

Authority Bulletin **- June 2003**

The following summarises the main points raised during discussions held by the S4C Authority at its meeting on Friday, 23 May 2003.

Minutes of the Audit Committee

The minutes of the Audit Committee held on 25 April 2003 were accepted. Further, at the committee's request, the Authority agreed that the Audit Committee should be re-named as the 'Audit and Risk Management Committee' to reflect the fact that matters concerning risk management had been delegated to this Committee.

Review

The Chairman referred to a meeting of the Authority Members, held the previous evening, when the issue of reviewing S4C's activities was discussed. It was concluded that an internal review should be held before undertaking any external review process. The Authority itself was keen to assess, in the first place, the whole range of strategic options open to S4C at present. It was agreed to ask the Secretary of State to commission an external review of S4C to follow this internal process.

In the meantime, the officers were asked to produce a timetable along with some proposals for the main headings on which the internal review should concentrate by the next meeting of the Authority.

BAFTA Wales

S4C's success at the BAFTA Wales award ceremony, winning 18 out of 34 awards, was noted with great pleasure. All those associated with these successes were congratulated.

Memorial Service for Sir Goronwy Daniel

The Secretary was thanked for all his hard work in arranging the Memorial Service on behalf of the family of Sir Goronwy Daniel. It had been a most memorable and inspiring service. Lord Gwilym Prys-Davies, Professor Derec Llwyd Morgan, Sir John Meurig Thomas, Dr Glyn Tegai Hughes and Mr Emrys Evans participated in the service.

Assembly Service

A report was given on a breakdown of the costs of providing live coverage from the Assembly on S4C2 and an explanation was given concerning the main factors which needed to be considered. Having discussed the details, it was agreed that the Assembly service offered value for money. It was agreed to continue with providing the Assembly service, and also, that this decision should be fed into the review process.

Programmes for 2004

Consideration was given to a report on the discussions held by the commissioners in deciding upon programme commissions for 2004. It was acknowledged that the contents of the paper reflected the strategy set by the Authority last year and that it offered a sensible foundation for making decisions with regard to 2004. It was also acknowledged that the paper contained issues which the Authority would need to consider carefully during the process of producing its end of year statement with regard to its priorities concerning future commissioning rounds.

Update on the Communications Bill

Consideration was given to a paper which set out the latest developments with regard to the Communications Bill on its journey through Parliament. There was nothing specific to add to the paper's content, except to draw Members' attention to the fact that EPGs and the prominence that should be given to public broadcasters were likely to be discussed during the next fortnight.

The Relationship between S4C and OFCOM

Consideration was given to a paper which outlined the nature of the relationship between S4C Authority and OFCOM. It was specifically noted that the Authority would be required to publish a statement of programmes policy before the end of the year which would have to conform to the guidelines set by OFCOM. This statement would be considered by OFCOM when it reviewed the situation of public service broadcasting across the UK. At present, it was not easy to see how this process would develop, but it was likely that S4C would need an early discussion on this with OFCOM officers as they were appointed.

Presentation on the Attention to Regions

Elin Haf Gruffydd Jones, manager of the Monitoring Unit at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth was welcomed to the meeting. She gave a presentation on research work carried out by the Unit on the attention given to locations and regions in the Welsh language programmes produced by S4C. The Authority noted the way that Wales had been divided into regions and various areas within those regions for the purpose of this work. The research was based on a sample of two separate weeks (i.e. 7-13 October 2002 and 17-23 February 2003). Several aspects of the programme service were studied in assessing the attention given to various regions and areas. The following were noted in particular.

With regard to the attention given to the regions on news programmes, the North received 34%; Mid-Wales 26% and the South 40%. On the other hand, attention given in programmes apart from the news was as follows: North 32%, Mid-Wales 41% and the South 27%. Furthermore, with regard to drama programmes, the North received 33% attention, Mid-Wales 49%; and the South 18%. Then, with regard to all programmes except for news and drama, the situation was as follows: the North received 32% of the attention, Mid-Wales 40%; and the South 28%. Looking at the situation from the point of view of all programmes, it was seen that there was a general balance between the three regions during the two week period, when the North received 33% of the attention, Mid-Wales 37%, and the South 30%. However, it was noted that some areas within the various regions appeared frequently, (e.g. Arfon Dwyfor; Carmarthenshire, and Cardiff) whilst other areas (such Montgomeryshire, Breconshire, Radnorshire, Merionethshire, Pembrokeshire and Gwent) received very little attention at all. In spite of this, within the two weeks' sample, no area had been completely ignored.

Other Issues

The following issues were also discussed / noted:

- Chief Executive's Report – Matters for information
- Programmes Report
- Financial Report
- Complaints Report
- Report and Minutes of the Compliance Group held on 9 May 2003
- Viewers' Hotline Report
- Research Report
- Report by the Managing Director of S4C Masnachol