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To whom it may concern:

Submission to Ofcom as part of the PSB review 2008.

I am writing personally about potential changes to English language broadcasting in Wales.

I have worked for thirty years in Wales, London, South Africa, Poland and Spain. I have won awards including the Celtic Film Festival “Spirit of the Festival”, Royal Television Society and the Bafta Carl Foreman award for “A Way of Life”. I have worked for the BBC, ITV Wales and have run my own company for eleven years selling material to over eighty countries.

Television and broadcasting remain important but we are at a tipping point in terms of audio-visual development, production and distribution. In Wales we have a new governmental and social arrangement in devolution, which has already had enormous effects and the future production and dissemination of information, comment and entertainment is crucial to our future social and economic development. The freedom of individuals, artists and audiences to engage with their society and culture, through the medium of both languages, unhindered by hierarchical organisations established between 25 and 50 years previously in another technological age, must be paramount. This is now an opportunity to step forwards in terms of freedom and plurality, therefore the decisions we make now for future financial arrangements for Public Service content will have far-reaching consequences.

Even with the current arrangement there has been little true competition within the Welsh audio-visual industry which might have led to high quality. BBC Wales and S4C have been such dominant well-funded monopolies that they have distorted the industry culturally and economically. Both have interfered in the wider market place promoting the establishment of a small group of larger production companies. This social and market engineering further undermines opportunities for personal and artistic freedom and diminishes the quality and variety of output available to the audience. ITV Wales has, with ridiculously small budgets, attempted to assert balance and plurality with projects such as “Nuts and Bolts”, “Little White Lies”, “In the Company of Strangers”, “It’s My Shout”, “A Way of Life”, and “Pleasure Park”. But there is only so much that we could have done. When the budgets of the public service broadcasters are up to ten times higher than ours – then fairness, variety and plurality are pure fantasy.

In the future it is crucial that organisationally we do not replicate a hierarchical arrangement that is not relevant for the next twenty years. The historical development of the audio-visual culture and economy is an ongoing trajectory of increasing diversity. With a system that started with the BBC and the GPO it is now a system

being lead by consumer generated material. Over the past five years in particular the decrease in finance available for ITV Wales for commissioning a variety of production companies and the policy of consolidation promoted by S4C and BBC Wales has lead to the demise of a wide variety of production companies such as Raw Charm, Teliesyn, and Forget About it Films. The larger companies have not come to any satisfactory arrangement with these artists and entrepreneurs – Wales has become dominated by hierarchical and old-fashioned companies who work as service companies for the Public Service Broadcasters. It has decreased variety, creativity and plurality of vision and thought.

As I have written previously, the only alternative source of finance available to those small companies and individual artists, is the Film Agency for Wales. As Chairman of FAW I have seen the depth of talent which we have developed on a tiny annual budget of £650,000. Alongside the IP Fund and other commercial finance we have produced magical fiction and non-fiction material from artists like Gideon Koppel, Justin Kerrigan, Wyndham Price, and Dave Evans, and we have material of world-wide potential from Katherine Lindstrum, Catrin Clarke and Marc Evans in development. Feature documentaries such as “Little Matadors” from Gabriel Range and “Elephants of the Okavango” from Richard Waterstone. This is evidence of cultural vitality.

The Welsh film industry model provides an example of how things might proceed in the future. The multi-finance model supported by public finance for development and production, commercial finance support from the IP Fund to ensure commerciality i.e. demand driven. A distribution system, which is a mixture of commercial sales agents and distribution and publicly supported Arts Centres and Cinemas, with a DVD distribution system and ultimately internet distribution. Currently this source of plurality is supported by relatively tiny amounts of public funding. However it is a model for further development.

Revised Competitive Funding – the broadly competitive fund appears to me to be the option which might provoke the greatest diversity of supply, variety of programming and material which will appeal to a plural audience, and which might spread a plurality of opinion and information. This is the option which might protect our democracy.

If we take the film model as a starting point then it might be worth looking at the elements required to provide a vital and sustainable sector which can provide the plurality which we all seek.

Currently there is no support for the artists and entrepreneurs who risk everything on their first film and then spend, for instance in Justin Kerrigan’s case, eight years to make his second film. FAW is currently commissioning research looking at options for economic support and models to establish sustainability.

2. Distribution

ITV Wales provided an opportunity for finance and distribution for films such as “A Way of Life”, “The Testimony of Taliesin Jones”, and “Little White Lies”. This does not exist at ITV, BBC and S4C. Therefore we need space on all those channels, in

cinemas, DVD, internet, mobile phone and IPTV. During the transition period the new sector will need access to the traditional TV channels and financial support to engage with the new opportunities.

FAW is engaged with the UK Film Council and Nesta research pilot into digital distribution and we are currently scoping the Welsh requirements for the development of film business and Innovators.

3. Education and Training

The ITV Wales element of the jigsaw is being removed at a time when new opportunities are become a reality. We the broadcasters and FAW are currently engaging with Skillset to help develop the next generation of artists and entrepreneurs who will drive the succession forwards.

FAW is bringing EAVE to Wales next year.

The Option 4 fund will have access to development production and distribution funding accessible on a competitive basis and it must also have access to broadcast space and other distribution space. In the early years it must, alongside partners in CBW, FAW, WMF, Nesta etc develop and open up the market place to ensure that the material provided is known to the populace, and that it is regulated to be fair but argumentative.

I am concerned that the UK solution will be seen as support for Channel 4. This would be disastrous for Wales, not a “tailored solution and an attempt to provide a “one solution fits all” which runs counter to the purpose of the devolution.

It is not just that for 20 years and more Channel 4 have shown no interest in Wales. On this basis alone we can see that C4 is making promises to Wales because of its present crisis. The history of London based broadcasting companies and corporations is not good – I have lived through about five takeovers at ITV Wales and none of them have lived up to early promises. It would be a hierarchical structure, London based and metropolitan focussed – there would be nothing organisationally within the structure that would ensure the best interest of Wales.

The new sector is essentially devolved, in the widest sense of the word, and therefore the “tailored solution” required for Wales which will ensure plurality of vision and original argument, entertainment and information, has to be the establishment of a competitive fund with access to all forms of distribution.

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