

National Assembly for Wales

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

9 March 2016

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



Report on the draft revised Memorandum of Understanding: BBC Charter Review

Background

1. On 10 February 2016, we agreed to consider the draft [revised Memorandum of Understanding](#) ('the revised MoU') between the UK Government, the Welsh Government and the BBC. The Assembly is listed as a party to the revised MoU, but is not a signatory. The revised MoU is annexed to this report.

2. As part of this consideration, we agreed to seek the views of stakeholders on the revised MoU.

The revised Memorandum of Understanding

3. The purpose of the revised MoU is to formalise the consultative role for the Welsh Government and National Assembly in the Charter review process. It also commits the BBC to lay annual reports and audited accounts before the Assembly and to appear before Assembly committees.

4. The revised MoU is intended to supersede an earlier MoU between the UK and Welsh Governments and the BBC in October 2015. The earlier MoU did not include provision for a consultative role for the Assembly in the Charter review.

Committee consideration

5. To assist with our inquiry, we issued a [call for evidence](#) on the revised MoU. We received responses from the [Institute of Welsh Affairs](#)' Media Policy Group and the [Centre for Media and Culture in Small Nations](#).

6. We considered the revised MoU, along with the responses, on 2 March 2016.

Our view

7. We welcome the revised MoU, and the formalising of the consultative role for the Assembly in the Charter review process.

8. We believe that the annual reports and audited accounts to be laid before the Assembly by the BBC should be Wales-specific. Our recent [report](#) of our inquiry into the BBC Charter review includes a specific recommendation on this matter. Such an arrangement would better enable scrutiny of how the BBC meets its public service broadcasting obligations to Wales.

We believe that the revised Memorandum of Understanding should be amended to provide for Wales-specific annual reports and audited accounts to be laid before the Assembly.

9. In its evidence, the IWA's Media Policy Group stated that, whilst "setting the licence fee currently lies outwith the terms of the Charter itself, (...) in practice it is the most fundamental factor in setting the parameters of debate about issues that are dealt with in the Charter". We support this view.

We believe that full and open consultation with the Welsh Government and Assembly about the setting of the licence fee should be provided for in the revised Memorandum of Understanding.