



From the Director-General

21 February 2017

Bethan Jenkins AM
Chair, Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1NA

By email: bethan.jenkins@assembly.wales

Dear Bethan

I am writing today to update you on the work we have been doing to review our provision of programmes and services in Wales, and to share our plans to increase investment in English language programming for Wales by 50% over the next three years. We will be announcing this publicly at 5pm this evening.

Over the last Charter period, as you will know from developments like Roath Lock, the BBC transformed the amount of content it makes in Wales. The global success of BBC network production in Wales has been widely celebrated and we are determined to build on our track record to date.

But we also accept that despite the success of network production in Wales over recent years, these programmes have not done enough to reflect Wales' own stories. Last May, I set out a number of measures we are taking to improve how the BBC's network channels reflect the diversity of life across the UK. These include:

- The appointment of a network television drama commissioner for Wales
- The introduction of a BBC Writersroom team in Wales to support the development of drama and comedy writers
- The introduction of a £2m portrayal fund to support the development of network factual, drama and comedy programming that better reflects the devolved nations
- The introduction of on-screen portrayal objectives across all major network production teams, including drama, factual and comedy
- The continued commitment to produce at least 5% of network programming from Wales - a target that has been consistently exceeded over the last eight years due to the success of BBC Wales and indie network productions. In 2015/16, this investment was worth £61.7m.

While these are significant steps, I have always shared your concern - and those of the National Assembly - that funding for English language content made in Wales for a Welsh audience has dropped to unsustainable levels in recent years.

Following the formal renewal of the BBC Charter in recent weeks, I am delighted to let you know that we will be announcing later today that the BBC is to increase its investment in English-language programming for Wales by 50% in the biggest expansion of BBC Wales television output in a generation.

The additional £8.5m p.a. of new funding will deliver a step-change in programming for Wales across a wide range of genres - including comedy, entertainment, drama, factual and culture – and enable BBC Wales to reach out to younger audiences and develop its online and mobile news services. Under our plans for Wales, total investment in English language TV services is expected to reach almost £30m p.a. by 2019/20.

The new funding is expected to:

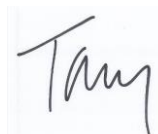
- Deliver more than 130 hours of additional programming each year across BBC One Wales, BBC Two Wales and BBC iPlayer
- Generate at least a further £5m of on-screen investment through co-production agreements with other broadcasters and producers
- Support a new BBC Wales iPlayer channel – providing a new home for Welsh programming available across all devices and in all parts of the UK.
- Boost portrayal and coverage of Wales on the BBC's network channels – with the aim that at least half the additional programming should also be broadcast on the BBC's UK network channels.
- Provide a major financial boost to the Welsh production sector with all new television funding open to full competition.

Side by side with this new content funding, you will also be aware that building work on the new BBC broadcast centre in Cardiff city centre continues apace. The development of the Central Square HQ is the largest single estates project being undertaken by the BBC in this Charter period, and I believe it has the potential to be transformative not just for BBC Wales but for the wider sector too.

It has also been terrific to see how our decision to relocate has also triggered a much wider regeneration of the area around the station. The public announcement due later this week that Cardiff University is to relocate its media and journalism centre (JOMEC) right alongside our new centre is particularly exciting, and will enable us to deepen our partnership with this vital national institution.

I hope you will welcome today's announcements and I look forward to continuing our discussions regarding the development of the media sector in Wales.

Best wishes



Tony Hall
Director-General