

## **Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee**

**6 December 2018**

### **Background Briefing on the National Broadcast Archive**

The National Broadcast Archive is a proposed £9 million project developed by the National Library of Wales. The Library is planning to request around half of the funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, £2 million has been allocated from National Library of Wales private funds, £0.5 million is to be raised from trusts and foundations (underwritten by the National Library) and £1 million has been requested from the Welsh Government. The remainder of the funding of around £0.9 million is made up of in kind contributions from the National Library, BBC Cymru Wales and volunteer time.

The Library see the NBA as a major development which would see the physical programme archive of BBC Cymru Wales, transferred to the National Library, along with the institutional archive and digitised copies of the programme archive. The BBC has agreed for the Library to make 1,000 broadcast clips available on-line, and for the entire broadcast archive to be available from four regional CLIP Centres in Cardiff, Carmarthen and Wrexham, as well as at the Library site in Aberystwyth.

Access to the BBC Cymru Wales Archive would be a major addition to the resources available to researchers from the National Library, and the Library feel that the CLIP centres would enhance the profile of the Library and extend its reach into communities across Wales.

### **Welsh Government Support**

The Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport has consistently expressed the support of the Welsh Government for the ambition of the National Library to establish a National Broadcast Archive for Wales.

However, the Minister confirmed to the President of the National Library on 20 November that the Welsh Government would not provide strategic support for the project, or make £1 million available to support the implementation of the NBA *in its current form*. This decision was based on concerns regarding the project design, a lack of clarity on the impact the NBA could have on existing Library activities during the period of the HLF project, and the costs of sustaining the archive over the long term, amounting to some £400k per annum once the HLF funding comes to an end in 2023.

Concerns regarding the NBA project have been raised with the National Library by officials, and in correspondence between the Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport and the President of the National Library over an extended period. In August, the Minister requested a thorough review of the project and where necessary a reshaping of the project to ensure its sustainability. This review was not undertaken, and although some progress has been made in discussions with BBC Cymru Wales and other partners regarding the long term sustainability, the information provided by the National Library did not address fully the concerns surrounding the project.

### **Future of the Project**

It should be noted that the physical archive has already been digitised by the BBC. The Welsh Government is willing to continue to engage with the National Library and to support the efforts of the Library to develop a robust and sustainable plan for the creation of a National Broadcast Archive, and arrangements are being made for a meeting as soon as this can be arranged. The partners are seeking to extend the submission date for the Heritage Lottery Fund bid to enable further discussions to be held and, if possible, to secure a positive outcome.