national, and UK wide and global. To play to all those strengths is what I want out of our network coverage. I edited what was called *BBC Nine O'Clock News*—which shows my age—which is now *BBC News at Ten*, and I know the pressures on you. You are juggling an extraordinary international agenda—and, by the way, I want to make sure that the BBC covers key events around the world thoroughly and well because we have a wonderful line-up of reporters and correspondents to do that—we have England and what happens in Westminster, and then we also have what is happening outside London and in the nations. It is quite a big juggling act.

[127] When it comes to looking at the sensitivity of coverage, the Presiding Officer last night made a point that, in some of our coverage of the dreadful January and February that were had in Wales, and that were had in Somerset and other parts of England as well, we referred to the Environment Agency. Now, that is just not good enough. We have got to get those sorts of things absolutely right. I think that this is a bit Forth bridge-like; we have to keep on working using the strengths that we have in Wales to work closely with London about improving the sensitivity and accuracy of what we do, while recognising that this is changing all of the time.

[128] We are giving a report to the trust next month—a biennial report on King, how it is going, and what it feels like. I would be very interested to see—I have not seen it yet—what that report says. It may be that we need to do something that brings our various constituent bits of the UK together with our national news people to think about how we reflect the news, what we want to do, and so on. It was very interesting talking to the head of news and current affairs in Wales last night and he was making the point that, actually, we probably need to do more of those sorts of sessions, bringing everyone together, than we have been doing over the past couple of years. I just do not know, but that may be one way forward.

[129] **Peter Black:** The Anthony King report did make a huge difference; there is no doubt about that. You get *Question Time* going to South Africa devoting the whole programme to South Africa, but if you try going on *Newsnight* and *Question Time* to explain the difference between Michael Gove's education policy and Leighton Andrews's education policy, you get cut off. That is not good enough and it needs to be put right. That is not something that has happened recently; it has been happening over a number of years.

[130] **Lord Hall:** Yes. I think that that is something that we should be looking at with the *Question Time* team. I think that the *Question Time* team knows that there were issues around the Newport programme. We have to work out how in—

[131] **Peter Black:** It has happened in previous programmes as well.

[132] **Lord Hall:** Well, we need to look at that. We also need to look at it in terms of the casting and how we look at the issues that we are covering that the rest of the UK knows about, while being responsive and sensitive to the Welsh dimension of this, which I think is really important, and also making sure that we cover issues, as you know, that come up on *Question Time*, which are to do with world politics or anything.

[133] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. I now turn to Leighton.

[134] **Leighton Andrews:** Actually, I do not know about complaints about my treatment by *Newsnight*, by the way. However, I want to touch on this point about network coverage of devolved administrations. Tony, the preparation for devolution started when you were director of news, back in the 1990s and there was incredibly intensive background work done on what the differences were likely to be, and the different responsibilities of the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly and so on. Yet, one does feel that elementary errors continue to be made from time to time, whether it is online or in network programmes. Rosemary gave you one example yesterday. I accept that you have to keep working at it, and I certainly accept that it will never be perfect, but I just wonder whether you could say what it is that you expect from journalists, particularly perhaps some of the journalists that have been around the longest and perhaps think that they know it, to remind them that things have changed since they were, usually, boy journalists—not always, but usually.

[135] **Lord Hall:** It is a very rich question, but let me try to go two points back. First, I think that the national journalism from London needs to be really thinking hard about how it connects into what is happening in the rest of the UK, not least because we have a very fine set of correspondents and newsrooms around the UK that it should be using. I go back to that being one of our strengths as others kind of pull out of that. However, also the diversity of the UK is something that we should both relish and make sure that the rest of the UK knows about. This is not a Welsh example, but I think that it will make the point. I was very struck, when I visited Radio Lincolnshire, just after the May elections, that the political editor there—a woman, who I thought was first rate, and wanted to get onto the network, and indeed she did in the end, which is good—was saying that if you actually want to understand UKIP, go to Boston on a Friday night and you will understand exactly why people have this sense of, ‘No political party is sorting this out, so we will vote for UKIP’. I thought a lot about that. A few months later, indeed, the *BBC News at Ten* went to Boston, and it was a fascinating report there about migration and the pressures on the local community. I give you that example from Lincolnshire, but I think that is where I, and James Harding, who I brought in from *The Times* to come to run the news, and who is doing a really good job, are not surprised. We are actually using this network of really informed good correspondents and newsrooms around the UK to be the person that does tell you about what is happening. It could be in Wales or in Scotland, but equally it could be in the north of England, Lincolnshire or wherever. So, I think that that is really important.

[136] Secondly, I remember well—and thank you for mentioning it—the work that we did on devolution in the late 1990s. So much is changing and might/will change from the autumn onwards, that it might well be the moment when we say, ‘Let’s have a look at this across all our journalism and work out how’. We have made great progress, and I really want to say to the teams of journalists that work for the BBC, ‘You’ve done a fantastic job, but how we can go one step further and better reflect what is happening in Wales and the constituent parts of the UK?’

[137] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. Rhodri, did you want to come in?

[138] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Mae sefyllfa ariannol anodd yn wynebu’r BBC. Rydym yn cydnabod hynny. Mae ffi’r drwydded wedi ei rhewi ac mae gofynion eraill wedi eu gosod arnoch chi. Mae Rhodri wedi fy nghlywed i yn dweud hyn fwy nag unwaith, ond mae’n rhaid cofio drwy’r amser mai trwydded ar gyfer darlledu cyhoeddus yn y Deyrnas Unedig yw’r drwydded, nid eiddo personol y BBC, er yn hanesyddol fod y BBC wedi derbyn arian y drwydded. Sylwais yn y papur **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** There is a difficult financial situation facing the BBC. We recognise that. The licence fee has been frozen and other requirements have been placed upon you. Rhodri has heard me say this more than once, but we always have to remember that it is a licence for public broadcasting in the United Kingdom, and it is not the personal property of the BBC, although historically the BBC has received the licence fee. I noticed a reference in the

Sul—yn y *Sunday Times* y gwelais ef—fod cyfeiriad at yr hyn roeddech wedi ei ddweud ynglŷn â gosod BBC Three ar-lein. Hwyrach eich bod wedi cael eich camddyfynnu, fel sy'n digwydd yn aml, ond yr argraff a oedd yn cael ei rhoi oedd, 'Wel, rydym yn gorfod rhoi BBC Three ar-lein oherwydd mae yna ofynion ariannol ychwanegol arnom ni gyda'r gwasanaeth byd-eang, S4C ac yn y blaen'. Nid yw hynny yn rhoi rhyw lawer o hyder i ni ynglŷn â'r berthynas rhwng y BBC ac S4C, sy'n ymddangos yng Nghymru fel ei bod yn berthynas adeiladol a chadarnhaol sy'n cynnig lot o opsiynau nad oedd yno o'r blaen i ddau gorff annibynnol gydweithio. Rwyf eisiau rhoi'r cyfle i chi i osod y sefyllfa honno yn ei chyd-destun priodol.

Sunday paper—I saw it in the *Sunday Times*—to what you had said about placing BBC Three online. You may have been misquoted, which often happens, but the impression that was given was, 'Well, we have to put BBC Three online because there are additional financial requirements on us with the World Service, S4C and so forth'. That does not give us much confidence about the relationship between the BBC and S4C, which appears in Wales to be a constructive and positive relationship that offers many options that were not there before for two independent bodies to work together. I just wanted to give you the opportunity to place that situation in its appropriate context.

[139] **Lord Hall:** Thank you for giving me the opportunity. I will tell you what I was trying to do and explain, but let me start with this. The relationship with S4C is phenomenally important, and I have been really pleased when talking to S4C—last night was the last time that I was chatting to S4C—and also when talking to Rhodri, to hear that there seems to be a real sense of partnership, and there should be. Our interests should be, as two publicly funded broadcasters, in saying, 'How can we do the very best for Welsh-language speakers and for the Welsh language in Wales?' I am not going to go on about *Hinterland*, but that again seems to me like a very good example of people coming together as partners. So, let me say that that is relationship is important. Although it is completely independent and, in that sense, its relationship is with the trust, not with me, I still hope that, as we talk about our ambitions for the new charter, we can have a joined-up, but separate approach to Wales and, from a programmatic service point of view, to what we are trying to do. I think that it would benefit us all to have that and to go hand in hand on occasion, and on occasion to go quite separately, in terms of what we are asking the public to back us for. So, there is that.

[140] The thing about BBC Three is actually twofold. The important risk that we are taking here—and the trust has to approve this, so this is me saying something and the trust has to approve it, or not—is saying that we want to do something for young people where they are, and audiences are moving online. You all know that. Audiences are moving online, to on-demand services, saying, 'I want stuff when I want it and wherever I happen to be, on my smartphone, my tablet, at home or wherever'. We are seeking to do something very brave and new to match that big change for younger people because, after all, they are the licence fee payers of the future.

[141] We are doing it a bit faster than I would like, to be frank with you. It would be better to keep BBC Three going for another year or so as a linear channel, and then transfer an audience. However, we have to deal with our Delivering Quality First programme of cuts. I strongly believe that, given the financial background, it is better to do something big and save money to put it, as it happens, into drama on BBC One, which I think is really key, rather than salami slicing. In any organisation—you all know this—you can always do a bit more each year to be more efficient, but there comes a point when you have to say, 'We're actually cutting into stuff here that we want to do'. In that context, and to explain why we have got to that position, we have to explain that there is a flat licence fee plus the other things that we have taken on.

11:00

[142] The S4C commitment is working really well, I think. Yesterday, I was celebrating with the World Service that it was coming over to be funded by the licence fee. Its staff had been worried about this and saying, ‘What’s that going to mean, being on the licence fee? Will the public want to support us?’ As part of their celebration of coming over to the licence fee, they had a festival of poetry readings and other things being broadcast around the world in front of new Broadcasting House, London. I was nabbed to go and read a poem—a bit of W.H. Auden, which is slightly gloomy—and it was a wonderful celebration of all these cultures coming together. They will be better off under the licence fee, because we will argue for them much more powerfully. I hope that, with S4C, we can argue powerfully together, but independently, for what we believe in for Wales.

[143] **Mr Davies:** A gaf i ateb yr hyn ddywedodd Rhodri yn gynharach? Rwyf yn meddwl yr oedd llawer o bryder ac amheuon ynglŷn â’r berthynas ag S4C adeg setliad y drwydded. Rwyf yn meddwl bod y berthynas wedi gweddnewid yn y blynyddoedd diwethaf a bod y berthynas agosach wedi bod o fudd i bawb yng Nghymru, ac nid i siaradwyr Cymraeg yn unig. Mae Tony eisoes wedi sôn am *Hinterland*; yn hwyrach eleni bydd S4C yn lansio ar iPlayer y BBC—yr unig sianel annibynnol a fydd yn cael ei osod yn gyflawn ar iPlayer. Mae hynny’n bwysig i bawb. Bydd holl allbwn Cymraeg y BBC ac S4C yn eistedd ar yr un llwyfan ar dros 500 o ddyfeisiadau gwahanol ledled Prydain. Mae hynny’n gam sylweddol.

Mr Davies: May I just reply to Rhodri’s comments? I think that there were many concerns and doubts about the relationship with S4C at the time of the licence settlement. I think that the relationship has been transformed over the past few years and that the closer relationship has benefited everyone in Wales, not just Welsh speakers. Tony has already mentioned *Hinterland*; later this year, S4C will launch on BBC iPlayer—the only independent channel that will be fully represented on iPlayer. That will be very important to everyone. All of the Welsh-language output of the BBC and S4C will sit on the same platform on over 500 different devices throughout Britain. That is a huge step forward.

[144] Bythefnos yn ôl, cyhoeddodd S4C bod ei phencadlys yn mynd i Gaerfyrddin, ond hefyd ei bod hi’n mynd i gydleoli rhai gwasanaethau darlledu gyda’r BBC yng Nghaerdydd. Mae hi wedi bod yn siwrne gyffrous dros y blynyddoedd diwethaf—yn enwedig o ystyried lle y dechreuon ni. Rwyf yn meddwl bod elw mawr i bawb o natur y berthynas a’n bod ni’n cynnal y berthynas yn un agos.

A fortnight ago, S4C announced that its headquarters were to relocate to Carmarthen, but also that it was to co-locate some broadcasting services with the BBC in Cardiff. It has been a very exciting journey over the past few years—particularly bearing in mind our starting point. I think that there are huge benefits to everyone in terms of the nature of that relationship and that we maintain that close relationship.

[145] **Leighton Andrews:** On this point about the relationship with S4C, may I just ask you about transmission? This is a question that I tried to ask in the last session. Are you planning to outsource transmission across the UK?

[146] **Lord Hall:** Shall I just say something about the UK? We have outsourced transmission—not in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland—to Red Bee Media in London. This is part of a procurement programme that is to drive as many savings as possible from what we call overhead areas—it sounds a bit depressing for those who work their socks off for things that really matter—in order to put more money into programme services. In the budget that is going to the trust at the moment, by doing better procurement we are able to put 4% more money into programmes and services. I will let Rhodri deal with the specifics.

[147] **Mr Davies:** I think that I know where Leighton is driving on this. We go through a regular re-procurement exercise on a whole range of broadcast services. That is one of the reasons that most of the savings that we have delivered in Wales have been in support areas

and through a reduction in contract costs. One of the things that we are doing jointly across the UK now is going to the markets to see whether, in future, our playout services should continue to be delivered in-house—as they currently are—or whether the market can provide savings. Clearly, if it can provide savings and maintain the quality of service to audiences in Wales, then there is a dividend back into programme making. We will look at what the market has to offer; we currently have a very effective in-house operation and we will see what the market says.

[148] **Leighton Andrews:** Does that have an implication for the relationship with S4C? Clearly, if S4C were to consider co-locating part of its operation with you, it would need transmission and playout.

[149] **Mr Davies:** I think that we are both agreed that we need to deliver playout services together. There are significant savings in how you do that. You need to distinguish between the people who operate—. I do not want to get too technical here, but there is a question as to who provides the kit, and whether the BBC puts its own kit together or whether you go to the market and a commercial provider puts the kit together. We are just testing the pricing and different models for delivery. The rationale for co-locating in Cardiff is partly driven by the cost savings that you can deliver by pulling together playout into a single integrated structure.

[150] **Leighton Andrews:** So, the thinking about a new co-location will take account of the transmission and playout.

[151] **Mr Davies:** It would, yes.

[152] **Christine Chapman:** May I remind Members that we have about 25 minutes left? I know that some of you want to come in. Mark, did you have a question?

[153] **Mark Isherwood:** I apologise if I missed the answer to this question. How does spending on the BBC services specifically for Wales compare with spending on services specifically for the other nations and regions?

[154] **Mr Davies:** In terms of Scotland, it is broadly equivalent in terms of BBC spend. Currently, in terms of BBC network production in Wales, there is about £60 million of income, which is slightly below Scotland, but it has double the population. In terms of local services or national services in the nations, again it is broadly similar. Clearly, the challenge for BBC Wales is that we are servicing in both languages, and Elan touched on this earlier, whereas Scotland is using the vast majority of its investment in local services or national services for English-language services. Our television spend services English-language audiences, but also delivers a supply of programming to S4C—programmes like *Pobol y Cwm*, as well as live rugby and the Eisteddfod. So, in terms of crude investment, it is broadly equivalent, but clearly spent in very different ways, reflecting the linguistic make-up of Wales.

[155] **Mark Isherwood:** We heard earlier this morning reference to what I call the ‘Gove test’ and whether people understand, for example, who the responsible Minister is in Wales. We have heard reference to *Question Time* being broadcast from Newport and I mentioned that my party is normally represented in Wales by an MP representing an English constituency, whatever the issues of the week may be. With reference to the King report, what tangible evidence, which is a question that I put to the chairman previously, do you have of progress in coverage of devolved issues?

[156] **Lord Hall:** Before my time, the trust asked for a full report on the implementation of measures to correct what Anthony King’s report had said and broadly found an enormous amount of progress, both in terms of the network coverage of Wales, Scotland and Northern

Ireland, and in terms of items from those nations. The tangible work then is a biennial report to the trust. It is odd timing, but, in fact, we are delivering to the trust some time next month. The report will look again at the last two years and how we have been doing. To be honest with you, that is the bit that I am most interested in because I cannot really account for way back when.

[157] As I think that I was saying earlier, I want to have a look at that. I also want to see what is happening in terms of increased devolution, which is going to happen to Wales, what is going to happen in Scotland, and I am also interested in England and English regional identity, although, of course, that has no expression politically. I will then think about whether we carry on with a programme that is kind of painting the Forth bridge, to be frank with you, which is carrying on reminding people and urging, or whether there is something more fundamental that we should do.

[158] I was talking to the head of news and current affairs here last night, who was saying that there used to be places where the network people would come together with Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland much more routinely, and maybe that is something that James Harding should be thinking about. However, it is absolutely on my radar and the point that you are making, which is about concrete evidence, is right. My sense is that it is getting better, but like everything in life, we can always point at things that are not right, as you did rightly with *Question Time*.

[159] **Mr Davies:** Very quickly, in terms of tangibles, one of the things that we have done post the initial King report in 2008 is to commission two yearly reports that benchmark the data from 2008, so that we can see progress. Just to give you a flavour of that, the last time that was done, which was 2010-11, what we saw was a sixfold increase in the number of times that stories from the devolved nations were appearing on network news and a doubling in terms of the number of times comparative analysis of, for example, education policy in Wales and England or England and Scotland was carried out. That is not to say that there is not room for improvement—there is significant room for improvement—but what the research that Cardiff University undertook showed was how far we had travelled from the difficult reading that that first King report had been for the BBC.

[160] **Mark Isherwood:** I have a very short question. How do you respond to the Silk commission recommendation that public service broadcasters should present an annual report, with transparent data, to the National Assembly?

[161] **Mr Davies:** If I can give a Wales perspective on this, we publish a management review every year of BBC Wales's activities, and alongside that, the audience council provides its review of the performance of BBC services in Wales. Clearly, for these types of sessions, with the director general and the chairman, that is something that we are very keen to do, so that we can answer your questions and provide context for the decisions that we are making.

[162] **Christine Chapman:** I have a couple of other Members who want to come in, but I have one specific question. When you look at your approach, would you say that it is more of an add-on approach, or are you looking at the holistic picture of how you react to changes in the nations and within the UK? Is it adding things on in terms of Wales, or are you actually starting to look afresh at these issues in terms of the coverage of Welsh programmes?

[163] **Mr Davies:** To take us away from news for a moment, if I may, one of the things that has really changed dramatically in the last couple of years is the relationship between the English language commissioner in Wales, Adrian Davies, and his counterpart in network. So, what we are seeing is far more of the content and the programming that we are making here for audiences in Wales, travelling and being broadcast on BBC One and BBC Two right

across the UK. *Hinterland* is one example of that journey, but there are many more. We did a whole season of programming on Swansea about a year ago and almost all of that series found its way on to the UK networks. We commissioned *Rhod Gilbert's Work Experience*—a very successful local series that has travelled up to network. So, about £2 million of programming that we made here in Wales for Welsh audiences has since been rebroadcast on the UK networks. That simply was not happening. The structures were not there. Whatever was wrong, it was not happening. Now, that programming is being seen and enjoyed and attracting very significant audiences in the UK.

[164] **Jenny Rathbone:** Just to take us back to news, given the importance of the media in making sense of the news and the world we live in and the fact that most people in Wales read *The Sun*, coverage of Wales in which is negligible if not downright inaccurate, how much concern and effort are you putting into making sense of devolved Welsh politics, so that people understand who makes the decisions about their daily lives?

[165] **Mr Davies:** I think that what you say is spot on and it echoes something that Tony said yesterday about the disproportionate scale of responsibility that falls on the BBC in Wales, given the paucity of alternative sources of information and news about Wales. I think that the reason is that, when we looked at the savings that we were required to make, one of the things that we did very deliberately was protect news and political coverage, and invest. We have invested in a new investigative team and in additional correspondents. *The Wales Report* is a very significant additional investment above and beyond what we were previously paying for *Dragon's Eye*. I think that that reflects the seriousness with which we take our obligations in news and current affairs.

[166] However, you are absolutely right. It is very easy just to talk about the BBC in isolation. I think that one of the dilemmas in Wales—we were talking to Mark, our head of news, yesterday—is that, in a sense, if BBC Wales does not think that it is a story, it is often not seen. There is not that—. If you go to Scotland and you see the interplay of the broadcast services and the press in Scotland, you have that civic dialogue going on between a whole range of bodies and that is sorely lacking in Wales. So, I think that it was the right decision to protect news and current affairs, but clearly, there are knock-ons for other services. We want to be doing more drama, more comedy and more entertainment but, living within our means at the moment, that is very difficult.

[167] **Jocelyn Davies:** On the research that you mentioned on the policy comparisons and so on, would that include announcements that are made on, say, the *Today* programme that do not say, '... in England?' It seems to be that—

[168] **Mr Davies:** No.

[169] **Jocelyn Davies:** So, it is not a comparison, really. For example, there is a new announcement by the UK Government that—I do not know—it is going to pay mothers to breastfeed their babies, but the announcement does not say, 'This is not happening in Scotland or in Wales. This is an England-only announcement.'

[170] **Mr Davies:** That is right.

[171] **Jocelyn Davies:** Does that research cover—

[172] **Mr Davies:** No. The doubling was in comparative pieces, where they looked at a policy position in Wales or in Scotland and compared it with England. If you take the example this morning of the *Today* programme, with Mark Drakeford and the—

11:15

[173] **Jocelyn Davies:** Yes; but he was saying something different.

[174] **Mr Davies:** Yes. That would not have fallen into that category, because that was not a comparative analysis. It was purely looking at a policy decision that was unique in the UK context.

[175] **Jocelyn Davies:** It just seems to me that it is very lazy for someone who is making an announcement that is England-only not to say 'in England' or 'This is only going to happen in England'. Otherwise, we get contacted by people who think that that announcement is going to affect them. It just seems that it would be a tiny thing to do.

[176] **Lord Hall:** I think that that is a very fair point. When you are announcing something, you need to be clear. If it is e-cigarettes, it is Wales; if it is something else, it is England. I understand that. In a way, because there has been nothing comparable with all that has happened to Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland for over 50 million English people, you have to keep thinking all of the time, 'Is this just for England, or is it England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, or whatever?' I think that it is a really fair point. We should take that one away.

[177] **Christine Chapman:** Did you have any further questions, Leighton?

[178] **Leighton Andrews:** No. That is fine.

[179] **Christine Chapman:** Do you have any questions, Mike?

[180] **Mike Hedges:** I will just start by saying how, in the area where I live, which is Swansea, the majority of the people do not get their information from *The Sun*; they get it from the *South Wales Evening Post*. If you have ever been to Swansea, you will have seen that the pile of the *South Wales Evening Post* is five times as high as that of any national paper. However, the relationship that you have with the *Western Mail*, in terms of picking stories up from there, does not seem to happen with the *South Wales Evening Post*.

[181] **Mr Davies:** I am thinking of yesterday, when we were working directly with the *South Wales Evening Post* on the announcements around Dylan Thomas and our season of programmes. So, I think that we have a relationship with the *South Wales Evening Post*. Clearly, the *South Wales Evening Post* positions itself as a regional newspaper in the Welsh context, whereas the *Western Mail*, whatever your view, positions itself as a national paper. That is probably a discussion for another place.

[182] **Jocelyn Davies:** Do not go there. [*Laughter.*]

[183] **Mike Hedges:** The *South Wales Evening Post* has twice the readership and sales—

[184] **Jocelyn Davies:** I think that the recommendation from Mike Hedges is that you look to the *South Wales Evening Post*.

[185] **Mr Davies:** I shall take it on the chin.

[186] **Mike Hedges:** The question that I was going to ask is: have there been any discussions with the Welsh Government on the renewal of the royal charter?

[187] **Lord Hall:** No.

[188] **Mike Hedges:** Do you intend to do so?

[189] **Mr Davies:** We are meeting with the First Minister immediately after this session, and I suspect that a range of issues will be raised.

[190] **Lord Hall:** In terms of the royal charter and our preparations for that, we have nothing that I could say that we could discuss with anyone at the moment. The last year has been about establishing a team. It is a great team, and Rhodri is doing a terrific job here, really. It has involved getting the team to work together, thinking about what we want to do with our organisation between when I joined and 2016. We are just beginning now to say, 'Okay; let's start having a discussion about the charter and what we want to achieve'. However, there has been a huge amount to do just to begin to get the place into good order.

[191] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Just on that, as we speak at the moment, there are no priorities that you have set for the royal charter. We are in 2014, and this will be 2016. No priorities have been set at the moment.

[192] **Lord Hall:** If you asked me, which is what you might be doing, 'What are those kinds of gleams in your eyes?', I would say two things. I think that one of them must be how we reflect the UK to the UK and to the constituent parts of the UK. Why do I say that? You know, because of all of the things that you have been going through, but I see it from elsewhere, across the UK. The BBC, in the 12 years that I have been away, has become more important nationally—by which I mean the nations, regionally and locally—not less. When I left, I thought that it might be less important.

[193] I think that you see that in the extraordinary viewing figures that we have, not just for *Wales Today* but actually for all of our regional news programmes right across the network. That points you towards something that says that the BBC has become part of a local, regional or national identity. When I was brought up on Merseyside, frankly, you looked to Granada for that. However, now, you absolutely look to the BBC. That is a good thing. How we build on that is one of the things that I want to think through.

[194] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** On the 3% to 4% of annual efficiency savings, you do not see that that is going to have an impact on how we get our message across here in Wales.

[195] **Lord Hall:** I think that, as Rhodri has been saying, we have been trying—I think that Rhodri has done a great job on this before my time—to protect news and current affairs and, indeed, the two radio networks from some of the much tougher regimes that we have had to put in elsewhere around the corporation. However, look, we have to come, by the end of 2016, with our programme, *Delivering Quality First*—the savings programme—intact. I am not going to ask for any more money. It is completely the wrong time to do that, even if I were to do that in future. We have to accept where we are. That is quite hard. I think that we have come to the end of salami slicing where—. Actually, what you do when you salami-slice, quite often, people like me say, 'Well, we can do that for 2% less' and you leave it for the people on the ground to sort it out. That has been very hard. I think that the response of people around the corporation to that sort of regime has been amazing, and some of the things that they have done to save money have been remarkable. We should speak very highly of that. However, we have got to the point now where I think that, in future, it is going to be a case of asking, 'Can we afford to do all the things we're doing?' and what is very precious to me—

[196] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Finally, you mentioned *The Wales Report*. It was said here earlier that *Dragon's Eye* was seen as a more local political programme, and I know that the *The Wales Report*, certainly with some of my friends, has not engaged in quite the same way. At what point will you be evaluating whether this new format, this new programme, works?

[197] **Mr Davies:** We continuously evaluate. Just to correct something that was said earlier, it is made in Cardiff. It is made by an independent company called Wales & Co—

[198] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** It does not come across as being quite as—

[199] **Mr Davies:** We deliberately gave *The Wales Report* a broader agenda than pure party politics, which had been the focus of *Dragon's Eye*. So it strays into public policy areas. I can think of the Archbishop of Wales, I can think of the Welsh Rugby Union chief executive and a range of other guests beyond the pure political community. That, allied with Huw Edwards being such a trusted and respected face, has brought an audience to our political coverage that *Dragon's Eye* was unable to bring. So, the most recent series has had an audience that is 60% to 70% bigger than we were getting for *Dragon's Eye*—

[200] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Really.

[201] **Mr Davies:** Just to give you a feel for it, *Dragon's Eye* was averaging an audience of about 50,000 to 55,000. *The Wales Report* audience is about 90,000 to 100,000. So, it is a very significant uplift.

[202] May I just make one other point about political coverage? One of the key decisions that we took under DQF was that—as well as going to the independent market for *The Wales Report*, because we thought that the internal plurality point is a consideration for us with our journalism—we should also direct some more of our political resource into our daily coverage. I will tell you why. It is because the most popular news programme in Wales, bar none, ahead of any other channel, ahead of the *BBC News at Six* and the *BBC News at Ten*, is *Wales Today*. You have 300,000 people every day coming into it. You have 1.5 million people every week coming into it. If you can get your public policy discussions on that programme and if you can get the key policy elements on that programme and done with the level of expertise that you would expect from the BBC, that is a much more effective way of reaching out. It goes back to the point that was made earlier that a lot of people in Wales are not consuming newspapers that have anything to say about Wales. So, one of the responsibilities that we have is to make sure that our political coverage infuses our mainstream output. It would be very easy to curry favour in this room and do lots of bespoke and dedicated political output. However, in terms of engaging the broader Welsh audience with public policy issues—

[203] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Oh yes, I agree on that.

[204] **Mr Davies:** —you have got to prioritise your mainstream output.

[205] **Christine Chapman:** We have about five minutes left and I have a few more Members who want to come in. Gwyn, I think that you wanted to come in.

[206] **Gwyn R. Price:** Good morning, both. You touched on the issue of S4C and the talks you had last night on the way forward, working together. To what extent will S4C play a part in the negotiations on the charter?

[207] **Lord Hall:** Do you want to say something on that? My view—. Look, I do not know how the negotiations on the charter will run and, actually, that is a matter, to a huge extent, for the trust. My point to you is this: I think that we would be missing a trick, while recognising that we are separate independent organisations, if we did not have a thought through strategy for the Welsh language and Welsh-language programming. Do we want to do more programmes like *Hinterland*? Are there other ways in which we can work together on programming and to build our services? As Rhodri mentioned, what the iPlayer will do for S4C, I hope, will be really important. One of the things about the iPlayer is that you can add

other bits of content and it need not all be linear, long-form programming; it could be short programming. Your editorial imagination could run wild. So, I would hope that we can then come to a shared understanding of what we would like out of the charter process, while recognising that we are quite separate. It will negotiate, no doubt—

[208] **Mr Davies:** May I add one thing? It is very easy to get into a zero-sum game about S4C's needs and the BBC's needs. BBC Wales has an enormous vested interest in the success of S4C. In a sense, BBC Wales's television commitment in the Welsh language passed from BBC Wales on to the S4C channel in 1982. We want to see S4C thrive, because S4C as an institution is important, but also because S4C helps us to fulfil our responsibilities in terms of the Welsh language. So, if one of your concerns is the BBC articulating the importance of S4C in those discussions, I would not worry about that. I think that we absolutely understand the importance of the channel and how it helps us to fulfil our own purposes, too.

[209] **Lord Hall:** One of the things that I learned from my work on the Olympics, when I was asked to go to sort out the cultural Olympiad and the cultural festival, was how much more you can do when you come together with others. Separately, you have got your own board and money flows and all that, but, actually, when you come together to do something bigger than you can do when you are on your own—. What was lovely last night was talking to S4C and also National Theatre Wales and others, because you think, 'How can we work together? We've all got limited amounts of money, but how can we work together to give the public a bigger splash than we could on our own?'

[210] **Jocelyn Davies:** I do not want to remind you of a perhaps not-so-positive time, but on the dispute between Eos and the BBC over the royalties, do you think that the eventual outcome provided value for money for the licence fee payer?

[211] **Mr Davies:** I think that we took the only route that we could. I think that we had a long negotiation with Eos about the value of the rights. We found ourselves in a very difficult dispute where we were having to balance the needs and the aspirations of the Welsh-language musicians with what we thought was both affordable and representing fair value. I said on the record, more than 15 months ago, that we made a number of very significant offers to Eos, which it rejected, and so we were left with the only route, which was to invite the independent Copyright Tribunal to arbitrate and come to a sum. What I would say to you in terms of the overall value of that outcome from the tribunal is that, side-by-side with any commercial value, which is what the tribunal determined, there is an additional cultural value. There is no doubt that there is an additional cultural value to this music. It is why Radio Cymru invests so extensively in supporting Welsh-language music in a whole range of events and in a broad range of programming. It is also why, some months ago, we came together with the Arts Council of Wales to launch a new scheme called Horizons, which, as well as offering bursaries for emerging talent in Wales, also uses the BBC's expertise in Wales and BBC Introducing, which is run by Radio 1, to help to provide a platform for developing Welsh-language and English-language musicians in Wales.

[212] **Lord Hall:** I think that that is such an important point, the latter one. I hope that, in the next six weeks, Bob Shennan and I, working with whoever takes over from Roger Wright on Radio 3, can say something about the importance of music to the BBC, because it is part of our DNA. In terms of finding the next generation of musicians, it could be Radio Cymru in the Welsh language or it could be someone else, I think that this is an important part of our public purpose.

[213] **Jocelyn Davies:** Thank you, and I am glad that you recognise the cultural importance of songs in Welsh. Why are there no Welsh-language songs on Radio Wales?

[214] **Mr Davies:** There are.

[215] **Jocelyn Davies:** Are there?

[216] **Mr Davies:** Yes, there are. If you take a typical week—

[217] **Jocelyn Davies:** I hope that it is not just the Welsh national anthem.

[218] **Mr Davies:** No, it is not. It is very rarely the Welsh national anthem. I think that if you took a typical week, you would hear at least 30 or 40 tracks played in Welsh on Radio Wales. I think that Radio Wales has really upped its game in the last three or four years in supporting contemporary music of all types in Wales.

11:30

[219] **Jocelyn Davies:** I must listen to it more often. [*Laughter.*]

[220] **Mr Davies:** If you listen to it, you will see that twice a year it has a Radio Wales music day, and it very deliberately includes artists performing in both Welsh and English.

[221] **Jenny Rathbone:** Elan Closs Stephens has already made a strong argument for moving out of the 1970s building in Llandaff—

[222] **Mr Davies:** It is a 1960s building, actually.

[223] **Jenny Rathbone:** I beg your pardon. It does remind me a little of Lime Grove. What are the implications for the rest of the BBC operation? You have 1,300 staff based around Wales. What are the benefits to them of this new headquarters, and, indeed, for independent producers, with the view of S4C moving to Carmarthen?

[224] **Mr Davies:** It is a very good question. One of the exercises that we are going through at the moment is to look at the shortlist. We have announced a shortlist of two sites in central Cardiff as well as a site just next to this building, and in the next few weeks we will go both to the executive board of the BBC and to the BBC Trust to share our thinking on where we have got to. I think that there are some very significant opportunities. There are some creative opportunities in terms of working more closely with S4C. We are also talking to a number of higher education institutions about potentially partnering on the site. There are a number of independent companies that are awaiting our decision in order to inform where they would want to be. I think that Cardiff is sufficiently small, if I might say so, that I do not think that immediately clustering next door to each other is always absolutely necessary. I think that transport around Cardiff is good enough that those types of informal networks can happen anyway. However, I think that there are a number of opportunities. I have to go back to the point that this is first and foremost a remedial project. We have, dare I say, a sick building, with sick technology, and we are running a level of risk on our broadcasting output at the moment that makes me extremely uncomfortable. So, clearly, we need to move on, first and foremost to protect our services.

[225] **Jenny Rathbone:** Okay, but you are a bit tentative. Is it actually going to improve the quality of the output?

[226] **Mr Davies:** I think that it will, undoubtedly. I will give you two reasons why it will improve the output. The first is that the technology that we will be using will be state of the art. We have a lot of—. Somebody once described opening the wiring on our tv galleries as like going on an archaeological dig. A lot of that kit is 10, 15 years old, which in broadcasting terms is an age. So, they will be working with kit that works, that is modern, and that enables them to focus on doing their jobs rather than coping with broken technology.

[227] The second one is perhaps more intangible. I do not think that the national broadcaster should be in a leafy suburb of Cardiff. I think that it should be close to the institutions that it seeks to hold to account. It needs to be as close as possible to its audience, too.

[228] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Come to Carmarthen.

[229] **Mike Hedges:** Neu Abertawe. **Mike Hedges:** Or Swansea.

[230] **Mr Davies:** Let me make a second point about S4C going to Carmarthen—it has made a commitment to take about half its staff to Carmarthen—I think that we should look carefully at our operations in west Wales. If it is going to a modern broadcasting infrastructure, I think the BBC should be part of that, if it can be. I also think that we should think about what additional staffing that we might want to see in Carmarthen. We have already a very significant staffing base in Bangor and in Wrexham, but I think that, perhaps, we should look carefully at west Wales.

[231] **Mark Isherwood:** You mentioned Bangor and Wrexham and working closely with universities. Wrexham is already in partnership with Glyndŵr. I know that Bangor is just around the corner from the university. Can you assure us that these regional centres will be secure, and that staffing levels will at least be retained at the current level?

[232] **Mr Davies:** I think that it is vital that we have a strong set of regional offices around Wales. The drama story of Roath Lock is a very important one, and it is very important that there is a geographical focus to that operation, given the cluster of talent that you need for a network drama. However, it is equally important, both in west Wales and in north Wales, that we retain significant bases. So, we have no plans. The only discussion that I want to have is about whether we should be looking to do more in west Wales.

[233] **Christine Chapman:** On that note, I will have to draw this session to a close. I thank Lord Hall and Rhodri Talfan Davies for attending the committee this morning. It has been a very informative session for Members. So, thank you once again. Hopefully, we will see you at some stage in the future.

[234] **Lord Hall:** We look forward to that.

[235] **Christine Chapman:** We will send you a copy of the transcript of the meeting so that you can check it for factual accuracy.

11:35

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o'r
Cyfarfod**

**Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from the
Meeting**

[236] **Christine Chapman:** I move that

the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting and the meeting to be held on 1 May in accordance with Standing Order 17.42(ix).

[237] I see that Members are content.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 11:35.
The public part of the meeting ended at 11:35.*