



Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

Cofnod y Trafodion The Record of Proceedings

[Y Pwyllgor Diwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chyfathrebu](#)

[The Culture, Welsh Language and
Communications Committee](#)

28/09/2017

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Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal, cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd. Lle y mae cyfranwyr wedi darparu cywiriadau i'w dystiolaeth, nodir y rheini yn y trawsgrifiad.

The proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee. In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation is included. Where contributors have supplied corrections to their evidence, these are noted in the transcript.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Hannah Blythyn Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur Labour
Suzy Davies Bywgraffiad Biography	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Bethan Jenkins Bywgraffiad Biography	Plaid Cymru (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) The Party of Wales (Committee Chair)
Dai Lloyd Bywgraffiad Biography	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Jeremy Miles Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur Labour
Lee Waters Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur Labour

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Alan Edmunds	Cyfarwyddwr Golygyddol Cyhoeddiadau Rhanbarthol Trinity Mirror Editorial director for Trinity Mirror Regionals
Alison Gow	Prif Olygydd (Digidol) Rhanbarthol Trinity Mirror Editor in Chief (Digital) Trinity Mirror Regionals

Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol
National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance

Lowri Harries	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Manon Huws	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol Legal Adviser

Adam Vaughan

Ail Glerc
Second Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:34.

The meeting began at 09:34.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau, Dirprwyon a Datgan Buddiannau **Introductions, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest**

[1] **Bethan Jenkins:** Diolch a chroeso i Bwyllgor Diwylliant, Gymraeg a Chyfathrebu, a chroeso i aelodau'r pwyllgor a'r tystion yma heddiw. Os bydd larwm tân, dylai pawb adael yr ystafell drwy'r allanfeydd tân penodol a dilyn cyfarwyddiadau'r tywyswyr a'r staff, ond ni ddisgwylir prawf heddiw. A all pawb droi eu ffonau symudol i fod yn dawel? Rydym ni'n gweithredu'n ddwyieithog fel Cynulliad, ac felly bydd cyfieithiad ar y pryd ac addasu'r sain i bobl sy'n drwm eu clyw. Cyfieithu ar y pryd sydd ar gael ar sianel 1, a chwyddo'r sain ar sianel 0. Nid oes angen cyffwrdd â'r botymau ar y meicroffonau gan y gall hwn amharu ar y system, a gofalwch fod y golau coch ymlaen cyn dechrau siarad. A oes gan unrhyw Aelod rhywbeth i'w ddatgan? Na. Diolch yn fawr iawn. Ymddiheuriadau a dirprwyon: ymddiheuriadau gan Dawn Bowden a Neil Hamilton, ac nid oes dirprwyon ar eu rhan yma heddiw.

Bethan Jenkins: Thank you and welcome to the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee, and welcome to members of the committee and witnesses here today. If there is a fire alarm, everybody should follow the ushers and leave the room, but we're not expecting a test today. Could everybody switch their phones to silent? We operate bilingually as an Assembly, and therefore simultaneous translation and sound amplification is available. Translation is on channel 1 and sound amplification on channel 0. There is no need to touch the buttons on the microphones because this could impair the sound system, and please ensure that the red light is on before you start speaking. Are there any declarations of interest? No. Thank you very much. Apologies and substitutions: apologies from Dawn Bowden and Neil Hamilton, and there are no substitutions on their behalf today.

09:35

Newyddiaduraeth Newyddion yng Nghymru: Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 13

News Journalism in Wales: Evidence Session 13

[2] **Bethan Jenkins:** Symudwn ymlaen, felly, at eitem 2: newyddiaduraeth newyddion yng Nghymru, sesiwn dystiolaeth 13. Diben yr eitem yma yw cael tystiolaeth yn rhan o ymchwiliad y pwyllgor i newyddiaduraeth newyddion yng Nghymru. Mae Aelodau wedi cytuno ar y cwestiynau o flaen llaw. Diolch i'r tystion: Alan Edmunds, cyfarwyddwr golygyddol cyhoeddiadau rhanbarthol Trinity Mirror; ac Alison Gow, prif olygydd digidol rhanbarthol Trinity Mirror. Yn amlwg, rŷm ni wedi cael Paul Rowland yma, sydd yn cynrychioli'r hyn sydd yn digwydd yng Nghymru, ond roeddem yn credu ei bod yn bwysig i gael Trinity Mirror yma heddiw i ateb cwestiynau, efallai ar lefel Brydeinig, felly diolch yn fawr ichi am ddod i mewn. Bydd y cwestiwn cyntaf gen i, os yw hynny'n iawn—bydd Aelodau'n gofyn cwestiynau wrth inni fynd ymlaen: a ydych chi'n cytuno â'r hyn y mae Ofcom yn ei ddweud, sef nad yw Cymru'n cael ei gwasanaethu yr un mor gryf ag ardaloedd eraill o'r Deyrnas Unedig o ran y wasg yn gyffredinol, nid yn unig yn ysgrifenedig, ond drwy ddarlledu hefyd? A ydych chi'n cytuno â'r *analysis* hwnnw?

Bethan Jenkins: We move on, therefore, to item 2: news journalism in Wales, evidence session 13. The purpose of this item is to receive evidence as part of the committee's inquiry into news journalism in Wales. Members have agreed the questions beforehand. Thank you to the witnesses: Alan Edmunds, editorial director for Trinity Mirror regionals; and Alison Gow, editor in chief, digital, Trinity Mirror regionals. Clearly, we have had the attendance of Paul Rowland here, who represents what's happening in Wales, but we thought it was important to have Trinity Mirror here today to answer questions, possibly on a UK level, so thank you very much for coming in. The first question will be from me, if that's okay—Members will be asking questions as we go on: do you agree with what Ofcom has said, namely that Wales is served less comprehensively than other UK nations in terms of the media in general, not only as print media but also broadcasting? Do you agree with that analysis?

[3] **Mr Edmunds:** If I may go first, Alison, I think it partly depends—. I think generally I do. So, if you compare it with Scotland, which is the comparison that's normally made, Scotland has always had a stronger

national print media, in terms of the number of titles. I think that, from a broadcasting perspective, I don't think the issue is as strong. I think BBC Wales serves Wales very well. I think that, in the digital age, Wales is not so different from the rest of the UK. So, WalesOnline, for example, is very strong, is one of the largest websites in the UK and performs very well. BBC Wales is very strong. So, I think that in terms of the digital provision, that is certainly less of an issue.

[4] **Bethan Jenkins:** Unrhyw **Bethan Jenkins:** Any comments?
sylwadau?

[5] **Ms Gow:** From my point of view, in the north, where I am, we've got, obviously, the BBC, S4C, *The Daily Post* and various weeklies. So, I think that we have quite decent service there, and certainly I know that I have, discretely, 11 news sources just for my village and area alone. I would say that one of the big problems that you have in Wales is the geography of it. There's so much country in between, it can be difficult for that kind of blanket coverage to happen. Just getting reporters around the place can be a challenge because it can take some time to get to stories. So, you might find that some, especially the smaller titles, might struggle to send to—. For example, if you're in Pembrokeshire, you may not come up here and cover stories. So, I think there might be deficits around that. I wouldn't say that we have news deserts in the way that, you know, you see news deserts in some of Europe and the USA, though.

[6] **Bethan Jenkins:** Pam ydych chi'n credu bod yr Alban yn well o ran print? Byddai'n ddiddorol clywed hynny. Ac, a ydych chi'n credu bod y diwydiant yn gryf yng Nghymru o'i gymharu â gweddill y Deyrnas Unedig? Neu a fydddech yn cytuno â rhai pobl sy'n dweud ei fod yn mynd yn wannach o ran teitlau lleol yn hynny o beth?

Bethan Jenkins: Why do you think that Scotland is better served in terms of print? It would be interesting to hear your views on that. Do you think that the industry is strong in Wales, as compared to the rest of the UK? Or, would you agree with those people who say that it is becoming weakened in terms of local titles particularly?

[7] **Mr Edmunds:** The Scottish issue has always been raised in Wales. It's just historically different. Scotland has had a range of national titles or Scottish editions of national titles historically, where Wales hasn't. That's just simply been the way it's always been. It's partly due to reader demand, and partly due, as Alison said, to geography. It's very difficult to explain, but it's

where we are. In terms of the current state, the issues facing the press in Wales are no different at all from the issues facing the printed press in the rest of the UK and, in fact, around the world. There is just nothing that singles Wales out as any different or being any more vulnerable than anywhere else.

[8] **Bethan Jenkins:** Rŷm ni wedi **Bethan Jenkins:** We've heard from Dr clywed gan Dr Andy Williams o Andy Williams from Cardiff Brifysgol Caerdydd, sydd wedi bod yn University, who has been discussing trafod effaith strategaethau digidol er the impact of digital news strategies mwyn targedu pobl sydd yn darllen in targeting those people who access neu sydd yn mynd i ddarllen news online. He said: newyddion ar-lein. Dywedodd:

[9] 'A potential problem with such performance-related data is that it might further de-prioritise coverage of areas of public life which many in the audience might not *be interested in*, but which is nonetheless squarely *in the public interest*.'

[10] I ba raddau y mae hynny'n To what extent is that an accurate ddadansoddiad cywir yn eich barn analysis in your view? Paul Rowland chi? Roedd Paul Rowland wedi dweud said on Twitter yesterday: ar trydar ddoe:

[11] What we're aiming to do is use all the information available to us to give our readers what they want, when and where they want it.

[12] A ydy hynny'n meddwl wedyn Does that mean that stories that fod straeon sydd, efallai, ddim mor aren't, perhaps, as popular and are boblogaidd, sydd yn fwy difrifol, am more serious and politically based wleidyddiaeth, er enghraifft, ddim aren't as prominent, because you are yno cymaint oherwydd eich bod chi'n looking at what people want to click edrych ar beth mae pobl eisiau? on? Maybe they're not looking for Efallai nad ydyn nhw eisiau'r straeon those particular stories. penodol hynny.

[13] **Mr Edmunds:** Shall I go first?

[14] **Ms Gow:** Yes.

[15] **Mr Edmunds:** Briefly, then I'll hand over to Alison. I would endorse

what Paul said. Again, I see no difference from the printed media. We have a mixture of stories. So, if you take a newspaper on any given day, you would have a story, usually about health, education or politics, alongside maybe a story that is much lighter or is to do with films or culture. Online is no different. If you look at WalesOnline, for example, in the last year, our greatest growth in audience has been around the issues of health and education. So, politics, education and health are growing, in terms of unique users, faster than the average growth of users on the site. So, that shows there's a very engaged audience for those issues and we deliver a lot of content on it.

[16] **Bethan Jenkins:** Suzy.

[17] **Suzy Davies:** Just on this, because obviously you're regional editors, you mentioned that headlines could be health, education or politics, all of which are devolved. Obviously, Trinity Mirror national tends to report through a very English lens, what's your experience of how readers differentiate between the two, because they're likely to be buying Trinity Mirror papers regionally and obviously the national dailies?

[18] **Mr Edmunds:** I think there's been a lot of publicity, I would say, in the last couple of years, certainly around the BBC trying to make it clearer, when they were dealing with health stories and education, in saying what the impact in Wales was as compared to England or Scotland. It depends which titles you look at, how often that's an issue, but if you take the *Mirror* for example and its current campaign on presumed consent for organ donation, it's constantly referencing Wales and what Wales has done and urging England to follow. So, I think that there are some great examples of a greater national awareness within the national media of devolved issues. I think that that has improved.

[19] **Suzy Davies:** It may be improved, I still don't think it's exemplar, but thank you for your answer. Did you want to add?

[20] **Ms Gow:** I would say one of the things that we try and do in digital is put ourselves in the position of the readers. So that you think, 'Well, why would they read a political story?' It's always about what are the people within it. So, for example, with Betsi Cadwaladr and the special baby unit, people really understood that it was something that was a devolved issue because they were deeply involved in it. So, I think the best that we can do as journalists is to ensure that we give clear examples, that the stories are

explicit and we make ourselves try and look at it from a reader point of view, rather than coming at it from a political point of view. I think you can't make somebody read a political story if they don't want to. You have to try and find a way in for them.

[21] **Suzy Davies:** I accept that, actually. Thank you.

[22] **Bethan Jenkins:** Mae'r **Bethan Jenkins:** The final question I cwestiwn olaf sydd gen i ynglŷn â'r have is on an issue that we raised in mater y gwnaethom ni ei godi y tro the past with Paul Rowland, in the diwethaf gyda Paul Rowland, yng context of the fact that you currently nghyd-destun y ffaith eich bod chi ar make most of your revenue from hyn o bryd yn gwneud y rhelyw o'ch print editions, but you have a digital arian o'r print, ond eto i gyd mae first editorial policy, although that gennych chi bolisi digidol yn gyntaf, doesn't bring in the same revenue in er nad yw hynny yn dod â'r un terms of financial support through refeniw o ran y gefnogaeth ariannol online advertising. Can you expand ar lein o ran hysbysebion. A allwch upon the rationale for doing that and chi ehangu ar y *rationale* o wneud when do you think you will strike a hynny a phryd ydych chi'n credu y balance where print advertising bydd balans yn dod pan fydd yr comes in line with online advertising? hysbysiadau print yn dod mewn lein gyda'r hysbysiadau ar lein?

[23] **Mr Edmunds:** To answer the second part of your question first, obviously, from our point of view, we are driving digital. So, on growth, we would hope to reach that point that you've referred as soon as we can, but it takes time. But, we put a lot of effort and a lot of thought into our strategy to grow audience and to grow revenue. The reason that we're digital first is because it's audience-driven, so, for example, if there's a crash on a main road, then you have people wanting to know instantly, particularly if that affects them, what that is and what the details are. So, you have to create that content for digital because digital is immediate.

09:45

[24] You can't create it for print first and then say, 'Well, what will we now put online?' So, the nature of the audience demand is that digital content has to be created straight away. So, the natural process that you would create journalistically in that is to create it for digital first and then print follows.

[25] **Bethan Jenkins:** Ocê, so nid digidol yn gyntaf oherwydd eich bod chi'n blaenoriaethu hynny fel cysyniad, ond ei flaenoriaethu oherwydd natur pob dydd y broses o greu newyddion. Mae hynny bach yn wahanol i beth yr oeddem yn credu yr oeddech yn ceisio ei ddweud yn flaenorol.

Bethan Jenkins: Okay, so it's not digital first because you're prioritising that as a concept, but you're prioritising it because of the everyday nature of news generation. That's slightly different to what you were trying to say previously.

[26] **Mr Edmunds:** I don't think it's—. For us, print is very important. For us, it's all about the content that we create and then we've got various platforms on which we can deliver it to our readers and advertisers. So, we just have to organise ourselves in the best way to do that most effectively for that audience.

[27] **Ms Gow:** People will shift towards the most convenient platform for them, I think. So, you can't, as a business, make a move after an audience has gone somewhere. If they move onto a new platform, they want to find familiar and known brands that they trust there when they get there. So, if you've got people who are moving on to Twitter, they will look for WalesOnline or they'll look for the *Daily Post* because they know them in print, and we need to have presences on there and be giving them content digitally to be able to build that audience.

[28] So, I think you have got different strands in the business: print is one audience, and people will read that because they get a certain experience and they have a need state for print, which we meet, but then, digitally, we've got the websites with the live blogs and the instant stories, and then you've got your social media platforms as well, and people want it from that. I was just saying to somebody yesterday that, if you've got a video story, it's really hard to tell that in print; you have to tell it for the platform that it's appropriate for and then look at ways of translating it and how it would connect to your print audience, because we are going to have a print audience for a long time. I think you will have people who will want some kind of printed element always, because it's so convenient. If you drop your phone down the loo, then you've had it.

[29] **Bethan Jenkins:** Or it breaks, like mine did yesterday. Jeremy.

[30] **Jeremy Miles:** I have some experience of working for a media

organisation that is headquartered in London, but has subsidiaries in other parts of the UK and internationally, and some of the operational tensions that arise within that. My experience is that subsidiary companies often feel that too many decisions are centralised in the parent company or in the HQ. We've heard evidence that that is true of Trinity Mirror. What's your feeling on that?

[31] **Mr Edmunds:** Any particular—

[32] **Jeremy Miles:** Budgeting, staffing and overall policies—the critical stuff.

[33] **Mr Edmunds:** I've seen it from both sides. So, there's a certain amount of direction from the centre over certain issues, which you would expect, and a lot of autonomy as well. If you look at the nature and the history of how the company has come together, and last year, we became bigger when we acquired the Local World titles, we've integrated those titles well into the company and what we have to do, obviously, is look for the opportunities to share the advantages of our scale and to share excellence. So, when you've got a lot of regional titles and regional websites, then there's a lot of talent across the company, and a big part of the roles that Alison and I play in it is trying to make sure that really good things happening in one place are repeated and shared in another. We're very, very good at that.

[34] **Jeremy Miles:** In terms of staffing—let's take that as an example—what sort of pressure is there or what discussions would happen between the parent company and a regional business in relation to the overall staff budgets or head count or the deployment of staff? How do those conversations play out?

[35] **Mr Edmunds:** So, as editorial director, each of the regions has an editor-in-chief, who reports to me and I have those discussions with them. So, not all regions take identical approaches. So, there are some things we do where there's a lot of commonality, and then there are some things we do that are changed more, determined by the nature of the portfolio, for example, or the marketplace.

[36] **Jeremy Miles:** And how does it work in general terms? Is there a sort of overall budget for each individual region or company within the group, and then they allocate that as they wish, or is there more of a directive from the parent company?

[37] **Mr Edmunds:** It will depend on what the specifics are. So, for example, one editor in chief might spend more on freelance, have a bigger freelance budget, and another might have a much smaller freelance budget. So, to try to answer your question, within their different budgets, they may spend that in quite different ways, depending on the nature of their portfolio and marketplaces, I would say.

[38] **Jeremy Miles:** And the proportion of an operating budget for an individual region or however you organise your units within the group, as it were—the decisions on how that budget is allocated are done locally or centrally?

[39] **Mr Edmunds:** That's over discussion and time. So, that depends on different companies' revenues and so on. So, that's just a budgeting process that would happen by discussion with each region.

[40] **Jeremy Miles:** Okay. So, it's a kind of consultation process, is it?

[41] **Mr Edmunds:** Yes.

[42] **Jeremy Miles:** Okay. So, it's not agreed between the two. It's essentially a decision taken at the centre, but with consultation locally.

[43] **Mr Edmunds:** Well, I think it's a joint decision taken. So, obviously, ultimately, we come to a final decision, but each editor in chief, with me, would agree their budget.

[44] **Jeremy Miles:** Okay. If you look at the staff incomes of specialist journalists employed at Trinity and their organisations over the last five years, what has the trend been in term of head count?

[45] **Mr Edmunds:** Obviously, we've had to—. I mean, I've had to—. I've been in this building explaining why we've had to cut our costs over the last decade because of falling revenues as the market changes. We're very open about that.

[46] **Jeremy Miles:** What sort of reduction has that amounted to in percentage terms?

[47] **Mr Edmunds:** It will depend. Again, it will differ by region. So, in terms

of editorial labour, it's very difficult for me to say. It would depend on what period and what region, but, you know, obviously—

[48] **Jeremy Miles:** Say overall in the last five years.

[49] **Mr Edmunds:** I couldn't give you a percentage, because I wouldn't know if that was accurate, I'm afraid.

[50] **Jeremy Miles:** That's fine. We've heard evidence that actually doing that is critical to maintaining profitability. Is that a fair assumption?

[51] **Mr Edmunds:** Yes, that's right. It has been, yes. We've been very conscious of the fact that I think that we've needed, in editorial, to be more efficient. And as the audience has changed, then we've had to look at our editorial resource because audience demands have changed significantly around the world. So, it's about if you carry on doing the same things in the same way, and delivering the news in the way that you always have done, then, obviously, you will just lose audience. So, what we've done very successfully in Trinity Mirror is that we've grown our audience online very substantially. And that's been a big success.

[52] **Jeremy Miles:** Okay, thank you.

[53] **Bethan Jenkins:** Diolch. Lee Waters.

[54] **Lee Waters:** Clearly, you're existing within a very fierce commercial environment, and you are primarily a commercial business. But you're a different business because your activities have a public interest impact. I sense, talking to you and your colleagues over a number of years, that there's a great deal of frustration that politicians and policy makers don't really understand the nature of the pressure that you're under in your business. Can you tell me a little bit about what you think is generally misunderstood or not properly grasped from the challenges you face?

[55] **Mr Edmunds:** If I go first, and I know Alison—. I don't feel that too strongly. I think it's improved. I think we've been very open to dialogue. I think I've been here four or five times in this sort of forum, and we've invited many of you and your colleagues into the building to show you, really, how we've had to change. I think probably one of the frustrations has been that, over time, the idea that somehow digital offers a less serious forum for news, and I just don't accept that at all. So, if you look at WalesOnline, which,

obviously, we've talked about quite a lot today, it won the website of the year in the Regional Press Awards, it was commended for its tremendous online coverage of the Aberfan anniversary, and the skilful way that the new content, some of the new interviews that had never been heard before—. And I think the frustration is sometimes the sense that digital platforms are not suitable for providing great, serious journalism, because I think they can be. There are some fantastically talented journalists in our newsrooms, who are doing some amazingly clever things online, and engaging very well with their audience. And Wales has been at the forefront of that. So, I do think, in Wales, WalesOnline has been a huge success over the last 10 years, and I think that that's really important for Wales, because if you only had BBC Wales as a national news platform, then that, obviously, would not be the ideal place for plurality. So, the fact that our strategy was to build WalesOnline—. We didn't do the *Western Mail* online and we didn't do *South Wales Echo* online; we built WalesOnline and we created a national platform for news. I think that's been really important for Wales.

[56] **Ms Gow:** It's really hard following Alan, because he's very eloquent. For me, the thing I think is, I've worked in local journalism for over 20 years and I think politicians generally, at a local level, really do understand the pressures that newsrooms face, and understand their journalists. And that's probably why there is a strong feeling around, 'Why are you changing this and cutting that?' because we are a part of the community. So, I completely understand that. The thing that worries me particularly is actually the way that the public mood has changed towards news, the false news and the misinformation and the kind of 'read the headline and then go straight to the comments' and the confirmation bias that has really started to become a big issue recently. It's probably in the past two or three years where you find that people don't actually read the facts. So, to come back to what you were saying about politics, actually, people will actively not read a story because they will have a view, and they will then, for example—. If you look at Facebook posts, you can see how the conversation becomes an echo chamber, and it's really—. I think one of the great problems that we face is trying to burst filter bubbles around that and try and engage people in conversations.

[57] If you look at WalesOnline, on Facebook, you probably see quite often that they will go in and say, basically, 'That's not what the story's about. It's this—'. So, I think, from an understanding point of view—. I mean, I've had politicians in the *Daily Post* newsroom when I was editor there. That was standard. They'd come and see how the live blog ran, how the live desk

worked et cetera, and I think they went away with a better understanding. But we always say that people can come in. The Liverpool *Echo* has a rota for readers who just sign up and say, 'I want to come in and sit in your conference on Tuesday, the seventeenth'. I think we would always extend invites to people, but we shouldn't just extend invites; I think we should be receptive to people just saying, 'I'd like to come in', and more of that is what I would like to do.

[58] **Lee Waters:** Okay. You've moved a little away from where I was hoping to focus on. You said earlier that you didn't believe that there were any news deserts in existence, but inevitably, because of the commercial pressures you've discussed, and in particular the decline in classifieds at the local level in particular, the way that the news of an area is covered has changed significantly in the last 20 or 30 years. Do you feel that there are areas that are no longer sufficiently covered by anybody because of the commercial pressures that you face?

[59] **Ms Gow:** I'm sure that that's going to be the case, you know, if I'm in—

[60] **Lee Waters:** I don't just mean geographically, I mean, for example, courts and councils are often mentioned—

[61] **Ms Gow:** Yes, I see what you mean.

[62] **Lee Waters:** Are there gaps because of the changing nature of the market?

[63] **Ms Gow:** You're not going to have the luxury anymore of a reporter going and sitting in a magistrates' court for four hours on the off chance that something will happen. That just—. It was a nice morning, but it wasn't particularly a productive one, necessarily, although it's the serendipity, sometimes, that you miss from that. So, where we've tried to be more clever is to actually look at the court list, and the courts have been really brilliant since they've been putting their court lists on electronic media so we can look and go through it, but I would say, you're not going to have—. I did Whitland council. Somebody sat in Whitland council covering it is not going to be happening at the same level, I would suggest, that it once did.

[64] **Mr Edmunds:** I agree. It's a good point you make and it'll be interesting to see how hyperlocal coverage evolves over the next few years.

In the end, I think it will come down, largely, to whether there's a demand to read the coverage. And where there's demand, usually, someone supplies it. So, at the minute, we're in the middle of the change, really.

[65] **Lee Waters:** Sure, but I'm just, you know—. Clearly, the issue that concerns us is the gap that opens up between you as a commercial provider following reader demand, and the analytics you have allow you to do that in a far more refined way now, but that leaves a gap that may leave the public interest not properly filled, and I just wonder if you have any thoughts about how that might be filled if it's not going to be by you anymore.

10:00

[66] **Mr Edmunds:** It might leave a gap, but I sometimes think there was a lot of content produced in the past that people didn't read, clearly. It was done that way because it always had been done that way. So, ultimately, I think it will depend on demand, and if there is a demand to read it, I think that supply will arrive. It just depends on the business model. And because the media is changing so much, new business models are emerging.

[67] **Lee Waters:** But not everything's about the commercial imperative, though, is it? Clearly, from a public interest point of view, there are some things that may not have a high readership, but are important to be challenged and scrutinised and reported. So, how's that going to be done? Because, obviously, the hyperlocal market is very patchy; it's not curated.

[68] **Mr Edmunds:** In other words, if there's no business model for it then there would have to be some sort of public provision, wouldn't there, if it was deemed necessary. Because if there is no business model, then, obviously, that's not sustainable.

[69] **Lee Waters:** Indeed, and that's what I'm trying to edge towards, really. Do you think there is a case for some kind of non-market provision to cover those areas the market has retreated from?

[70] **Mr Edmunds:** I'm not convinced, because, although I take your point that sometimes it can be in the public interest, I think you can—a lot of hyperlocal information, where it really matters and really is in the public interest, does get covered. So, for example, if there is a big issue at a very local level that is in the public interest, a big story, it will be covered by the mainstream, generally, in my view. If it's hyperlocal and only of interest in

that very local area, but you could still classify that as in the public interest, then I think that's the more difficult question to answer.

[71] **Lee Waters:** Let me just use this for a local example, then, because you mentioned the local titles that had been successfully integrated into the business more generally, and I think in terms of my personal experience of the *Llanelli Star*, a strong newspaper, a very strong local brand, has significant shrinking of reporters as reporters have moved around the titles—I understand why that's happened. The relationship between the local newspaper and the local council, for example, is not a particularly critical or challenging one, and now there is a hyperlocal emerging that is providing some tension in that relationship, but you don't often find those stories where there is local interest that Facebook would pick up on, for example, locally, finding their way into the *Llanelli Star*. From a commercial point of view, that's an example that is working perfectly well, the synergies in the business are being explored, but in terms of local challenge and accountability, there is a space there.

[72] **Mr Edmunds:** I think I can only answer with what I just said, really. I think it—

[73] **Lee Waters:** You're relaxed about that.

[74] **Mr Edmunds:** I think it depends on the level of it. So, hyper, very local issues may not be covered if there's a very low demand to read them, but I still think if you look at the role that we play in challenging authority, it's enormous.

[75] **Lee Waters:** Well, it's patchy.

[76] **Mr Edmunds:** Well, around Britain, it's enormous.

[77] **Lee Waters:** I'm talking about local, in particular, here.

[78] **Mr Edmunds:** Where it's not so enormous, maybe at the very hyperlocal level, it's still significant.

[79] **Lee Waters:** Well, I'm not convinced about that. Just finally, one of the things we've discussed previously as a committee is the potential provision of a wire service that could be tendered. We're going to talk about the BBC scheme in a minute. But an investment of money to allow a wire service, for

example, of courts and councils that then would be freely available to both mainstream and hyperlocal to use. If that was available free of charge, is that something you would find useful?

[80] **Mr Edmunds:** We're open-minded to everything, so I would have to understand the idea and the concept behind it in more detail—

[81] **Lee Waters:** But it's not a complicated idea. You subscribe to wire news services—

[82] **Mr Edmunds:** It would depend on the arrangement and who provided it. But—

[83] **Lee Waters:** That would be for discussion, but the concept of—if for perfectly legitimate commercial reasons you were no longer able to cover Whitland council or Llanelli magistrates' court on a Wednesday morning, if there was a publicly funded but arm's-length-run wire service, which could be run by PA or it could be run by Trinity Mirror under contract, do you think that would be a useful addition to the ecology?

[84] **Mr Edmunds:** Yes, potentially. I'd be very open-minded. It would be a very new idea, wouldn't it, but as we've shown with the BBC, you know, we're very open minded to engage in everything as news provision changes.

[85] **Lee Waters:** Just briefly, we heard from Enders Analysis last week of, in Canada, a subscription model emerging for a more quality niche end of the market, which was proving successful. I think it was called *La Presse*. Is that something that Trinity Mirror has looked at as a potential—if there's a market there for that?

[86] **Mr Edmunds:** We look at everything, obviously. We're always looking at what's happening around the world. Alison, you've just been to America—

[87] **Ms Gow:** Yes.

[88] **Mr Edmunds:** Do you want to say—? Looking at what they're doing.

[89] **Ms Gow:** Yes. I've just been out to a conference of about 150 journalists and Trinity Mirror was the only local, regional publisher that was represented there, just to try and see what others are doing in that space. And, actually, to come back to what you were saying about the wire service,

AP are doing an automated writing experiment at the moment, which I think's really interesting, and you'll probably see, emerging either in PA or Reuters here, within the next 18 months or so, where they are automatically generating market reports and stuff, and it may well be that that translates more into areas—council minutes, for example—being automatically turned into stories that are there for people who then want to access them. So, what you're saying about wire is coming down the road and it may actually not need Assembly intervention; it might be created anyway. But I've wandered from the topic again. I keep doing that, I'm sorry.

[90] **Lee Waters:** The subscription model I was asking about.

[91] **Ms Gow:** Yes. So—

[92] **Bethan Jenkins:** We need to move on.

[93] **Ms Gow:** Okay. *La Presse* tries everything. About every two years, they try something, it's hailed a success and then they change their minds and they try something else.

[94] **Lee Waters:** Right. In a fast-failure environment, that's not a bad thing.

[95] **Ms Gow:** No, but I don't agree with fast failure; I agree with fast learning. I don't think that you should then wipe off a huge amount of money on one thing and go, 'Oh well, fail fast, on to the next thing'. It's like, 'Think about it and look at where your audience is going and see if that's going to be—. Actually, is the subscription model something that people will want?' I hope that it works for them and then they'll have done the experiment and maybe we can learn from it.

[96] **Lee Waters:** Have you learned from their previous failures?

[97] **Ms Gow:** iPad apps are definitely not the way to go. Yes.

[98] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay. Suzy Davies.

[99] **Suzy Davies:** Yes. Just going back to the local accountability—*[Inaudible.]*—what you made about not being able to attend court and all the rest of it, local authorities, at least, are under some pressure and have had finance to live stream certain of their meetings. What has your organisation

done to make sure that they're tapping into that so that they don't actually have to disappear off to Whitland court, but it's running as background in the office and suddenly you hear something that's worth listening to?

[100] **Ms Gow:** Live streaming is a really great initiative. I think, where councils do it, it makes an enormous difference. It's not that you—. You would still want to go there in person for the big committee meetings, because part of it is actually the contacts and the conversations that you have while you're there. But a live stream that isn't just for journalists, but actually opens a chamber up for anybody who wants to watch it—.

[101] **Suzy Davies:** Yes. It's a double-edged sword, though, because, if there are people who're interested in listening directly, they're then going to be asking you why you're not covering it.

[102] **Ms Gow:** We have to have an answer for that, to be honest, though. If we've got audiences coming to us and saying, 'Why wasn't this in the paper?' or 'Why wasn't this online?' then you need to have a word with yourself and make sure that you are looking at that topic and covering it, because there's interest.

[103] **Suzy Davies:** Okay. I was just trying to get a sense of whether the live streaming thing has permeated your actual offices.

[104] **Ms Gow:** Yes. We very much use it.

[105] **Suzy Davies:** Okay, thanks.

[106] **Bethan Jenkins:** Hannah.

[107] **Hannah Blythyn:** Thanks. You touched briefly on—*[Inaudible.]*—and the role of hyperlocals in your previous answer and I'm sure that colleagues have got more questions on that. But I want to perhaps turn to how the idea of collaboration can perhaps best support news journalism in the future within Wales. The south Wales editor-in-chief of Trinity Mirror, Paul Rowland, previously suggested to this committee establishing

[108] 'some form of syndication network that allows hyperlocals to gain a revenue stream from the nationals or organisations like ours'.

[109] I was wondering what you made of that suggestion.

[110] **Mr Edmunds:** I saw that in Paul's evidence. It would be something, wouldn't it, that we'd just have to sit down and talk about to see what's feasible. When I was talking about hyperlocal earlier, what I was stressing was, 'What about finding a new business model?' and I think that's what it's all about. Hyperlocal is all about what the business model could be.

[111] **Ms Gow:** If a hyperlocal had a story, for example, that they wanted to work on and didn't have necessarily the resources—whether that's people or time or money—to put to it, I would be really open to working with them, and that story then getting syndicated, because we have a syndication department, and making sure that there was a revenue share around that. I think that we're not in—. I've always worked in a collaborative space, and I think most of our newsrooms do, and I would be keen to see that happen. We haven't got a formal syndication agreement with hyperlocals, but it's certainly one that we could have a talk about. I know that it arose from this committee, didn't it? Paul came away with the view of doing that, and I think that that's a good thing.

[112] **Hannah Blythyn:** So, there's the potential there, but there aren't any plans as yet.

[113] **Mr Edmunds:** No.

[114] **Ms Gow:** No.

[115] **Hannah Blythyn:** Do you think—? Trinity Mirror publications do have a market dominance in towns and cities across Wales. Do you think that places more of an obligation on you to collaborate to support news across the country?

[116] **Mr Edmunds:** I think, generally speaking, there's good collaboration in Wales. There's no reason not to collaborate and, actually, journalists tend to be pretty collaborative. We encourage collaboration, absolutely. So, there are no issues around our willingness to collaborate to strengthen the Welsh media whatsoever.

[117] **Bethan Jenkins:** Can I just ask, on the back of what Hannah said—? You said there are no plans as yet. Who's going to initiate that conversation with hyperlocals, or within hyperlocals? Because, obviously, Paul Rowland was sitting beside a hyperlocal. Do we just wait? Is there going to be a discussion

ongoing therefore on that, or is it something that we may have to put in a recommendation for people to act on?

[118] **Mr Edmunds:** What we would do—. I mean, we've spoken to Paul about it, and we would carry on discussions. I wouldn't make any pledges, because we've got to just discuss it to see what the options are.

[119] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay. We'll keep an eye open for that. Suzy.

[120] **Suzy Davies:** I want to talk a bit more about hyperlocals, but I just want to examine that last point you made about collaboration is your modus operandi, really. Certainly, as politicians, our received wisdom is that the press want exclusives, that, actually, they don't want to talk together. Where does that disinformation come from?

[121] **Mr Edmunds:** That's different. You always have fierce competition between the press, but you also get a lot of collaboration behind the scenes. You'll see it, for example, where sports reporters, will—you know, at that level—help each other out on a story, but also you get collaboration, I think, in terms of when you want to challenge things. So, I've been involved, over many years, in challenging legal decisions that have been made with other media outlets where you will come together to raise a challenge, and on big issues around, for example, public notices and trying to keep public notices in papers.

[122] **Suzy Davies:** I'll come to that now.

[123] **Mr Edmunds:** When I was in Wales I brought all the Welsh media together on that. So, there are many instances where we collaborate on really important issues. Obviously, what you're referencing is the natural competition that you get in the media. I was talking more from a sort of business perspective.

[124] **Suzy Davies:** I think it is important though, because, if your hyperlocal has a story, it would strike me that they might be a bit nervous or suspicious of coming to a bigger organisation to handle it, lest it wander out of their control.

[125] **Mr Edmunds:** I don't think they would be.

[126] **Suzy Davies:** Okay. Well, that's good to hear. Just to go on to statutory

notices, then, you'll have heard in evidence here that the hyperlocals would love to get their hands on some of the money that relates to these notices, perhaps unsurprisingly. We've also heard from Enders that the balance of advertising revenue is changing—it's moving away from print into various parts of digital, not necessarily your online equivalents. What kind of effect would it have on Trinity Mirror's interest in local titles if hyperlocals were allowed to take that statutory money away? Within the business model, they'll be contributing nothing, will they, in terms of commercial advertising.

[127] **Mr Edmunds:** When you say—. I don't quite understand the question.

[128] **Suzy Davies:** Let's say the *Glamorgan Gazette*, just as a random example, suddenly loses its, let's call it, monopoly on statutory notices and all that money goes off to hyperlocals. How would these local Trinity Mirror titles make any money?

[129] **Mr Edmunds:** Oh, I see. In the discussions we've had about them, obviously you would expect me to very much want institutions in Wales to spend money with us. I think I've said before that—. When I've given evidence about why we've cut jobs back and then someone has said, 'Well, we're also analysing how much we spend with you', well, obviously, if public institutions spend much less with us, then that's going to reduce our revenue. So, naturally, if we lose significant revenue, then we inevitably have to look at our costs, but—

10:15

[130] **Suzy Davies:** And the viability of those titles?

[131] **Mr Edmunds:** Well, the viability of the titles depends on a multitude of different factors. That would just be part of it.

[132] **Suzy Davies:** A significant part?

[133] **Mr Edmunds:** It will depend by title. It's extremely variable, so it will depend by title.

[134] **Suzy Davies:** All right, I take that; I accept that element of it, but, if you've got a newspaper that's not being widely read and is losing a fortune, it's going.

[135] **Mr Edmunds:** Well, you know, I can't generalise—

[136] **Suzy Davies:** I can. [*Laughter.*]

[137] **Mr Edmunds:** We have so many titles that it will depend on—. So, what's important is—. If you look at print, print will be there as long as there's a demand for it and it's a profitable business model. So, you have to look at that in the case of each print title. And our aim is obviously to make sure they thrive.

[138] **Suzy Davies:** Thank you.

[139] **Ms Gow:** With that, if you see—. I'm not saying this is the case, but, for example, if you looked at your Glamorgan population and the analytics showed—. If that audience was migrating online, so you might well have a corresponding drop in print, but they're coming with you to the digital brands, then you've still got a business. If they're not, then you've got a problem.

[140] **Suzy Davies:** And that local connection is kept. Because that's partly what's behind my question, that you lose local connections and journalistic expertise as well.

[141] **Ms Gow:** Yes. The local connection is—. You can't do your job if you don't have boots on the ground and people who are talking to journalists, so the local connection, from our point of view, it's absolutely key and we are restructuring now to look at—not in Wales at the moment; we're doing pilots in other parts of the country—how do we get journalists out into communities more and not sat at desks.

[142] **Suzy Davies:** No, I understand that as well. Are you worried about the migration of advertising revenues to Google and Facebook?

[143] **Ms Gow:** I think that's always going to be an issue, yes. Google and Facebook are at great pains to tell us how valuable we are and how much they want us to be involved in—

[144] **Suzy Davies:** We understand they steal your content as well, according to—. I think we heard evidence from Martin Shipton that—

[145] **Ms Gow:** I saw that. I don't really understand that, because, at the end

of the day, Google's a tech company; it's not a media publisher, and it doesn't have—. It amplifies our content; I wouldn't say it steals it, but, you know—

[146] **Suzy Davies:** Maybe I put words in his mouth.

[147] **Ms Gow:** No, I did see that.

[148] **Suzy Davies:** Oh right. Was that your view as well—'Well, it's there and we've just got to deal with it', more or less?

[149] **Mr Edmunds:** We're in a fiercely competitive environment and that's the nature of the work we do.

[150] **Suzy Davies:** Okay. Well let me take you back, finally, Chair, to the hyperlocals. Having established that they're not going to be in competition with you exactly, and that there is a space for collaboration, I'm assuming that you've got no real objection to them being supported in some kind of way, and we've had suggestions that hyperlocals could have start-up funding or, potentially, tax breaks. I don't know what our levers over that are. What is your view on some of the suggestions that have come forward for supporting hyperlocals, notwithstanding the potential competition on statutory notices?

[151] **Mr Edmunds:** You know, it depends. Always, it's about the detail of propositions. I mean, you know, it depends what you class as 'hyperlocal' as well, because that's a term that's widely used. What does it mean? My focus, I think, has been on, if we look at what's happened in Wales—so, lots of weekly titles—I think the important thing has been are we serving those communities digitally. So, the task that we set ourselves was to say, 'Well, what would be awful would be, as print sales decline and you live in an area where the weekly sales have fallen dramatically, is if we are not saying, "Here's a great digital service" on top of it, if we're not delivering that'. That's why WalesOnline has been successful. Our coverage of Wales, north and south, from WalesOnline is very well spread and we've had a lot of success, I think, in that migration. That needs to be recognised. I think it's really important, which is why I'm repeating it. We say that WalesOnline has been a huge success and I do urge you to recognise that.

[152] **Suzy Davies:** Okay, thank you. Alison, anything—

[153] **Lee Waters:** I'm not sure anyone is denying that, are they?

[154] **Mr Edmunds:** No, but I think, often, questions, which are fine, start from the premise that it's not as good as print. And I think digital is every bit as good as print and has some tremendous advantages over it from an interaction with the audience opportunity that we've exploited very well. And, you know, we have great engagement with the audience in Wales.

[155] **Bethan Jenkins:** What I've heard more is that the *Evening Post*, like what Lee said about the *Llanelli Star*—those online sites disappearing in brand is something that has consumed the minds of some readers. I won't give examples of stories, but for some stories in Swansea you have to go into various parts of the website and it's not there in your face, whereas when you used to go to the *Evening Post* website, because that was the face of South Wales West, it would just be there on the front page. As opposed to saying WalesOnline isn't a good website and that it doesn't provide that—that digital isn't as good as print—it's not that that I've heard; it's the mega website bringing in all the different areas that once existed as standalones.

[156] **Mr Edmunds:** But WalesOnline had more audience from Swansea than the Swansea website had before they merged, and our users tend not to come in through the homepage.

[157] **Mr Edmunds:** So, if you want Swansea news, you know where to come into WalesOnline to get that, and on our app you can configure it so that that is very personalised, and most of our audience does not come through the homepage where they see different stories prioritised; they come in a way that they would normally come in, or through social media.

[158] **Ms Gow:** Yes, search is really important. There are a lot of people who will search 'Swansea Evening Post' just in the URL and that will take them directly to the Swansea section on the website, but then social media, you know, direct traffic from that, is really one of the biggest drivers we have, and then the onus is on us to make sure that within an article there are routes to related content around it so people can go on a journey. I wouldn't say that the homepage is dead, but the homepage isn't a destination for people in the way that it was five years ago. So, we just have to—. It keeps us on our toes, definitely.

[159] **Suzy Davies:** Can I just ask one quick one on this? What sort of conversations have you had with the Welsh Government about the roll-out of superfast broadband? Because you're increasing the emphasis on digital and

obviously losing readers in other parts of the print media. Which bit of Wales aren't you getting to now?

[160] **Ms Gow:** The connectivity in Wales is a big issue for us, and it is factored in quite often to conversations that we have around growth. I don't have broadband at home; I have an Assembly grant for satellite broadband because I can't get it—and thank you very much. So, I am not unique in that, and I think that when you're looking at how we grow digital in north Wales particularly, and I would say areas—

[161] **Suzy Davies:** Are you speaking to the Welsh Government as a company from time to time?

[162] **Ms Gow:** Well, we have done, yes, definitely, and the *Daily Post* has got a very strong campaign that's been running for a good five years around mobile connectivity and also broadband.

[163] **Suzy Davies:** Okay, thank you. 'Yes' was the answer I was after.

[164] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay. Dai Lloyd—BBC.

[165] **Dai Lloyd:** Diolch, Gadeirydd. Rydw i'n ymwybodol iawn o'r amser, felly dim ond cwpwl o gwestiynau byr ynglŷn â chynlluniau newyddiaduraeth leol y BBC. Nawr, rydw i'n clywed beth rydych chi'n ei ddweud ynglŷn â phawb yn cydweithio â'i gilydd, rydych chi'n berfffaith agored i syniadau, ac eto mae yna gystadleuaeth. Ond a allaf i jest ofyn ynglŷn â, yn benodol, cynlluniau newyddiaduraeth leol y BBC? A oes gennych chi gynlluniau i fod yn rhan o'r broses yna? Pam fydddech chi, gan eich bod chi'n gwmni mor fawr ta beth? Rydw i'n derbyn beth rydych chi'n ei ddweud ynglŷn â phawb yn cydweithio, ac mae pawb yn hapus gyda'i gilydd ac ati, ond yn y lle cyntaf, ynglŷn â

Dai Lloyd: Thank you, Chair. I'm very aware of the time, so just a couple of brief questions on the BBC local journalism plans. I'm hearing what you're saying regarding how everybody's collaborating together and sharing ideas, and yet there is competition. But I'll just ask specifically about the BBC's local journalism plans: do you have any plan to be part of that process? Why would you, because you're such a large company anyway? I accept what you say about everybody collaborating and everybody's content, but in the first place, regarding the BBC's plan, why would you want to be part of it? Do you have plans to be part of it? And what aspects of the BBC's plans would be

chynllun y BBC, pam fydddech chi most helpful to you?
eisiau bod yn rhan ohono fe? A oes
gennych chi gynlluniau i fod yn rhan
ohono fe? A pha agweddau o gynllun
y BBC fyddai fwyaf defnyddiol i chi?

[166] **Mr Edmunds:** We've been heavily involved with the BBC throughout the discussion. So, David Higginson, who unfortunately wasn't able to be here today, has been our representative on that. You know, we're in that stage now where you bid, I think, until 13 October, and we're looking at that. So, we're extremely engaged in it and fully supportive of it.

[167] **Dai Lloyd:** Yn amlwg, rhan o'r **Dai Lloyd:** Clearly, part of that plan is cynllun yna ydy'r gallu i gael the ability to have additional gohebyddion ychwanegol—staff reporters—additional staff. Are there ychwanegol. A oes yna unrhyw any implications, if you followed oblygiadau, os bydddech chi'n dilyn y those plans, for the staff that you cynlluniau yna, i'r staff rydych chi'n employ?
eu cyflogi, felly?

[168] **Mr Edmunds:** No, because it's obviously to cover very specific areas of content. It's a very clear remit for this project. We've been involved in all the discussions from the beginning to reaching this point. The BBC, I think, has done a great job in working with regional media on it, and we're very confident about it and very excited about it.

[169] **Dai Lloyd:** Diolch am hynny. A **Dai Lloyd:** Thank you for that. Do you ydych chi'n credu bod yna fodd i think that there is a way to improve wella ar gynllun y BBC o gwbl? Ynteu the BBC's plan at all? Or are you a ydych chi yn berffaith fodlon a completely content about all these rhadlon braf ynglŷn â'r cynlluniau i plans as they are?
gyd fel y maen nhw?

[170] **Mr Edmunds:** As I said, we've been involved, so we've had a lot of input. We're very pleased with what's come out of it, so we've got no issues.

[171] **Dai Lloyd:** Océ, diolch yn fawr. **Dai Lloyd:** Okay, thank you.

[172] **Bethan Jenkins:** I just want to be devil's advocate. You said earlier, in response to—I think it was—Lee again, that you felt that you were confident that you were covering what you could, and where you weren't covering

things like hyperlocal, then that was something, potentially, that wasn't within your commercial remit to do. So, why do you need to be part of this BBC scheme when it seems to me that you're quite comfortable about what you are covering under the current auspices of Media Wales? What do you need the BBC—this scheme—for? Could it not be for hyperlocals who feel that they may be squeezed out of this process to get involved in, more than yourselves, who are already, potentially, strong enough in that sense?

[173] **Mr Edmunds:** My point to Lee, when we were looking at hyperlocal, was what the business model was and that the bigger stories tended to be covered. What the BBC scheme affords, obviously, is the opportunity to produce even more content from local councils and so on, which is a great opportunity to cover them in great detail and to—

[174] **Bethan Jenkins:** If they're that important, why are you not doing them now anyway, regardless of the BBC?

[175] **Mr Edmunds:** Well, we do, but we don't do it to that extent. The whole philosophy of it has been, hasn't it, to increase the coverage of those and to make sure, in coming years, that it's very strong. So, that's what it's designed to do, and we've been part of the discussion, looking at what we do cover and what the opportunity is. I mean, I don't want to give the impression, for one moment, that we're comfortable about anything. We spend most days beating ourselves up about what we're not doing, not patting ourselves on the back about what we're doing well. Our culture, every day, is about the stories we could have done better, or about the stories someone else got that we missed.

[176] **Bethan Jenkins:** What I'm trying to get to is you did have staff that were doing these things. Some of them don't exist anymore. You did have processes whereby there were local titles. Even if they do still exist, they don't have offices in their local areas. Are you therefore using the BBC and that potential relationship to do the work that you should actually be doing anyway?

[177] **Mr Edmunds:** What you're characterising there is the way that local media has changed everywhere over a long period. That's why this BBC scheme has come in, isn't? Because it's about looking at the current media marketplace, the current provision of news, and seeing how collaboration with the BBC can improve it.

[178] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay.

[179] **Ms Gow:** Just really quickly, the other thing it will afford is: instead of that agonising over the rota as to who can spend a half day in the council meeting and then a full day writing up, that person would go and cover it, but they can do something else. If there is another reporter sat in there doing that, then you have a reporter who is freed up to do other things. That's just me with my practical head on, really. We do need to cover these things. We have to be represented. The local community, as somebody said, they would very quickly challenge us if we weren't covering councils, and we will still be going. You might end up, sometimes, with two people sat in a council meeting, because we can't just withdraw from these fields. You can't seed the ground to say, 'Well, the BBC's going to that.' You're still going to want to go for contact reasons.

[180] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay. If there are no more questions, then I'll bring that session to an end.

[181] Diolch yn fawr iawn ichi am Thank you very much for attending
ddod yma heddiw. Fe fyddwn ni'n today. We'll keep in touch with
cadw mewn cysylltiad ynglŷn â'r regard to the report and the
adroddiad a'r hyn rydym ni'n ei recommendations in that report.
wneud fel cynigion i'r adroddiad Thank you very much.
hwnnw. Diolch yn fawr iawn.

10:29

Papurau i'w Nodi **Papers to Note**

[182] **Bethan Jenkins:** Rydym yn **Bethan Jenkins:** We're moving on now
symud ymlaen at eitem 3, papurau to item 3, paper to note. Paper 3.1 is
i'w nodi. Mae papur 3.1 yn ohebiaeth correspondence from the Secretary of
gan Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru. A State for Wales. Any comments on
oes unrhyw sylwadau ar hynny o that at all? No.
gwbl? Na.

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o
Weddill y Cyfarfod**
**Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public
for the Remainder of the Meeting**

Cynnig:

Motion:

*bod y pwyllgor yn penderfynu that the committee resolves to
gwahardd y cyhoedd o weddill y exclude the public from the
cyfarfod yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog remainder of the meeting in
17.42(vi).*

*accordance with Standing Order
17.42(vi).*

Cynigiwyd y cynnig.

Motion moved.

[183] **Bethan Jenkins:** Eitem 4, **Bethan Jenkins:** Item 4 is a motion
cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i under Standing Order 17.42 to
benderfynu gwahardd y cyhoedd o'r resolve to exclude the public from
cyfarfod am weddill y cyfarfod. A ydy the meeting for the following
pawb yn hapus gyda hynny? business. Everybody content?

[184] **Dai Lloyd:** Bodlon.

Dai Lloyd: Content.

[185] **Bethan Jenkins:** Diolch yn fawr **Bethan Jenkins:** Thank you very
iawn. much.

Derbyniwyd y cynnig.

Motion agreed.

Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 10:30.

The public part of the meeting ended at 10:30.