

## **BBC Scotland**

### **Delivering Quality First: Overview**

As a result of the UK Government public spending review, the BBC Licence Fee has been frozen at its current level - £145.50 per annum – until the end of the current Royal Charter (December 2016). With additional financial responsibilities placed upon it – World Service funding, the Welsh language service S4C, support for Local TV, etc. – this has necessitated a BBC budget saving of approximately 16% - 20% over the period.

The impact on the BBC, and on BBC Scotland, was outlined in October 2011. In detail:

- BBC – average savings required per area 20%: in Scotland, requirement is 16%
- BBC Scotland will be required to reduce its local budget by £16.1million, from £102m to £86m, over the period to the end of financial year 2016/2017.
- The likely impact will be 100 – 120 post closures and we will look to voluntary redundancy, redeployment where possible/appropriate, etc.
- News posts will reduce by c. 30, with a simplified management structure (under DQF, 11 News posts were closed last year and 17 proposed for this year); radio potentially could lose 15-20 posts, though investment in distinctive programming will remain a priority, as will sharing content with BBC networks.
- There will be no drop in hours in News and Current Affairs from BBC Scotland - in fact there will be an increase, with more radio news at weekday lunchtimes. We have already reshaped our offering on Saturday mornings, with more news and current affairs on offer to our audience, instead of late night programming.
- The overall number of local TV programmes will reduce, though maintenance of quality will remain a priority. An increased number of nations' opts (local programmes) on network radio and TV will provide opportunities for increased representation and portrayal of Scotland and/or Scottish issues on network.
- The overall impact of the budget cuts will, we hope, be offset to a degree by increased network business, which will bring both funding and employment opportunities.

### **The current phase**

By the end of August 2012, 39 posts had been closed. Whilst we will again find some of the savings from non-staff costs, by March 2013 we expect to close approximately 35 posts to achieve the required savings for 2013-2014.

These are in the following areas:

Radio, Scotland	8 posts
Gaelic	2 posts
News & Current Affairs	17 posts
Marketing, Communications & Audiences	6 posts
New Media, Learning & Outreach	2 posts

We will do all we can to support staff affected by the post closures and, as we would always do, we will be seeking to manage any post losses through voluntary redundancy and redeployment, thus avoiding compulsory redundancy wherever possible.

We continue to talk to the unions about the Delivering Quality First savings plan. A number of volunteers have come forward from the trawl for voluntary redundancy. However, some areas have not received enough volunteers and, consequently, we will still need to undertake selection for retention exercises in these areas.

### **Inverness**

We had originally planned two News post closures in Inverness. However, as an organisation that has an on-going dialogue with our employees, we have been talking through our efficiency plans with staff and unions as part of the consultation process. Following those talks we have been able to reduce the proposed News post closures from two to one.

By way of general context, it should be noted that BBC Scotland has never had a greater newsgathering commitment to the Highlands and Islands than it does at present, with 21 News staff working on English-language and Gaelic output across TV, Radio and Online.

Of those 21, we have 13 Newsgathering staff covering Gaelic output from Inverness, Skye and Wester Ross, Argyll, Stornoway and Uist, while another eight News staff based in Inverness work largely on English-language output.

In addition to those 21, we also have a further team of 19 presenters and production staff who are part of the overall output teams for Inverness.

As the numbers indicate, Highlands and Islands has a considerable amount of BBC investment in Newsgathering and that is in addition to around 200 News staff based elsewhere in Scotland who can augment and add to that core team if there is editorial demand for it.

Going forward, it is our intention to deepen the collaboration which already exists between the English language and Gaelic news staff and to continue to invest in new technologies, such as satellite kits, to enhance our newsgathering capabilities across the region. We do not envisage such a development as placing greater pressure on our Gaelic service.

We are also aware of concerns having been voiced that such pressures as may consequently be placed on BBC Scotland by the need to make cost reductions could lead to Scottish Government resources being used to underpin the Gaelic language for mainstream news. This situation could never arise, as funding for all news programming, on all BBC services and broadcast platforms, must be derived wholly from Licence Fee and from no alternative source. This ensures the BBC's impartiality in its news reporting.

### **Aberdeen**

Staffing will be impacted as a result of the decision to decommission the Tom Morton programme, the Beechgrove Potting Shed and Digging Up Your Roots. The news

operation will also be reduced by one post as part of the 17 post reductions in BBC Scotland News in this phase of the Delivering Quality First strategy (that one post has been identified through voluntary redundancy).

The BBC Trust recently reviewed the Radio Scotland service licence and determined that, in order for the station to remain distinctive, there should be a greater focus on speech-based programmes during the daytime schedules, with specialist music programmes featuring during evenings. To that end, we have decided to close the Tom Morton Show and to replace it with a speech-based programme, featuring Janice Forsyth, which will be produced from our existing radio features base in Edinburgh.

The Beechgrove Potting Shed will also be decommissioned, as we seek to develop a new approach to gardening. This will involve the development of a weekly Radio Scotland slot in the lifestyle strand, inserts to the MacAulay and Co programme and a new series, The Kitchen Garden, which will focus on all aspects of food, from growing and sourcing through to preparation and presentation.

It is our intention to make Aberdeen a base for social history and environmental science output and we are already planning series around both themes, building to a large extent on the expertise which exists within the Landward and Out of Doors teams.

Where particular posts are affected by the proposed changes, we will in the first instance look to voluntary redundancy and possible redeployment and we continue to have constructive discussions with the unions on these matters.

On the question of news coverage, we remain firmly committed to providing local news from Aberdeen using the team based there, both to offer a service for Aberdeen listeners and to feed into our national and UK news coverage. We will not reduce the amount of news coverage which we offer from Aberdeen; nor will we compromise on the quality of that coverage or redirect the focus of our existing news coverage towards the Central Belt. A new sports journalist has also just been appointed in Aberdeen.

Our commitment to producing output of the highest quality from Aberdeen is reflected in programmes such as Out of Doors and Landward; we have recently re-commissioned The Beechgrove Garden; the six part television series, The Harbour, about Aberdeen Harbour and produced by Tern TV, began on BBC One Scotland on Monday 22 October; and this year's production of Children in Need will for the first time be based in Aberdeen.

### **Going Forward**

We are in the process of preparing for coverage of the Independence Referendum and the Commonwealth Games. Both will benefit significantly from increased, fixed term resourcing from network BBC. Welcome as that funding will be, these monies are outwith the timeframe of the current phase of savings that are required of us and consequently do not impact on the savings that we currently have to make.

In the period up to and during the Independence Referendum we will offer comprehensive, authoritative coverage of the issues and provide a platform for debate and discussion, involving voices from across the political spectrum.

Our approach will be as thorough as that adopted in covering the signing of the Referendum Agreement on 15 October 2012. On that occasion, on television, the network Six O'Clock News and Ten O'Clock News were co-presented, with contributions from Nick Robinson and Brian Taylor; in Scotland, there were extended versions of Reporting Scotland and Newsnight Scotland; the story featured prominently across radio services, from Good Morning Scotland to the Today Programme to 5Live; Radio Scotland also ran a phone-in on the Tuesday morning. There continues to be collaboration over the content of our online Referendum website and collaboration across all Scotland and UK platforms on branding.

As we move towards the Referendum itself, we will offer more debates, more documentaries and new programming, across television, radio and online, where, particularly in the case of the latter, we are developing innovative ideas to engage and inform our audiences, specifically younger viewers and listeners.

### **Conclusion**

We do not underestimate how hard it is to achieve these savings plans and how difficult it is for those facing the prospect of losing their jobs. In this respect, the challenge we face is similar to that in other parts of the Scottish media.

We would, however, like to underline our track record of success in delivering great content to our audiences and of significant investment in BBC Scotland over recent years. Our aim remains to provide high quality and distinctive programmes, content and services for audiences in Scotland and in the rest of the UK. Our proposals will ensure that we deliver those aims and respond to the demands of an ever-changing industry.