



From the Director-General

14 November 2016

Bethan Jenkins AM
Chair of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee
The National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1NA

By email c/o: Martha.DaGamaHowells@assembly.wales

Dear Bethan,

I'm writing to you following the Committee meeting earlier this month, and in response to the question you posed about *BBC Breakfast's* coverage, particularly of business news and the possibility of introducing a wider range of specialist correspondents to the programme.

It is my view that business news is an integral part of the *Breakfast* package. The business stories that have broken overnight or are still developing while *Breakfast* is on air are many and varied, of real interest to our audience, and relevant and significant to the day's news agenda. Our business correspondent, Steph McGovern regularly travels the UK, covering different business angles and industry-related stories. The *Breakfast* team are rightly proud of their record on bringing news from all over the country to its audience.

While we are able to provide a focus on business related stories throughout the programme, I would argue that isn't to the detriment of other news stories and items. *Breakfast* goes to great lengths to highlight stories from BBC correspondents and specialists both here in the UK and around the world. It also regularly features specialist network correspondents in areas such as Health and Education as well as specialist correspondents from across the nations to ensure a UK-wide perspective. Another integral part of its editorial remit is the national and regional opt outs, such as *Wales Today*, which are broadcast twice every hour.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Hall', written over a horizontal line.

Tony Hall
Director-General

**Transcript from Evidence to Welsh Language and Communications Committee 02
Nov 2016**

[133] **Bethan Jenkins:** Can I ask a question, given that we have the director general of the BBC here? On breakfast television, it does intrigue me somewhat why there's always a business correspondent on every day—and I've had this from Twitter and Facebook and others I've spoken to—when there's no other correspondent on, perhaps, industrial relations, or on other elements of importance to the UK. I watch it quite regularly in the mornings, and not only do I not see Welsh people—either politicians down the screen to the reporters, or people on the sofa from Wales—but then you have that discussion that is mostly on business each morning, and not on other themes. I wondered who made that decision. There is that lack of an outlook, perhaps, on other aspects of news.

[134] **Lord Hall:** It's a really interesting point. I think our business coverage really matters—

[135] **Bethan Jenkins:** Oh, I'm not saying it doesn't matter, but it's quite focused on business quite regularly.

[136] **Lord Hall:** I think that's important, but the broader point you make I will talk to the *Breakfast* team about, which is, I think, two things. One is: are there other areas of specialism we should be running with? One of the great things about the BBC is you have this extraordinary range of specialism. I start the day rather differently; I listen to Radio 4 and *Farming Today* and I was delighted yesterday morning to hear about scallop trawling going on off the Welsh coast. Not so great for the scallops, I don't think, from the piece, but nonetheless that sort of sense of really using the newsgathering power of the organisation right around the organisation. So, that's a good point that I'll raise with them and I'll drop you a note about it, because I think it's a well-made point.