

**BBC Audience Council for Wales
Cyngor Cynulleidfa Cymru y BBC**

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT
BBC BROADCASTING HOUSE, LLANDAFF, CARDIFF
FRIDAY 5 June 2009**

Present:

Audience Council Members

Janet Lewis Jones (Chair and National Trustee for Wales)
Sangeet Bhullar (until item 50)
Nicola Branson,
Andrew Carter,
Nicola Cockburn,
Carl Cooper,
Roy Grant
Andrew Jones,
Arun Midha,
Teresa Rees,
Dafydd Whittal.

BBC Cymru Wales staff:

Clare Hudson, BBC Cymru Wales, Head of Programmes, English
Cathryn Allen, BBC Cymru Wales, Head of Broadcast Development,
Rhodri Talfan Davies, BBC Cymru Wales, Head of Marketing, Communications and
Audiences,
Mark O'Callaghan, BBC Cymru Wales, Head of News and Current Affairs,
Geoff Williams, BBC Cymru Wales, Head of Sport (for item 51).
(Several of BBC Cymru Wales' staff attended the meeting intermittently, because of on-going news developments related to the Westminster Government Cabinet re-shuffle which was underway at the time of the ACW meeting).

Also present:

Wendy Bryant, Research Manager, BBC Trust Unit (from item 49 onwards),
Will Jackson, Head of Strategy Audio & Music (for item 49),
Roger Mosey, Director London 2012 (for item 51),
Amanda Farnsworth, Project Executive London 2012 (for item 51).

Governance and Accountability Wales, BBC Trust, staff:

Karl Davies, Head of Governance and Accountability Cymru Wales
Siôn Brynach, Accountability Adviser, Cymru Wales
Clair Baguley, Departmental Assistant, Governance & Accountability Cymru Wales
Harald Bretschneider, Work Experience Placement, Governance & Accountability
Cymru Wales.

45. APOLOGIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rob Humphreys,
Alex McMillan,
Menna Richards, Director BBC Cymru Wales,
Keith Jones, BBC Cymru Wales, Head of Programmes, Welsh, and New Media.

46. TRUST BUSINESS (IN PRIVATE)

The National Trustee shared with the Council some of the developments regarding Lord Carter's final *Digital Britain* report which was expected to be published around 16th June. She informed them that there was still no obvious indication of the final direction of the report. However the BBC Trust had been clear that any developments should create rather than transfer value, that there should be no dilution of editorial, operational control or the independence of the BBC and that the BBC Trust should remain in control of the Licence Fee. Discussions continued regarding a possible tie-up between BBC Worldwide and Channel 4 but this remained very complex.

The BBC Trust Chairman's speech to the Royal Television Society in May had been an important occasion. The National Assembly's Culture Committee was also expected to publish its report during the week commencing 7th June. The Council was also informed that the National Trustee and Chairman had met the Chair of the S4C Authority in May and this had paved the way for opening discussions regarding a new Strategic Partnership Agreement.

The Council expressed its concern at the article which had appeared in that day's *Western Mail* that had suggested top-slicing the Licence Fee to promote English language television provision in Wales. The Council said that it recognised that there was difficulty for it as a Council to articulate a view on the present debate regarding public service broadcasting in Wales, since there was a paucity of concrete proposals to which to respond. The Council also expressed its concern that an increasing number of bodies and individuals were claiming a locus on broadcasting in Wales

The National Trustee informed the Council that the BBC Trust had clearly said that it would not contemplate the top-slicing of the Licence Fee and that in future the BBC would not be willing to act as a conduit for what was, in effect, general taxation.

The Council said that from an audience point of view, this was perceived as a largely esoteric debate of little relevance to audiences but the Council recognised that the debate surrounding a commissioning body for English language news in Wales was very important indeed.. The Council agreed that it would wish to provide advice to the BBC Trust on the proposals released by the National Assembly's Culture Committee and provide the perspective of Welsh audiences on the *Digital Britain* report. The Chair said she would make arrangements for a meeting of Council to be convened on 19th June to enable Council to formulate advice to the BBC Trust.

management joined the meeting

47. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

These were agreed as a true and accurate reflection of the previous meeting. There were no matters arising.

48. REPORTS

The Council was informed that the Service Review of Radio 2 and 6 Music had begun and members were informed that they had been sent a pack of materials to assist them during this review. The Council members were asked to access their personal and professional networks to gain views on the services.

The Head of Governance drew the attention of the Council members to the BBC Trust's paper on its approach to audience engagement. While welcoming the paper, the Council said that it considered the proposals fell short of the ideal and appeared old fashioned and limited

in its scope compared to the approach to engagement in other sectors - such as the voluntary sector – which provided an opportunity to shape services.

The Head of Governance made reference to the listed sporting events (crown jewels) and the draft response of the Council. The Council approved the draft response.

National Trustee

The National Trustee described the confused picture surrounding the preparation of the *Digital Britain* report.

She said that the BBC Executive had produced an interesting document on taste and standards which would be published in July with a commentary from the BBC Trust and the Council would have an opportunity to consider this in due course.

Party election broadcasts had been more complicated in the run up to the 4th June's European elections than in previous years since more parties had fielded candidates than previously.

Director Wales

In Director Wales' absence her report was presented by the BBC Cymru Wales Head of Programmes (English).

She informed the Council that Director Wales, Mark Byford and she had presented evidence to the Westminster Parliament's Welsh Affairs Select Committee in May. They had been questioned regarding the BBC's relationship with S4C, and the inter-relationship between Network production and BBC Cymru Wales' provision for Wales. The report of this committee was expected to be published a few days after the National Assembly's Culture Committee report.

The BBC Executive's Finance Committee had approved the draft proposals for a drama village in Cardiff Bay's Roath Basin, and further work was now being undertaken on the proposals for presentation to the Finance Committee in July. A standalone option for Casualty was still under consideration.

The Council was informed that the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition would begin during the following week and that the BBC's Hoddinott Hall had recently won a major architectural award.

Board Report

The Council said that it welcomed the BBC's expanded News service on S4C but expressed some concern at the 3pm slot, where the presentation of the news – during the Tinopolis produced *Wedi 3* programme - could create the impression amongst viewers that this was news produced as a part of *Wedi 3*'s rather than provided by the BBC.

49. PRESENTATION ON THE BBC RADIO SUPPLY REVIEW

BBC Audio and Music Head of Strategy was welcomed to the meeting and outlined some of the differences in listening which had been identified in the different nations in the UK as part of the research undertaken to inform the Network Radio Supply Review. He also outlined that difference in the scale of funding available for radio compared to TV, where TV had £1,900m while radio had £440m.

At present of the BBC's 10-UK wide radio Networks were supplied from 7 production locations around the UK – Glasgow, Belfast, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol Cardiff and London – with the latter having the lion's share of the spend on Network Radio output. By 2012 Radio 5 Live would have moved to Salford..

Production of Network radio outside London was under-pinned by a long-standing commitment of one third of eligible spend. This meant that BBC Network radio had a voluntary commitment that one third of eligible programming spend (first run originated programming excluding news and sport) should be outside the M25. He informed the Council that Radio 3 had a specific target of 2/5 for out of London spend (though no other Network stations had specific targets) and also made reference to the 1/10 Network Radio minimum quota for independent production – 10% of all eligible hours (first run originations excluding news). He informed Council that in 2008/09, 31.4% of eligible spend was outside London, of which the performing groups accounted for 9.3%

As part of the Review, Audience Research had been undertaken which had as its goals, the need:

1. To understand how well represented audiences felt by BBC Network Radio
2. To identify the key indicators of representation (e.g. accents, production)

Head of Strategy Wales shared with the Council some of his impressions having attended audience research events. He had been struck by the passion of audiences for BBC Radio, the importance audiences placed on quality and the connection they felt with individual presenters. The research had also identified that representation was highly valued by audiences.

The research had found audiences were segmenting their listening according to their needs for localness. Surprisingly the majority of respondents did not object in principle to production being overwhelmingly London based – although audiences in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland objected more to this than those in the English regions. A quote from a person in Cardiff was that “the budget should be spent in such a way that it brings prosperity to a wider area than just central London. But quality is more important”.

The research had identified that radio production from all parts of the UK for the Network was important in connecting with BBC Audiences, but that it must be of national scale, quality and relevance. Quality was paramount to audiences according to the research and there was a need to ensure all output, wherever it was produced, met the BBC's high standards.

The research had also identified that it was important to people that Network Radio was finding and developing the best talent from the whole of the UK.

It had identified the need for BBC Radio to incentivise decisions which delivered what audiences valued, and for Network Radio stations to work with the nations and English regions to achieve it (through, for example, events), thus building greater recognition and awareness of activities outside London.

BBC Cymru Wales Head of Programmes (English) said that it was timely to be doing this strategic piece of work, not least since historically not enough Network productions had come to Wales to ensure the sustainability of Network radio production. The Council said that it recognised the need for a critical mass of Network production for radio to be created in Wales so as to attract more Network productions to BBC Wales.

The Council made the point that because of the transmission difficulties in many parts of Wales many people in Wales were unable to get Wales' national radio stations on FM or DAB, and thus portrayal of Wales on the BBC's Network Radio stations was even more important to them.

BBC Audio & Music Head of Strategy acknowledged that there were opportunities to move significant Network strands outside London but reiterated the point that a target, as had resulted from the TV Network Supply review, did not, at present, appear to the review group to be the way forward.

The Council expressed its concern at the use of the word 'target' in relation to the TV Network Supply Review since its understanding had been that 17% of Network programming produced outside London was a floor rather than a ceiling.

The Council endorsed the point made by the Head of Programmes English that it was critical that returning strands be commissioned from outside London since it provided an opportunity for production teams to feel part of the radio station's community as well as the community at their production base.

50. PRESENTATION ON THE BBC TRUST PURPOSE REMIT SURVEY

The BBC Trust Research Manager outlined the key principles underpinning the research, which were to gauge the views of licence fee payers on the BBC's priorities within each Purpose (to determine what was important for them, and how well the BBC performed), to understand how perceptions varied within different audience groups, to highlight purposes and priorities which were important but where the BBC performance was low ('performance gaps') and to understand change in views over time. The Research Manager informed the Council that 2260 UK adults had been interviewed during two periods of a fortnight in late 2008 and the first quarter of 2009, with half of them being interviewed face-to-face and the other half interviewed on-line. Of these 329 interviews had been conducted in Wales, and the results overall had been weighted by demographics, ethnicity and internet access to ensure they were representative of the UK population as a whole.

Wales had the highest share of the high BBC approvers of all the nations of the UK at 46%. Turning to the relationship with the BBC 86% in Wales agreed that "I would miss the BBC if it wasn't there" compared to 83% in the UK as a whole.

There was a slight increase in feeling that the BBC offered good value for money in Wales and only one in ten adults in Wales would like to change the BBC significantly – which was lower than the other nations of the UK, however, a quarter of adults in Wales felt the BBC was irrelevant to them – which seemed at odds with the other conclusions.

The biggest performance gap the research had identified in Wales was that between the expectation and delivery of the Purpose of Representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities.

She informed Council that in Wales the Creativity Purpose was also failing to meet expectations though there had been increases in the performance and importance scores since the last survey in 2007.

Performance scores were consistently low for the Purpose of Representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities. Comments had included criticisms of the BBC's failure to

reflect the new devolved Wales and there was a feeling too that the BBC was poor at reflecting Wales to the other nations of the UK.

The Education Purpose was one where the BBC consistently performed well as was the Citizenship purpose. The BBC was not considered to be performing well in terms of helping people to understand new technologies worked but was seen as highly successful in delivering a global perspective to audiences.

The Purpose of encouraging use of new communication technologies felt irrelevant to many of those questioned during the research and thus there were no significant performance gaps identified in relation to this Purpose being as it was given low importance. However lack of accessibility gave rise to other feelings such as those in a quote from one person in Wales - "Since many of these new technologies aren't available to me because of my geographical location then I begrudge the BBC using my licence fee to promote these technologies."

51. PRESENTATION BY ROGER MOSEY, BBC DIRECTOR OF LONDON 2012 AND BBC DIRECTOR OF SPORT

BBC Director of London 2012 outlined the history of past Olympic Games in London in 1908 and 1948. He also outlined the importance of the Olympics in terms of the world stage, and emphasised that it provided a fantastic combination of sport and drama.

During the Beijing Olympics audience reach in the UK had reached 74%, with a record 8.5m online users during week 2 and 28m video stream requests (compared to a total of 2.6m video stream requests during the entire Olympic Games in Athens). For the Beijing Olympics the BBC Sport portal had been developed which providing a choice of sports which had proved very popular with viewers.

He emphasised that for London 2012 the BBC was not the host producer (this being the Olympic Broadcasting Service) but that the BBC had secured all UK multi-platform right for the 2012 Olympics.

He informed the Council that the broadcast rights to the Paralympics hadn't yet been granted and that these were sold by the host city and there was a hope that the BBC would be successful in winning them.

He acknowledged that there was a 'London conundrum' in terms of ensuring that the whole UK felt involved in the games. At present Wales had the following Olympic involvement:

- football staged at the millennium stadium
- cultural Olympiad
- torch relay
- training camps
- London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games' UK plans (LOCOG).

The Legacy of the 2012 games was key for the organisers and already the story of the development of sports was being followed on the way to 2012 and a lot was being done in education with an Olympic reporting network and twinning established with 20,000 UK schools.

Work was also underway on the involvement of the BBC in the opening and closing ceremonies.

There were significant editorial issues – not least the matter of sponsorship coverage.

Security was also a significant issue for the Olympic Games as was the matter of public information.

Key headline issues for the BBC included the use of:

- Multi-platform/multi-channels
- the use of broadcasting zones so that those individuals who don't want to watch the Olympic games can find other programming to view.
- Communication relating to the Olympics
- Marketing of programmes

The London 2012 Olympics was likely to have the largest TV audience ever and the 2012 summer would also have the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. He suggested it could be the key point for promoting digital TV and the delivery of services by alternative means and there was an ambition to cover every Olympic event live on one platform or another – 5,000 hours of sport.

The Council raised the matter of the sense of negativity which existed to some extent in Wales towards the Olympics because of the loss of Lottery funding for Wales based projects due to expenditure on the Olympics and asked whether there were opportunities to address, for example, through coverage of soccer from the Millennium stadium in Wales.

The Council asked to what extent Wales would be represented in the coverage of the Games and the associated events such as the Cultural Olympiad. Head of 2012 said that a great deal of thinking was being done on the impact of these on all parts of the UK and on the nature of events, and reminded Council that the first events of the 2012 Olympic games could in fact come from Wales since the football tournament began before the Opening Ceremony of the Games.

The Council asked whether local people would be selected this time to carry the Olympic torch and Head of 2012 confirmed that discussions were presently underway to see whether the BBC as well as the main torch sponsors could select individuals to carry the Olympic torch.

52. PRIORITY ISSUES FOR BBC TRUST

1. The Council draws the Trust's attention to the increasingly vigorous public debate in Wales on the future of public service broadcasting, in particular the need to secure plurality in English language TV programming in Wales especially News and Current Affairs. Key policy recommendations are expected from both the National Assembly for Wales and the Westminster Parliament in June. The Audience Council for Wales will meet on 19th June to formulate advice to the Trust on these issues as they affect Wales and on which the audiences and opinion-formers in Wales will expect the BBC Trust to contribute to the public debate.

2. The Council expresses its concern about a lack of commitment which it perceives in the Network Radio Supply Review to securing an equitable spread of commissioning of Network Radio programmes from across the UK.

53. CONFIRMATION OF DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Council was reminded that its next meeting would be on 3rd July 2009 at BBC Broadcasting House, Cardiff and an audience engagement event for the Council with the Alzheimer's Society would be held on the evening of 2nd July at broadcasting House Cardiff.

