



11 January 2017

Lord Hall of Birkenhead CBE  
Director General  
BBC  
Broadcasting House  
Portland Place  
London  
W1A 1AA

Sent via e-mail [tony.hall@bbc.co.uk](mailto:tony.hall@bbc.co.uk)

Dear Lord Hall,

### **BBC ALBA and BBC Radio nan Gàidheal**

Having reviewed the BBC Royal Charter and Framework Agreement published on 15 December, my Chair has asked me to follow up on correspondence last July in relation to the importance of supporting the Gaelic language and, crucially, the level of that support at a time when the language remains in a fragile state.

BBC ALBA and BBC Radio nan Gàidheal are highly valued by Gaelic speakers and both are key elements of current developments in language revitalisation.

We therefore welcome, in Schedule 1(3)(b), the inclusion of BBC Radio nan Gàidheal amongst the existing services which the BBC must retain.

We also welcome, in the specified activities detailed in 40(1), the undertaking that the BBC must continue to support the provision of output in the Gaelic language in Scotland and, in 40(2), that through its partnership with MG Alba, the BBC must continue to provide a television service supporting MG Alba's function of securing that a wide and diverse range of high-quality programmes in Gaelic are broadcast or otherwise transmitted so as to be available to persons in Scotland.

We have been unequivocal in our support of both services while recognising that any weaknesses in the BBC ALBA service, in particular, could be overcome with greater investment in new programming. The current level of repeats - 74% of output - could be reduced dramatically and viewers could have access to fresh programmes on a regular basis.



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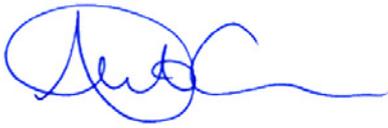
In that context, given the level of support there seemed to be among Gaelic speakers at the time of the Charter Review Public Consultation last year, we were somewhat dismayed to note, in 39(3), that S4C is to have £74.5m guaranteed to it until March 2022, while no such commitment is made in relation to BBC ALBA.

Fèisean nan Gàidheal supported, and continues to support, the call for a minimum of 10 hours of new programming per week. We recognise the S4C operating model is different to that which the BBC enjoys with MG ALBA, but feel that a commitment to new programming, along with the resources required to make them, will be necessary if BBC ALBA is to be enabled to fulfill its role of offering a diverse range of high-quality programmes in Gaelic.

While we could make further points in relation to both services, we would refer you to the submissions we made to the *BBC Charter Review Public Consultation* and to the *Consultation on nations' radio, BBC Alba and news and current affairs on TV and online in the devolved nations*.

We hope that you and your colleagues at the BBC will support this reasonable expectation on the part of Gaelic speakers.

Leis gach deagh dhùrachd



**Arthur Cormack**  
Chief Executive

cc Duncan MacQuarrie MBE, Chair, Fèisean nan Gàidheal  
Ken MacQuarrie, Director of Nations and Regions, BBC