

Cofnod y Trafodion The Record of Proceedings

Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau, Cydraddoldeb a
Llywodraeth Leol

The Communities, Equality and Local
Government Committee

18/11/2015

Trawsgrifiadau'r Pwyllgor
Committee Transcripts



Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

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from the Remainder of the Meeting

Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynnddi 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

Peter Black	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Christine Chapman	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Alun Davies	Llafur Labour
Janet Finch–Saunders	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
John Griffiths	Llafur (yn dirprwyo ar ran Gwenda Thomas) Labour (substitute for Gwenda Thomas)
Mike Hedges	Llafur Labour
Mark Isherwood	Ceidwadwyr Cymru Welsh Conservatives
Bethan Jenkins	Plaid Cymru (yn dirprwyo ar ran Jocelyn Davies) The Party of Wales (substitute for Jocelyn Davies)
Gwyn R. Price	Llafur Labour
Rhodri Glyn Thomas	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Dr John Geraint	Green Bay Media
Angela Graham	Sefydliad Materion Cymreig Institute of Welsh Affairs (IWA)
Natasha Hale	Dirprwy Gyfarwyddwr Sectorau a Busnes, Llywodraeth Cymru Deputy Director of Sectors and Business, Welsh Government
Dr Ruth McElroy	Prifysgol De Cymru University of South Wales
Yr Athro/Professor Tom O'Malley	Prifysgol Aberystwyth Aberystwyth University
Kenneth Skates	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (y Dirprwy Weinidog)

Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth)
Assembly Member, Labour (Deputy Minister for
Culture, Sport and Tourism)

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

Sarah Beasley	Clerc Clerk
Sarah Sargent	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Robin Wilkinson	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:00.
The meeting began at 09:00.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau, Dirprwyon a Datganiadau o Fuddiant
Introductions, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations

[1] **Christine Chapman:** Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee. We've had apologies this morning from Gwenda Thomas, and John Griffiths is attending in her place. So, welcome again, John. We've also had apologies from Jocelyn Davies, and Bethan Jenkins is attending. So, again, welcome, Bethan.

09:01

Ymchwiliad i'r Adolygiad o Siarter y BBC: Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 5—
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Inquiry into the BBC Charter Review: Evidence Session 5—Deputy
Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism

[2] **Christine Chapman:** The first item today is a continuation of our inquiry into the BBC charter review. This is evidence session 5, and I would like to welcome Ken Skates, Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, and also Natasha Hale, deputy director of sectors and business, Welsh Government. So, welcome, Minister and Natasha. Obviously, the Members will have seen and read the paper that you've sent in advance, so, we'll go straight into questions, if you're happy with that. Okay, I want to start off. In

your paper you have called for a specific evaluation to be undertaken of what the BBC's obligation should be to Wales, separate to the charter review process. Why do you think this is necessary?

[3] **The Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism (Kenneth Skates):** Just to be clear, we're not calling for an evaluation of the BBC's public purpose to be carried out separately. The two are linked. So, that evaluation would have to take place in parallel. We've been calling for that assessment for some time after devolution, and, indeed, it was built into our response to the Ofcom review of public service broadcasting. So, it's nothing new. Effectively, it should be undertaken now in parallel with charter review in order to establish a compact for Wales within the new charter after 2017. The First Minister has already written, requesting that this review be undertaken. He's not yet had a response, as far as I'm aware. If we do not have a satisfactory response, I think it's fair to say that we may need to undertake that work ourselves, and therefore re-establish the broadcasting advisory panel.

[4] **Christine Chapman:** Obviously, this has been pursued with the UK Government, but you're still waiting for the response. When do you anticipate the response?

[5] **Kenneth Skates:** Well, it's in the hands of the Secretary of State.

[6] **Christine Chapman:** Right. Okay. Thank you. Rhodri.

[7] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Minister, I take Weinidog, rwy'n cymryd mai'r sail am yr alwad yma yw eich bod chi, fel Llywodraeth, yn teimlo nad yw Cymru'n cael ei chynrychioli yn ddigonol ar y BBC ar hyn o bryd, ac nad oes yna ddigon o bortread o Gymru—yn y Gymraeg, ac yn sicr yn y Saesneg—ac nad yw Cymru yn ymddangos yn ddigonol ar y rhwydwaith, ac eithrio'r rhaglenni hynny sy'n cael eu cynhyrchu yng Nghymru, megis *Doctor Who*, *Casualty* ac yn y blaen, ond sydd ddim yn adlewyrchu Cymru mewn

it that the basis for this call is that you, as a Government, feel that Wales is not represented adequately on the BBC at the moment, and that there is insufficient portrayal of Wales—in Welsh, and certainly in English—and that Wales does not appear adequately on the network, except for those programmes that are produced in Wales, such as *Doctor Who*, *Casualty* and so forth, but which don't reflect Wales in any way.

unrhyw ffordd.

[8] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes, I'd agree entirely. In the context of the sorts of cuts that the BBC has had to shoulder in recent years, I think it's necessary that the level of funding for news and non-news in the English language for the BBC must increase. But also, how Wales is presented to the UK, and, crucially, how Wales is presented to the people of Wales by the BBC, informs us not just of our culture and our past, but where we're going as well. We've seen a reduction in the programming for Wales by the BBC, and I think it's essential therefore that we do have the review of the public purpose of the BBC.

[9] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Mae Ymddiriedolaeth y BBC wedi awgrymu bod angen newid y geiriad yn niben y BBC i sicrhau bod y BBC yng Nghymru nid yn unig yn cynrychioli Cymru ond yn adlewyrchu anghenion Cymru. A ydych chi'n gefnogol i'r alwad honno?
Rhodri Glyn Thomas: The BBC Trust has suggested that there is a need to change the wording of the BBC's public purpose to ensure that the BBC in Wales not only represents Wales but also reflects the needs of Wales. Are you supportive of that call?

[10] **Kenneth Skates continues:** There are already a half a dozen public purposes that the BBC has, one of which concerns the regions and the nations, but I think the review could strengthen that purpose, as Rhodri Glyn Thomas has identified.

[11] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Beth James Purnell pan oedd e yma yr wythnos diwethaf, yn sôn nad oedd modd sicrhau unrhyw faint yn fwy o arian i'r BBC yng Nghymru ar hyn o bryd? Onid yw hynny'n golygu nad oes dim modd cyflawni hyn heb fod chwistrelliad ariannol? Mae sôn am yr angen am £10 miliwn yn ychwanegol ar gyfer darlledu o Gymru am Gymru yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg.
Rhodri Glyn Thomas: What do you make, therefore, of James Purnell's statement when he was here last week, talking about the fact that there was no way of ensuring any more money for the BBC in Wales at the moment? Doesn't that mean that there is no way of achieving this without there being a financial injection? There has been talk of a need for an additional £10 million for broadcasting from Wales about Wales in Welsh and in English.

[12] **Kenneth Skates:** The BBC's budget is significant, and I reject the idea

that they aren't able to allocate more resources to English-language, particularly non-news programming in Wales. I think the money could be allocated if the BBC so wished.

[13] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** A sut Rhodri Glyn Thomas: And how do you ydych chi'n credu y dylai'r siarter believe the new charter should reflect newydd adlewyrchu anghenion the needs of Wales? Cymru?

[14] **Kenneth Skates:** Sorry, I didn't catch the first part of the question. Sorry.

[15] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Sut Rhodri Glyn Thomas: How do you ydych chi'n teimlo y dylai'r siarter think the new charter should reflect newydd adlewyrchu anghenion the needs of Wales? What needs to be Cymru? Beth sydd angen ei gynnwys included in that charter to change the yn y siarter hynny i newid y sefyllfa situation as it exists at the moment? fel y mae'n bodoli ar hyn o bryd?

[16] **Kenneth Skates:** That's precisely why we need to have the review of the public purpose of the BBC—in order to assess precisely what it is that the BBC should be providing for Wales and therefore how much the BBC should be resourced and how the BBC should be accountable to the people of Wales as well. We've already got the memorandum of understanding in place with Welsh Government, we've got the second MOU in formation with the National Assembly for Wales, but I think what is essential during the deliberations over the charter renewal is that we do also have the review of the public purpose of the BBC to inform a compact for Wales.

[17] **Christine Chapman:** Bethan, you've got a supplementary.

[18] **Bethan Jenkins:** Just on this point precisely, at the moment, the charter renewal is happening, and I appreciate what you're calling for in terms of that public purpose, but if that isn't going to happen or you're not getting a response, what would you then say would be needed from the charter? If they don't listen to what you're calling for, then really we need to be saying, 'Well, in light of that, these are the urgent matters that we would want to see happening as a Government'.

[19] **Kenneth Skates:** Well, as part of our formal process in charter renewal, we've already been able to provide an initial response to the consultation,

which I think highlights the various demands that the Welsh Government has of the new charter. However, as I said at the outset, I think if we do not have a satisfactory response concerning our request for a review of the public purpose of the BBC, that work would have to be undertaken by us here in Wales, I believe. It may well require establishing a new broadcasting advisory panel in order to assist in undertaking that review.

[20] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. So, obviously, Minister, you're going to wait for their response, but you've got something in place, you've got a concrete plan, if that is not forthcoming.

[21] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes.

[22] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Peter.

[23] **Peter Black:** When we had the BBC Trust here last week, they were very keen to emphasise the huge amount of investment they're putting into Wales: we've got the swanky new drama studios at Roath Lock and, of course, the new development by Cardiff railway station—although actually it seems to me they're investing in Cardiff, rather than Wales, but that's another issue. Yet, when we talk about how Wales is portrayed by the BBC, they don't have a commissioning editor based in Wales—all the programmes are commissioned centrally—and the casting is done outside Wales, even for productions produced in Roath Lock. Is that part of the problem, do you think, in terms of why the BBC are not portraying Wales in the way they should be?

[24] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes, and we see no justification in the emergence of Cardiff as a centre of excellence for drama production in reducing provision for local television here in Wales for local services. It's fantastic that we're able to celebrate Cardiff as a centre of excellence, but that shouldn't be used as an excuse for reducing spend on television for Wales. I think, Peter, you're right in identifying commissioning as a major hindrance to this. We do have a commissioner, as you rightly said, but my understanding is that the commissioner is now based outside Wales, in London. I believe it's time for a commissioning base here in Wales.

[25] I also reject the BBC executive's view that they should have the quotas removed for commissioning, and that there is, as they call it, an opportunity put in place. I'd see it as a requirement. To compete for commissions in Wales, it's absolutely clear that, without the quotas for out-of-London

production, we would not have that centre in Cardiff and we would not have an incredible increase in the level of employment that we've been able to celebrate and the BBC has been able to celebrate. So, on both counts, I would say, 'Yes, commissioning needs to be addressed—we need a commissioning base in Wales—and quotas should not be removed'. My view is that if they wish to proceed with an element of competition for commissions, then at the very least they should protect the quotas for out-of-London production.

[26] **Peter Black:** I think the issue with competition, in a sense, is that you tend to commission in your own image, and because they're based in London they're not really identifying Welsh diaspora and what's happening in Wales. That seems to be the big problem.

[27] **Kenneth Skates:** And then that raises questions about the idea of establishing, if you like, a super-indie in the BBC that could then distort the market, and distort the market in a way that may not be to the benefit of Wales.

[28] **Peter Black:** Have the Welsh Government made representations along these lines to the BBC?

[29] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes.

[30] **Peter Black:** The other issue I wanted to raise is that we talk about reflecting Wales in drama productions and non-news output, but there are, of course, other BBC services coming to Wales that don't reflect Wales. I'm thinking, you know, of the biggest mass audience for Radio 2, for example. Have you made representations to the UK Government about how they might better represent Wales through that particular output as it is broadcast throughout Wales, and more people in Wales listen to it than Radio Cymru and Radio Wales?

[31] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes, absolutely; I think it's the radio station with the most listeners in Wales, and there are questions about whether you could have an opt-out service in terms of the news provision that's on network television and radio stations. But, in addition, I think the BBC need to roll out BBC Radio Cymru right across Wales—that needs to be dealt with—and the issue about DAB needs to be resolved as well.

[32] **Christine Chapman:** Before I bring Alun in, I just wanted to pursue the point about the commissioning. You've said that the Welsh Government has

pressed the BBC about this. Have you got a sense of whether they are resisting it or are they more amenable to it? How would you assess the—

[33] **Kenneth Skates:** The First Minister first raised this back in December 2013 with the director-general. I think it's fair to say that BBC Cymru Wales would welcome a commissioning base here in Wales. We're still pursuing it with vigour with the BBC in London, and I think it's essential, especially in the context of the memorandum of understanding that we've been able to establish with the UK Government and the BBC, as well as the one that Scotland has been able to establish, that we have at least the same fairness of deal with the BBC as Scotland has. But I'm pursuing the need for a commissioning base here in Wales on a constant basis.

[34] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, thank you. Alun.

[35] **Alun Davies:** Thank you. I go back to the point that Peter made about commissioning to reflect your own ideas or prejudices, if you like. What the BBC will no doubt say to you is that what you can't do is to emasculate the creative process and that people deserve the best blah, blah, blah, and therefore we have to commission the best irrespective of where. So, quotas are a way of fixing a lot of that, but, of course, what that means is that we have to put up with things that are metropolitan focused and metropolitan orientated because there's a metropolitan culture within the BBC. And is it not the case that quotas, commissioning base and the rest of it are ways of ameliorating a more fundamental problem, and that is that the culture of the BBC is a culture that is rooted in the upper middle classes in London and not rooted in the daily life experience of the people of Britain.

[36] **Kenneth Skates:** I think that's a fair assessment. I think that, in addition, the BBC actually has a duty to be able to identify and promote production and talent right across the UK, not just in London, so the removal of quotas would undermine talent pathways as well. I think Alun Davies's assessment is very accurate.

[37] **Alun Davies:** But that demands a far more fundamental and profound response, because you can argue about—

[38] **Kenneth Skates:** Which is why we do need that review of the public purpose of the BBC for Wales so that we can then have a good impact.

09:15

[39] **Alun Davies:** But not for Wales, sorry, Minister, for Britain, because we talk about Wales being unrepresented and not portrayed on screen in the way that we would expect and anticipate because we're looking at it from a Welsh perspective, but I'm equally sure that somebody living in East Anglia might come to a similar perspective. Somebody living in Cumbria might come to a similar perspective. So, it's a more fundamental thing than simply a Wales versus England, or Wales versus a UK structure, because what we're talking about is Britain as a multinational, rich, cultural state not being represented by the public service broadcaster, but the public service broadcaster simply representing the interests of a particular social class within the south-east of England.

[40] **Kenneth Skates:** This is a point that was discussed when I met with my counterparts from Northern Ireland and Scotland as well—the need for the BBC to truly and fully represent the whole of the United Kingdom.

[41] **Christine Chapman:** Mike.

[42] **Mike Hedges:** I agree with what Alun Davies has said, but moving it from representing the elite of the south-east of England to the elite of the south-east of Wales is not necessarily making such huge progress. I speak as somebody who—

[43] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** You represent Swansea.

[44] **Bethan Jenkins:** You think that the elite of Swansea should rule. [*Laughter.*]

[45] **Mike Hedges:** No. I think that—. I thought you represented Swansea as well, Bethan. [*Laughter.*] What my constituents feel is that, 'For Wales, see Cardiff' seems to be the BBC's view, and as long as they do Cardiff or—if they really have to do the whole of Wales—Cardiff, Carmarthen and Caernarfon, that's Wales done. Will the Minister agree that it's not just about putting something into Wales but that if we're going to do Wales we cover the whole of Wales? You know better than I do, Minister, that the area around Wrexham sometimes feels that it is equally as forgotten.

[46] **Kenneth Skates:** Oh, indeed. Again, I'll just reflect on the point that's been made about the drama production centre here in Cardiff sometimes being promoted as a great celebration of the BBC's devolution of resources

to the regions and nations. Well, it may well be that we have a superb centre for drama production, but we need to have a greater degree of funding and better representation of all of Wales for Wales.

[47] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thank you. I will move on to John now.

[48] **John Griffiths:** Thanks, Chair. Sticking with funding, then, Minister, the First Minister has suggested that BBC Cymru Wales should receive an extra £30 million per year. Could you tell us on what basis that figure has been arrived at?

[49] **Kenneth Skates:** Well, that figure is based on discussions with BBC Cymru Wales. I was pleased that the Institute of Welsh Affairs last week supported that figure as well. Of course, it could change based on the public purpose review that we've called for, because that would then inform us what the BBC should be doing for Wales, and therefore how the BBC should be resourced accordingly.

[50] **John Griffiths:** So, has an analysis been done, then, on what that additional £30 million per year would achieve, and what would be the consequences of not receiving that additional sum of money?

[51] **Kenneth Skates:** Well, not receiving that additional sum of money would mean that the people of Wales, in our view, would not be represented and served by the BBC in the way that we believe we should be. The figure of £30 million, as I say, has been arrived at through discussions with BBC Cymru Wales, but it could change depending on the review that we're calling for. Again, that's why the review is so essential.

[52] **John Griffiths:** That analysis—that request—would have been made, obviously, to UK Government as well as to the BBC.

[53] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes, and it's in our formal response to the consultation.

[54] **John Griffiths:** Yes, okay. The Welsh Government has also said that it really is questionable how the BBC could deliver on its commitment to invest in and improve services to the regions and nations of the UK without additional investment being made. Could you flesh that out a little bit, Minister, in terms of how that position has been determined and arrived at?

[55] **Kenneth Skates:** Sure. Is that okay?

[56] **Ms Hale:** Yes. Sorry—can you ask the question again?

[57] **John Griffiths:** The Welsh Government's position is, without a net increase in funding to the BBC on a UK basis, it's very difficult to see how the BBC could deliver on its commitments to improve services to the regions and constituent nations of the UK. So, could you let the committee know how the Welsh Government position has been arrived at and what is the analysis and the thinking behind that statement?

[58] **Ms Hale:** Yes, I can. So, we've had quite detailed analysis of the cuts that have been made already to the BBC and S4C and the amount of programming that has reduced because of those cuts, certainly within the BBC on English language programming. So, that analysis and the forwarding of consultations to both Ofcom and the BBC and the DCMS have been going on at Government for some time. It is absolutely clear that, if there are any further cuts to S4C or BBC Wales, Wales will lose out substantially in terms of the services, because we have taken all the cuts we can take. We are already not represented adequately in terms of our own programming, in terms of news, right across the board—from local drama to local news to local comedy to local entertainment. If you cut it anymore, we will absolutely not have the services we will require. And, the BBC and S4C will not be able to deliver for Wales as the people of Wales would expect.

[59] **John Griffiths:** Just taking that a little bit further, Chair, the First Minister is also on record saying that the next charter might result in audiences within Wales being dealt the worst hand of any part of the UK. So, obviously, there's a general picture in terms of BBC funding, what it's likely to be and the effect on regions and constituent parts of the UK in general. But, the First Minister is obviously very concerned, as we would expect, that Wales could be dealt with a more negative and damaging effect than any other part of the UK. What's the basis for that statement?

[60] **Kenneth Skates:** We've had significant cuts already in the past 10 years. So, the basis of that concern is that we've already had to shoulder considerably deeper cuts to provision for BBC Cymru Wales than has been experienced in other parts of the UK. So, the trend is towards cutting BBC Cymru Wales in a way that's not equitable across the United Kingdom.

[61] **John Griffiths:** Okay, Chair.

[62] **Ms Hale:** And, I would just like to add as well, I think that we stand—and have shown that there’s a standing of shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the nations and that actually we would participate in the negotiations, and have done with Scotland and through the MOU of making sure that Wales is not going to take any more cuts than anywhere else.

[63] **Christine Chapman:** I think the main point is that—. Obviously, everybody else has been cut, but Wales has actually done disproportionately badly. I wonder could you say something more about that the fact that Wales is doing so badly.

[64] **Kenneth Skates:** I think this is actually a question for the BBC, but our view is that Wales has not been dealt a fair hand and that sometimes the centre of excellence is used to promote the idea that the people of Wales are being served and represented in a very fair way, which is not necessarily the case.

[65] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, we will be putting these questions to the BBC. Okay, thank you. Alun.

[66] **Alun Davies:** Yes, I’d like to follow on from our earlier conversation about the way the BBC reflects British people. You have said that in your submission the Welsh Government supports the option of a unitary board and a standalone regulator for the BBC. Could you explain, Minister, how you believe that structure would help address the cultural issues that we referred to earlier.

[67] **Ms Hale:** I think that, at the moment, right up until this point where Wales hasn’t been represented as it should have been. I think the reason that the First Minister was calling for a public purpose review is an understanding from a very high level of what is the requirements and reasons for the public purposes of the BBC and S4C. But, because, actually, we haven’t been represented and the BBC hasn’t been accountable as it should have been in the past, I do think that a new regulatory body that sits outside would make the BBC more accountable because they would have to be accountable to an external body, but our job then would be to make sure that Wales was represented properly within that outside body. What I would say is that it seems to be that, up until now, the accountability of the BBC hasn’t been as adequate as we would have wanted it to be in Welsh Government, and an external body would give us a new chance to change that in the future.

[68] **Alun Davies:** I'd be interested if you could describe that in a bit more detail because, at the moment, of course, the BBC does have means and mechanisms of accountability. The representative, if you like, Elan Closs Stephens, was here last week. I know from personal experience that she is an extraordinarily strong representative for Wales. She fights hard, speaks up and is hugely respected in the sector and within the BBC itself. It's difficult therefore to see how this suggestion of a unitary board—I don't understand what you mean by a stand-alone regulator, I must say—would actually fundamentally change what we have today.

[69] **Kenneth Skates:** Well, it wouldn't be as a stand-alone system of accountability in its own right because, with the establishment of the MOU with the National Assembly, there'd also be direct accountability to this place as well, but I think it would make progress over the current arrangements. I think the fact that you were able to identify the current representative as somebody who fights so passionately and effectively for Wales and yet, in spite of that, Wales is not represented as it should be, demonstrates why there has to be structural change there. We believe that the stand-alone unitary system would enable us to be better represented.

[70] **Alun Davies:** Okay. I'm still not entirely convinced by that. In terms of where we are today, we discussed last week that I think it's been seven years since there was a major drama production reflecting Wales on UK networks. To me, that isn't simply an oversight—something you've missed one year due to a changeover of months or years or financial years or whatever. That's a fundamental systemic problem. One of the nations of Britain not represented in drama on the mainstream channels for seven years—

[71] **Kenneth Skates:** That comes back to commissioning—

[72] **Alun Davies:** Well, I don't think it does, you see—. Clearly, it does, but I think it goes further again. Is it not the case that, without a significant federalisation of the BBC, you're not actually going to address some of the issues that we've agreed need to be addressed within the BBC?

[73] **Kenneth Skates:** I think, first and foremost, it is about the commissioning, because if the commissioning leads to more drama production for Wales being produced in Wales that can then be put on the network, then we would address the problem that you've highlighted. So, I think, first and foremost, it is about commissioning.

[74] **Alun Davies:** I don't think it is, you see, Deputy Minister, with all due respect, because, at the moment, the BBC produces a significant amount of programming from Wales. I don't want to be at all churlish about it. They've used my own constituency as an alien planet on some occasions, and I'm very pleased to see that. But *Doctor Who*, with the best will in the world, is not a reflection of life in Wales. It may feel like it, sometimes, I accept that, but it's not a reflection of the lives of our constituents; it's not a portrayal of life in Wales. I don't think it should be, quite frankly, but the fact that you have a production base in this country doesn't lead to an improvement in portrayal—. A commissioning facility might well address those issues, I do accept that, but, fundamentally, the systemic issue that we've agreed and identified—can that be addressed without the federalisation of the BBC and a fundamental change in the way the BBC operates?

[75] **Kenneth Skates:** I see what the Member is saying. The presentation of Wales through drama for network—

[76] **Alun Davies:** I use it as an example.

[77] **Kenneth Skates:** And I think that's absolutely fair. I think the way that Wales has been presented has been a major issue for all of us for some time. It is not accurately portrayed in many respects. Sometimes, we're not fairly portrayed across the network. So, I would agree with your assessment of this situation.

09:30

[78] **Alun Davies:** But do you agree with my solution?

[79] **Kenneth Skates:** A more federalist structure?

[80] **Alun Davies:** That these issues that you've agreed with—. Can you address and overcome these issues without a significant federalisation, not simply of individual decision making, but of the structures—the financial structures, the legal structures and the decision-making structures of the BBC?

[81] **Kenneth Skates:** Well, unless the review that we're calling for can identify any other means of addressing those concerns, I think we would have to examine very carefully what you propose. But first and foremost, if

we start with the review of the public purpose of the BBC to examine precisely what it is that the BBC should be doing for Wales, in Wales, and in terms of representing Wales outside of our country, if that can address the concerns, then that would be a satisfactory method of delivering the sort of change that we would both wish to see. But if that failed, or if we are deprived of the opportunity of having a review, then that work needs to be undertaken by ourselves and, of course, would then consider the sort of structural change that you've been advocating.

[82] **Alun Davies:** Okay. So, you're quite hesitant on that.

[83] **Christine Chapman:** I think the Member is suggesting that the federalisation could actually be a stronger model than hoping that the BBC will—. You may not have a view on this yet.

[84] **Kenneth Skates:** Well, the review would hopefully be able to present us with the sort of intelligence that we need to be able to conclude whether or not that's the case. My impression is that it probably would be, but I'd wish to have a review conducted in order to fully inform us of that.

[85] **Alun Davies:** There is, of course, the independent review of the BBC's governance taking place, being led by Sir David Clementi, at the moment. I presume that the Welsh Government is going to be contributing to that.

[86] **Kenneth Skates:** Our consultation has been fed into that. So, our consultation response to the charter review has also been forwarded to him for consideration as well.

[87] **Alun Davies:** So, the response that you've already written would be presented to Sir David.

[88] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes.

[89] **Alun Davies:** Okay. Just finally, we've spoken about the portrayal of Wales on screen. What is the Welsh Government's position at the moment, and what do you feel about the reporting of Wales? I don't necessarily mean by BBC Wales outlets—you know, *Wales Today*, Radio Wales, Radio Cymru and *Newyddion*—but I mean by the network news and current affairs programmes.

[90] **Kenneth Skates:** Well, the provision and the degree of coverage have

not been particularly impressive. At times I think this is an issue for the news editorial team. There are questions about whether you would have opt-out services. Again, I don't think we should have any different system implemented to that which Scotland has. I think we need to have the same degree of coverage and the same service that Scotland has as part of the new charter.

[91] **Alun Davies:** I listen to *Today* in the morning. I can't easily remember a report from Wales outside of sport. Do you think that fairly reflects the experience of living in the United Kingdom from a Welsh perspective?

[92] **Kenneth Skates:** Well, again it comes back to the point you were making earlier about where the BBC is focused, and where the majority of BBC activities are based. It still remains London and the south-east. This ties in with the need for quotas to be at least maintained, because unless we have more of the BBC planted in the regions and in the nations, we're not going to have a fair degree of coverage of the nations and regions. As Mike said, it's not just about taking what the BBC has in London and then planting it in one large urban centre in each of the regions and the nations; it's about ensuring that the BBC fairly and adequately covers all of life across the UK.

[93] **Alun Davies:** Okay. Finally, the representatives of the BBC Trust here last week were very clear that they felt that the BBC had responded fully and adequately to the original Anthony King report, and then subsequent updates. Is it the view of the Welsh Government that the BBC has responded adequately to those views?

[94] **Ms Hale:** Yes, I think we have responded adequately. I think it's—

[95] **Alun Davies:** I asked whether the BBC has responded adequately.

[96] **Ms Hale:** Oh, sorry—have the BBC responded adequately? I'd have to come back to you on that and have a look into it, if you don't mind.

[97] **Alun Davies:** It's a pretty fundamental question, Ms Hale.

[98] **Ms Hale:** Yes. I mean, from the perspective of whether they have been able to do everything that was asked of them, I don't think that they have, but I would have to come back to you in detail on that.

[99] **Alun Davies:** It would be useful if you could do that reasonably

quickly.

[100] **Christine Chapman:** Yes. If you would, yes. Thank you. Right. Bethan.

[101] **Bethan Jenkins:** Rwyf i jest eisiau mynd yn ôl yn glou at y cwestiwn ynglŷn â rheoleiddio. Roeddwn i eisiau dod i mewn pan yr oedd Alun Davies yn gofyn ichi am greu corff annibynnol a fydd yn rheoleiddio'r BBC. Rwyf i wedi darllen yr hyn rydych chi wedi'i ysgrifennu, ac yn fy marn i, fe fyddai'n rhywbeth a fyddai ar wahân, oherwydd na fyddai'n cyd-fynd â'r hyn y mae Ofcom yn ei wneud ar hyn o bryd. Mae Ofcom wedi dweud nad oedden nhw'n meddwl mai nhw ddylai wneud y gwaith. Ond a fyddai ffordd o roi digon o reolau yn eu lle, fel na fyddai eu cyfrifoldebau masnachol neu eu cyfrifoldebau ehangach yn gwrthdaro â'r hyn a fyddai'n digwydd o ran rheoleiddio'r BBC? Fy nghonsŷrn i yw bod creu un endid ar gyfer rheoleiddio un peth yn y byd cyhoeddus yn rhy gul, ac ni fydd yn atynnu, efallai, arbenigwyr yn y maes i wneud y rôl hynny. Rwy'n credu ei fod yn bwysig, oherwydd os ydym ni am newid y system, rydym eisiau gwybod yn iawn pa fath o strwythur a fydd yn gallu gweithio er mwyn dwyn y BBC i gyfrif. Nid wyf yn siŵr, ar hyn o bryd, a ydw i'n cytuno gyda'r hyn rydych chi'n ei ddweud: mai creu rheoleiddiwr yn benodol ar gyfer y BBC fydd yn gweithio i'r dyfodol.

Bethan Jenkins: I just want to return briefly to the question about regulation. I wanted to come in when Alun Davies was asking you about creating an independent body that would regulate the BBC. I have read what you've written, and in my opinion, it would be something that should be separate, because it wouldn't correspond to what Ofcom is doing at present. Ofcom has said that they don't think that they are the ones who should be doing this work. But would there be a way of putting sufficient regulation in place, so that their commercial responsibilities or wider responsibilities don't conflict with what would happen in terms of regulating the BBC? My concern is that creating one entity for regulating one thing in the public realm would be too narrow and it wouldn't draw in experts in the field to fulfil that aim. I think it's important, because if we want to change the system, we want to know exactly what kind of structure could work in order to hold the BBC to account. I'm not sure, at present, whether I agree with what you're suggesting, namely that creating a specific regulator for the BBC would be the one thing that would work in future.

[102] **Ms Hale:** I think our position has been that we need something that is more separate and sits alongside the BBC than the current situation in terms

of the trust, which sits within the BBC. And Ofcom would have to still have some regulatory power over the BBC, but it would not be all moved into Ofcom.

[103] **Bethan Jenkins:** Right. Okay. It's just how that would work in practice concerns me in terms of the separation of those responsibilities and the accountability within the system, but, of course, that would all have to be worked out, I suppose.

[104] **Ms Hale:** It would have to be worked out. But also obviously there's separation now, already, so I think that it's about saying, 'Which bits of that separation work and which bits don't work?' I would agree that the trust member for Wales is an amazing advocate and has fought very strongly for Wales, but actually, up to now, it hasn't worked that Wales has got the best deal that it possibly can out of the BBC. So, the structure has to change, and our perspective is that we should have a very clear idea of what the BBC is there to deliver for Wales and what its obligations to Wales are. We have actually called for a compact and a contract between the BBC and Wales, and any new regulatory body would be ensuring that the BBC does deliver those for Wales and those contracts for Wales, and therefore would have to involve Welsh Government and the Assembly in how it was regulating.

[105] **Bethan Jenkins:** Ie, wel, dyna beth roeddwn i'n dod ymlaen ato, achos yn fy marn bitw i, ac efallai barn rhai o'r Aelodau eraill, mae'r memorandwm yma wedi digwydd, ond mae yna broblemau, fel y dywedodd y sector wrthym ni yr wythnos diwethaf, sydd yn mynd yn ôl hyd at 10 mlynedd. Pam ydy hi wedi cymryd hyd at nawr i hyd yn oed ystyried creu memorandwm o ddealltwriaeth rhyngom ni a Llywodraeth Prydain? Ai oherwydd y refferendwm yn yr Alban, ac rydym ni, felly, wedi dilyn yr hyn sy'n digwydd yna, yn hytrach na ni, fel Cymru, fel Llywodraeth, yn gosod yr agenda er mwyn sefydlu'r ffaith bod angen mwy o ddatblygiadau yma yng

Bethan Jenkins: Yes, well, that's what I wanted to come on to, because in my small opinion, and perhaps the opinion of some of the other Members, this memorandum has happened, but there are problems, as the sector told us last week, that go back 10 years now. Why has it taken until now just to consider putting together a memorandum of understanding between us and the UK Government? Is it because of the referendum in Scotland, and we've followed what's happened there, rather than us, as Wales, as a Government in Wales, setting the agenda to establish the fact that there needs to be greater development here in Wales? The

Nghymru? Mae'r Gweinidog yn cario ymlaen i ddweud bod angen adolygiad pwrpas o'r BBC, ond gallai'r panel ymgynghori ar ddarlledu fod wedi gwneud hyn yn barod heb aros a dibynnu ar Lywodraeth Prydain i wneud y gwaith hynny. Felly, beth sy'n mynd i newid nawr bod y memorandwm yn ei le a bod yna ail femorandwm yn mynd i ddiwydd? Pam nad yw wedi digwydd cyn y pwynt yma, pan mae nifer fawr o doriadau wedi digwydd am y 10 mlynedd diwethaf?

Minister continues to say that there needs to be a review of the purpose of the BBC, but the advisory panel on broadcasting could have done this already without having to wait and depend on the UK Government to do that work. So, what's going to change now that the memorandum of understanding is in place and that there's a second memorandum going to happen? Why hasn't that happened before this point, when there have been a number of cuts for the past 10 years?

[106] **Ms Hale:** Do you want me to answer that?

[107] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes.

[108] **Ms Hale:** I think that we have been pushing the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for a long time and BBC central in how Welsh Government will be feeding into the charter review, and they were very clear that, post election, there wasn't going to be a discussion about the charter review until the election was over. We have been in constant negotiation and discussion with DCMS about how Wales will feed into that review. It ended up that we went and met with Ministers in Scotland and Northern Ireland because we were actually very nervous that we weren't going to get the input that we should get, and that is what led to the memorandum of understanding. I think the memorandum of understanding is a very, very good step, but I think you're absolutely right in that it probably isn't enough, and that is why the First Minister wrote and asked for the review. But I also think that the other reason that was behind the asking for the review is what Alun Davies said, which is that, actually, this makes sense for the whole of the UK. We are now living in a devolved UK, and actually to just keep on having this charter review and renewal system, where the services of the BBC are looked at over and over again without saying, 'Actually, what's the purpose—

[109] **Bethan Jenkins:** I appreciate that, but I was at the Institute of Welsh Affairs conference, as were others, last week, and there was a sense that they carried out the audit of the current landscape of the situation in Wales

because of the vacuum that there is, they believe—I'm not wanting to put words in any of their mouths, but I know that the likes of Tom O'Malley would say that—of work and research that hasn't been done by Welsh Government, and which could be done despite the fact that we don't have the powers. Let's create a scene in Wales whereby if we did ever want television to be devolved, we already have the set-up here for that to be an environment in which to do so.

[110] So, I just come back to the question: if that is the fundamental thing here—and I'm hearing 'the review, the review, the review' in every answer—why was that not done before we got to this point of the charter renewal, so that we were already running towards it with a clear outline as to what Wales has and will be able to do in the future? Again, just to reiterate my point, what will be new in this new memorandum of understanding now that the Assembly Commission will be involved in it, when they weren't before? The Scottish commission element was there before. So, can we understand why that wasn't included initially?

[111] **Ms Hale:** It wasn't included initially because we wanted to get the memorandum of understanding done as quickly as we possibly could so we could start feeding into the process as early as we possibly could. That's why. So, we've decided to do the memorandum of understanding, and for the Commission and the Assembly to feed in on how it's going to work later, because we wanted to get it done as quickly as possible.

[112] In terms of why we didn't do this audit, and the vacuum and the research, I think that we took the advice of the broadcasting advisory panel, which was, 'This is what we should be looking for in terms of charter renewal.' We have said what Wales needs from charter renewal before charter renewal, in terms of Ofcom consultations since the panel broke up. That's what we've done, and as the Minister said earlier, if we don't get what we've requested then a panel will be set up to do that piece of work, and we've made that quite clear.

[113] **Bethan Jenkins:** I know this is in future questions but it would be really interesting for me to see what that advice was, because I've tried to get information on what the panel's done, and it's been very, very difficult. I think if the panel did advise, and did give information or recommendations, it would be useful for us to see so that we could then know where you've come from and where you're at in terms of that panel and its work, why it isn't a standing advisory panel, and why you have to reconvene it anyway.

[114] **Kenneth Skates:** Can we follow this up with a note for Members?

[115] **Christine Chapman:** I think the point the Member's making is that there is a risk that things seem to have been done quite quickly now, but whether it could have been done, say, five years ago—or at least some of the work. I think that is a fair point. So, we'll get the information.

[116] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes. This is why I think it's necessary for you to see some of the work that's taken place, because that may well demonstrate that there has not been that vacuum that some have assumed there has been.

[117] **Christine Chapman:** Right. Yes, I think that would be clear then.

[118] **Alun Davies:** Rather than receive a note, it would be useful to receive the information from the panel accompanying that note.

[119] **Kenneth Skates:** Okay.

[120] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. All right, Bethan? Okay. Mark.

[121] **Mark Isherwood:** Before I develop my question about S4C, could I just ask a supplementary related to the previous section? Regarding the accountability to viewers and listeners, we all know that viewers and listeners have very personal tastes, very individual views, and very strong views, often, about the programmes that they like to view or listen to, and the medium they choose to do that through. What, if any, research has been undertaken, or will be undertaken, to establish the broadcast balance that the viewers and listeners of Wales actually want to see, perhaps on programming that reflects the common experience of people across the UK compared to programmes specifically reflecting Wales and its regions?

09:45

[122] **Kenneth Skates:** It's probably a question best asked of Ofcom, I'd imagine.

[123] **Mark Isherwood:** Is this something you believe the Welsh Government could have a role in facilitating, or do you see a purpose in this?

[124] **Kenneth Skates:** A purpose in examining tastes and audience—

[125] **Mark Isherwood:** Establishing the views of the viewers and listeners, because the Welsh Government has stated, rightly, that broadcasting institutions should not only be accountable to this place, but also to viewers and listeners. So, how do we give them a voice?

[126] **Kenneth Skates:** Well, that's done, often, through the audience council and through Elan Closs Stephens, basically, with representation directly to the BBC and also through work undertaken by Ofcom. But are you suggesting—

[127] **Mark Isherwood:** In terms of asking them this question, or the questions related to the charter review, the balance of programming, how it can better reflect Wales, and their wishes in terms of the programmes they want to watch. There are programmes broadcast from Stockholm that were very popular in parts of Wales, for example, as well as London, Manchester—

[128] **Kenneth Skates:** This comes back to the public purpose of the BBC: to reflect the people of Wales, the views of the people of Wales, and the tastes and desires of the audience as well.

[129] **Christine Chapman:** Can I just add to that? I was going to ask about the different sectors, age, gender et cetera; is that something you would get involved with in your discussions as part of this process?

[130] **Kenneth Skates:** Well, the BBC has a duty to represent the whole of Wales—all ages and all communities. So, it will be the BBC's responsibility to ensure that the views of the audience are listened to and addressed.

[131] **Christine Chapman:** If you felt, theoretically, that they weren't addressing that, would there be a role for Welsh Government in this to—?

[132] **Kenneth Skates:** Well, there is through charter renewal—

[133] **Christine Chapman:** Right. Okay. That's what I'm saying—that you are pressing that.

[134] **Kenneth Skates:** —and that's why we've made the submission that we have, because effectively people are not being represented as we'd wish them to be.

[135] **Ms Hale:** Just one area that we have directly commented on was on the BBC's big push for equality of opportunity and a big new push on making sure that there's equality across the BBC, and that we make sure that, when we're looking at equality, we look at the different, diverse audiences and the different, diverse people of Wales and do not just look at diversity from a London or England perspective—there are diverse nations all over—and we made representations to the BBC on that specific issue.

[136] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, thank you. Mark.

[137] **Mark Isherwood:** I seem to have gone around, but I will just conclude. Do you believe that there will be, or could be, a role for Welsh Government in ensuring that the views of listeners and viewers are taken into account in terms of the broadcast mix that might come out of all of this?

[138] **Kenneth Skates:** I think there's probably a better responsibility for the National Assembly to ensure that there's accountability of BBC Wales and the BBC to the people of Wales. That would be for the MOU to establish, alongside the accountability of the BBC to Welsh Government as well. I don't think it's just for Welsh Government; I think it's probably for the National Assembly for Wales as well.

[139] **Mark Isherwood:** As far as I understand it, the Assembly doesn't, as a legislature, carry out public surveys in the way that a Government might facilitate.

[140] **Kenneth Skates:** Okay, sorry, in terms of public surveys.

[141] **Mark Isherwood:** It might not actually be done by it directly, but it might facilitate it.

[142] **Kenneth Skates:** Right, okay, in terms of public surveys. Yes, it could be, but ultimately it's for Ofcom as well to make sure that the BBC is carrying out its duty in a way that the audience requires and expects. But I can see the point that you're making about the Government involvement in pressing the BBC to be more accountable and representative of the people.

[143] **Christine Chapman:** Mark, I've got a supplementary on this from Rhodri and then Alun.

[144] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Yn ôl yr **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** According to

hyn rwy'n ei ddeall o ran sut y mae'r sefydliad yma'n gweithio, gwaith Llywodraeth Cymru ydy gwneud y cysylltiad uniongyrchol â'r cyfryngau yng Nghymru, a'n gwaith ni yw sgrwtineiddio beth mae'r Llywodraeth yn ei wneud a'r modd y mae'r Gweinidog yn cyflawni'r gwaith hwnnw. Byddai'n anodd iawn i'r Cynulliad Cenedlaethol fel corff gael rôl uniongyrchol o ran ymwneud â'r broses yma. Pwy fyddai'n gwneud hynny ar ran Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru?

the way I see this institution working, it is the work of the Welsh Government to make that direct link with the media in Wales, and our work is to scrutinise what the Government is doing and the way in which the Minister is achieving that work. It would be very difficult for the National Assembly as a body to have a direct role in terms of dealing with this process. Who would do that on behalf of the National Assembly for Wales?

[145] **Kenneth Skates:** Apologies; it was my misunderstanding of the question regarding accountability and the MOU between the National Assembly and the BBC.

[146] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, thank you. Alun.

[147] **Alun Davies:** That's a shame because I actually quite liked that. That was a very good answer; I preferred that to the second one. I disagree with Rhodri's point, as it happens; I believe that this institution can create means and mechanisms to deliver accountability. We do it through the committee system at the moment, and I think we can do it in the future as well. But I'm interested in the Welsh Government's view on this, because the Welsh Government has taken a view historically that it does not wish to see the devolution of broadcasting as a subject area, and I understand the thinking behind that. But, once you start devolving means and mechanisms of accountability, it seems to me that it's very difficult to do that if broadcasting remains wholly a reserved function, because any institution can really be accountable in a profound way if there is a level of responsibility as well. So, my question to you, Minister, is if you see a role for accountability here in Wales—we'll leave the point of Government and Assembly to one side just for the purposes of this question, but if you see institutions in Wales playing a role in accountability, which I agree with, then you must at the same time accept that responsibility for broadcasting cannot wholly remain with the UK Government, but has to be shared with these institutions as well.

[148] **Kenneth Skates:** I think we've stated quite clearly that, regardless of

the devolution issue, there should be accountability to the people of Wales through Welsh Government and the National Assembly. Actually, it's worth reflecting on the point you made previously that there could be a role here. One of the recommendations, I think, of the task and finish group on the future of the media was to ensure that broadcasters come to this place and are held to account before, I think, this committee.

[149] **Alun Davies:** But my point to you, Minister, is that the current constitutional structure doesn't create the opportunity for that to happen except on the basis of good will.

[150] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes.

[151] **Alun Davies:** And so, essentially, if we're to deliver real accountability—not a PR exercise, not a promotional or marketing exercise once a year, but real accountability that would address issues of the performance of the BBC across the whole range of its functions—then that has to be reflected in the constitutional settlement. And that means, from my point of view, from what you're saying, that the Welsh Government want to see a sharing, if you like, of responsibility for broadcasting in the UK.

[152] **Ms Hale:** I was just going to say that what we have called for at the moment is that the BBC would have a clear outline of their commitments to Wales—what they're going to deliver for Wales—on a very granular and clear basis, and they would have a compact, which would be a written contract, that they would deliver that for Wales, and would therefore be represented and would be accountable to Government on that written compact and contract.

[153] **Alun Davies:** I accept that, I understand that, but without a change to the fundamentals—. With all due respect, that's not quite a side show—I accept that—but, if you are to ensure hard accountability, that needs to be in statute, it needs to be in the charter or the supporting documents, and it needs to be reflected in any new Wales Bill.

[154] **Kenneth Skates:** And that's why we need that review to take place in parallel with charter review, so that we can actually ascertain whether further structural change and devolution is required. So, it may well be that we would have to, at a later date—depending on what the Secretary of State says in response to the First Minister, it may well be that we need to look at the issue of devolution.

[155] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, thank you.

[156] **Bethan Jenkins:** So, 'no' at the moment, then.

[157] **Christine Chapman:** Right. Mark, have you finished? Have you any more questions on your section?

[158] **Mark Isherwood:** On this section, just the observation that, as an AM, like all of us, we have people coming to us with all sorts of views. I have had people come to me saying that they want to safeguard broadcasting from north-west England into north Wales. I've had people—you have, I know, as well—regularly complaining in north-east Wales, reflecting Mike's comments, that broadcasts from Cardiff are too Cardiff-centric, and also people saying they want more Welsh content. But we haven't got an objective basis to assess the general position of the people of Wales on this basis, which is the point I was trying to make.

[159] **Kenneth Skates:** Is it an audit, if you like, of activity that you're proposing?

[160] **Mark Isherwood:** Well, an audit of views—what people themselves want. Are they content with the current mix? Do they wish to see it changed? What is their favourite medium? What is their favourite programming? Do they feel there is insufficient news or drama broadcast from and within Wales reflecting Wales and its experiences, or not? As an evidence base to go forward.

[161] **Kenneth Skates:** Sure.

[162] **Mark Isherwood:** Anyhow, I'll move on to S4C, which is the main block of questions I've got. Since you last appeared before us at the beginning of this inquiry, what action has the Welsh Government taken to protect/safeguard S4C's budget?

[163] **Kenneth Skates:** Again, we've made clear demands for S4C's funding to be protected. S4C has suffered an incredible cut in recent times, a real-terms cut of 36 per cent. It cannot be cut any more. We've also called for the review that we were promised into S4C to take place. It's worth noting that we were promised a review of S4C during the current spending round. That has not yet happened. So, a review of S4C is urgently required. It's also worth

noting that, in the letters of October 2010 that were sent out by the Secretary of State to the chairs of S4C and the BBC Trust, it was stated that a review of S4C's strategy and finances would be completed in good time before the end of the period covered by the comprehensive spending review, and also the 2011 framework agreement between the Secretary of State and the BBC referred specifically to a review of the strategy and finances of S4C. We need the review to take place urgently in order to inform us of what it is S4C requires for the Secretary of State to be able to deliver on his duty to make sure that S4C is adequately resourced.

[164] **Mark Isherwood:** So, since he came to see us in September, are we to assume from that that there's been correspondence or phone calls?

[165] **Kenneth Skates:** We've reaffirmed our demand for S4C to be protected, the funding to be protected, and for the review to take place, as we were promised it would be.

[166] **Mark Isherwood:** Through correspondence, this is?

[167] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes.

[168] **Ms Hale:** Yes.

[169] **Mark Isherwood:** Okay. Is that something the committee might want to see, Chair, or not?

[170] **Christine Chapman:** Do you want to see the correspondence the Minister suggested? Yes. Okay; we'd like to see the correspondence.

[171] **Ms Hale:** There's lots of correspondence.

[172] **Kenneth Skates:** Can we provide that if you haven't already had it?

[173] **Christine Chapman:** Yes.

[174] **Kenneth Skates:** Okay.

[175] **Christine Chapman:** Okay.

[176] **Mark Isherwood:** And, in terms of what the Welsh Government considers would constitute sufficient funding for S4C, would that, again, be

dependent on the review, or do you have a view already?

[177] **Kenneth Skates:** Well, it would be in part, but, as I've already said, the Secretary of State has a duty under the Public Bodies Act 2011 to ensure that S4C receives sufficient funding. A review would inform us, but it's my belief that sufficient funding would ensure that S4C secures the current quality and volume of services, but that it also has the freedom to innovate, to improve services, to increase provision, and to be able to implement services such as high definition and enhanced online delivery. But we do need an informed assessment of the level of appropriate funding, which should come out of the review that we're calling for.

[178] **Mark Isherwood:** So, at this stage, you can't give us an estimated or ballpark figure of what you consider would be sufficient.

[179] **Kenneth Skates:** No, we can't at this stage.

[180] **Mark Isherwood:** What funding model for S4C would you advocate, and do you see a role for Welsh Government in the future in this?

[181] **Kenneth Skates:** Well, at this moment in time, the model of the licence fee, and the contribution from the UK Government, is a model that would serve S4C. There are risks with any devolution of funding of S4C to the Welsh Government because of the way that the BBC may be funded after 2017 following charter review. So, it's our view that any change on this would have to be conditional on a very, very strong safeguard concerning the degree to which S4C is funded overall. All of this, of course, has the priority of the wellbeing of the Welsh language at its heart.

10:00

[182] **Christine Chapman:** Is it a supplementary on funding that you wanted? Because I know Gwyn had some questions, but it is on the funding.

[183] **Bethan Jenkins:** Ie. Roeddwn i jest eisiau gofyn, pan ddaeth y sector annibynnol i mewn, roedd un aelod o'r cwmnïau wedi dweud y bydden nhw eisiau gweld 10 y cant o gynnydd i S4C a bod hynny wedyn yn codi gyda chwyddiant pob blwyddyn. **Bethan Jenkins:** Yes. I just wanted to ask, when the independent sector came in, one member of the companies said that they would want to see a 10 per cent increase for S4C and that that would increase with inflation every year. Have they raised

A ydyn nhw wedi codi hynny gyda that with you, and what's your
chi, a beth yw'ch barn chi ar y ffigur opinion on that figure? Because, as
yma? Oherwydd, fel rwyf i wedi ei I've heard, you don't currently have a
glywed, nid oes ffigur gennych chi ar figure, because you're awaiting a
hyn o bryd, oherwydd rydych chi'n review. Is it only the review, then,
aros am adolygiad. Ai dim ond yr that would push you towards a
adolygiad, wedyn, a fydd yn eich specific figure?
gwthio chi tuag at ffigur penodol?

[184] **Ms Hale:** So, was it the independent sector that had come in and had—
?

[185] **Bethan Jenkins:** They proposed 10 per cent, to grow with inflation.
Have you heard that from them? Have they represented that to you? And
would you only come to a conclusion on a figure after a review? Will you say
that sufficient funding would be necessary until you know what that service
would look like?

[186] **Ms Hale:** Do you want me to answer that?

[187] **Kenneth Skates:** Sure.

[188] **Ms Hale:** We have lots of correspondence, obviously, with the
independent sector and with the tv sector in Wales. There are a number of
views of how much S4C requires going forward, and I think Ministers'
correspondence with DCMS and the BBC on what S4C requires going forward
has been dealt with in conjunction with S4C and with the chief exec of S4C.
At the moment, we haven't put a specific figure on how that would be and
that's been the strategy that we have worked on with S4C.

[189] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay, thanks.

[190] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Before Gwyn, just on this specific point,
Mike, and then Gwyn wants to come in.

[191] **Mike Hedges:** On funding, how does funding for S4C compare to BBC
Alba?

[192] **Kenneth Skates:** I think we're going to have to come back to you on
that and get the specific figures for that.

[193] **Mike Hedges:** But don't you think that's a good comparator?

[194] **Kenneth Skates:** No, we don't.

[195] **Mike Hedges:** Why?

[196] **Kenneth Skates:** Because the demands and requirements of the audience in Wales, I feel, may be greater than the equivalent for BBC Alba. I wouldn't wish to benchmark against BBC Alba. We are in a very different situation. We're a different country and the audience is different as well. I don't think it would be fair to the audience to compare the audience directly to that which BBC Alba serves.

[197] **Mike Hedges:** I wasn't comparing audience, I was comparing funding and the question is—. I don't know how much BBC Alba gets, but, from what you're saying, S4C should get more than more BBC Alba.

[198] **Kenneth Skates:** Oh, yes. Yes. I am saying that, which is why I'm saying that it wouldn't be fair, necessarily—well, it wouldn't be right to fund them equally.

[199] **Mike Hedges:** Does it get more than BBC Alba?

[200] **Kenneth Skates:** Sorry?

[201] **Mike Hedges:** Does it get more than BBC Alba?

[202] **Christine Chapman:** S4C.

[203] **Kenneth Skates:** I believe they do, but I don't have the figures to hand. So, yes.

[204] **Christine Chapman:** Would you have the figures, or should we—?

[205] **Ms Hale:** We can get the figures for you, if you want them.

[206] **Kenneth Skates:** We can ask for the figures, yes.

[207] **Christine Chapman:** All right. Well, if you could send that, that would be useful.

[208] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes.

[209] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, thank you. Gwyn.

[210] **Gwyn R. Price:** Good morning to you both.

[211] **Kenneth Skates:** Good morning.

[212] **Gwyn R. Price:** Why does the Welsh Government feel that an independent review of the partnership between S4C and the BBC is necessary, and what progress has the Welsh Government made so far?

[213] **Kenneth Skates:** I think I've covered this question in quite some detail already. We've made various demands, as I've highlighted, for the review to take place. The First Minister has called for the review. We've made it very clear in our response to the charter review that there should be the review, so progress is being made, and various representations have also been forwarded.

[214] **Gwyn R. Price:** You wanted an independent review.

[215] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes.

[216] **Gwyn R. Price:** That's what I'm trying to get to, that you've called for an independent review, haven't you?

[217] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes.

[218] **Gwyn R. Price:** So, that's the way it is. To what extent does the Deputy Minister feel that the cultural and social significance of indigenous language services has been recognised during the charter renewal process?

[219] **Kenneth Skates:** They've been recognised, but I think, given the fact that we are calling for further consideration and evaluation to be made, they probably haven't been recognised sufficiently. That review would then be able to highlight whether or not and the degree to which consideration has been given to them.

[220] **Gwyn R. Price:** Thank you.

[221] **Christine Chapman:** Janet.

[222] **Janet Finch–Saunders:** Thanks. We've talked a lot about the content production, but here goes. What assessment has the Welsh Government made of the BBC's proposals to remove production quotas for in-house and independent content and to turn its production arm into a commercial subsidiary?

[223] **Kenneth Skates:** Ofcom has undertaken an assessment of the impact of out-of-London quotas, and what is clear is that there has been an increase in Wales as a consequence of those quotas. Through discussions that we've had with production companies, it's absolutely clear that we wouldn't be where we are today without quotas, and what the BBC executive is proposing, I think, would cause damage to the production sector in Wales. We—

[224] **Janet Finch–Saunders:** And you believe this is—oh, sorry; go on. I thought you'd finished, sorry.

[225] **Kenneth Skates:** If the committee doesn't have the data, then we can certainly provide the data from Ofcom that highlight the success of the quotas for out-of-London production.

[226] **Janet Finch–Saunders:** And do you believe there's a place for your own Government, though, to be doing more assessments in this regard?

[227] **Ms Hale:** We would be able to quite easily get the information in terms of how many production companies, and also supply chains, have benefited from the out-of-London policy, and also how fragile the policy is and the impact that removing the policy would have. We talk a lot about the centre of excellence, BBC drama, where *Doctor Who* is filmed, but, actually, there is a huge independent sector and supply chain based in Wales that rely on it and have seized it and made the most of it, and to remove that—we can very easily provide figures on how that potentially could damage Wales and employment in Wales.

[228] **Janet Finch–Saunders:** Okay, and what representations will you be making as a Government in respect of any proposed changes to the terms of trade between public service broadcasters and independent producers?

[229] **Kenneth Skates:** Well, we've already said that we're very wary of any changes to quotas or, indeed, to terms of trade. I'm particularly concerned,

as I've already said, by the BBC studios proposal, which would effectively create a super-indie. I think it would lead to competition being driven out. I think the transformation of BBC's production operations into a commercial subsidiary could significantly distort the market, and it's my belief that the licence fee revenue should be invested in the BBC's content and services for the benefit of UK citizens, rather than directed elsewhere on a commercial risk basis. So, any changes to the current terms of trade must protect the interests of both the people of Wales and the creative businesses within the nations.

[230] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Thanks. So, as the Minister, you've already made strong recommendations on that that we can actually, you know, see?

[231] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes, we can provide that.

[232] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thank you.

[233] **Ms Hale:** Just to add, as well, that Tony Hall, the director general, is in Cardiff next Monday, and we are arranging for him to meet many of the independent production companies that rely on that out-of-London—. That's quite an important event for us.

[234] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** And, again, feedback from that—

[235] **Ms Hale:** That's quite an important event for us.

[236] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** —is good. It just keeps it more transparent, and then we can see how you're making recommendations and representations. Thank you.

[237] **Kristin Chapman:** Thank you. And Tony Hall will be with us next week as well, at this committee. Mike.

[238] **Mike Hedges:** Can I just throw at you a couple of comments from Equity and see how you respond to them? The first one is where Equity has said that Wales's interests have not been represented sufficiently during the renewal process and the Welsh Government lacks a firm media policy. How do you respond to that?

[239] **Kenneth Skates:** Well, I would refute that. On what basis do they say that? I think we've been very clear in our demands of what we expect from

charter review and our demand for a review of the public purpose of the BBC.

[240] **Mike Hedges:** The other thing that Equity said is that it's critical of the Welsh Government approach to its broadcasting advisory panel, claiming that its failed to report formally and how it

[241] 'would seem to have been the perfect focus point for a consistent message about broadcasting in Wales'.

[242] **Kenneth Skates:** Much of our policy has been informed by the work of the broadcasting advisory panel that was established in 2012, and our policy has been consistent with the advice that we've had from those experts, and which I believe we will be providing you with information on.

[243] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Mike, have you finished?

[244] **Mike Hedges:** Yes, I've finished, thanks.

[245] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Bethan.

[246] **Bethan Jenkins:** Having met with Equity, I think the frustration is that the body was set up, but having access to information on the ongoing work that that group was doing has proven difficult, and as Peter mentioned earlier, despite representations with regard to casting and locations of castings and the trial, for example, for trying to get more Welsh actors and more diversity—not just the same old faces on our screens. They've made those representations to the BBC, and they feel that that isn't being listened to. So, I think that those are the frustrations they feel. If that's something that you can talk to them more constructively about as a trade body, they would be grateful for that.

[247] **Kenneth Skates:** I understand now, yes. I have regular meetings with Equity and we discuss these very issues, especially those concerning human resources and opportunities for performance in Wales to be able to access opportunities. So, I take what you hear, but I do actually meet with Equity and I do try to represent their concerns to the BBC.

[248] **Ms Hale:** I think that's a very good point that Equity make. I think what's happened on the back of the drama production is that other shows are coming in from America, and just a point on the last big Twentieth Century Fox show that came into Wales, 50 per cent of the cast were from

Wales and were cast from Wales. I think that that is a real demonstration to the BBC that, actually, there is an opportunity to cast a lot more talent and actors from Wales than is currently happening. If the American producers can do it, there is no reason why the BBC producers can't also do it.

[249] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thank you. I just want to ask about the licence fee. I don't think we raised this yet. I wondered how you've raised your concerns about the lack of consultation over the July 2015 licence fee deal.

[250] **Kenneth Skates:** Sorry, how we've—?

[251] **Christine Chapman:** How have you raised concerns about the lack of consultation over the July 2015 licence fee deal?

[252] **Kenneth Skates:** Can we provide you with correspondence on that?

[253] **Ms Hale:** There was lots of correspondence about it.

[254] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. So, if you could—

[255] **Bethan Jenkins:** It would also be a good idea, I think, on the issue with regard to the pension obligations. That would be good to know, because obviously—

[256] **Kenneth Skates:** We'll forward you all of the correspondence on that.

[257] **Christine Chapman:** I think, obviously, we are concerned that, you know, this is not going to happen again.

[258] **Kenneth Skates:** Absolutely.

[259] **Christine Chapman:** So, yes, if you could provide us with some information—.

[260] **Kenneth Skates:** We expressed our displeasure at that and we'll provide you with the correspondence.

[261] **Christine Chapman:** That would be good. Okay. Thank you. I don't think there's any more questions. I think we've had a very good discussion this morning. So, can I thank both the Minister and your official, Natasha

Hale, for attending and answering the Members' questions? We will send you a transcript of the meeting so that you can check to see if there are any inaccuracies there. Okay. Thank you very much.

[262] **Ms Hale:** Thank you.

[263] **Kenneth Skates:** Thank you.

[264] **Christine Chapman:** We'll have a short break now. We'll reconvene at 10.35 a.m. for our next panel.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10:13 a 10:37.
The meeting adjourned between 10:13 and 10:37.*

Ymchwiliad i Adolygiad Siarter y BBC: Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 6 Inquiry into the BBC Charter Review: Evidence Session 6

[265] **Christine Chapman:** Welcome back, everyone. For this part of the meeting, we will be continuing our evidence gathering as part of our inquiry into the BBC charter review process. I'm very pleased to welcome our next panel. Could you introduce yourselves and your organisations for the record? Tom.

[266] **Professor O'Malley:** I'm Tom O'Malley. I am professor emeritus of media in the department of film, theatre and television at Aberystwyth University.

[267] **Ms Graham:** I'm Angela Graham. I'm a freelance television producer and I chair the Wales media policy group for the Institute of Welsh Affairs.

[268] **Dr McElroy:** I'm Ruth McElroy. I'm reader in media and cultural studies and director of the Centre for the Study of Media and Culture in Small Nations at the University of South Wales.

[269] **Dr Geraint:** John Geraint. I'm creative director of Green Bay Media.

[270] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Welcome to you all. You have sent some written evidence. Members will have read that evidence, so we'll go straight into questions. I just want to start off. The Welsh Government has called for a specific evaluation to be undertaken of what the BBC's obligation should be to Wales, separate to the charter review process. Do you think this is

necessary? Who'd like to start? Angela.

[271] **Ms Graham:** I welcome anything that the Welsh Government does in respect of the media in Wales. I question the timing of this review. I managed to hear some of the earlier session. It puzzles me as to why it wasn't done before now, and I think that may say something about the inadequate role that the Welsh Government takes in relation to media in general in Wales. That's not to say that—. I am not saying that they're doing nothing. I fully appreciate what they are doing. I've seen the letter that Ken Skates sent to your committee on 4 November and the negotiations with the Government at Westminster, but I just find his arguments of why it couldn't be done before unconvincing.

[272] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. We did pursue this, as you know, with the Deputy Minister earlier on. Are there any other comments from the panel on this particular point?

[273] **Professor O'Malley:** I'd endorse what's just been said and stress the importance of Wales figuring significantly in the Government's overall statement about its policy, which will come out in the White Paper in the spring. So, I do think it's important, but I do agree entirely with what has just been said.

[274] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, thank you. John.

[275] **Dr Geraint:** I think that one of the points I was trying to make in the paper that I sent in advance is that the media has a particularly powerful place in modern society. The way in which cultures, people, groups of people and individuals are represented, and the way in which they represent themselves, or the way in which they are seen on the media, has real effects in the real world. Those effects go well beyond the economic effects that we know can happen as a result of media investment. They're actually in the cultural sphere. Because Wales has been under-represented historically, I feel that that has had certain effects in the cultural sphere for the people of Wales. The BBC is the cornerstone of public service broadcasting, and the BBC above all should be addressing those concerns in a more active way than it's been doing hitherto.

[276] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thanks. Ruth, did you want to—

[277] **Dr McElroy:** I'm happy to endorse the comments so far, but also just to

emphasise that I think it's absolutely vital that the Welsh Government does engage in this way, because it's quite clear that, unless a Welsh voice from this place is made very loud and clear, there's a real danger that the BBC will not continue to understand the importance of representing the nations and regions, and will not be able to meet the challenge of understanding the changed context of devolution in the UK. If the BBC is going to have a future as a national broadcaster, it needs to understand what has changed here in Wales, but also across the rest of the UK.

[278] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Now, I've got a couple of supplementaries: Alun first, and then Bethan. Alun.

[279] **Alun Davies:** Point 11, Mr Geraint, of your paper:

[280] 'Wales needs to express a sense of outrage at this state of affairs.'

[281] You discuss at the beginning of your paper your doctoral thesis about representation. Now, I have to apologise: I haven't read your doctoral thesis. But I'm interested as to the impact that you are saying that the lack of representation has—I assume you mean 'portrayal'—in terms of the BBC's broadcasting ecology. So, it would be useful for us, I think, if we could understand what you mean by that, and, when you say 'a sense of outrage', how would you expect that to be expressed?

[282] **Dr Geraint:** Well, when the Chair of this committee and myself were teenagers in the Rhondda a little while ago—[*Laughter.*]

[283] **Alun Davies:** I didn't realise—

[284] **Dr Geraint:** —our accents were scarcely ever heard on television outside of news and current affairs. We never heard our particular experience being reflected in a rounded way on television. I think for many people—not necessarily ourselves, but for many people—that has an effect of making them feel rather like second-class citizens in their own country: that they are not the ones who speak in the accents of the privileged and of the entitled. I think it's absolutely outrageous that, all this time later—if I may, Chair—we are still having to establish why we need that rounded representation, and the BBC is still admitting that it's not doing it. That is, in my mind, a cause over which we should express our anger. Why I put it that way is, we know, from events that have happened in Scotland when BBC officials have gone up there, that a sense of outrage has been expressed. The chair of the

conference that we were at last week made, in my view, an error of saying that we are rather docile as a people, and that we don't express ourselves in terms of anger. I think our history proves otherwise. Key moments in our history prove otherwise. Indeed, the history of television, and the creation of S4C itself as a result of public protest and very skilful political lobbying, proves that we are very adept at putting our case. We need to be on the front foot here.

[285] **Alun Davies:** Thank you for that. It's very useful. Do you think that the Welsh Government should be doing more to express this sense of anger, and do you think that the Welsh Government should be demanding, if you like, a greater role in terms of holding broadcasters to account for some of what they are failing to do?

10:45

[286] **Dr Geraint:** I think the Welsh Government has done absolutely outstanding work in terms of the development of the creative industries here in an economic sense. I've been very proud, as an independent producer, to go to international television markets and be able to talk about the support that we receive, which is actually a great business advantage for us when we're trying to set up deals of co-production. What concerns me is the arguments around culture and around the effects of the media, beyond those simple economic factors. I think in some ways, from the transcripts I've seen of this committee's meetings, committee members here absolutely get that—they understand that, whereas there was an argument 10 years ago to be had about the locus of production, about where programmes were being made, particularly with regard to the BBC, we are shifting now onto the ground of portrayal and of representation and of how we tell Welsh stories on screens both here in Wales and beyond.

[287] **Christine Chapman:** Can I just ask, before Bethan comes in, Dr Geraint, you've made the point about Wales's representations, but are we any worse than the other nations of the UK, do you think, in terms of this, or are we about on an even—?

[288] **Dr Geraint:** I think there is certainly an England—call it a London—bias, if you like, in all broadcasting commissioning. I'm sure that people in Scotland and people in the north of Ireland will be expressing themselves in similar terms to mine. I think, historically, we've had a particular problem here in Wales. We've had very good resources devoted historically to Welsh

language broadcasting and television here. The S4C model has been successful, it's been justified, it's been the right thing to do. That's now under huge pressure, of course. But, in terms of English-language provision, yes, I think we've actually—and the BBC's own figures prove that—gone backwards, and we've gone backwards at a faster rate than the other nations of the UK.

[289] **Christine Chapman:** Are there any other Members who would like to comment on that? Because I've got Bethan who wants to come in as well.

[290] **Alun Davies:** I'd like you to explain, Dr Geraint, what exactly you meant by that. You talked about a bias in terms of commissioning, and I think it's important that you explain what you mean by that.

[291] **Dr Geraint:** Well, there's been a huge shift in my time in broadcasting. When I began at the BBC, the producer was king, and it often was a male figure. The producer held the power to make the kind of programmes that the producer wanted to make. Now, almost all the power is in the hands of the commissioners, the people who decide what programmes get made, the people who release the funds for those programmes to be made. One of the issues, I think, that this committee might want to address is where commissioning is based now. We've had the argument about where production is based. We have the success of Roath Lock. But all BBC commissioning at a network level is effectively done in England, and that is something which I think has unfortunate effects in terms of the representation of the whole of the United Kingdom on BBC services.

[292] **Alun Davies:** Do you think that necessarily just opening a commissioning office, essentially, here in Cardiff or Tredegar or elsewhere would fundamentally change that? If you remember, seven years ago, Channel 4's commissioning was all based up in Scotland. But you didn't see the same sort of change in terms of the commissioning spectrum, if you like, as a consequence of that.

[293] **Dr Geraint:** I'm not entirely sure that your characterisation of Channel 4 is quite right.

[294] **Alun Davies:** Okay.

[295] **Dr Geraint:** But, to the extent that it is, I think there is definitely something that happens when you force a change of behaviour upon

commissioners. Commissioners are very adept at saying, 'Oh, it all has to be about creative freedom', and 'Quotas don't work', and 'We can't do this'. I think Dr McElroy's work on Roath Lock shows that, actually, when you have a political will from the very top to change things, things change. I think a clear message, like the relocation of some commissioning outside of England, would certainly have effects.

[296] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thank you. Bethan, do you want to—?

[297] **Bethan Jenkins:** I just wanted to go back to the issue of the review that the Deputy Minister was calling for, because I think this is quite important, because I hear what you say about the fact that it may be late in the day, but my concern is: how will the charter renewal process reflect what Wales wants entirely without that review of purpose having happened now, because the Minister said about 10, 11 or 12 times that that review should happen, but yet hadn't instigated a review himself. Do you think that should have happened to create the scene whereby we could have this discussion now, and, if it doesn't happen, what will that mean, therefore, for the way in which the charter renewal process will carry forth in its negotiations? It's quite fundamental to me, because it did frame most of his response to us as a committee.

[298] **Christine Chapman:** Angela.

[299] **Ms Graham:** I think the review is one element of a number of things that could have happened, should have happened, and then it's perhaps up to you to think, you know, what you would like to happen. If I may refer to the Institute of Welsh Affairs media audit, it relates to the amount of information that the Welsh Government has at its disposal. I'm sure you're aware of the audit. It's 145 pages of facts. I heard Elan Closs Stephens, in what she said to you, say that it was about content. Yes, it is, but it's about a great deal more than content. It includes a literature review, which Ruth and colleagues did, about all policy on media since 2008. So, there's a lot more than content in this. But, anyway—.

[300] How has the Welsh Government equipped itself to speak about media issues in Wales? I think that's the broader thing behind your question about a review. Certainly, the IWA would be very concerned to point out to you that the broadcasting advisory panel, which I know the Minister referred to this morning, last met in 2013. But he said that its advice had had an influence—I can only paraphrase—on what they're doing about this current review. The

Institute of Welsh Affairs had to use a freedom of information request in order to find out anything about the activities of the broadcasting advisory panel. Now, I do understand that it's up to the—. Maybe not everything can be in the public domain, but, in that answer, we were told that it was a task and finish group. It was tasked. It finished. It last met in 2013. That's all I can—. I know who was on the panel, including Natasha Hale, who was here this morning—

[301] **Christine Chapman:** Sorry, that was the FOI—the information you had.

[302] **Ms Graham:** The freedom of information question gave us this information. Now, I can tell you that I'm a very experienced media researcher, and I came across other media researchers and journalists who, over the years, have been trying to find out about the broadcasting advisory panel, and we all failed. I know that an AM asked a question—I think it might have been Suzy Davies, but I'm not absolutely sure. Honestly, I thought I was a bad researcher, because I couldn't find out anything about it. Now, it would be interesting to know why Welsh Government felt it necessary to operate in that way.

[303] Then if I may just move on to, again, refer to our media audit, which I know that you know was done on a voluntary basis, it was not funded by the Welsh Government; it was funded by membership fees from the Institute of Welsh Affairs members and by a £3,000 grant from the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods, which is an academic funding thing that we got from Ruth. But it's important that you know that a lot of collaboration went into that audit from academics and from people in the industry. It's a real demonstration that the arts in Wales, the industry in Wales and academics in Wales think that there should be an ongoing, accurate body of information. So, it I think it's very important that I say to you on behalf of the IWA that something that you could consider and take on is whether that would be something that you require—this media monitoring capacity and media analysis capacity. You heard what the Minister said this morning about the broadcasting advisory panel.

[304] May I also say that in the IWA's summit he was asked specifically why Welsh Government had not put together some kind of resource to ensure that the service to listeners, viewers and online users is adequate? He said, 'Well, I'm open-minded about that, but I'm not sure or certain that now is the right time, given where we are with the charter review and where we are with discussions with Welsh Government about S4C. But I'm open-minded

about the potential to draw together experts and advice for Ministers and to inform the Assembly, as well. I see a role for the National Assembly to scrutinise and hold to account particularly the BBC, and AMs will have to be able to draw on expertise, so there will be a role there.'

[305] He mentioned the broadcasting advisory panel, which now, we know, doesn't exist. So, you know, how are politicians to have sensible opinions about the BBC and the media if they have to rely on ad hoc bodies that emerge and disappear? That undermines the credibility of what public politicians say, which I'm sure is not what you want. So there's a strong recommendation for a requirement for some kind of working body that enables you to know what's going on.

[306] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Ruth.

[307] **Dr McElroy:** If I could just add to that, I think there's also a need to appreciate that, across Europe, many of the challenges that we are talking about here find resonance. The European Broadcasting Union, which is based in Geneva, has media monitoring capabilities. There are models for how to do this work, and we work closely with individuals there who head their research in order to produce the kind of evidence on which policy should surely be based. We are not alone in trying to deal with some of these challenges. We should be thinking in a pan-European way about how we address them, as well as looking towards London. London might not have the answers. Other parts of Europe might.

[308] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thank you. Tom.

[309] **Professor O'Malley:** Your question was, 'Should it happen?', and the answer is, 'It should happen'. The committee may well want to make a formal request in a letter, if you haven't already done so, to Minister Skates on that matter, and a formal request to the BBC on this matter as well, plus a letter to the Secretary of State, John Whittingdale, to ask what mechanisms are in place in the Government's procedures over the next few months to ensure that it does happen. So, I'm not sure that you'll get positive responses to any of these things, but I think it needs to happen.

[310] The second thing is, you'll all be familiar with the film *Groundhog Day*, which is a very entertaining film in which a man wakes up every morning and the same day repeats itself over and over again. These arguments go back, I think, to the 1920s, which led to the build-up of BBC Wales, and John Reith's

vehement opposition to BBC Wales. If you read the evidence submitted to the Beveridge committee in 1949–51, arguments were coming from many bodies in the civil society of Wales about this. These arguments occur again in the Pilkington committee, they were there again throughout the 1970s, in the lead-up to the arguments for S4C, and they have continued ever since.

[311] There have been concessions, major and important concessions, but the root of this is the opacity with which much broadcasting policy is determined in the United Kingdom historically, which continues to be the case. In fact, since the reforms of the early 2000s—the Communications Act 2003—both Ofcom and the BBC have in a sense become less accountable in the way that their boards are structured. They're far more industry centred and far less representative of the broad body of opinion in the United Kingdom as a whole. I think it is really important to emphasise the fact that there are clear steps that can be taken by the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Government in the context of a policy that is not devolved. I'm sure Minister Skates, if pressed, would say 'at the end of the day this is not a devolved area. We do what we can, but that's it'. That doesn't seem to me to be good enough.

[312] Throughout my time living in Wales there have recurrent incidents of this kind, with committees established in an ad hoc fashion to deal with questions that really matter to people in Wales. Therefore, it seems to me very simple that one of the things that this committee could recommend is that there be a standing committee, or a body of this Assembly—after it is re-elected, obviously—which has a broad remit to monitor media issues in Wales and can advise on that. That seems to me to be fundamental, and an easy step forward, and it would not cost much at all. It would have a really serious impact, and I refer to the letter sent this week by the Culture, Media and Sport Committee in Westminster to Tony Hall requesting details about his proposition to put out up to 80 per cent of BBC content to independent production. It wasn't thought through, but the letter itself shows that there is a body with the power and the authority in Westminster to ask those questions.

[313] Finally, the second thing that I would argue is that this is a question about the governance of the BBC, and I would also argue, public service broadcasting and Ofcom generally. The BBC, it seems to me, should organise a Welsh broadcasting council with devolved powers over finance, content and commissioning to deal with questions here, and that council should be appointed in as democratic a way as possible to ensure that we do not have

any more of these groundhog days.

11:00

[314] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, thank you. Bethan, have you finished?

[315] **Bethan Jenkins:** For now.

[316] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Rhodri.

[317] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Diolch yn fawr iawn, Gadeirydd, a diolch yn fawr iawn am yr ymatebion. Diolch yn arbennig i'r Athro O'Malley; rwy'n credu eich bod chi wedi ysgrifennu'r adroddiad ar ein rhan ni, ac rwy'n gobeithio wir y byddwn ni yn cynnwys yr holl argymhellion hynny yn y dull cryfaf posibl o fewn yr adroddiad. Ond, a ydych chi mewn gwirionedd yn credu fod yna ewyllys o fewn y BBC yn gyffredinol i dderbyn y math hwn o newidiadau? Rydym yn sôn am rywbeth sydd wedi bodoli dros y rhan fwyaf o'r ganrif ddiwethaf. Roedd Elan Closs Stephens o'r ymddiriedolaeth yn dweud wrthym ni mai peth diweddar iawn oedd y cais yma am weld portread o Gymru ar y BBC, a'n bod ni wedi bod yn canolbwyntio ar S4C a diogelu S4C. Nid dyna fy atgof i o'r degawdau diwethaf; yn sicr, dros 20 mlynedd rwy'n cofio'r alwad gyson yma am weld portread. A ydych chi'n credu bod yna ewyllys o fewn y BBC i wneud hyn, a sut ydych chi yn ymateb i ddatganiad James Purnell yr wythnos diwethaf pan roedd yng Nghaerdydd yn dweud nad oes mwy o arian ar gyfer hyn yng Nghymru?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Thank you very much, Chair, and thank you for your responses. In particular, thank you to Professor O'Malley; I think you've written the report on our behalf, and I really hope that we will include all those recommendations in the strongest way possible within the report. But, in reality do you think there is a will within the BBC in general to accept these sorts of changes? We're talking about something that's existed for most of the last century. Elan Closs Stephens from the trust was telling us that it was a recent thing to see this request for a portrayal of Wales on the BBC, and that we'd been concentrating on S4C and safeguarding S4C. That isn't my memory of the last few decades; certainly, over 20 years I remember this consistent call for this portrayal. Do you think there is a will within the BBC to do this, and how do you respond to James Purnell's statement last week when he was in Cardiff that there is no more funding for this in Wales?

[318] **Dr McElroy:** Os caf ateb, mae'n anodd iawn i siarad dros y BBC yn gyfan gwbl o ran a oes yna ewyllys; rwy'n siŵr bod yna ewyllys mewn rhai rhannau o'r BBC, yn sicr. Beth sy'n anodd ydy cael gwybod a oes yna ewyllys ymysg y bobl yn Llundain sydd efo'r pŵer i wneud y penderfyniadau. Beth sydd yn amlwg ydy bod angen i'r BBC ymateb i'r gynulleidfa. Un o'r pethau sydd yn fy nharo i ydy cyn lleied rydym ni'n sôn amdan y gynulleidfa. Iddyn nhw rydym ni'n gwasanaethu. Iddyn nhw rydym ni yma nawr. Yng Nghymru y mae'r rhan fwyaf, o ran canran, o wrandawyr radio y BBC, er enghraifft—nid ydym wedi sôn am radio hyd yn hyn—a fan hyn rydych yn gweld y rhan fwyaf—eto, fel canran—o bobl yn edrych ar deledu y BBC. Os ydy'r BBC eisiau parhau, fan hyn maen nhw yn cael y bobl sydd fwyaf ffyddlon, a dweud y gwir, i ddarlledu cyhoeddus. Felly, dylai bod ewyllys yna yn sicr.

[319] Mae'n rhaid i mi ddweud fy mod i'n drysu efo Purnell a'r agwedd yma bod yn rhaid i ni benderfynu—rhaid i ni benderfynu—beth ydym ni am golli. Nid yw hynny yn ddigon da o bell ffordd, nac ydy? Mae'n rhan annatod o'r BBC eu bod nhw yn cynnig gwasanaeth i bawb dros y deyrnas, ac felly mae'n rhaid iddyn nhw gael hyd i ffordd o sut i weithredu ar hynny. Rwy'n credu bod yna le, i fynd yn ôl at beth ddywedodd John, i edrych eto ar

Dr McElroy: If I could respond, it's very difficult to speak on behalf of the BBC as a whole; I'm sure that there is a will in some parts of the BBC. But, what's difficult to find out is whether people in London who have the power to make those decisions have that will. What's clear is that the BBC does have to respond to the audience. One of the things that strikes me is how little we talk about the audience in this. We're serving them. That's why we're here now. Wales has the majority, in terms of percentage, of listeners to BBC radio, for example—we haven't talked about radio until now—and it's here that you see the majority, in terms of percentage, watching the BBC's television programmes. If the BBC wants to continue, it's here that they have the people who are most faithful to public broadcasting. So, there should be that will there.

I have to say that I'm confused by Purnell's attitude that we have to decide—we have to decide—what we want to lose. That's not good enough at all, is it? It's an inextricable part of the BBC that they offer a service to everyone across the United Kingdom, and so they have to find a way of doing that. I think there is room, to go back to what John said, to look again at commissioning processes. This isn't always something that's about funding; it is partly about how

ddulliau comisiynu. Nid yw hyn wastad yn rhywbeth o ran arian; mae'n rhannol am sut mae'r arian yn cael ei wario ar gomisiynu rhaglenni. Felly, mae yna fodd i'r BBC fod yn fwy creadigol. Mae'r BBC wedi dangos yn barod, unwaith eu bod nhw'n penderfynu bod yn rhaid iddyn nhw newid—drwy'r strategaeth '*out of London*'—maen nhw'n gallu gweithredu ar hynny. Felly, gofyn iddyn nhw sydd rhaid i gario ymlaen efo'u gwaith nhw a gweithredu o ran portread a chomisiynu, achos mae hyn yn bwysig nid yn unig ar gyfer y diwydiant creadigol yng Nghymru, er bod hynny yn bwysig dros ben, ond mae hyn yn cael effaith ar y celfyddydau a'n bywyd cyhoeddus ni i gyd. Felly, Bethan, pan roeddech yn gofyn beth yw'r gost os nad yw hyn yn digwydd, mae yna gost i'r celfyddydau yng Nghymru. Mae yna gost i'r gwasanaeth iechyd yng Nghymru. Mae yna gost i addysg, yn sicr, yng Nghymru. Nid yw hyn yn unig yn fater diwydiannol ac economaidd.

[320] **Christine Chapman:** Angela.

[321] **Ms Graham:** Thank you. I know that your inquiry is about the BBC, but just to add to what Ruth has said, it shouldn't be detached from public service broadcasting in general. In listening to the earlier sessions, I noticed there was very little discussion about radio. So, I know the inquiry is about the BBC, but it should be seen in the context of how the BBC interacts with commercial radio, for instance, with the public service work that ITV Wales is obliged to do, with S4C as a public service broadcaster, with Channel 4 in Wales and with Channel 5 as a public service—it has some remits as well. So, I would encourage you in inquiring into the BBC to see it as part of a holistic service to Wales.

[322] I also note that not very much has been said in your sessions about the cultural activities of the BBC in Wales: its orchestra, its work on diversity—it is an extremely important role model in terms of diversity in the broadcasting and media industries—its work with culture in general, its work with young people, its work with citizenship. If I could just add, again, to what Ruth has said, if I were the director of the BBC, I would try to do my job well and I would have to give resources to where there was a demand for them. So, the media industry can ask for everything it wants, but unless that demand is seen to be coming from other parts of society in Wales—and perhaps in particular from its politicians—if I were Tony Hall, I would have to put my resources where people said they wanted them. So, this is another argument for the politicians in Wales to give the media the respect and the scrutiny they need by having an ongoing basis on which to form policies. Because it's holistic—it all works together.

[323] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you, Angela. Tom.

[324] **Professor O'Malley:** Purnell implies that this is a matter of financial decision making at the BBC; however, in the summer, the Government took a major set of decisions about the financial direction of the BBC, not least of all saying that the BBC licence fee for the over-75s should be now paid out of BBC funds. Other examples of that can be cited. So, it's quite clear that questions of financial strategy, despite Mr Purnell's statement, are not just internal questions about the allocation of resources—there's a political dimension. It's clearly about governance. What needs to happen is that there should be structures of governance in place that allow for requests of the sort that we've been discussing about funding for the BBC to be made properly, transparently and openly so that the reasons for acceptance or rejection can be clearly made.

[325] Finally, the argument that this is a financial matter and not a matter of broad governance seems to me to be rather perverse coming from an organisation that is a public organisation, which has public responsibilities and which, unfortunately, does not have sufficient mechanisms for accountability within it for some of those responsibilities to be properly exercised. I would also say that about Ofcom as well.

[326] **Christine Chapman:** John, did you want to come in?

[327] **Dr Geraint:** I recognise Professor O'Malley's description of groundhog

day; I also know that the BBC can change. The director general is an honourable and distinguished public servant. He's made a statement about the lack of English-language provision in television here in particular. I'm sure he wouldn't want anyone to get the impression that he was simply raising the legitimate concerns and interests of the people of Wales in that regard as a bargaining chip during any licence fee negotiation, only to be discarded once a settlement was made. So, the committee will have an opportunity to allow him to clarify that assurance, I'm sure, next week.

[328] The BBC can change. Dr McElroy's work at Roath Lock is one example of that. That was driven not solely by any creative impulse; it was driven by some very specific targets that were set internally in the BBC. When I was at the BBC in the late 1990s, I worked with Mark Thompson, who went on to become director general, to look at the proportion of factual programmes that were commissioned outside England. We discovered, to Mark's horror, that it was less than 1 per cent at that time—less than 1 per cent of all BBC factual programming on network television came from outside England. As a result of that, we put in place a number of escalating targets, which results by now in a much healthier proportion of such programming being made outside England. The focus now, as I've said, moves on to portrayal. I think what we need to do is to ensure that, written in to the BBC's commissioning architecture are specific requirements, specific targets—measurable targets—in terms of portrayal. I think the kind of overall political pressure that Angela has been talking about in terms of ensuring that the BBC's feet are held to the fire on that is absolutely crucial at the moment.

[329] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. Rhodri.

[330] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Dim ond Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Just to come
i ddod yn ôl ar hynny, ac a gaf back on that, and may I endorse what
ategu'r hyn a ddywedodd Angela Angela Graham said about the more
Graham am yr agweddau mwy general aspects of the BBC's activity?
cyffredinol ar weithgaredd y BBC? I was in Patagonia recently when the
Roeddwn i ym Mhatagonia yn orchestra was there doing work with
ddiweddar pan oedd y gerddorfa yno the Wales youth choir, and what they
yn gwneud gwaith gyda chô achieved was amazing, and the
ieuenctid Cymru, ac roedd yr hyn a workshops they did, and going out to
gyflawnon nhw yn anhygoel, a'r the community, and that is
gweithdai roedden nhw'n gwneud, ac exceptionally important.
yn mynd allan i'r gymuned, ac mae
hynny'n eithriadol o bwysig.

[331] Rwy'n dod i'r casgliad, o'r hyn yr ydych chi'n ei ddweud, nad yw'r datganiad a ddaeth o'r ymddiriedolaeth—mai'r hyn a oedd angen ei wneud oedd newid geiriad diben cyhoeddus y BBC ar gyfer y gwledydd a'r rhanbarthau i ddweud bod angen darparu mwy o gynnwys sy'n diwallu anghenion y gwledydd a'r rhanbarthau, yn hytrach na jest eu cynrychioli nhw—yn ddigonol, a bod angen llais cryf, unedig o Gymru i bwyso. A oes yna berygl gwirioneddol, pan fo galwadau'n mynd i ddod hefyd o wledydd a rhanbarthau eraill y Deyrnas Unedig? Er enghraifft, maen nhw'n cymharu ni â'r Alban, ac mae yna lais cryf iawn yn dod o'r Alban ar hyn o bryd, yn galw am y gynrychiolaeth a'r portread hwnnw, ac mae yna berygl nad yw llais Cymru yn mynd i fod yn ddigon cryf yn y gystadleuaeth honno.

I come to the conclusion, from what you've said, that the statement that came from the trust—that what was needed was to change the wording of the BBC's public purpose for the nations and regions to say that there's a need to provide more content to meet the needs of the nations and regions, rather than merely representing them—was not adequate, and that there is a need for a strong, united voice from Wales to apply pressure. Is there a real danger, when calls are going to be coming from other countries and regions of the UK? For example, they compare us to Scotland, and there is a very strong voice coming from Scotland at the moment, calling for that representation and portrayal, and there is a danger that Wales's voice isn't going to be strong enough in that competition.

[332] **Ms Graham:** Mi wnaf ateb yn Saesneg.

Ms Graham: I'll respond in English.

[333] Well, you've got to speak and see what happens. It's a good question. But I wouldn't worry about that; I would get your act together, get the voice together and get it on platforms.

[334] **Dr Geraint:** I think it comes back to what Dr McElroy was saying about the audience, really. Actually, we're fighting on the same side here. We're fighting only for fairness, only for justice, only for what the audience needs, the audience requires, to live in a civilised society. And that is true whether you're in Newcastle or Edinburgh or in Penrhyndeudraeth. We need to make sure that our voice is heard in that debate, for sure, but it's not a squabble about how we divide up the cake. It's about, as Professor O'Malley has been saying, governance, about public purposes, about recognising that this is

more than simply an economic argument.

[335] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Any other comments before I move on to other questions?

[336] **Bethan Jenkins:** Can I just ask—

[337] **Christine Chapman:** On this part, Bethan.

[338] **Bethan Jenkins:** I'm just confused, because, last week, when Elan Closs Stephens came in, the lady that was with her said that they couldn't define what portrayal would be. Could you tell me what you think that the Welsh portrayal would mean, so that we could properly reflect Welsh life—for example, it would vary across Wales—so that we understand, if that trust recommendation came to fruition, and if checks and balances were put in place, what that would actually look like, so that we could check against that to improve this portrayal of Wales? Because it would vary substantially, I would have thought, or perhaps I'm entirely wrong.

[339] **Dr McElroy:** Can I begin with that? When was the last time you saw a programme where you heard Welsh people talking, and that wasn't Huw Edwards? When was the last time you laughed because somebody spoke in a Welsh accent, and it wasn't funny because they were speaking with a Welsh accent? When was the last time you watched a mainstream, prime-time, hospital or crime drama that was based in Wales? Portrayal is not complicated, not really. You know it when you see it, because you just feel it; you take it for granted. You can have mechanisms for understanding this, absolutely. There's lots of modes in which you can do this, and, actually, the King report used some of these very research methodologies about quantifying the number of times that you actually hear a different accent, the number of times that particular locations are used, the number of occasions when writers from Wales are the authors, either by themselves or as a team of writers. There are several measures that you can do and that can be flexible enough to recognise that different genres of television programming do representation and portrayal in different ways. Of all the problems that we've got, I don't think that's high up on the list, to be honest.

[340] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. And any other comments? Angela.

[341] **Ms Graham:** Having seen your earlier sessions, I'd just like to put on the record what it is that we're lacking. We talk about portrayal, but that's

very general. So, I would say to you—. I think Ruth has just used a very good example; I would ask you: when was the last time you saw a programme about science made in Wales? Can any of you remember seeing a television programme made in Wales about Welsh science? And yet the Welsh Government is doing its duty by the promotion and development of science. I can think of only one in the last 25 years, and that was very recently this year, when Carol Vorderman, as part of BBC Wales's north Wales documentary series, did a programme about engineering.

11:15

[342] When you bring it down to it, when did you last see agriculture dealt with in English, or children's programming from Wales in English, or religion dealt with from Wales in English? When did you last see citizens who don't have English or Welsh as their first language on screen being the subject of a documentary? There was a series about Welsh-Italians, but, you know, the more one asks oneself, 'What have I seen, and what have I heard?', the gaps come up and we really begin to see what it actually means. How many arts programmes are there? When did you last see opera from Wales? We have the Welsh National Opera. When did you last see dance from Wales on television? Once you break it down into aspects of the way we live, you begin to understand—sorry, I'm sure you already understand—why this really matters. So, I just want to get portrayal down to the nitty-gritty, and then you start—

[343] **Bethan Jenkins:** That's what I wanted as well, because I was feeling that it was quite abstract.

[344] **Ms Graham:** It's not abstract.

[345] **Dr McElroy:** It isn't abstract, and I think, also, research that I conducted with Professor Steve Blandford back in 2009–10, when we were asked by the BBC Audience Council Wales, working with the BBC Trust, at that point, where there were already concerns—and, my goodness, things have got worse since then—about the fact that, yes, it was great to see *Doctor Who* and *Torchwood* and so on, but where was this question of representation? And the audience research we did was really unanimous: people want to see themselves reflected on television screens. They value it enormously when they are reflected there. And, if anything, what the most recent Ofcom PSB review demonstrates is that that demand from audiences to be represented is increasing. Arguably, that's one of the many consequences of devolution, that there is a greater expectation that that

should be happening. So, the kind of level of disappointment, I think, from the audience is increasing, which is why I think the BBC should be responding, because that's not a position that any organisation, public or private, wants to be in.

[346] **Christine Chapman:** Before I bring Peter in, are you saying—I think you probably are, but are you saying—that there's more of a responsibility on Welsh Government to ensure that they are putting pressure on the—?

[347] **Dr McElroy:** Absolutely. As the elected representatives of Welsh citizens, I think there's a real responsibility for Welsh Government and for the National Assembly to monitor, but also to call to account. Accountability, to my mind, is absolutely key here.

[348] **Dr Geraint:** If I could take, if I may, just one small example of the long list Angela gave you: children's programming. S4C has a terrific children's service in the Welsh language. We, as a company, are one of the companies that contribute towards that. We've just been nominated for a kids' BAFTA award across the UK. The whole channel is nominated for Channel of the Year at that BAFTA UK ceremony, and yet children's programming in the English language does not exist in Wales. So, going back to where we were as teenagers, children growing up in Wales, unless they speak Welsh, don't hear themselves reflected back to themselves in the way that they should do. BBC has just said that it wants to reserve the children's area outside of BBC studios because it's concerned that it wants to go on commissioning its own in-house staff in that regard. We've found it very difficult to break into that market—it's commissioned from Salford, as it happens, up in Manchester—despite the fact that we and others have very long track record of making children's programmes in the Welsh language. There's an obvious opportunity there, I think.

[349] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, thank you. Now, I've got a number of Members. I know time is moving on very quickly. I've got Peter, then John, then Gwyn, so—.

[350] **Peter Black:** I just want to make a very quick point. To be fair, I've seen *Countryfile* and Michael Portillo's railway programme set in Wales, and quite a few programmes from Wales, but when we had the trust in front of us, they kept falling back on *Hinterland* as an example of a network programme. My point was that it was on BBC Four, and isn't it the problem that, when you do get programmes that do reflect Wales, albeit, you know, commissioned by

S4C in partnership with the BBC, they're marginalised on those lesser-known, less popular channels?

[351] **Dr McElroy:** Absolutely. I think, you know, the real measure of inclusivity is what's on BBC One in prime time. I think, actually, if you are completely absent there, that's a major, major failing.

[352] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thank you. John.

[353] **John Griffiths:** We've heard, I think, some strong arguments in terms of how Wales needs to beef up its act, as it were, in terms of stating its view on these matters and getting its voice heard and exerting pressure. One part of that, I guess—and, perhaps, on this, we're playing catch-up in terms of what devolution has brought to Wales, Chair, as perhaps we are in general in terms of devolution is quite young and we're still building capacity in all sorts of ways to develop civic society, pressure groups, you know, research capability and so on. I'm just wondering, really, whether, at the IWA conference or elsewhere, there was much discussion of how Wales as a whole might be mobilised more in terms of making its voice heard on these matters. We heard earlier that there are some mechanisms in place, feeding through viewers' and listeners' views as to what should be the content of programming, but, you know, that's obviously quite restricted and narrow. It just seems to me that civic society and others in Wales need to make their voices heard on this—and, hopefully, the citizenry as a whole. I'm sure there are various ways of doing that. People in Wales are paying their licence fees, just as they are all over the UK. Nowadays, there are all sorts of e-petitions circulating on all sorts of matters, and I'm just wondering whether you've got any sense of that sort of development—you know, a sort of broader recognition of these issues and an expression of concern within Wales.

[354] **Christine Chapman:** Shall I bring Tom in first on that one?

[355] **Professor O'Malley:** The point I made about a standing committee of the National Assembly for Wales: it wouldn't just be a group of specialists from broadcasting or academia or politics sitting around talking about things; it would have a remit to include members of civil society on a rotating basis, so that organisations were represented. It would have a remit to consult with those bodies, and it would have a remit to conduct research on top of the research that's done by Ofcom and the BBC, and to critique that research as well. So, it's a small proposal; it wouldn't change the world, but it would provide an avenue through which some of the issues that you've raised

could be systematically and regularly voiced within the context of a research base that could then be used to help with policy.

[356] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Angela.

[357] **Ms Graham:** A couple of points. It's struck me, over the years, how many of the concerns that affect the media you will also hear from people in the arts and cultural organisations. There's a great overlap there. So, the IWA has invited some of the major arts and cultural organisations in Wales to follow up on an article that David Anderson of Amgueddfa Cymru published recently called 'The Centre-Periphery Game'. I don't know if you've read it, but it's well worth reading, and it's on the IWA website, where he makes the same arguments. So, we are working to try and get those voices together at an institutional level, which is not quite what you meant, but that's important nonetheless. Also the Voice of the Listener and Viewer is an organisation that was referred to in an earlier session, and I think it's worth noting that, if you look at their response on these issues, Wales gets only the slightest mention. So, the IWA is liaising with the Voice of the Listener and Viewer to raise their level of understanding of what is going on in Wales, because that's a fruitful way of doing it. Of the group of people who are currently advising the Westminster Government on these matters, one of them is, I think, the president of the Voice of the Listener and Viewer. But since we know that Welsh issues are not high up the VLV's agenda, it's important to help them rise up. There's a great deal of work to do, and it's just enormously helpful that Welsh Government and politicians are seen to be exercised about this. So, for instance, we very much welcome Welsh Government's request for an extra £30 million recently, because that's a demonstration of understanding and commitment.

[358] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, thanks. John.

[359] **Dr Geraint:** If I may say so as well, devolution is young, but I spent most of my BBC career pre-devolution, and if it's difficult now to argue these cases, boy, was it difficult without a democratic institution like this one. I really value the privilege of coming to talk to you today. You are our democratic representatives here in Wales. You are the people of Wales in this regard. The kind of anger I was talking about, if I may, you are the people to express it. You are the people who should get behind this campaign. That's what you're here for; that's why we elect you. To have this forum is hugely valuable; it makes a huge difference. There are young people all over Wales who are not hearing their stories told, who are not seeing their lives

expressed in a rounded way—in a way that makes them feel valued in civic society, in a way that they see other people are, whether it's in America or whether it's in privileged parts elsewhere in the United Kingdom. You should be expressing their voice. That's what you're here for. That's what this debate is about.

[360] **Ms Graham:** And you do meet them. We know that you meet a wide range of people.

[361] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. I think that's a very good point. Gwyn, I think you had a question that brings—

[362] **Gwyn R. Price:** Yes. Good morning. To what extent is the BBC currently fulfilling its public purposes with regard to Wales? Other than the increase in funding, how should the next charter address the issue of BBC output in Wales?

[363] **Christine Chapman:** Who would like to start? Ruth, do you want to start?

[364] **Ms Graham:** That's a very broad question.

[365] **Dr McElroy:** It's all in there. [*Laughter.*] No. It is, I think, not clearly fulfilling all equally. To reiterate, as I said before, I think that there is evidence that the BBC is very adept at being able to change its ways when it decides that it needs to do so when it feels pressure to do so. But I think in areas of commissioning, in terms of thinking very carefully about how, with regard to radio in particular, the move to digital radio is actually managed and how the particular needs and the particular geography of Wales is taken into account in making those decisions, I'm not confident at the moment that the BBC has fully grasped that or has made sufficient tangible commitments to really understand that, before we move on to that next digital phase of radio. So, to that extent, no, I don't think it is fulfilling all of its obligations. But it is valuable that a commitment to representing the diversity of the UK, including the nations and regions specifically, is very important to have in its purposes. I think diversity, as a term alone, is too broad to be productive and helpful to us here. It rightly includes a range of other forms of representation, including gender, sexuality, ethnicity and so on. So, I think there really has to be a very precise sense of commitment to serving the nations and regions in the public purposes of the BBC.

[366] **Christine Chapman:** Angela.

[367] **Ms Graham:** I could give a very precise answer to your question if you wished me too, but it would take me some time, because we've got this list of recommendations—. I could read them out to you. I could say this, this, this, this, this, this—

[368] **Gwyn R. Price:** You've got 30 seconds. [*Laughter.*]

[369] **Ms Graham:** You can stop me when—. [*Laughter.*] Just on radio, digital audio broadcasting coverage in different parts of the UK should be assessed before any decision is taken to switch off FM or BBC Radio Wales's medium-wave frequency. Radio regulation in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland should be devolved to the Ofcom advisory committees in the nations. The abandonment of local content requirements for DAB services should be reconsidered. The Welsh Government and Ofcom should collaborate to explore the feasibility of a radio-based independently financed news consortium for Wales. The BBC should provide an opt-out news service for BBC Radio 1 and BBC Radio 2. That's a very interesting one, because BBC Radio 2 has very high listening numbers in Wales. So, why can't it have more Welsh material on it? Some part of the additional funds for BBC Wales should be devoted to strengthening its radio output and creating a flexible mix of on-demand radio output.

[370] Then we have lists of what could be done online. The Government should support the BBC's proposal for an interactive online service for Wales. We've talked about television portrayal but, of course, as you know, many people access product on devices. The iPlayer service for Wales—there's room for improvement there. BBC Wales should be accessible on the main iPlayer site's homepage. You should be able to find BBC product very easily and very quickly—that's something accessible. The Government and Ofcom should explore options for new sources of revenue that could support a contestable production fund. I could go on, you know—

[371] **Gwyn R. Price:** Yes, but with all these things you've just said there, would that mean increased funding, because increased funding seems to be a major obstacle?

11:30

[372] **Ms Graham:** Well, since I know that you all know that there have been

many funding cuts, we're starting from down here. So, of course, more funding is necessary. The Welsh Government itself has asked for extra funding. So, yes, Mr Purnell in the media summit last week could only keep saying that we need more debate and that we need to think more creatively. So, really, it's political pressure that needs to go and say, 'Okay, we want more money'. The Welsh Government has already said that. If that's not forthcoming, what does the Welsh Government want to do about that? What will be the political response to that? If the BBC keep saying, 'There is no more money'—. Mr Skates said at the summit that he was open-minded about the media advisory capacity, but there is no more money. So, there are a number of positions there. Yes, more money is needed. If there's no money, are you going to fight for reallocation of money on behalf of Wales, and where do you see the money as needing to go most? That's a discussion that has to happen.

[373] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. I'll bring in John and then Tom. John.

[374] **Dr Geraint:** Someone once said that the point is not to describe the world but to change it. But you have to have both; you have to have a description. This audit that has been done is a marvellous resource that this committee can use, I think. I heard the earlier session where you were asking for facts and figures, you were asking for correspondence, and you were asking for detail about that. That's there and available to you, together with a long list of recommendations about what we should do to change things. I really would commend this audit as something that you should consider in detail, really, as a committee.

[375] **Christine Chapman:** Before I bring Tom in, I think the point that you are making is that the cost of not doing this is this impact of not providing a voice for everyone in Wales. I think that's the general point, really, that you are making, isn't it? That's the cost. That's what we need to do, I suppose. Okay. Tom.

[376] **Professor O'Malley:** Can I just address what I think is the second part of the question, which is what happens to governance in charter renewal? It seems to me that whichever body within this Assembly or Welsh Government that has prime responsibility for monitoring the proposals in the White Paper next spring needs to look very closely at the levels and the nature of Welsh representation within the structure of governance at the BBC. I say that because my reading of the situation at present is that there is a likelihood that the trust will go; that there will be some kind of executive body to run

the BBC; and that oversight and governance of the BBC will be outsourced to some other organisation, possibly Ofcom. I think that is very, very serious if it does happen. I think it is really important that any change to the overall structure of governance at the BBC is done within the context of enhanced accountability rather than diminished accountability in the interests of executive speed and commercial decision making, as important as that is. If the BBC is to be put under Ofcom, it's a long argument, but Ofcom's governance and aims and purposes would need to be radically reformulated in order to make sure that the BBC was not being put under a body whose *raison d'être* is to promote commercial values within the media sector. It has other responsibilities as well, but that is at its core. So, in answer to your question, look carefully at what is being proposed, not just specifically about Wales but within the overall context of the new governance structures.

[377] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. I'm very conscious of time. It's a fascinating discussion, but we have got 10 minutes more and that will be the maximum. I know some Members haven't come in yet, so I want to bring those Members in. I've got Peter, Mike and Janet. So, I'll start with Peter.

[378] **Peter Black:** Just a small declaration of interest before I ask this question: I am a member of the IWA. The IWA media audit includes the recommendation that the BBC investment in Wales should increase by £30 million, which, of course, the Minister has also taken up as well. How was that figure actually arrived at?

[379] **Ms Graham:** Well, now, you'll have to ask the Welsh Government. You know—.You don't know?

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

[381] **Dr Geraint:** My understanding was that it was arrived at in discussion between some key players in the Government and some key players in the media sector.

[382] **Peter Black:** So, is it based on an assessment of what's needed in Wales or is it based on an assessment of a proportionate amount of income that the BBC spend now that we think Wales should have?

[383] **Dr Geraint:** I think, to be fair, it's based on a reasonable assessment of what it would take to address those genres in English-language television that aren't currently being addressed.

[384] **Peter Black:** Right, so it's not just 5.9 per cent or something like that, no?

[385] **Dr Geraint:** I don't think so.

[386] **Ms Graham:** No.

[387] **Peter Black:** Okay, fine.

[388] **Bethan Jenkins:** We could ask the Minister. Perhaps we could—

[389] **Christine Chapman:** Yes, we could pursue that, I think.

[390] **Peter Black:** Yes.

[391] **Christine Chapman:** I think we'll pursue that.

[392] **Peter Black:** I wasn't clear whether it was an IWA figure or a Government figure or a combined figure—

[393] **Ms Graham:** It's a Government figure.

[394] **Peter Black:** A Government figure, right, okay. Then, the other issue: the BBC Trust claim that savings that BBC Cymru Wales have had to make since 2010 are not disproportionate. I think I know the answer about what you think of that, but, you know, feel free to—*[Laughter.]*

[395] **Dr Geraint:** Again, there was a bar chart shown at the conference last week that showed that, in terms of English-language provision in television, they have been disproportionate. What tends to distort the figure is the baseline for funding in S4C, which, in my recollection, was arrived at because of a specific increase in the licence fee, way back when S4C was established, to take account of the 520 hours that the BBC was obliged to provide for S4C.

[396] **Peter Black:** Okay, right.

[397] **Christine Chapman:** Any others? No. Okay. I want to move on to Mike. I know Alun after Janet wants to—. Mike you come in first.

[398] **Mike Hedges:** I'll pass and let Alun have more time because I think he's got some very interesting points to raise.

[399] **Christine Chapman:** Well, shall I bring Janet in first because Janet hasn't been called yet? So, Janet and then—

[400] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** To be honest, the questions set for me—. I mean, for me, having taken evidence—. This is the second inquiry now, and we're no further forward than we were with the first one, but I felt today that the Minister was—. I mean, I do think we have a part of scrutinising through committee and what have you. I felt that the Minister was trying to pass the buck for some of the challenging that they should do as a Welsh Government. But my question is: how successful do the panellists think the Welsh Government has been at representing Welsh interests during the charter renewal process? I think you've touched on it, really. There needs to be far more robust challenging and accountability. I get the message, but if there's anything more you want to add on that, really—. What more should the Welsh Government be doing?

[401] **Dr McElroy:** I think one thing—. Last week, during the course of the media Summit, I was interviewed by Steve Hewlett on Radio 4's *The Media Show*, and his final question was, 'Isn't this really a problem of the Welsh politicians?', which is an annoying question because, ultimately, it would be great to be able to respond and say, 'Actually, no, because this is what Welsh Government has done: they've done this, this and this.' So, I think in a sense it's too easy for critics to sort of hear what we are arguing as a mere Welsh Celtic complaint to actually point the finger at Welsh politicians and, in a sense, you need to give us as well as the people of Wales the ammunition to say, 'No, that one really won't do. That is nowhere near adequate. That's not the point.'

[402] **Dr Geraint:** To return to an earlier point, I think the Welsh Government has done an enormous amount of spadework in helping put the creative industries here in a position to compete across the UK and internationally. The development work that's gone in, the training that has gone in, the facilities that are here now and the experience that we've built up over the decades, as well as recently, put us in an absolutely terrific position to exploit opportunities that are given to us. So, it just makes sense for that other side of the coin also to be shown at the moment.

[403] **Dr McElroy:** Yes.

[404] **Ms Graham:** Yes, I'd endorse that.

[405] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Tom.

[406] **Professor O'Malley:** I think it's perfectly understandable why the Minister and the Government have done what they've done, because it is not devolved because there is a culture, which has grown up and that I've observed over the years, which says, 'We'll go so far but no further.' So, I think that's perfectly understandable. I would have liked to have seen a much more robust position taken very early on in this process by the Welsh Assembly Government. That hasn't been the case for the kinds of reasons everybody knows, but there is an opportunity, I think, once the White Paper is published in the spring. I would certainly want to see the Welsh Government make representations to ensure that there is a lengthy consultation process after the White Paper is published so that it's not just published, a six-week debate, rubber-stamped and then just done.

[407] Within that context, the Welsh Assembly Government could involve civil society on a broader scale in responding to that document and coming up, therefore, with its own co-ordinated response to what is in the charter. Because it seems to me very odd that there's a very lengthy consultation procedure going on now and no clarity about the length of the procedure.

[408] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** I know. I was going to pick that up.

[409] **Professor O'Malley:** I do think it's important. I heard Secretary of State Whittingdale talk about this. I think it was to Steve Hewlett a little while back. He was pressed on how long there will be after the publication of a White Paper for consultation, and he was very unspecific. So, I think it's an opportunity for the Welsh Government to ask for a longer period of consultation and then, using what resources it's got, to convene elements within civil society to make a full Welsh response to the proposals, rather than the speculations, which are in the public arena.

[410] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Yes. Okay. That's good. Thank you.

[411] **Christine Chapman:** Angela.

[412] **Ms Graham:** I noticed, in Ken Skates's letter to you on 4 November, that he mentioned a new charter contract for Wales. It would be good to

know what is meant by that. Can I also mention press and online newspapers? That's changing rapidly. The BBC in Wales is a major provider of news, but the news provision from newspaper outlets is changing as well. We cannot ignore that synergy and convergence. Again, it's changing the mindsets, because we can't just talk about television; it's got to be all the platforms together. So, it's an increasingly sophisticated menu that you're having to deal with. The role of the market is very important. It would be important for politicians to have views on how well the market has served Wales and how much it hasn't. Wales is in danger of becoming supplied by an insufficient plurality of voices, isn't it? We have so many basic problems to deal with, and yet there's this additional pressure. What is the market doing for Wales and its media? What must public service do for Wales and the media?

[413] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thank you. Alun, you wanted to come in.

[414] **Alun Davies:** I very much agree with your final points there, Ms Graham. It could take us to a whole other hour of discussion and debate, at least. I'm aware that time is moving on, so can I just put two issues to you, as a panel? We spent a great deal of time this morning outlining some of the weaknesses that we've identified with current BBC operations and the way that it functions. That's fair, right and proper, but we need also to put in place not just a changed policy or a changed approach, but re-engineer the BBC. If what you've described is so fundamental, then simply changing a policy will not sufficiently change the way that the BBC operates. Professor O'Malley, you've said in your evidence to us that you would like to see a more federalised structure, with a Welsh broadcasting council, as you've described. I'd like to ask the panel two questions. First of all, in terms of the BBC itself and its structures, do you believe that that federalised model is the way forward, and how would you describe it? I know, Dr Geraint, you've said that in some ways about commissioning. Would you see that in a wider sense? If, therefore, we've got a more federalised model of operation and management of the BBC within its structures, do we also then need a more federalised accountability? At the moment, broadcasting is not devolved to Wales, although we do have—I think—a wholly legitimate interest in the subject area; but if we are to have fundamental issues of accountability built into any new structure, then that has to be reflected within a constitutional settlement as well. I don't see how it would operate without doing so. So, I'd like to ask you those two questions about the structure of the BBC, and then the structure of the accountability of the BBC.

[415] **Christine Chapman:** I think that, obviously, these are fairly fundamental questions. It would be quite good to end on this because, obviously, time is—. So, anyway, how does the panel feel about this? Is it straightforward? Tom O'Malley.

[416] **Professor O'Malley:** It's mixed up. You have a structure of accountability, which enables the restructuring of the BBC in Wales. I think it's sadly unlikely that the new charter will allow for that, but I do think it is something that can be pressed for consistently over time. I think it is not beyond the ability of people in Wales generally, and people who think more specifically about this, both to delineate what a new BBC structure might be in relation to its internal operations—and it's already got some of that, anyway, that you could build on—and to consult on that. I think, on the structures of accountability, that, too, is something that should be subject to consideration by bodies such as this and by civil society in general, and you're never going to come up with a perfect model, but you can move forward.

11:45

[417] Just to finish, I'll go back to Beveridge. It was arguments like this in Beveridge that led to the establishment in 1951 of—I think it was the Broadcasting Council for Wales, which has been sort of stripped away and removed. Back then, there was a desire to see a greater degree of devolution in accountability and decision making. I think it's even stronger today, but I'd hesitate before putting forward a clear blueprint now. I think it's something that should be consulted on, but definitely something that should be thought about, urgently.

[418] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. Angela.

[419] **Ms Graham:** I think there's the ideal; there's what's achievable in the long term and what's achievable immediately, and I think some of the achievable things could answer your second question. We haven't had time, really, to talk about a service licence for Wales and what that would look like. I think if there were time, there would be the ingredients there. There could be a mechanism by which the Assembly asked the broadcasters to submit an annual report—not the annual report of each channel, because that is always somewhat of a PR exercise, quite understandably, but an annual report done to your requirements. That would be relatively easy. That's a measure of accountability that could be worked up.

[420] So, that's one thing. If I could just remind you, the monitoring and analysis, that would increase—. That's not devolution, but it's more knowledge, more contact; it's a step in a good direction. And some mechanism to deal with issues that come up. I know I'm repeating myself, but I think it's important. Then, we'd be looking at how far you can go and what's achievable without going to devolution in terms of taking responsibility for media issues.

[421] I think it's very encouraging—I hope can speak for all of us, but tell me if not—that this whole process makes somebody like me feel much more encouraged. We can really see, in listening to your debates, that you do get it. Somebody asked us on Radio Wales last week, 'Do 'they' get it?' I thought it was an interesting question. It's wonderful to see this developing.

[422] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. Ruth.

[423] **Dr McElroy:** To my mind, this is a classic instance of where, actually, it would be really good to be able to get some evidence about how, in different countries, including in Europe—. I'm thinking particularly about Germany that has a very interesting model, and how, historically, it has had public service broadcasting that is federal and that is obliged and positively does represent the different states of Germany.

[424] So, I think that there are models that we could be looking to as part of that evolution of devolution, and understanding that it isn't likely to be one single step, but we can look at that. As I said earlier on, on Monday this week, I had the privilege of hosting colleagues from across Europe who are looking at TV production in small nations. They came from Norway, from Denmark, from Belgium and from Ireland. These are common concerns and there's an awful lot of work and policy review happening in these countries, many of which, as in Denmark, feel and have articulated a pressure to produce beyond the centre. One of the people who came to speak was the producer of a new drama, *Norskov*, which was produced because the provinces and the politicians in the provinces of Denmark place considerable pressure on the Danish Government to move beyond Copenhagen. So, we have commonality. There's a kind of shared purpose there. I think, on these models, both how we might commission but also how accountability can happen, we could be having a useful review of different models there. That might also help the BBC in its thinking.

[425] **Bethan Jenkins:** Let's hope those programmes come to Wales as well.

[426] **Dr McElroy:** Yes.

[427] **Christine Chapman:** That's useful. We were going to ask about the models, as well. John.

[428] **Dr Geraint:** Gosh, we've given the BBC a good kicking this morning, haven't we? [*Laughter.*] Look, the BBC does marvellous things. It does marvellous things in Wales and for Wales. The audience responds to that and appreciates it, and we mustn't forget that. The governance issues, we've covered, and they should be addressed, but I would say, even in the absence of a major change in governance, there are things that the BBC can and should do better. I think you do get it. I mean, you've had discussions here about structural failures in the BBC with regard to network drama commissioning and the portrayal of Wales, for example. You've put your finger on the issues. I think the BBC can be encouraged, made or required to change policy, even in the present structure, in ways that are helpful to Wales. I think it's identifying those issues as well as engaging in the broader debate.

[429] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. Well, I think, at that point, we're going to have to close this part of the session. Can I thank all of you as witnesses? I think it's been an excellent session today and it's certainly raised issues for us as Members, so thank you all for attending today. We will send you a transcript of the meeting so that you can check it for factual accuracy. So, thank you for attending.

11:51

Papurau i'w Nodi Papers to Note

[430] **Christine Chapman:** Before I close the meeting, I just want to mention to Members that there are papers to note.

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

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

Cynnig:

Motion:

*bod y pwyllgor yn penderfynu that the committee resolves to
gwahardd y cyhoedd o weddill y exclude the public from the
cyfarfod yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog remainder of the meeting in
17.42(vi).*

*accordance with Standing Order
17.42(vi).*

Cynigiwyd y cynnig.

Motion moved.

[431] **Christine Chapman:** Can I now invite the committee to move into private session to discuss the evidence?

Derbyniwyd y cynnig.

Motion agreed.

Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 11:51.

The public part of the meeting ended at 11:51.