

S4C Authority Bulletin - December 2002

Set out below are the main points raised during the S4C Authority's discussions at its meeting held on Friday, 29 November 2002.

Publishing Viewing Figures

Now that the number of wholly Welsh speaking homes on the BARB Panel corresponded much more closely to the demographic situation in Wales, S4C had recommenced releasing viewing figures for the top twenty programmes. Viewing figures were published in *Y Cymro* on 22 November and would appear weekly therein from now on. The figures would also be available on S4C's website.

OFCOM Board

It was noted that Lord Currie, the new Chair of OFCOM, and Professor Ian Hargreaves would be coming to S4C for a meeting on 6 December 2002.

S4C's 20th Birthday Celebrations

Reference was made to the RTS dinner the previous evening. It was felt that this had been a very successful occasion and it was noted that this was the last of the formal celebration events in relation to S4C's birthday. Reference was also made to the more informal event held on 15 November. This was extremely successful and it received excellent support. In considering the programme of activities arranged to celebrate S4C's birthday, the Authority congratulated all those in the marketing/press team who had worked so hard on the events on their success.

Result of S4C's Request to the DCMS for Additional Funding

Consideration was given to the Secretary's report which notified Members of the Secretary of State's response to S4C's request for additional funding. It was noted that the Secretary of State's letter suggested that there was additional money for S4C, however, whilst this was technically correct, S4C would not receive anything apart from a rise to take account of inflation.

The Members all agreed that this was extremely disappointing news. The result of this would be the need to weigh very carefully basic questions about the ability to continue with S4C's fringe activities (e.g. sponsorship and contributions to external organisations) in addition to the effect on the programme service, when considering the budget for 2003 later in this meeting.

The Authority now needed to look anew at the best way forward for continuing with the campaign for more money for the Channel. In the meantime, S4C would make a statement with regard to the Secretary of State's decision and the Channel's financial position during the next few days.

Strategy Review

Consideration was given to further developments on implementing the strategy agreed by the Authority at its previous meeting. Specifically, officers expanded on that intended for the new schedule in 2003, especially the decision to move *Pobol y Cwm* to the body of the schedule, i.e. at 8.00, 8.30 or 9.00 pm depending on the evening. A seminar would be held for suppliers on 4 December to discuss the revised commissioning process and the new schedule. Once this had been held, information about the new schedule would be made public by the Press Office.

Corporate Plan 2003-05

Consideration was given to a paper that noted the strategic aims that should be borne in mind when considering decisions that needed to be made in respect of the budget. A revised corporate plan for 2003-05 would be presented to the Authority at its next meeting. The main thrust of the paper was to underline the importance of retaining the investment in programmes as high as possible.

Budget 2003

The Director of Finance led the Members through the budget that the Management Team was recommending for 2003. They noted those areas where cuts were being recommended, and specifically that the programme budget would be reduced by some £1 million in 2003 compared to 2002. A thorough discussion was held on that being recommended in respect of contributions to external organisation. Then discussion concentrated on the effect that the cut in the programme budget would have on the service. The 2003 schedule would be the product of the present commissioning process. It was noted that the new method of commissioning would give more flexibility to extend or cut back as required, although there would only be limited scope to use this flexibility during the next two years.

The Authority noted officers' attempts to try to protect the programme budget by cutting as much as possible across all other areas. In accepting the officers' recommendations for the budget for 2003, Members agreed that the Chief Executive and his team should be congratulated on the way that everyone had contributed to savings and cuts in order to arrive at the budget presented to the Authority.

Other Matters

In addition, the following matters were discussed/noted:

- Chief Executive's Report – Matters for information
- Programmes Report
- Financial Report
- Subtitling the BBC's programmes on S4C
- Report and Minutes of the Compliance Group meeting held on 15 November 2002
- Complaints Report
- Viewers' Hotline Report
- Research Report
- Report of Managing Director of S4C Masnachol

Confidential Matters

Minutes of Personnel and Remuneration Committee – 1 November 2002 – The minutes were accepted.