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Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Annwyl Bethan,

Thank you for your letter dated 23 October with a copy of the Committee's report on community radio in Wales.

As a Government we fully recognise the importance of the community radio sector in Wales. Community radio provides a key service for local residents. In addition to reflecting the issues affecting people and their communities, local radio stations also contribute towards improving the lives of their listeners through a variety of initiatives such as holding local events, training initiatives working with schools/universities and fundraising for local charities.

We therefore welcomed the symposium for community radio stations in Wales arranged by the Committee on 20 June. It was disappointing that the Welsh Government was not invited to attend.

I attach the Welsh Government's response to the Committee report

Yn gywir,

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Written Response by the Welsh Government to the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee's short report into community radio in Wales

December 2019

We welcome the findings and offer the following response to the recommendations in the report.

Recommendation 1. The Welsh Government should fund a community radio body for Wales. The body would offer practical support to stations, perform a representative role and co-ordinate cross station co-operation and knowledge sharing. Practical support might include performing common tasks for stations like HR, marketing or grant writing. The body should also help forge links between community stations and other interested bodies like commercial and BBC radio.

Response: Reject

The Welsh Government has not received any representations from the sector to establish a community radio body for Wales. We fully expect Ofcom to provide advice on a number of the issues outlined in this recommendation. The sector should contact Ofcom Wales officials as well as the Ofcom Board Member for Wales if it feels that appropriate support is not being provided. Ofcom of course already administers a Community Radio Fund on behalf of DCMS and as we said in our response to the Committee's report on radio last year our understanding is that Ofcom Wales officials already promote the availability of this fund to relevant community radio stations on a regular basis.

Financial Implications – None

Recommendation 2. The Welsh Government should place more government advertising, particularly public information campaigns, with Community Radio stations and provide guidance to other public sector bodies in Wales to draw their attention to the possibilities of using the sector more.

Response: Accept in Principle

As we have previously informed the Committee, the marketing and communications agencies on the Welsh Government's Framework tender to deliver campaign work across all government portfolios. The Welsh Government wrote to all agencies reminding them to include community radio stations when developing media plans for all Welsh Government campaigns. This can either be as part of the advertising mix or through suitable creative involvement of the stations, whichever is judged to provide the best audience engagement. In addition, agencies have also been asked to provide details to the Framework manager of engagement work along with advertising value they undertake on any Welsh Government campaigns. This will enable the Welsh Government to gather these details and values on a six-monthly basis.

Since our last update to the Committee on this issue in April 2019, Welsh Government Communications officials have continued to engage with its agencies and Welsh Government staff responsible for running its campaigns and purchasing advertising space. Since April 2019, the Welsh Government has and is in the process of using community stations to advertise the following campaigns:

- Organ Donation
- Childcare Offer
- Fly tipping campaign
- Children's Homelessness campaign

As part of its remit in relation to community radio, we would expect Ofcom to encourage other public bodies in Wales to make more use of the community radio sector.

Financial Implications – Any costs are drawn from existing programme budgets.

Recommendation 3. The BBC should actively engage with community radio to give access to the output and promote the use of their Local Democracy Reporting Service.

Response: Not a recommendation for the Welsh Government

This is matter for the BBC but we naturally encourage co-operation wherever possible when delivering news services, including the Local Democracy Reporting Service.

Financial Implications – None

Recommendation 4. The BBC and commercial radio should work with community radio to develop a pathway for community radio volunteers to gain experience at their radio stations as a means of developing talent across Wales.

Response: Not a recommendation for the Welsh Government

This is matter for the BBC. We welcome the co-operation that already exists between the BBC and a number of community radio stations in Wales and this should continue and possibly be expanded.

Financial Implications – None

Recommendation 5. The BBC should offer community radio stations preferential rates and first refusal when selling off radio equipment they no longer use.

Response: Not a recommendation for the Welsh Government

This is matter for the BBC to consider.

Financial Implications – None

Recommendation 6. Radio Joint Audience Research (RAJAR) should develop a less complex and cheaper audience survey that community radio could use. Stations that chose to use this new service should then be able to access the advertisers that place adverts using RAJAR ratings.

Response: Not a recommendation for the Welsh Government

It is vital that the community radio sector receives robust evidence data to ensure that it delivers appropriate services for its listeners and attracts appropriate advertising revenue. It

is for the community radio sector to discuss with RAJAR and other organisations to ensure that appropriate monitoring arrangements are developed for the sector.

Financial Implications – None

Recommendation 7. Ofcom should simplify the grant process for community radio stations.

Response: Not a recommendation for the Welsh Government

This is a matter for Ofcom. Our understanding is that Ofcom Wales already liaises closely with community radio stations in Wales. Community radio stations in Wales should raise any concerns about Ofcom's grant process with Ofcom Wales officials in the first instance, as well as the Ofcom Board Member for Wales.

Financial Implications – None

Recommendation 8. Ofcom should work with community radio to develop access for community stations to affordable Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB).

Response: Not a recommendation for the Welsh Government

The community radio sector in Wales should discuss with Ofcom how the sector could benefit from broadcasting on DAB.

Financial Implications – None