

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru / National Assembly for Wales
Pwyllgor Diwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chyfathrebu / The Culture, Welsh Language and
Communications Committee
Radio yng Nghymru / Radio In Wales
CWLC(5) RADIO08
Ymateb gan Bro Radio / Evidence from Bro Radio

In regards to the extent to which BBC Cymru Wales services, commercial radio services and community radio services meet the needs of audiences in Wales:

We believe that in most cases radio services in Wales do meet the needs of audiences in Wales, however the choice for radio listeners in most of Wales is far less other parts of the UK.

We hope that with the potential for small scale DAB services in Wales, the choice available to listeners will increase, as well as extending the coverage of the current community radio sector offering.

The possible impact of the deregulation of commercial radio on audiences in Wales:

Although we expect the deregulation of commercial radio to have an impact on the local content of commercial radio stations in Wales, we believe that it will only benefit the community radio sector and help in its continued growth.

Ownership structures of commercial radio and their impact on local content:

No comment.

The Impact of new technology on local content:

Community radio is currently restricted to small coverage areas due to the licenses granted by OFCOM and we believe new technology can only benefit the sector and radio as a whole.

The introduction of Small Scale DAB to South Wales will hopefully be of benefit to stations like us, allowing us to reach a larger audience and therefore increase advertising income.

The financial sustainability of community radio services in Wales:

The Community Radio sector has struggled across not just Wales but the United Kingdom, with many stations struggling to generate enough support from Government, Councils and Businesses alike.

In Wales, stations previously received financial support from the Welsh Government through the Community Radio Fund which ended in 2010. This financial support allowed stations to continue to develop their services, volunteering opportunities and employ staff to continue the growth of the organisation. In return, community stations would carry all Welsh Government advertising campaigns.

Since the closure of the fund, Community Radio stations like Bro Radio were informed that they would receive income from the Welsh Government advertising, through its chosen media agencies. Although we have pushed AM's and Agencies for this, this had only led to small amounts of advertising spent within the Community Radio Sector.

In essence the Community Radio sector is sustainable as it has proven without the support of the Welsh Government. However, if the sector is to continue to survive and more importantly grow, it is going to need further support from the Welsh Government and local councils to allow stations to invest in new technologies, such as small scale DAB and to employ further staff to continue on the successful growth of the sector over the years.

Discussions with other colleagues at Community Radio stations have shown that the current broadcast areas defined by OFCOM, do not suit most of stations, with many including Bro Radio seeing the need to broadcast to a wider area.

If OFCOM were to be more flexible with the defined broadcast areas of each station, then we would expect to see community radio stations become more sustainable with wider coverage areas providing further advertising, partnership and income generating opportunities.

The suitability of Wales's radio broadcast infrastructure:

Although the future of radio is digital, the landscape of Wales currently does not in all areas suit the existing FM or DAB infrastructure.

In our broadcast area, there are main shopping areas in Barry which cannot receive local FM radio stations, let alone local or National DAB stations and these issues need to be overcome before a full digital switch over is discussed.