

**Project no:** Advisory Committee for Wales

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## Minutes of the 75<sup>th</sup> ACW Meeting (11 December 2019)

### For information

**Document no:** ACW 76 (3)

**Submitted to:** ACW 76

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**Project sponsor:** Eleanor Marks

**Project director:** Eleanor Marks

**Project manager:** Elinor Williams

**Date written:** 12 December 2019

#### COMMITTEE:

##### Present:

Hywel Wiliam	Chairman (HW)
Andrew Board	Member (AB)
Peter Trott	Member (PT)
Ruth McElroy	Member (RM)

##### Apologies:

David Jones	Ofcom Board Member for Wales (DJ)
Eleanor Marks	Director, Ofcom Wales (EM)
Rem Noormohamed	Member (RN)
Robert Andrews	Member (RA)

##### In Attendance

Karen Lewis	Communications Consumer Panel Member for Wales (KL)
Aled Eirug	Content Board Member for Wales (AE)
Emma McFadyen	Public Policy Nations representative (EMcF) - part
Other Ofcom Colleagues	

##### Ofcom Wales Staff:

Elinor Williams	Principal, Regulatory Affairs Wales (EW)
Joanna Davies	Senior Welsh Language Advisor (JD)
Liz Nash	Regulatory Affairs Assistant, Wales (LN)

#### Item 1: Chairman's Introduction & Apologies for Absence

1. The Chairman, Hywel Wiliam (HW), welcomed Members and Ofcom Wales staff to the 75<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ofcom Advisory Committee for Wales (ACW) held at Ofcom Wales offices and advised of apologies received.

#### Item 2: Update of Members' declaration of interests

2. No additions from Members.

### **Item 3: Minutes of the 74<sup>th</sup> Meeting & Matters Arising & actions**

3. The Minutes of the 74<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ofcom Advisory Committee for Wales were reviewed and amendments received. There was a discussion on the style of the minutes, and it was agreed these could be less detailed and in line with the style of other Committees. **ACTION – LN/JD**
4. It was noted that all actions from the from the 74<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes had been completed with one exception: A visit to the BBC Cymru Wales studios which EW confirmed would now take place in January.

### **Item 4: Chairman's Report**

5. HW gave a verbal update on the Chairman's activities since the last meeting which included:
  - Meetings with S4C; Committee Chairs annual meeting with Ofcom's Chair and Chief Executive; David Jones (Ofcom Board Member for Wales).
  - He thanked the Ofcom Wales team for a very successful away meeting in North Wales, the well-attended stakeholder reception with Ofcom Board Members and the successful Small Screen Big Debate event. He also acknowledged Ruth McElroy's excellent contribution as a speaker at the event.
  - He reported back on his and RM's contribution to the Small Screen Big Debate discussion before the Welsh Assembly's Culture Welsh Language and Communications Committee.
  - The Committee discussed the forthcoming CWLC roundtable discussion regarding devolution of broadcasting. Members would not be attending in their ACW role. ACW has not yet responded to the consultation. EW offered to forward the Committee's response to the previous Silk Commission as an aide memoire to members. **ACTION - EW**
  - HW updated members on the on-going piece of work relating to business parks and connectivity. Following successful visits, he will be compiling a paper to advise members of the findings. He thanked PT and AB for their work in this area. KL asked that this could also be fed back to the CCP to assist them in their work around micro businesses. **ACTION - HW**

### **Item 5: Ofcom Board Member for Wales**

6. There was no update available in DJ's absence.

### **Item 6: Shared Rural Network - overview**

7. The Committee received a verbal update on the SRN project. This is a government led process with Ofcom providing technical advice only. The Committee discussed statistics relating to Wales and the role of the ACW. The team advised that members could assist by influencing stakeholders when opportunity arises. The team advised the forthcoming Connected Nations Report will provide further detail and breakdown for nations/areas. HW thanked colleagues for their contribution

### **Item 7: Report – Public Policy**

8. Members had received a paper providing an update on key public policy developments since the last Committee meeting. There was a discussion around video sharing platforms

and Ofcom's possible future role as regulator. In answer to a request from the Committee for further details, the team offered to ask the relevant team to provide an update note to members. **ACTION - JH**

#### **Item 8: Report – Wales Recent Developments**

9. An update report had previously been circulated to members. EW was asked to elaborate on the current investigation by the Welsh Language Commissioner. There was a discussion on the inevitable increase on workload for the Cardiff team and concerns were raised around the lack of resources. In response Emma McFadyen advised that Ofcom is currently undertaking a review of the Ofcom Wales office and Welsh language requirements feature heavily.
10. EW drew members' attention to Welsh Government's current Next Generation Access consultation. The deadline for responses is mid-December and she will circulate a link to the report to members. **ACTION - EW**
11. EW updated the Committee on staffing issues reporting a recent recruitment process for Senior Associate in the Cardiff office has been completed and a new member of staff will join the team in the new year. Members expressed their concern about the ongoing absence of the Director Wales and were informed of an expected return to post in the new year. The Committee expressed their thanks and appreciation to EW for ably leading the team during this period.
12. HW requested more information on the item relating to IXCardiff – EW agreed to contact the Welsh Government official responsible and put members in touch. **ACTION – EW.**

#### **Item 9: Communications Consumer Panel Update**

13. An update report had previously been circulated. Issues included the launch of the CCP Hubs. The first Wales Hub was held in the Cardiff office in early December. KL reported turnout was low, but some high-profile stakeholders were in attendance. There was a good discussion around common issues of concern to vulnerable consumers. KL urged members to support the incoming Wales Panel Member and to assist in progressing this area of work. Rick Hill, current CCP Chair, will stand in for Karen until a new member is appointed and would welcome receiving any relevant updates from the Committee and Ofcom. As part of this, it was agreed that PT would be invited to attend the Wales Hub meetings. EM to liaise with CCP colleagues. **ACTION – EMcF**
14. KL also drew members' attention to the recent report by Price Waterhouse Cooper on low income households. She encouraged members to read and EMcF offered to ask CCP colleagues to circulate a link to members. **ACTION – EMcF**
15. On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked KL for her contribution to the work of the ACW and wished her well for the future

#### **Item 10: 5G and Health**

16. Colleagues from Spectrum Policy joined the meeting and had previously circulated an information paper. They explained the background to the work being carried out and how measurements are being assessed and recorded.

17. A consultation is due to be published in January.

**Item 11: Annual Plan of Work 2020/21**

18. London colleagues had previously provided an update paper. They thanked members for their valuable input and advised of current status of the draft plan. The initial publication for consultation is planned for 7 January and this year must be laid before the Welsh Government. The consultation period will be shortened to seven weeks due to the Election. The team will advise Members of the deadline for responses - probably early February.

19. The Cardiff event will be held on 29<sup>th</sup> January at the Ofcom Wales offices.

**Item 12: Report – Content Board Member for Wales**

20. AE expressed an interest in the pending BBC Studios Review and noted the importance of having an out of London perspective. More production companies are coming in from outside Wales with big budgets. This makes it difficult for local companies to compete, particularly when producing drama. This could be particularly impactful for S4C who have more limited budgets. There could be issues of portrayal and representation as well. AE suggested sourcing a detailed analysis of what's happening in the market nationally and the effect on local creative economies.

21. The question of prominence on the iPlayer for local programming was raised by RM particularly for S4C. RM also mentioned the need to focus on Channel 4 as regards its public service obligations.

**Item 13: Review of BBC News and Current Affairs**

22. Colleagues from the Content Policy Team joined the meeting. They focused on the headlines of the recent Ofcom Report on BBC News and Current Affairs. Ofcom will be engaging more with the BBC and discussing how they're going to deliver on the report's recommendations by the end of January 2020.

23. Ofcom's next BBC review in 2020 will be focusing on BBC Studios. HW noted the Committee would welcome an opportunity to have an input into this review. Content Policy Team colleagues agreed to liaise with the Committee.

**Item 14: Small Screen Big Debate (SSBD) – update**

24. Content Policy colleagues explained that the overall goal of the SSBD project is to get views from a broad range of people across the UK on PSB and priorities to consider for its future. Portrayal and representation will be considered as key themes for discussions. RM raised the position of S4C and that an understanding of the Welsh language audience is key as S4C doesn't have the large market unlike other PSBs. The Content Policy Team agreed that Welsh language broadcasting and the UK's indigenous languages in general were an important part of the SSBD plan of work.

25. The success and engagement from stakeholders for the recent Cardiff SSBD event was discussed as well as the key themes raised for further discussion. The next SSBD event will

be held in Carmarthen with Kevin Bakhurst attending. HW requested a half hour meeting before the event for ACW. **ACTION - EW**

26. HW requested that ACW members read the Small Screen, Big Debate report that he has drafted. **ACTION – ACW.**

**Item 15: Guest speaker -Professor Stephen Cushion, Director of Postgraduate Research, Cardiff University School of Journalism, Media and Culture**

27. Professor Cushion shared the findings of research undertaken by the University for Ofcom’s report on BBC News and Current Affairs. Topics included the lack of audience awareness of devolved matters, BBC’s Reality Check service and challenging extremist views effectively in news programmes. The Committee thanked Professor Cushion for sharing the research findings.

**Item 16: AOB and items for future agendas**

28. RM and AB are unable to attend the next meeting on 26 March 2020 and requested a change of date. It was suggested to reschedule between 17-19 March 2020. **ACTION- LN**

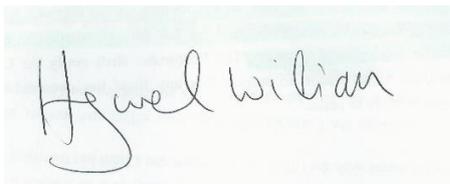
29. For the diary: Ofcom Wales Plan of Work Event -29 January 2020 at the Ofcom Wales office.

**Items 17-19: For Information**

**Date of next meeting:**

11 March 2020 – Ofcom Wales office

**Minutes of Ofcom’s Advisory Committee for Wales, 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019**



Signed ..... Date 15.04.2020.....

Hywel Wiliam, Chairman, Ofcom Advisory Committee for Wales