



Inquiry event for Scotland

Transcript of the event for Future for Public Service Television

Inquiry

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The session was chaired by **Lord Puttnam (DP)**, film producer, peer, the Inquiry chair

DP: Good evening and welcome. I'm David Puttnam, I am in the process of chairing this enquiry, we've been working for the last five months and we anticipate or hope to publish in June. And it's very nice to be here and given the chance to both understand and wrap my head around and wrap all of our heads around the position as seen for the future of public service broadcasting here in Scotland.

It's been quite a confused few months, partly because into the debate in a sense for the first time is the whole range and world of digital media. We're no longer talking about the world of television that I grew up in, we're now talking about far more complex, far more overlapping media ecology. And dealing with that and trying to work our way through that and trying to find out what might be the public service obligations or responsibilities for new media as well as retaining the public service responsibilities for the media we're very familiar with is no easy task. But I think we're doing okay.

I've got a distinguished panel tonight to address you and to answer questions. The only thing I've asked and I think it's very sensible, I doubt very much you disagree, is that in each time, the beginning to either a question or a discussion that we



differentiate very clearly between news and current affairs on the one hand and other content on the other. I say this as having had a pretty miserable experience where they got quite quickly elided and trying to unravel them from the point of view of being Chair I promise you was...well, it proved beyond me. And I'd rather not challenge myself again if you don't mind.

To my immediate is John McCormick, you'll be familiar with everyone I'm sure on the panel. To his right Angela Haggerty, to her right Neil Blane, and Iseabail MacTaggart and Stuart Cosgrove on the end. And that's the order we'll speak in. What I'd like to do as a scene setter or whatever you might like to call it, is to run a six minute clip, which I take full responsibility for. It's 'I Cut It,' it comes from two completely different series even of the same programmes, the programme unsurprisingly is WIA.

But I thought it gave a flavour of what it's like to be a supplicant. And believe me, I know exactly what this is like, it hasn't changed that much in the last 40 years, to try to get the BBC, or for that matter any other funding source, interested in an idea that you passionately care about. And that idea becomes that much more difficult if you're not necessarily a neighbour of the people you're selling to. In my case I spent 30 years doing it at a distance of 5,500 miles. I have to believe it's a little easier from a distance of a few hundred miles, but maybe not.

This clip I think illustrates the fact that I'm wrong and that it is just as difficult from a few hundred miles away. Can you run the clip? [video playback]

I wish it was as funny as that. I promise you, being on the receiving end of those meetings as many, many people will know or tell you is not that comfortable. On the other hand could all programmes be made in Walthamstow? They wouldn't mind in Walthamstow, that would be fine. So tonight what I hope we'll do for the next hour and a bit is try and tease, A, what are the real issues, help myself and my colleagues to go back and re-work a lot of what we've done. But what comes across to me is a sense of perennial injustice.

I've done more films, I've actually produced more films in Scotland than anywhere else in the world. I've done four films here. So I certainly come with a prejudice towards Scotland and



towards production in Scotland. What I think we're trying to get towards is what is a fair and equitable relationship between a broadcaster whose source of revenue, source of power is based in London, and how do you create governance structures, decision making structures, funding structures which satisfy every single nation and region of the UK? It's not easy. No one I think pretends it's easy. But I also think it's a discussion that needs to be better informed and certainly better informed in the light of all the changes that have occurred in the last three or four years in our settlement.

So I'm the person here who knows least about it. John, I'm going to hand over to you, about five or six minutes each. Put me straight.

JM: Thanks, David. Scary starting off with something like that when you know it's so close to the truth. Anyway, to follow that, in the five or six minutes we've got I'd like to concentrate on the points that were made by the team from the Royal Society, the fellows who got together, who cared enough about the BBC to spend so many weeks preparing a submission to the Department of Culture and Media and Sport, and that is about the future of the BBC.

But we know that public service television would all accept it's much wider than the BBC, although the BBC is at the heart of it. So what happens to the BBC over the next ten years, over the next charter review period is crucial to the future of public service broadcasting. But at the outset, to recognise that that system here in Britain has got the BBC at the heart of it, but Channel 4 with public service obligations and a range of commercial channels, both general channels and specialist channels which make a great contribution to the cultural life of this country across the UK.

But that important cultural contribution that broadcasting makes is I believe more and more important as you move away from the overheated South East and London as the cultural capital of the United Kingdom. And that benefit is more and more important and it's crucially important here in Scotland.

In the RSE's submission we concentrated on four areas. One is the BBC must be allowed to continue at a global scale. It's the only



broadcaster in this country which can compete with the new global competitors, the Netflix, Amazon, the people who are now revolutionising the delivery of broadcasting to homes across the world. And only the BBC can compete with them.

So we argue strongly against reducing its scope or its scale, narrowing its scope so that it becomes more elitist, less generalist. And we put a big stress on the need for there to continue to be universality so that it provides something for everyone across the country. And that it's also allowed and should not retreat from being able to help develop the new technologies of the next ten years that will revolutionise broadcasting television more so in the last ten. And the pace of that change is scary, and the BBC must be allowed and be tooled up to be allowed to play the part it has for the last 20 years in developing new technology and responding to that from HD television through to the iPlayer.

And at the heart of the strength of the BBC's public service proposition is its funding base. That funny only thing, a tax on a piece of furniture that John Reith invented in the 1920s, and here we are, we've still got it almost 100 years later. I think he'd be surprised if he did.

The great thing about the licence fee system is that it works in Britain. In the UK we have a landmass which is compact enough to deliver a television service from one side of it to the other, the length and breadth of that landmass. And also a population base that for a relatively modest fee can produce a sizeable income for the BBC to invest in creative work. And the genius of that which has underpinned public service broadcasting in this country and allowed others to call it the best in the world is that commercial television and the BBC compete for the audience's attention and not for the source of funding.

When ITV started they had to invest into televisions programmes to the same level of investment that the BBC was to compete for the audience's attention. And that very simple basic fact underpins the success of public service television in this country. And so we feel there has to be over the next ten years...it is optimistic to... There will be changes, there'll be technological changes. But at the heart of it, the principle of public funding must be underpinned. It may come in different ways, it may not be the licence fee we think.



We don't want to see the BBC and the Government in ten years' time sitting say what's the alternative to the licence fee? It will be overtaken as a methodology, as an approach over the next ten years and we recommend that the BBC should go into the next charter review period, which we recommend being an 11 year period to take it out of the UK political election period of ten years, get it out of politics, make it something that comes in and the new government looks at in 11 years' time.

But they should go into that charter review period with an agreed new funding model. At the heart of it, it may be a household levy as some people have suggested. Whatever it is has got to be a public service core, public funding core. And also it may be that there can be an element of subscription which would supplement that public funding core for people to buy premium services. The technology will exist, it will be nothing like we've got at the moment. But in five years' time we think it's an obligation if we want to preserve public service television in this country, that we have a public funding element of it and allow the BBC to make additional income from subscription. That's the basic model we would support, but it has to go in pace with the technology changes that will come in the next ten years, that we can only think about at the moment.

When we were preparing our submission the people around the table were strong BBC supporters, you'll not be surprised. They're fellows of the Royal Society and they were strong supporters. But they expressed a great deal of frustration about it on two levels. And it's those two points I'll make before I sit down.

One was on the news proposition that the BBC presents, and basically on both these points, the news, the journalism and on governance and the accountability. It came down to the fact that they said we've had a parliament here, and our remarks are limited to Scotland but they apply also to Northern Ireland and Wales. We've had a parliament here which has changed the politics, changed the way Britain is governed. We have a devolved legislature which is close to the people of Scotland. In the last 15 years it's had 2 new bills giving it more and more power, and yet the BBC goes into this charter review with the same structure of networked television news, UK news, that it's had in 1999. And that's indefensible when it has the biggest newsroom in Britain



and it's still delivering a structure of news that was there for set up for the pre-devolution age.

And we've had some many complaints about people saying that domestic policy dominates so much of the news agenda that they have to sit through and get confused about health policy in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, England, Scotland; you know the point. And we argue in the paper that the BBC has health editors and education editors, and they should be UK health editors and not regard their brief as England only in a sense at all. And too sadly that seems often to be the case.

And we put a challenge to the BBC UK news services that they should provide a more sophisticated, more nuanced, more textured approach to reporting the UK to itself. And try to implement some of the recommendations of a report that Professor Anthony King prepared for the BBC Trust in 2008 where he was strongly critical of the BBC News not responding to the devolved legislatures of the UK. And it's very sad to say that here we are eight years after his report and a great number of the recommendation have not been implemented, they've just sat on the shelf.

Where that concerned the fellows of the Royal Society was that they feel that unless something is urgently done about UK news, and about the news delivery in Scotland of an integrated televisions news that would be edited from Scotland and deal with global as well as local, then the BBC's writ here in Scotland will be weakened. And if it's weakened in Scotland and perhaps in other parts of the United Kingdom away from London, then it's more difficult to sustain it on the scale that it should be sustained.

So very strongly arguing for the BBC to continue as a global broadcaster, very strongly funded, but to do so it has to respond to the audiences across the UK, particularly in its journalism and particularly in its investment in creative work. There was a scary figure which shocked a lot of people which was published in the BBC's Scotland Audience Council report, a BBC polling about is the BBC good at representing your life in news and current affairs? And it was asked in Scotland, in England and in Wales.

And for the first time that figure fell below 50 per cent in one part of the UK, and that was in Scotland where, a kind of tipping point,



only 48 per cent of people said that it did. The figure in England, 61 per cent, Northern Ireland 61 per cent, 55 per cent in Wales. It was that kind of statistic that worried the people sitting around our tables here, that if you want to reinforce the strength of the BBC then it has to respond to the changes taking place in the way the UK is governed. And at the same time it has to improve its openness and transparency, the way it reports through parliament here in Holyrood as well in Westminster, and open itself more than it has done in the last ten years to the scrutiny of Scotland's Parliament. And we say it is a legitimate thing for the Scottish Parliament to scrutinise the investment in Scotland and the role of the BBC in Scotland and how it serves Scotland.

And I'm afraid there's another scary quote from there and then I'll just draw it to a close. The Public Audit Committee last year, the Public Audit Committee of Holyrood, following the Smith commissioned report about new powers for the Scottish Parliament, UK organisations that were not affected were asked if they would put in proposals or thoughts or any thoughts they'd been having about how they might improve their accountability scrutiny in Scotland, even though they were staying as UK organisations. Organisations I'm associated with did it, and I was sent the Public Audit report because it was mentioned.

And there it was saying we welcome your proposals and we look forward to seeing them come to fruition and... I had a colleague of mine say you should scroll down to what it says about the BBC. So this is the Public Accounts Committee of Holyrood saying we question the extent to which any Scottish Parliamentary committee can hold the BBC to account on "matters relating to Scotland on the basis of its UK annual report and accounts. We consider that for any accountability to be meaningful the BBC should provide Scotland specific data on performance, service delivery and financial information in its UK annual report and accounts. And although the BBC does provide a BBC Scotland management review we consider it essential that any Scotland specific data is robust and has been subject to an internal audit as is the case with the BBC's annual report."

Now that was very sharp for that kind of committee report in and the context of what other bodies were doing. I thought that too, that has been a very sharp remark. So the BBC has to get its act together in terms of governance and accountability. We can talk



about that later of different models that could happen. Scrutiny of Scottish Parliament in which then you're being accountable to the people of Scotland through its parliament. And as we say, that does not mean in any way reducing the BBC's independence or its accountability and independence. It's not accountability to politicians, it's scrutiny to the people of Scotland through the parliament. Not to politicians, not to governments, as happens with Westminster.

We believe those things are essential if the BBC is to at the same time remain a global player while becoming much more sensitive in both its investments, policy, in creative content, journalism and in governance to the changing UK, which it's ignored in the last ten years. Thank you, David.

DP: Thank you very much. Angela?

AH: Hello everyone. I'm going to speak to you about...just to be clear I'm going to focus on the news and journalism aspect of the BBC in Scotland and what I'm going to do is layout a bit of... Broadcast isn't what I work in, I've previously worked in print and I work in online now. So I've never actually worked fulltime in broadcast, so it's not my direct area of expertise. But what I can do is set a bit of the scene of what's going on in Scotland right now and what the feeling and attitude towards broadcast, public service TV and the BBC is.

There's nothing worse than a prepared speech, but I have a prepared speech which I'm going to read to you because I'm quite keen to stay in to time on this. I'm sure you have a lot of questions. In July last year an Audience Council Scotland review urged the BBC to reassess its offering in the face of viewer perceptions that the corporation has adopted an anglicised perspective which reflected the status quo.

The review underlined a rapidly growing discontent with the BBC and broadcasting as a whole in Scotland. There is a severe lack of trust and a lack of confidence in the coverage among many people. It manifests itself within everything from a more reasoned analysis of the structural problems within the BBC, to the conviction among some that there is an unquestionable and deliberate bias, whether it be in journalistic content or programming decisions.



I am the Editor of Common Space, a digital news website, and we are part of what we call the new media in Scotland. Among this new media are now well established sites like Bella Caledonia, Wings over Scotland, Newsnet Scotland, as well as broadcast offerings like independence live, creative tech products like Kilter and a range of blogs and podcasts.

The new media partly grew from a suspicion ahead of the referendum that media coverage would be skewed towards a no vote. And I would argue that some of those suspicions were vindicated if in numbers alone. Only one newspaper, the weekly Sunday Herald favoured a yes vote. The rest of Scotland's national newspapers and some of the UK titles either didn't declare or they backed a no vote. The new media has been funded entirely by readers and viewers and were well into five figures by this stage.

While sites like Wings and Bella which both have one editor but no in-house staff get by on annual crowd funders, Common Space is able to fund the roles of one editor, myself, and three journalists fulltime thanks to a model of monthly donations. We're funded by the commonwealth think tank which exists on that model, but we retain editorial independence and the final decision on anything to do with Common Space lies with me.

And Common Space has received a great response since it launched in January of last year. We've had a string of exclusives picked up by main stream media outlets throughout the UK. Articles have led to questions raised in both the Holyrood and Westminster parliaments. And over the last couple of months we've been hosting more than a third of the University of the West of Scotland's third year journalism students on work experience. All of them chose to come to Common Space because they're excited about the kind of journalism that we're producing.

But while there have been great successes in the new media there have been some falls. After the independence referendum a project called NewsShaft raised more than £50,000 to help fund research and the creation of a broadcast alternative for Scotland. This was a hugely ambitious project and far more money was needed to complete it. And unfortunately in a big part due to a lack of a regular income for those taking it forward the project failed.



However Independence Live, a project aimed at live streaming events from all over Scotland remains a year and a half since the independence referendum. Indie Live has amassed an incredible archive of footage in that time, this is public meetings, protests, cultural events, music, entertainment, hustings, you name it, Independence Live has been at it. Its offering is raw and unedited which I think reflects some of the deep suspicion that has emerged about the ability to manipulate content in news. And while the quality of Indie live can be a bit shaky it has provided an incredible service for a team staffed with a mixture of volunteers and people on a very, very low wage.

At Common Space we have a collaborative relationship with these projects and it's always been our intention to develop a broadcast offering of some kind. But we often feel throttled by a lack of funds. And it should be said that the time given by volunteers to these projects is really quite incredible. The well is there to create something better. But the resources aren't.

Since the referendum bad feeling towards the BBC in particular has persisted and worsened. Evidenced by Bella Caledonia Editor Mike Smalls called on a BBC news programme just after the indie ref for disgruntled viewers to discontinue licence fee payments and redirect the money to the new media. And some of them say that they did. Books have been written within the new media to address the subject, add more weight to voices who for years previously had called for a greater resource in Scotland and a different approach.

People feel that the BBC is London focused and efforts to cast the net further are simply box ticking exercises rather than representations of the regions of the United Kingdom. And it's possible that we could spend hours debating the merits of those charges. But the fact remains that a sizeable number of viewers and licence fee payers remain unconvinced and unfulfilled. The question of public service television in Scotland is undoubtedly laced with political interests in the post indie ref era. The SNP wants broadcasting control devolved and that's a position many agree with. And it's often difficult to have the debate about the future of media, whether it's in broadcast or print, or whether it's covering news, sport, culture or entertainment without it being framed in unionist versus nationalist terms.



But this makes the debate in Scotland a particularly hot topic, but it risks substance being lost amid the political wrangling. What is true is that in September 2014 45 per cent of Scotland's electorate voted to leave the United Kingdom and 55 per cent voted to remain. But what is also true is that Scotland's political awakening was about more than politics. And that was the case for no as well as yes voters. The no vote in Scotland came amid a promise for a significant devolution of powers to the Scottish Parliament. The people of Scotland have begun asserting themselves in an unprecedented way and this has fuelled an appetite for changes further afield.

The status quo of broadcasting in Scotland is no longer acceptable. Issues being raised by people in Scotland must be addressed and change must be forthcoming. Without it the standoff will continue. It unfortunately also makes it harder to have a debate about other issues related to TV and the future of media, how technology can be utilised, how our viewing habits are changing, how the question is no longer just about the kind of content and the structure of public service broadcasting, but also about how it is delivered and who creates it.

In terms of technology and how it affects journalism and media more widely I feel like Scotland has a lot of catching up to do. While the new media in Scotland has had an impact politically. Aside from Kilter and Independence Live to some extent it is technologically quite unsophisticated and basic given the range of tools available. The debate about the future of public service television in Scotland must involve younger voices I think to ensure that public service TV is fit for the future.

In one of the books written since the referendum. *Demanding Democracy, the Case for a Scottish Media*, author Christopher Silver rounds up 25 ideas for the future of media in Scotland. This is Chris' book and it is a great resource for anybody that's interested in the media landscape in Scotland. It really sets the scene for how people feel right now.

They're quite wide ranging ideas and a few of them I've got here. There's a call for the development for a federal structure within the charter renewal process, delivering key commissioning powers to Scotland and expanding the budget here significantly.



The adoption of an open decentralised and creatively led commissioning process for original programming in Scotland. The creation of a new media trust, which would have independence from Government, ensuring that the commitment to public service is met. Investment in digital alongside measures to ensure community involvement through education programmes and it also talks of far greater investment in journalism for future graduates and people coming into the industry. Adopting the French Government's strategy of introducing a levy on tech companies like Google, Netflix and Amazon in order to support film and TV production, and a revival in local media.

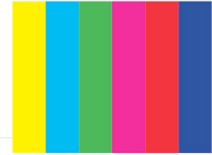
The National Union of Journalists in Scotland has echoed the call for a greater budget here. In August last year the NUJ Scotland organiser Paul Holleran said the NUJ believes the BBC could have covered the referendum better. We are now arguing for the resources BBC Scotland deserves proportionate with the licence fee collected in Scotland, he said.

Questions about accountability in public service television are prominent too. There is a need for transparency. I lose count of the number of social media graphics and memes I see informing me of senior figures within the BBC and the relationships with politicians or the press and speculations about agendas that they might have. A lot of this dominates the discussion in Scotland about public service television and it's quite difficult sometimes to move away from that. But there's certainly a need for greater transparency when it comes to news content I think.

The changes to public service television that people imagine in Scotland are perhaps radical for an institution like the BBC. But the changes in Scotland over the last few years have been radical. Media and broadcast should not only catch-up but it should nurture that creative landscape and the journalism industry. There is a great opportunity opening up in Scotland but we are desperate for resources, thank you.

DP: Neil.

NB: Thank you. I'm going to keep Angela's focus at first on the broader media ecology. When I say in relation to David's comments at the beginning that what I'm going to be saying initially sounds as though I'm interpreting public service broadcasting in the narrow



sense of journalism. But most of what I have to say I think applies to the entire range. I will also use for speed the unlovely abbreviation PSB where this crops up.

We had in Scotland a once very vigorous national press which now takes the form either of London newspapers which are adapted for the Scottish market. What remains of our indigenous press is drained of resource on largely outside Scotland. And therefore alongside what by international comparisons is a very undeveloped TV broadcasting infrastructure we have greatly weakened framework for the maintenance of Scottish journalism overall in which online is in fact a rare positive sign.

The democratic deficit inflicted on Scottish civil society by the inadequacy of our media platforms is a big gap to fill and it raises large issues of resource. And we've heard some from Angela, it's the online problem. It's often said C P Scott's famous dictum about the sacredness of facts, that facts may well be sacred but they're also expensive.

If that view of Scottish media provision sounds like a harsh judgement on existing TV provision by BBC Scotland and STV it isn't meant to be. Both work within the tight limitations of an opt out model of broadcasting and its budgetary implications which is continuous and has been continuous since the launch of STV towards the end of the 1950s. In fact, since Clem Ashby used to bid good night from Cowcaddens to those of us old enough to remember, and caution us to switch off and unplug the TV, this model has changed surprisingly little. We've gained most of all BBC Alba, we've got local STV, and we have our city. But Grampian and Border TV are gone and TV in Scotland is still in the main TV from London with little gaps where programming fits in.

But I want to step beyond Scotland for a moment and spread my pessimism more evenly. The media offer which Scottish people have in practice is very dependent on the London media and when thinning of the future of PSB I'm inclined to point out that we can't be complacent in the UK as a whole about the state of the media. We can variously observe from the press landscape some retreat from hard journalism in the quality press, growing extremism in political comment on reporting, seen most in the treatment perhaps of Ed Miliband during the last general election.



We can see how the whims of private ownership alter the press landscape, for example, the effect of former Scotsman owners on the telegraph more recently, or we might consider the long term finances of the Guardian Media Group, and we might wonder where the model is for press provision of quality news in the future. The future of Channel 4 isn't assured either.

I understand why Tony Hall last September chose to lead with the BBC's commitment to creativity as his main pitch for the corporation's future. But actually I'd like to hear the BBC lead with an unshakable commitment to high quality news and current affairs provision, even if that does draw fire from competitors. I should also say that it needs to up its game in both these areas, not just in the sense that John and Angela have been talking about, but I think news channels from overseas, also sometimes Sky News offer a sharper news sense than often the more grown-up analysis.

How far the future of PSB in the UK is synonymous with the future of the BBC can't be taken for granted, but it's too big a topic for me just now. But I want to come back to Scotland ask how far the future of Scottish broadcasting should be associated with the future of the BBC. In 2008 the Scottish Broadcasting Commission looked at the democratic cultural and economic dimensions of Scottish broadcasting and recommended the establishment of a new TV channel which would be run by an independent broadcasting body but funded by the BBC to better reflect fair apportioning of the licence fee spend in Scotland.

The reasoning was that we should have at least one channel with full editorial and commissioning authority in Scotland, that the BBC needed more competition and that the oppressed Scottish indie production sector was in desperate need of another patron. Actually the economic reasons are very pressing. And they are many and various. For example, the question which I've raised elsewhere of the BBC's role in what for shorthand I might call the economic Londonisation of the British state.

There was also just the issue of plurality as something desirable in itself. There seemed to be widespread support for the proposals across political parties in Holyrood, but the report was kicked into the long grass where it returned to the nitrogen cycle, along with



other rational proposals for the Scottish media including for amenities which other small nations and regions regard as normal such as film studios. It's not impossible to explain why we talk about this so much and see so little change. The debate over a new Scottish TV channel first of all has become re-politicised in the last few years, I think partly as a consequence of SNP dominance in Holyrood.

Holyrood in any case still seeds parliamentary oversight and John has already dealt with this of the media, to DCMS in Westminster. MSPs naturally have a more sustained focus on matters over which they have authority. And as we said, constituents don't seek urgently surgery consultations with their political representatives because they're worried about the media.

There are also existing media interests lobbying against the expansion of TV in Scotland as I would if I were them. And then there's the undeniable fact that many Scottish people seem to think that the Scottish TV channel would actually deliver really terrible contents. Indeed I have this argument in my own house. Apparently we can do literature, design, fashion, the visual arts, music, theatre and a few other things, but a Scottish TV channel would be a national embarrassment.

Newspapers recently published a poll claiming that 63 per cent of Scots actively don't want one. I often think of the final sequences of Buñuel's *Phantom of Liberty*. But if Ireland manages some quite decent output across TV channels like RTE and TV3, maybe we could manage to sustain at least one channel here. And to those who point out that changing media consumption patterns and the obsolescence of linear TV mitigate against this or militate against this argument, I'd say that this may be of relevance to any broadcast area with existing indigenous channel provision, and it seems premature here to worry about the obsolescence of TV channels where we don't have any.

And where the development of a decently sized media production infrastructure is concerned I think it's a very unhelpful argument to suggest that the only future development of Scottish TV should be online. If you suggest in Ireland that RTE and TV3 could adequately move wholesale to online you would not get very much support. So while comparable audiences in Ireland and Catalonia are each served by half a dozen or more TV



channels located in their territory, the German lender have one by right under federal law, the Dutch provinces have one, in Scotland, apart from BBC Alba we still have the twin TV channel opt out model established in the earlier part of the premiership or Harold Macmillan. And I don't need to emphasise the changes in Scottish society in politics since then, John and Angela have emphasised that enough.

I want to finish by suggesting in what I feel tonight is a slightly gloomy way for me, what might actually happen in the short term. I can certainly guarantee that there will be further events where people talk about the future of Scottish broadcasting. The first I recall speaking at was just along the road in the Assembly Rooms during the last year of Margaret Thatcher's premiership, so I'm in my second quarter century of these events.

The danger of circularity in the debate has become so acute that the Scottish six, the Nessie of the Scottish broadcasting world has stirred from the watery depths of her remote multiplex. As you know the Scottish six was familiar as an idea even to St Columba, to represent the only possible change on the horizon. John Steinbeck famously described Scotland as an un-won cause in the repost to Jacky Kennedy who thought it was a lost caused. I think the cause of significant structural change in the Scottish broadcasting landscape probably will stay un-won this side of further constitutional change.

Subsequent Scottish Government proposals for TV expansion have made less sense than the SBC proposals of eight years ago. In fact, I don't understand them. The timidity of the Holyrood Education and Culture Committee's recent conclusions a month or so back on BBC Charter Review, where they fell short even of recommending federalisation of the corporation was depression. I'm more optimistic about St Mirren return to European football than I am about adequate change in the Scottish TV broadcasting landscape.

In the meantime though I'd like to see BBC Alba well protected and maybe used more strategically by BBC Scotland, which I think it could be. I'd like to see the possibility explored by Holyrood for some more funding for the purposes of media democracy generally as happens in some other European countries. I would willingly join a lobby for a Scottish six if that's



all we can manage. And Angela's touched on this, I would like to see as much crowd funding as possible for online alternatives. I think we also need sustained pressure for democratic and authoritative oversight of media matters at Holyrood and I think that should be an element of BBC Charter Renewal.

I'd like to end though by saying this, that it's important to find a way of articulating the need for adequate Scottish public service broadcasting without losing sight of the value of existing provision from London, from which we all benefit enormously. And the desirability of not harming it. I'd even go as far as to say that if the Scottish political establishment doesn't rate structural change in the Scottish broadcasting landscape as important, and if it doesn't there probably won't be any, then I'd rather we concentrate on how best to protect PSB in the broader UK context, which in practice I think means lobbying an advocacy for the BBC. Thank you.

DP: Thank you very much indeed. Iseabail.

IM: Thank you, thanks, Neil. I'm from MG Alba and what I want to do is set out a wee bit of background about BBC Alba. And then set out a little bit more about the challenges both strategic and audience that we see and picking up on some of the points that Neil made about the strategic collaborations that may be possible.

MG Alba delivers BBC Alba in partnership with the BBC. BBC Alba's the first partnership television service to operate under a BBC licence. And it's quite a good thing. We do well in terms of audiences, it does well for Gaelic and arguably it does well for the BBC; it's a good thing for the BBC. It's a success, although less than two per cent of the population speak, read or understand Gaelic. Over 15 per cent of the national population regularly tune in. Over 70 per cent of Gaelic speakers are reached, over 100,000 views take place on the iPlayer every week.

And that is despite very, very challenging funding, we receive £12.8m from the Scottish Government, the remainder is from the BBC. That is a fifth of the Welsh channel's funding, the Welsh channel being S4C. And despite that we have a greater share both of core Gaelic speaking audience and of our national audience. And just a final point about that, that's a fifth of the funding that the Welsh channel S4C gets, it's a tenth of its BBC funding. That



funding creates real serious audience deficits and I'll come onto them later.

The final things, just we do some things well. Today we found out three of our programmes were short listed for the RTS Scotland Awards, two support programmes, two by purpleTV, one by Media Co-op and so good news on that front. And just to pick up on the point about Scottish six and news. Gaelic doesn't do crinch by the way. We've long done international and national, regional and local news with self-assurance and confidence. So it's one of the most prized parts of our schedule is the BBC news at eight o'clock.

So just a final point that the channel is a success. It wasn't predicted to be a success, in fact it was predicted to fail. The Herald newspaper on the day the channel launched in 2008 said new channel set up to fail. And it has failed to fail.

In terms of the success of the channel, we're an important part of the Scottish ecology, both commercially and strategically. And I'll come onto the strategic points later. Commercially, we estimate that 50 per cent of Scottish Commissions by our, by BBC Alba, we work with 22 different companies, 80 per cent of our content is commissioned from the independent production sector. Internationalisation is key to our development strategy, so that's about co-productions, co-commissions and sales of finished programmes.

The challenges are the strategic challenges are ones you will recognise, because they're not linguistic challenges. And these are the economic points that Neil raised. Tessa Jowell said a long time ago that the licence fee should be used as venture capital for the nation. We would agree with that approach, that we use our public funding as venture capital for the nation. I would probably amend Tessa Jowell's point to say that it should be venture capital for all of the nations and to the full extent of these nations.

So we actively work with our supply sector to try and develop them, that's both for example in terms of volume deals. So we have long term production arrangements with some of our companies in what's been called a reap to sow policy. We align our commissioning with Creative Europe deadlines to try and kick-start Scotland's production sector to try and take advantage



of Creative Europe schemes. Scotland is appalling at taking advantage of these schemes.

We work directly with international distributors immediately post-commission to see if there are international versions that we can create in some of our commissions. In terms of the micro companies we work with, and we work with some very small companies as well some more sizable ones, we're working together with them to create clusters so that they can employ development officers collectively.

Finally we're seeking structural solutions, so we're looking at corporate tax relief and also international co-production. Basically cognisant of the fact that we have to take something to the table. If we're talking about internationalisation and growth we have to have something to take there.

On genres too we have a very tight strategic focus, and again, these are not linguistic points, they are totally strategic points. And drama is an absolutely key genre for development for us and we have an ambitious writing development plan to build on the work that was started by Chris Young and the Bannan production. On animation development we're working with Highlands and Islands' Enterprise and Creative Scotland on a bilingual, born global animation.

And on formats, and again it's a genre that Scotland has been fairly poor in to be polite. We are developing a pilot in Ireland and with S4C. And if that is successful that will be shown in three different territories and immediately derisked for commercial exploitation by that producer. So these are some of the strategic challenges.

In terms of the audience, the audience is a focus of our ask in charter renewal. We've been very clear that we are asking for an increased BBC investment for BBC Alba. Specifically we're asking for increased in-house programming to match that made for S4C. Currently S4C enjoyed ten hours per week of in-house programme from the BBC. We have 4.4, we'd like that increased to 10.

Why do we want that increased? Because as those of you who see the channel know, it has a 73 per cent repeat rate. There are too



few original programmes on the channel. So we have 1.7 hours of originations per day, and that compares to about 5 hours on TG4, the Irish channel, and compares to 8 hours per day on the Welsh channel S4C.

So the substance of our case directly in terms of charter renewal is that audience deficit. There's a lack of weekend news because of that, there's investment badly needed for children and for learners and for entertainment types of programming.

And the framing of our ask is quite important. The way we framed is that we absolutely recognise that Gaelic is currently underserved by the BBC, equally the BBC is underserved in Scotland. We see these as two separate issues that should not be in competition in Scotland.

On the first we've asked the BBC to articulate a consistent, coherent approach to its minority language services. And what does that mean? That means a minimum standard for its minority language services. So a minimum number of hours per day of originations. We've also asked for formal recognition as a PSB, which is what S4C currently enjoys as well.

On the second point, and it is important in terms of when the elbows get sharp, we think that it's got to be clear that the funding for BBC Alba is from a consistent approach to minority language programming, as opposed to being detrimental to the funding of English language programming in Scotland.

So just conclude, we're quite clear that we see these things as two separate issues. The BBC underserves Scotland, it underserves Gaelic, they're separate. We would like the BBC to have a consistent approach to its minority language services. The BBC Alba partnership is a very effective powerful one. We bring a strategic focus to the sector. Just picking up on Neil's point from earlier, we do strategically focus on the need to diversify in terms of genres, in terms of the need to internationalise, in terms of the need for internationalisation incentives such as corporate tax relief and co-production incentives.

So we're well placed to contribute to the debate and to contribute to strategic solutions so that Scotland and Gaelic get



the public service television service they require and deserve. Thank you.

DP: Stuart.

SC: Hi folks, a number of issues that have been touched on, but I'd take an opportunity to bring some of them crisply together. I'll not talk a lot about news and current affairs, as the Chairman asked, and talk across more of the range of genres. I'm Stuart Cosgrove, many of you will know me from radio shows here in Scotland, which is BBC, but for 20 years I've been the Commissioning Editor and a Controller at Channel 4, which is a very different public service model to the licence funded BBC model. And prior to that I ran a very successful independent production company here in Scotland called Big Star, and sold that as part of the process of moving to Channel 4.

So I'm kind of seeing this through a number of different prisms, one of which is a very deep commitment to the idea of independent creativity, secondly that there are a range of every interesting PSB models of which clearly Channel 4 is one. And of course as someone who has very close connections with the BBC I've always been highly critical of the BBC but very defensive and supportive of the licence fee and the way in which the licence fee funds what I think most people would argue is one of the most significant and remarkable public service broadcasters in the world.

I want to put forward five arguments, one of which is for greater autonomy and the right to commission within a commissioning culture from Scotland for national networks. Secondly a fairer allocation of resources across the board in the key genres. Thirdly a greater understanding of both the civic and the economic impact of public service broadcasting, and especially, but not exclusively, the BBC. And I stress there the impact of the civic and the economic, rather than merely the impact say on our voting system and our capacity to be influenced by the union or Westminster or any other argument. I'm interested across the board on other impacts.

I'd like to see a new deal for digital coming from public service broadcasters broadly and I'll talk a little bit about that as well. And fifthly, but not unimportantly by any means, would be a



talent concordat for Scotland of what that actually meant looking forward. So let me talk about them in greater detail.

Greater autonomy for Scotland, now I think that a number of my previous speakers have hinted at this, but I think it's really important to nail it. That we've inherited in Scotland a BBC which has a proud culture of commissioning within a very constrained set of broadcast scheduling corsets. In other words, that whilst there is a degree of autonomy, a couple of people with a commissioning budget in Scotland, it is the case that the core decisions around the scheduling, the capacity to opt out, the ability to opt out, the resource to opt out is something that's not wholly controlled in Scotland.

Nor is it something that necessarily allows us maybe I would argue the space that we need to be a more relevant and adventurist commissioning culture. And the right to commission comes with the responsibility as well I think, of the responsibility of making sure that the commissions that you green light are commissions that work for significant audiences in Scotland, either audiences that wish to be challenged, or indeed in some cases audiences that wish to be reassured.

A fairer allocation of resources I think is a really quite significant thing in this debate, because much as we've seen debates about the amount of money that's spent proportionately in Scotland, I think most people understand that it's far from clear exactly how money without any broadcaster, the BBC, Channel 4, is actually allocated. And there are so many other things that are costs. The cost of buildings, the cost of staffing, the cost of a whole range of other things which make it very complex to even get to the truth of what the commissioning budgets are at major broadcasters which are ostensibly based in London.

Let me give you just a couple of examples of that. Over the 20 years at Channel 4 I was always advocating some kind of nations and regions strategy that would bring more value away from the London centre to the various regional centres or in our case, national centres. And that process was not by any means an easy one, because there was the agreement of you moving forward a few steps, and then moving back and moving forward.



But two of the things that I noticed on that journey, and these are predominantly to do with the independent production sector, is that we went through a phase of what was called brass plating. This was a situation where companies that were ostensibly owned and managed from London would open a small development office for drama or a small production centre for other centres and would have a brass plate on the outside of their office. And that was sufficient for them to be considered Scottish. They met the criteria then.

I remember vividly going down on the shuttle from Glasgow to London and I was sitting next to this businessman, it was a Monday morning and he was waking up and so was I. And we got talking about business and what business he was in. And he said that he was in the contemporary laser printing business. And I said to him oh, what kind of things do you do? He said oh, I do signs, door signs, shop signs, whatever. And then I asked him to explain a bit more about how his business had grown and developed to digit he explained to me that there was no longer a brass plate industry in Scotland. So even the brass plate manufacturers didn't benefit from it, let alone the independent producers.

Now that came to another new phase of what was more recently referred to as lift and shift. Now, this was an entirely different strategy, and like many of these strategies, began from a place of well-intentioned ideas. And I think it's one of the things that we've got to get right next time around as these debates come around, because Channel 4 in terms of its new licence and the BBC in terms of trying to honour progress under charter renewal or improving its service delivery as it were, move towards a process of lifting and shifting successful shows.

Now that might have been because they were given three years to improve their target, in the case of Channel 4 by Ofcom. Or it might have been because of internal pressures at the BBC to improve performance. But the consequence was that significant shows that were already on the networks, already on air, were moved to Glasgow or to other production centres outside of London, Waterloo Road being a famous example. But there are many more, 15 to 1 to give an example from the Channel 4 system or whatever.



Now, there's nothing wrong with that process, because very simply it moves value. And there can be no doubt whatsoever that there is a value in the lift and shift strategy. It has for example, the capacity to employ people as freelancers, to employ people as studio staff, to employ runners, to employ art department personnel or whatever. None of that I would wish to deny or indeed to reverse. But it has one fundamental problem, is that if the show is already significantly successful and known because it's been on air for four or five years, it means that new ideas coming from Scotland are less likely to be commissioned because the commissioning budget can be meant through the reallocation of lift and shift.

It has another unintended consequence and I think it is an unintended consequence, and that is that it takes IP out of the cultural systems in Scotland and the intellectual property rights of course to those shows which have already been commissioned by London companies, ergo the profit and the overseas rights and the development and the second and tertiary value of those programmes returns back to the London base and not to Scotland. So these are fundamental problems with the lift and shift strategy which I think most broadcasters now concede. But this is the second major iteration we've been in of shifting value, and we're not nearly at the end of the road of moving resource in the direction of Scotland in the ways that I think most people in Scotland imagine could or should happen.

If I was to give you an example of the greater understanding of both the civic and economic impacts of our public service broadcasters, many people will remember the debate that surrounded the infamous Nick Robinson argument with Alex Salmond at the height of the independence referendum, and that it actually produced a term that's now commonly used within the media here in Scotland called 'big footing.' And the idea of big footing is when someone from London imagines that they've got a big personality, a big ego, a big brain and big feet and they come up to Scotland and trample over some of the lesser beings that are in there doing the news agenda.

Now I know that it's the case that all sorts of different interpretations could've been made of what was happening on that day. But I was less interested in whether Nick Robinson should be named and shamed or whether there should be demos



outside the BBC. All of that didn't really matter too much to me. What mattered was that we had given life to a system where often it was the case that people were coming up from London to do a job that might well have been done by journalists here in Scotland.

Let me give you a current example. In fact, an example so current I don't even know what's happening as we speak. At Tollcross in Glasgow this week is the Olympic qualifications for swimming. So it's at Tollcross Baths, well, they're not baths, they're a big arena, but they're what used to be baths. And lots of really, really, really cool tall people with huge shoulders, men and women, dive into the bath and it's just brilliant. And some of them will qualify for the Olympics and they'll form part of Team GB, whatever.

Now all broadcasters, including Channel 4, but particularly the BBC and indeed Sky have brought big feet up to Scotland to talk about an Olympic qualification event. We're not talking the Olympics here, we're talking about how swimmers might qualify for the Olympics. And it's in Tollcross, but somehow BBC Scotland sports department or the Sky's local sports coverage doesn't have the resource to be able to cover an event on our own doorstep. I find that mystifying and bewildering.

And it's to do with the idea that if it's seen as significant within the calendar of events in London, people are sent up to Scotland to cover it. Now I got a request actually from a very, very, very dear friend of mine who I used to work with on the Late Show, remember that, BBC Two, where I was one of the presenters and she was one of the most brilliant producers I worked with. A woman called Jacky Hughes, and she got in touch with me saying Stuart, I'm coming up for the swimming at Tollcross. I thought well, they must be doing some kind of art coverage of it, maybe it's a piece on synchronised swimming or whatever.

I found out that her daughter is actually in the swimming team and may qualify for the Olympics. But I'll not know the end of the story till Friday when I meet her. But the good thing about that story is that she went through Airbnb and is now living in an apartment in Dennistoun in Glasgow and going to Tollcross every day. If she'd been at the BBC during the period that she worked there she would not have been Airbnb, she'd have been in a really nice hotel, probably the one I know exactly is in the centre of



Glasgow, very fine cocktails there. But there would've been an influx of people coming up to cover. We saw it with the Commonwealth Games.

Now there is nothing wrong with the Scottish economy being enriched by people visiting. In fact, we have an entire division of people that visit Scotland that encourage such a thing to happen. But I wonder whether we might just have the journalistic talent ourselves to cover some of these events.

And that takes me onto a debate about talent and the concordat for talent. Because I think that one of the things that we've got hopelessly wrong here is that because of these various things like lift and shift, it used to be that broadcasters in London used to say I need you to tell me...this is in meetings, not unlike the ones you saw there earlier. I need you to tell me who's going to give me comfort for this show. Where am I going to get comfort?

Now what they actually meant is who's going to be the executive producer is someone I already know and I've already worked with that will give me comfort. I used to get so pissed off with hearing this phrase, who's going to give me comfort? One day I said at Channel 4, go into Tesco's, walk down the aisle, it's next to Lenor and there's a range of other fabrics you can have as well. And it's just a very strange idea that in order to feel comfort you have to work with someone you've previously worked with.

Now I can understand the attraction of that at one level. But if it's a level that that disadvantages you bringing on new talent then actually you're not completely servicing the role that you've been given to do. I think too many trains leave Scotland with young people particularly, but not exclusively young people, who move down into the overheated London creative market and actually never return. Or if they do return as I've done 20 years on, bruised by the experience but having made a good life for myself...

And I want to talk just briefly about digital, because I think there's a great opportunity here for Scotland to do more in this space, and Angela gave an example of some of the initiatives that have grown up in and around the indie ref, but not exclusively so. And I think it's really important as well to stress that the BBC has been in the past hugely well-resourced in this area.



But I think one of the things that's really, really important here is getting the balance right. I think the BBC too often imagines that its role is to innovate in technology to build exclusive and unique proprietary systems that are theirs, rather than actually funding content which they're fantastic at. And I think that's always been the strength of the BBC and every time it's got involved in really, really big and ambitious technology projects they've often gone hopelessly wrong. And you wonder why you would build something if such a technology platform already exists. And it doesn't really matter to me whether that's owned by a company in Palo Alto in California or whether it's actually owned by an innovative company in Dundee or Edinburgh or indeed in Silicon, around about in London.

And I want to finish by a simple thing. In our industry we spend an awful lot of time talking about comparisons with America and people often look to America, we've heard of Netflix, we've talked about the others. One of the things that's really interesting about America is that if you look at it, it has a much more geographically and culturally diverse broadcasting landscape than the UK does. Let me just give you an example. The PBS system in Boston is at a level of quality that we can admire and often co-produce with. And that national geographic is based on Washington DC. Similarly high quality international programming which Channel 4 and the BBC frequently co-produce with.

It's the case of course that the film industry is based in Hollywood but not exclusively so, that CNN, one of the greatest news broadcasters in the world, in Atlanta and Georgia, that their entire infrastructure for Latino and Hispanic film and television are in Texas and Miami and Florida. That quite a lot of web TV initiatives come out of Seattle. And Los Gatos in California is the home of Netflix.

So the point I'm making there is whilst America's a considerably bigger place, it's also considerably better at diversifying the base of its media. It isn't focused on one uber city, and I don't think in Britain we should tolerate that much longer either. Thank you.

DP: Thanks very much indeed, Stuart. Before I hand over to you, because it is very much your evening, let's just pick up a couple of things. One is there's something Stuart just said, and I guess in a sense I don't agree with him. I spent a vast amount, too much of



my life living in the United States. I have never yet met anyone, ever, in America who said to me love your country, pity about your television service. That has never ever been said. In fact, the exact reverse. I have met thousands of Americans who said to me if only we had something like the BBC.

Why? Because at the moment what you see in America is a situation where the centre may not hold. One of the reasons the centre may not hold is the sheer hopeless fragmentation of people able to only listen to their own views reflected back to them, be there of the right, be there of the left. So in fact the lack of a balanced contextualised debate within the US broadcasting system is catastrophic. It's not dangerous, it's utterly catastrophic.

Yes, you can pick and mix around the channels, but people just don't. They simply look for the reassurance of the views they already have. I'd say that point.

A couple of other things, just to give the whole debate I think a little bit of context. If you want to read a really brilliant discussion of what television is and its future, go back to the 1950 and 1951 debates in Parliament and indeed in the House of Lords, over what was termed the second channel. The BBC very confidently expected to win the second channel. And there's quite an extraordinary debate that took place about the meaning of television, the purpose of television, the role of television, ended up with the creation, very brilliantly, by a Conservative Government, the creation of what we now know as the regional broadcast system in the UK effectively, what became ITV. It was an act of genius, absolutely genius.

Now why I feel very strongly about this and I must get this across, I've had several, as it were brushes, with television, including for 20 years I was a non-executive director of Anglia Television. It was a wonderful period. There wasn't one single year where we didn't make a decent profit. It used to vary, five per cent some years, six, seven per cent. The company was very well run, very well run.

It served its region, we had centres in Ipswich and Norwich and a news opt out in Cambridge. The Cambridge news opt out only reached 300,000, but it was worth it. We were the regional television service. For reasons best known to herself Margaret Thatcher in 1990, 1991 created the franchise system and destroyed



regional television in England. Not in Scotland, not in Wales, not in Northern Ireland, but in England. Destroyed it. What happened at Anglia? We survived the first round, but inevitably, capitalism being the way it operates, it was only a question of time before consolidation took place, because stations were allowed to buy each other.

Out of the window, on the day that we knew we were going to be bid at a price that our shareholders would accept, I saw a brilliant chairman burst into tears. For 30, nearly 40 years, they'd steered this business and its region. Five hundred jobs went out the window, an entire regional training structure went out the window. Three opt out new services serving in the region went out the window. The identity of the region itself went out the window.

And because someone mentioned the issue of democratic deficit each month we would discuss at some length... We had a weekly kind of any questions programme, it was taken very seriously. And we would organise it so that in a cycle of any three months every single local MP and indeed those opposing local MPs trying to get into that seat appeared on our local television station. There was no accuse for anyone in the Anglia region not to know who represented them, what their views were, they saw them cross-questioned and whether or not maybe they had a future as a future MP.

The day that Anglia sold that ceased. And I asked John Whittingdale in a meeting a month ago whether he thought that that act of parliament represented a democratic deficit. And he said if you look at it that way, of course it did. I said what's the chances, John, of a backbench MP today in England getting their face on television? He said a snowball's chance in hell.

If that is an idea of progressive useful television, if that's what we want from television, i.e. to allow politicians to become invisible, I don't actually think for one moment that's what this discussion's about, and I don't think for one moment there's anyone in this room thinks that's a good idea. But the one thing I've learnt from 20 years in the House of Lords is the slippery slope, the unintended consequences, the notion that you end up losing the very thing that you thought you were trying to protect.



So I hope that in the questions we get asked those sorts of issues will get penetrated. One just tiny thing, by an extraordinary coincidence the German constitution was written by a number of people and they included Hugh Carleton Greene who became the Director General of the BBC. And one of the reasons that German constitution and the powers were given to the lender was very specific; it was to prevent the rise of nationalism. It was to, as it were, to enforce, although not so much enforce, strengthen federalism and prevent nationalism. He at the time believed he was doing all of us in Europe a real favour. I suspect he was. But again, another piece of context. He did end up being Director General of the BBC.

So over to you, who'd like to start? Yes ma'am.

Q: To pick up on Neil's point, and I thought you ended very strongly Neil when you spoke of well, let's protect the PSB at the network level, network UK PSB, but surely...and to do that you said we've got to turn to lobbying and seeking support from the BBC. But surely it's a very delicate PSB ecology and that requires plurality and competition. So you cannot look just to protecting the BBC.

And on the BBC Alba point, you're seeking to become a PSB or you'd like the PSB status, it's a great privilege to be a PSB, there aren't a lot of benefits these days. You get prominence on the EPG but that's at risk of erosion and we need to be very careful about discoverability on all the different platforms these days. And we must not lose sight of the retransmission debate because it is important in this delicate ecology that the different funding models are allowed to prevail. And Sky's approach is not necessarily the one that is supportive of the other commercial PSBs. But I perhaps would say that.

DP: Neil and then Iseabail.

NB: Can I, I guess, pick that up? I think the point I was making really was that there is a bit of a tension between arguing for increased resource in Scotland, because nobody has come up with a better idea than the BBC funding or potentially funding a Scottish channel. And I suppose what I'm trying to say is I don't want to see the BBC being damaged by Scottish interests at a time when the BBC has many, many pressures on it.



My preference would be...you mentioned plurality. My preference would be to see at least one Anglophone Scottish channel which might or might not be funded by the BBC, but which would, if I say increase the plurality in Scottish broadcasting it's almost absurd to talk about plurality in Scottish broadcasting because there is so little of it actually based here.

But as far as equating PSB with the BBC goes, I suppose that's triage thinking from me in a way in the sense that I mean we know that the independence that Channel 4 have those kinds of commitments also. But I suppose what I was saying was if I had to put my eggs in one basket for the future, and I'm sure it's better not to, but it would seem to be safer with the BBC. Because I mean particularly if Channel 4 ends up being privatised, we really don't know what's going to happen to Channel 4. I mean I have to say, and I'm conscious of Stuart here, I didn't talk enough about Channel 4 but we're trying to stick within an allocated time.

But tonight Channel 4's running a Dispatches programme which the BBC wouldn't run in 100 years and I think we're entitled to ask why wouldn't the BBC run it? I mean Channel 4 news and Dispatches have been very, very element. I'm backing journalism again, I'm sorry. So I think you're right.

But in the ideal world you would have maximum plurality and maximum resource for the maximum number of channels, but it's not the way we're going. So I suppose what I'm saying was worst case scenario from my point of view, we don't have any development or significant development in the Scottish broadcasting landscape, in the meantime I wouldn't want to be diverted from being part of the support for the BBC at a time where in UK terms it's under threat.

And I think that's another balance that's quite difficult to get right, because the implication of some Scottish Government announcements on broadcasting, which have not been entirely coherent or consistent, but the impacts are generally damaging to the BBC. And without it seems to me proposing a very coherent solution. So that was my...

But I don't disagree with your implication that you can find the public service element outside the BBC and that the maximum plurality in the broadcasting landscape is desirable.



DP: Iseabail.

IM: The PSB point, it's an extension I suppose of the argument about the parity with S4C. S4C is a PSB and it's designated that through statute. At the moment any PSB like status that BBC Alba enjoys is purely contractual. So it's to try and strengthen the basis of the offering. And yes, you're right, the benefits of it are increasingly under question. But what it would do would give us a stronger basis to say we're pinpointing the deficits for audience for example in terms of children's, learners, entertainment, comedy. It gives a stronger basis within which to frame that argument for increased funding for that. So it's a correction of an anomaly if you like, compared to S4c.

I think you're absolutely right to raise the point about EPG and exactly what is the benefit other than that strengthening that PSB status gives. I definitely think that for all public service content, never mind Gaelic and minority language content, that discoverability is a huge issue and it needs to be addressed very, very quickly and quite openly and transparently. For example, if everything is going to be on any kind of splash page what kind of discoverability is there going to be for Gaelic programming?

And if there's going to be limited investment in Gaelic programming then how does that translate into the policy objectives? For example, increasing number of learners. If fundamentally things are content driven you put your big splashy content millions into a lovely beautiful drama, actually what does that achieve in terms of the policy objectives for increased Gaelic speakers? So yes, I agree, it's a fundamental point.

SC: Could I just make a point just on that, because I don't disagree with anything that you've said, but I still think that there's a huge, huge value to be had from the status of the EPG prominence of the various different stations. And only this week STV, which I think has been phenomenally well run in Scotland over the last five or six years, and has brought itself back into profit and into sustainability, obviously has launched the local channels. And they've now come up the EPG into a more settled place, I think it's button eight or whatever it is.



And it still remains the case that however many channels there are, 300, 200, 400, whatever it is, that people still make choices around a clustering, around 10 channels at most. That's average people. And that the ones that dominate within those ten are the ones that are at the top of the EPG, buttons one through to ten.

And so I think the market test here, and I would not wish this on anybody, is if they buttons don't have a value then there'd be an argument about why they shouldn't be put up for auction and Sky and BT would fight over each other for them. Because actually they're a really important part of what people's daily nights are like when they're flicking through channels. So I think they're things that we should fight to preserve and I think it's a good thing that we've a successful city TV or regional city, Glasgow and Edinburgh, which completely challenged David, the way in which quite a lot of the people in the House of Lords and indeed the House of Commons thought of regional city TV.

When it was sneered at all the way through its development, every broadcaster in Britain thought what the fuck are we doing this for? It's a busted flush. Birmingham went bust, see it can't happen. It's never happened. Of course it happens in Scotland and it's successful. So there is evidence that it can happen and that level of differentiation if well run and well managed can work. And I think it's unfair that the regional and city TV franchise idea in London is seen as dire and it didn't work and it was a commercial failure and a political... Was it Hunt that keeps getting hammered for it? But of course he's in another department now and getting hammered for other things, probably rightly so.

And you just want to turn around and say I wonder if you'd had a wee bit more faith in that that you might have had a different kind of ecology.

DP: I don't disagree with that. I remember Toronto City TV was a spectacular success. One thing, when we were doing the Communications Act 2001 there were endless discussions and debates about EPG and a very, pretty effective actually lobbying approach put up by Sky. What I have yet to understand is today, where are we, almost 20 years later, why we can't customise our own individual EPGs is beyond me. You can do it on a computer. It's got to be digitally possible and clearly it's just not in the interests of those who want to allow it to happen. But the



customisation of an EPG does seem to be one of the answers to this question. Because the visibility thing is huge.

Next question if I may? Yes, sir.

ES: Euan Sutherland. I suppose you preface this by saying at one time I worked in an office in Brussels which slightly further down the street at the Flemish language broadcaster, and slightly further down the street was the French language broadcaster, neither of which had much occasion to talk to each other. The question I want to raise really comes out of the RSE contribution, which seems to me rather naïve and suggest they haven't bothered to read the Scotland Act.

There are two reservations in Scotland that are separate reservations. One addresses telecommunications and the internet and says that's a UK responsibility, the other says broadcasting is a UK responsibility. So the challenge comes then how might you conceivably devolve any parts of that and retain accountability?

Because what you could conceivably end up with is a broadcaster or a regulatory trying to be accountable to four parliaments in the United Kingdom. And being asked to do different conflicting things by different legislatures. Now the Belgian answer to that, which is hideously inefficient is that they coordinate both the regulatory authorities. So they have three regulators for each of the language communities, and the regulators coordinate. But the ministers also coordinate. If it's sufficient, it goes up to that level.

So the question would be if you think you need to get bits off the internet, bits of terrestrial television, bits of satellite television devolved into Scotland, then you have to say right, you're going to have to amend the act, and you can't, as far as I can see, sensibly take terrestrial television without also taking satellite and without also taking the internet. Because otherwise you create regulatory arbitrage, and I can watch different things and there are different sets of rules.

But if there's to be accountability, at the moment that accountability sits with the Chairman in Westminster. If we go away from that then there has to be some way to change the



legislation to say which bits are we saying are not the responsibility of Westminster. And I don't think that's at all clear.

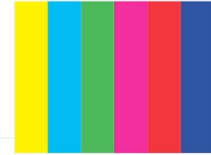
DP: John, do you want to try unpick that one?

JM: We didn't talk about the devolution of the legislation to the Welsh Assembly or the Scottish Parliament. We talked about it and we thought about it, but we're aware of the complexities and the issues and the downside as well as the upside. What we're looking for, it's a first step and it's something that should've happened ten years ago within the existing legislation, is a more openness and accountability of what the BBC does in Scotland.

Now it's very difficult, I accept it's very difficult, because of the way television, production expenditure is accounted for and where it takes place, et cetera. But what people are looking for is a way of...if somebody held up the annual report to me, I'm a decent, successful businessman, and I'd say I don't understand this annual report. My annual report has got to report to the shareholders of what we've spent, what we've done, how many we've sold and what the profits are. And I can't get a hold of this.

And I think in all seriousness the effort the BBC does in Scotland is undersold within the annual report because nobody understands it. It's obfuscatory, it's not clear. So what we're looking for, it's a simple first, is a better informed annual report which clearly can be understood by the average licence payer and that that would be scrutinised by the parliamentarians in Holyrood. It's scrutiny, transparency and openness. I don't think it's naïve and I don't think it's impossible.

Q: It's absurd. If the Westminster Parliament was to turn to you and say it doesn't like the outcomes in Scotland in, I don't know...health outcomes in Glasgow, that's a devolved matter. But Westminster doesn't like the results, it will intervene. The act, it's a quasi-federal system. Accountability of the BBC is to the House of Lords and the House of Commons. If you want to change that you go and say we want to devolve this. You can't put directors of the BBC in the invidious position of being told to do something by a Scottish Parliament with the act says they're not supposed to do and it's accountable somewhere else.



JM: I mean we could spend a lot of time arguing on the head of this particular pin. It is a pin. The Director General of the BBC is very happy to come to the Scottish Parliament and talk about what the Director General feels about the policy for Scotland. He's very happy to do it. The Welsh Assembly... We're not looking for at this stage a change in legislation, we're looking for more openness, more scrutiny, more transparency about what's done in Scotland and what the plans are for Scotland, so that there can be better public discussion. And it's to parliament, to the licence payers through the parliament. It's a very simple, straightforward and can be achieved relatively easily.

Now later if someone wants to talk about arguing for legislative power, we were not arguing for that.

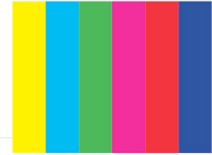
DP: What I would say to you is I think the biggest single issue is going to emerge, not so much from our enquiry although I suspect it will, but in the entire charter review process, will all be around governance. There's going to be a long and painful discussion on governance. And one of the things that frankly will need to be discussed and decided up here is there will be a unitary board. It'll be a recognisable unitary board.

What will be the relationship between Scotland that unitary board? Will there be a board or a panel that advises it? Will there just be the old thing of a representative sent down to London to sit on a unitary board? I don't know. But that will be the debate. And frankly that will be the nub of things. Get that right and a lot of these problems fall away. Get it wrong and all they do is become enflamed.

Sir?

DS: My name's David Smith, I run a small independent production company in Glasgow called Matchlight. We're primarily a BBC supplier but we also happily supply to BBC Alba and Channel 4 whenever we get the chance.

One of the things I wanted to highlight is a point that you touched on, Stuart, which is the economic and cultural deficit as well as the democratic deficit, and I think the BBC, to touch upon your point about we have to be careful not to throw the baby out with the bathwater, I think we have to be careful to school that



baby in the correct way to behave at times. And BBC Alba's very good at nurturing its supply base in Scotland. It has a policy called reap to sow which you touched upon Iseabail. And it brings producers along, they deal with us, they work with us.

The BBC in Scotland tends to operate at arm's length, you're very much kept at bay, and if you are successful in throwing an idea over the wall and it lands then you may be able to make some money on it, you might not. But it's an inherently unstable process. And one of the things that has emerged through the whole charter renewal process is that many producers in Scotland are very unsupportive of the BBC in terms of its process but not as an institution. We very much support it as an institution but the process needs to change and correct.

And one of the things I'd like to see is a fairer share and more of a nurturing of creativity across the UK.

DP: Can I ask, Angela, can I bring you in? Because I bet a pound to a penny that your transition will be from journalism to digital to broadcast of some form or other. How would you like to see the commissioning process and your ability to access television alter?

AH: That's a difficult question, honestly, I'm not...

DP: You don't see yourself ever moving into broadcasting?

AH: We want to move into broadcast but the path to do that isn't clear for us. It's not...

DP: Well, that's what I'm asking, what path would you like to see designed that allows you to get some visibility on...

AH: I don't really have an answer. I mean I don't know, we've got Maurice here as well who I'm going to... Sorry, Maurice, I'm bringing you in here. But Maurice runs a production company but also is one of the editors of Newsnet Scotland in the new media. So I don't know whether maybe you would have any more thoughts on that than me if that's more your area to begin with?

MS: Thanks, Angela.



AH: Sorry. And we would like to move further towards broadcast, but we're not really coming from... That's not really our aim. It's something that we look to the future, that we think...

DP: Maurice?

MS: Well I run a production company as Angela said, TVI, and we've had recent success with BBC Scotland which has been great. They're down the road, you know them. As David says, you throw an idea over the wall and if they catch it, great it.

I think the difficult which Stuart's touched on as well is the access to UK commissioners is much more difficult. I think some companies have done rather well but it's taken them a very long time. I can think of a couple of them actually in turn for example who've put a real effort into...but as far as I know it's taken a long time to achieve that.

DP: Well Stuart was the commissioner's commissioner.

SC: Well, one thing... Sorry, just picking up on that, and trying to some extent answer the question, because I think it is a very interesting question. In the week of the Panama papers a very, very strong online presence of a political activist / land reform radical called Andy Wightman has a digital site called Who Owns Scotland? Now it's something that's become a by-product really of the digital world. It's information up there on the web for you to look at, it's been crowd sourced in as much as he's drawn the information from a whole range of different contributors or whatever. And it's perfectly positioned to be a fantastic piece of broadcast journalism about who actually owns the land that we are currently in.

And in the context of the disguised and untransparent trust funds that currently own our land, including the highlights and the islands, including the current Prime Minister's wife's family and I'll not go into the great detail of what precisely she owns. But I think that's the stuff of good public service broadcasting, and it shouldn't necessarily be down purely to digital journalists to tell that story. I think that's a really good example of the journey where digital journalism has energised the story but it really now needs to turn into being a big broadcast concept basically.



DP: I couldn't agree more. Iseabail, you're also a commissioner.

IM: Yes. Sorry, my mind's still on David's point about the nurturing thing, and I don't quote Tessa Jowell very often, but I do think that point about the licence fee being the venture capital for the nation is a very important point. Because it brings in the creative economy side of things. And I think that's fundamental, that there's a kind of collective strategic insight into what does Scotland need? What genres does it need to develop and how are we going to develop them?

And it may take ten years. The Killing took ten years in terms of the script development aspect to the actual thing appearing on screen. And there was a clear development arch. So I think that there needs to be a collective vision strategically about what is needed.

And sorry, I'm going to touch briefly on the regulatory side of things, these strategic objectives can be held to account. And I think that the question about independence in terms of regulation comes when it's about editorial matters. But strategic objectives can totally comfortably be held to account.

And then what was the question about... It was about commissioning?

DP: Yeah.

IM: What was the...

DP: Basically access.

IM: Access. It's difficult for me to answer that. I mean BBC Alba, one of the commissions in the room... We have two commissioners, they're very transparent, it's all done and dusted in a day and published and if it's something time sensitive then it's done. So we're unusual in Scotland, we're fairly transparent.

I do think that the WIA example was painful, it was actually upsetting because I know that that's what happens to people. I know that commissioners are removed, they're not trusted, you're too wee, you're too poor, et cetera. You can finish the quote...



SC: Is this commissioning editors that say that or a wider range of people?

IM: Just a wider... So there's a lot of anecdotal evidence out there that suggests that there's a big gap between the people making the decisions and the people making it. And I do think that that needs to be closed. That's peculiar to the BBC though.

DP: Neil, do you want to contribute?

NB: I'm conscious that with...apart from some specific arguments around digital development and around BBC Alba, there is becoming a very familiar landscape, and I think we've known what a lot of the problems are for a very long time. And I mentioned there the Broadcasting Commission eight years ago, I think it was the most lucid illustration... I mean it produced a document unlike a lot of these kinds of documents which are very readable and made some clear recommendations. And I think carried most of the independent sector with it. And I know that I was involved in the follow-up, a thing called the Scottish Digital Network Panel, and again, I think we got very consistent evidence from the independent sector.

I mean I got to the point that I think that there really is a question of translating the things that we know, which need to be done into action, which is why I concentrated earlier on politics. Because I'm aware that individually MPs in Westminster and MSPs in Holyrood are very concerned about these matters. I mean I've been involved into enquiries into the press as well, and there are conservative MPs on the Scottish Affairs Committee that most people don't know of, who are nonetheless very, very concerned about these matters.

But the difficulty seems to be, and a lot of it has to do with the balance of power between Holyrood and Westminster, and goes back to the point made earlier on about the difficulty of separating communications and media legislation which is actually the... It's how we enact what are in some cases quite small scale and rational solutions. Whereas what we have had for a very long time I think in most of these fronts is stasis really. Because unfortunately I've heard a lot of these arguments for a very long time.



I mean when you think of what you can do practically, I think from Scotland one wants lobbying to put some quite specific things into charter review. But as it were, that is just the BBC. And when I look at the history of political inaction I look at film, I look at the fact that we still don't have the coherent film studio plan. We've got several plans. We've had film studios inflicted on us by Outlander, and we'll insist on building a studio. And I can't... I mean I think in this discussion if anything we've greatly underplayed the economic disadvantage. I mean we're all conscious of the democratic and cultural disadvantages that Scottish civil society has left its media platforms far behind.

But I think the economic...we've missed the boat so many times on economic development here. And again, I don't want to rabbit on too much, some people don't like the comparison with Ireland because it sounds as though I'm making too politicised a comparison. But if you look at the creative industries, how the creative industries flourish in somewhere like Dublin, with really a smallish number of television channels, and compare that to what we don't have here as it were, my own concern... What worries me slightly is that in another ten years we might be having arguments which are quite similar, except they've adjusted a bit for the digital landscape and we're still making all these kinds of complaints.

And I rather get the impression that there are... I should say this is an impression; I have no evidence for it. But I think there may well be figures in the present Scottish Government who are content to wait until the next round of constitutional change. And would not be unhappy to see things continue as they are, and may even think that there are some advantages in the kind of dissatisfaction which I think we now see in the online debate.

There is a quite...if I've got a moment to raise some maybe. Several years ago I made a remark in a book which I co-edited with a colleague, it was called the Media in Scotland. It was a big collection of essays, and I talked about the fragility of the media apparatus in Scotland. And the late Ian Bell, the journalist who people here would know best as a columnist for the Herald, he reviewed the book at some length and he cited this sentence and he said so what? Okay, we've got a fragile media apparatus and it might go down the tubes, so what?



Now I know he was...sometimes journalists like to work on their persona a little bit. But there's the kind of question there that's worth exploring. My answer to so what is there are a lot of jobs involved. I mean I know a lot of journalists for example that have lost their jobs in Scotland and are out of work and haven't picked anything else up and so on. And as someone involved in higher education and with employers' bodies I've seen all the opportunities we've missed.

But there is a strange question that while the Scottish media, the form of the Scottish media has remained relatively static with the exception of online, politically there has been very considerable change. And I think one of the questions in my mind is exactly what is the relationship between the media platforms and the civil society? Because it's a puzzling one actually.

SC: Could I just say to David that one of the roles that I think that you could play or that the House of Lords could play in this deliberation as we move forward is Neil makes a really important point about the Broadcasting Commission and the coherent document and all the rest of it. It's worth going back and just simply remembering that that document enjoyed the full widespread all party support of every party in the Scottish Parliament, not the SNP, and it's really important that that message somehow got jammed, the information got jammed in the process.

And I think now that anything that's aspiration about Scotland or anything that's noisy or disputational coming from Scotland is seen as being nationalism or the SNP, and it actually isn't. It's a nation saying we want to do better and be better, but we think that you need to help us be better because as the gentleman says, Westminster holds all of the keys to the unlocking of the creativity of this nation in terms of spend and allocation, in terms of the structures and the systems.

And I think that the less that Scotland gets listened to, and I'm meaning civic Scotland here, the more pain people get, the more untrustworthy they get, the more angry they get. And that's where we are now.

DP: I think that's absolutely correct, and I actually think Neil's raised an incredibly important issue. But what I would say is I find it



weird. There is more data, Stuart knows this, we more about the potency of the creative industries, the employment opportunities in the creative industries, the soft power generated by the creative industries than we've ever known. I mean the amount of metrics we've gathered and information we've gathered on the creative industries over the last 15 years is overwhelming.

I must have addressed, in fact one time it was with John, at the Edinburgh Film Festival, I must have given a dozen speeches over the last 20 years about the creative industries here in Scotland. What's been missing to me is people agree and they nod, and they... And there's no consistency and the debate moves on, the agenda moves on, something else takes over. And this hard fact that seven million European, mostly young people work in the creative industries somehow gets subsumed here, doesn't get taken seriously. I think it's taken more seriously I have to say certainly in London, and just in case anyone thinks I'm just big feet up from London, I spend three days a week in London, I actually live in South West Ireland. And so I'm very appreciative of everything that's been said about RT. In fact, a friend of mine just became DG. So I'm doubly appreciative.

It is true that those conversations are taken very seriously in Dublin. Dublin knows it has to build itself as a digital hub and as a... In fact, just to dwell on it a second, Ireland has got twice the amount of investment and people working in the digital arena than any other nation in Europe, because it's taken seriously, because that agenda hasn't moved on. And if I had to typify one thing, I hope I'm not...this may be a little bit big footed.

When I'm talking to my film students about America I run one clip always, always. I run the clip from the Life of Brian, of one of what have the Romans ever done for us? Because there is so much about this conversation which is summed up in that, that we have of course understand the things we want and the things we need and where we want to go. And we do forget the fact that it is up to us to do it.

And the question I want to leave you with, I'm not finished... One question I'd like to ask tonight is you've got £148 licence fee, if you feel that strongly about what could be achieved here in Ireland...sorry, Ireland. In Scotland. How popular would it be if the Scottish licence fee was £200? And the other £52 came directly to



Scottish production, Scottish companies, Scottish studios, whatever you wanted to decide to spend it on, so you get the component you already get, maybe a bit more, and another £52 on top, because the people of Scotland decided they want an outstanding broadcast system.

SC: That would be an interesting argument but...

DP: It would last 30 seconds I think.

SC: ...going back to my previous point, it would be very, very difficult to make that argument now because Scotland also has the highest proportion of refuseniks refusing to pay their licence, and the level of if you like feelings sometimes over emotional and sometimes slightly misguided of the idea of people are not getting value for the licence fee is at its highest. I would pay it, I'd pay the £200.

DP: A huge proportion of those refuseniks are paying £400 and £500 a year for their Sky licence. So it isn't about money, it's about perceived value. And one of the things that's got completely out of kilter the last few years is we completely forgot what we're paying for pay television and still regard...

SC: I'd actually challenge that, David, because the biggest driver of Sky is English Premiership Football, and whilst it's the case that that has some cachet in Scotland, it's not nearly as significant in Scotland as it is in England. So I would think that actually if you looked at those things the levels of refuseniks would be high and the lack of interest and the big driver of Sky's business would be different from England as well. Actually, most people watch more football on BBC Alba when it comes to first division games. They have great coverage, it's fantastic.

DP: We can hear about it endlessly. The truth is, it's a very, very interesting and very easily piece of research to do. Which is how many people who are uncomfortable with the BBC licence fee are paying twice that for their Sky subscription.

JM: But actually from my...I mean I know from just my anecdotal experience of appearing on BBC phone-ins and so on, when people phone in about this kind of thing, they draw a different conclusion, actually what they tend to say is precisely because I'm



spending all this money on Sky or I'm spending on Netflix or Amazon why am I also having to spend this on the licence fee? That doesn't seem very rational in some ways, but it is actually what people often argue.

SC: I would underpin that and I think it's quite dangerous in terms of the current charter review process, that I had always thought that when people were exposed to... I mean I pay £900 a year and my Sky subscription has just been increased. So I'll be paying £900 for the total package, and...I thought it was £145 the licence fee. What is the licence fee? £145.50? £145.50, see. We used to always have a board on the BBC, when you were going out to a public meeting it said the licence fee is... Don't forget and don't get it wrong! It's like the price of milk to the Prime Minister.

But I'd always thought when you get that into the debate people say well, that's bloody good value then. I'm getting all that radio and all that television for that, and it's had the opposite effect. It's because of the element of choice, because it's backed up by the old sanctions, because I choose to spend my £900 on Sky, therefore I want to save the £145 on the BBC, and it hasn't had the effect I thought it would have of underpinning the value of the licence fee. And I think there's a real marketing job to be done on that. Somebody's got to take an eclectic, new novel approach to it, trying to explain how that works and what you get back for it.

JM: May I just add that that could get to a tipping point, because actually apart from... I take Stuart's point, but for a lot of people who... There's probably a gendered point, but who watch news and football or who really want TV for news and sport, they can largely avoid the BBC. And I mean I was involved in the charter review from 1996 in audience research, and I think we all thought the digital world then was happening faster than it has. But it's happening pretty fast now.

And there is a generation of people, at least one with really quite very different viewing habits and actually different news habits and so on. So I think there's something that the BBC really has to be ready for, that somehow there's been a long rollout of the digital world, longer than many of us thought 20, 25 years ago. But it's really there with us now, and a lot of people are asking awkward questions about the licence fee. And if you look at polls on the acceptability of the licence fee they have altered a lot.



And I mean most of us that care about the BBC think that an alternative like subscription really would be a disaster. And that the BBC has to be big and it has to have critical mass. But I do think it might not be right now, it might not be this charter review, but it's close at hand when people say really why should I pay this at all given all the other things I've got? I like to binge on boxsets of whatever, and I don't really care about this anymore. I think that's on the way.

SC: Would that £50 be just for Scotland?

DP: Yeah, absolutely.

SC: No, I mean so Scottish licence payers would pay £200 and licence payers say in Northampton would pay £150?

DP: If necessary. I mean what I'm really suggesting is if we care, and I mean collectively, if we care enough about the best broadcasting system, the best BBC being the BBC in Scotland, and that's going to cost another £50 a year would the nation put its hand up and say you know what, that's what we want? And I suspect it wouldn't happen, but the truth is that is self-determination. Self-determination for me is to say we're not interested in the settlement in the UK. We want our own settlement and we want it to be better.

SC: The reason I'm pushing this is if a scenario emerged where the £50 was for all licence fee payers across the whole of the UK, and that we ended up with a better funded BBC, but that the culture didn't change and the proportionality didn't change, then all you would get would be people saying it's £50 more for what we're really angry about.

DP: There was another question out there and this...it's my fault, poor chairmanship, that'll be the last one.

AE: Alan Esslemont, I'm Head of Programmes for BBC Alba. I go back to 1996, I suppose I spent ten years or half of twenty years in Ireland, half of twenty years in Scotland and looking across. The big thing that being Scottish having spent most of my broadcasting career in Ireland, coming back to Scotland, what I noticed, that from 1996 onwards, one thing happened. And that



was basically that strategy went south in Scotland. So PSB strategy, BBC strategy, and also commercial strategy went to London and hasn't come back.

Whereas in Ireland what happened was that strategy remained in Dublin and fed off of London, so it got the best of both worlds. What has happened in Scotland is that strategy has gone to London and London has to a certain strength fed off Scotland, exploited Scotland.

I really don't think there's that much needed to sort broadcasting, sort the BBC in Scotland. But it does need the people in the BBC to regain control of strategy. To say we will strategise Scottish broadcasting out of Scotland, we make of BBC One and BBC Two what we need to make of BBC One and BBC Two for our audiences. And we will use BBC Alba strategically as part of what needs to be done. So we have three core linear assets, BBC One, Two and Alba.

Why can't we just grab hold of strategy, grab hold of a little bit more money and then start pushing the boat out? I think that's really what is needed. And it's not rocket science and it doesn't even need charter renewal. It could start tomorrow.

DP: John?

JM: I mean looking back over the past 25 years the thing I regret most is very much Alan's point. There's been great periods of investment here in Scotland and golden periods of drama and entertainment. And I believed in the first half of the 90s for example, that as new funding was invested, new talent was attracted, people came back here, people who were developed here, that that was where the BBC wanted us to be. And very big statements made to parliament before each charter review about development, et cetera.

And before the parliament...when the referendum was there explaining how things would develop and strengthen...and what's happened, which is frustrating to look back on, because it's a lack of a strategy, and I know it's a creative industry and creative industries ebb and flow with talent and ideas. And so you're bound to be...we're not making beans, you're bound to have good years and bad years.



But the strategic over review wasn't there to say this is something that we must build on and sustain. And so year by year you get a bit more, and so then you build on that talent, you build on that programme's success. Whether it's Hamish Macbeth or whatever it was from the early 1990s or looking at other... And you build on that and you get the talent and develop and the thing grows and develops and sustains. Instead of that...

And it's because I believe, looking at it from the outside now, because of the change, when you get the change of the commissioning power in London and people leave and new people come in, they start a fresh, it's ebbed and ebbed. And then you get another golden period where somebody's commissioned something and it comes up. It's a lack of a strategy to develop broadcasting outside of London on a sustainable creative way to strengthen the BBC.

Deliver to Scotland what Scotland wants delivered from Scotland, what the UK wants from Scotland and could take from Scotland. And that would enrich the BBC. But it's ebbed and flowed with the whims of commissioners that David started with on the WIA. And I cringe when I saw that, because we all know, I think most people in this room would know similar stories and there has been one in the press recently which make you embarrassed.

It should be built on a sustainable basis. And the creativity and creative work and people sustained and developed and invested in. So that when as you look over a five year period, given the ideas of what it's about, you can still say we've been working to develop more ideas and develop more programming, and investing in the creative life in Scotland. And the sad things is with all that public money that the BBC gets and that privileged position of having a monopoly over the licence fee, it hasn't happened. And it must happen over this next ten years, or with the growing powers that go to the Scottish Parliament, I'm afraid the public sympathies will erode below that 48 per cent I quoted at the beginning.

DP: Could I finish by picking up again on I think a really important thing that Neil said. And I don't want to sound as I'm trying to cop any credit for this. When we, the Labour Party, lost to the 1992 election, a number of us sat down, chaired by a Scot, Chris Smith,



and started to set out a strategy for the creative industries in the whole of the UK. And we worked for four years on it, it became the manifesto commitment in the run up to the '97 election, and it hasn't really changed; it's been utterly consistent. To a point at which the principle advocate in the UK today for the creative industries miraculously is the Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer. That's how embedded the concept of the creative industries and the importance of the creative industries has become.

So I would really in a sense leave you the only piece of advice I would offer. You have to be utterly consistent. You're absolutely right, you have to have a very clear strategy, you have to be prepared to invest in that strategy, you have to be prepared to train for that strategy, you need managers as much as you need great directors, writers and other forms of artists. But unless you take it very seriously, it won't happen. So I really would leave you, we'll try and pick this up, Des and I with the enquiry.

But I do believe to an extraordinary extent the ball is in your own court, and my experience of coming up... I've never had anyone say to me you're completely wrong, Puttnam, you're a fool, go back to London. What I've had is absolutely wonderful, thank you very much, but then 15 minutes after you've left the room the agenda's moved on and the creative industries were yesterday's story. The creative industries are fundamental to strong broadcasting systems, because these are talent driven systems. The rest of it's just wires and lights. These are talent driven businesses.

You've got colossal talent in this country. That is the reason, honestly, I've produced four films here, all of them thank god, no, three of them, of the four, did very well. One catastrophe. But never mind, moving straight on.

Thank you very, very much as a panel, you've been terrific. I've been a crap Chairman and we've overrun. But I've enjoyed the discussion...

End of transcript