

For the attention of Kevin Carson and Arun Devasia

Cc: Anthony Busselier, Gavin Cooke, Holly Christopher, Yameen Rasul

23rd January 2026

Dear BECTU representatives

Response to sixth collective consultation meeting

Thank you for attending the collective consultation meeting on Friday 16th January 2026.

In attendance at the meeting were the following colleagues:

- BECTU Representatives – Kevin Carson, Holly Christopher, Yameen Rasul, Gavin Cooke, Anthony Busselier. Apologies received from Arun Devasia.
- BBC Business Representatives – Kelly Kowal, Jaime Toca, Nic Bailey, Claire Sproulle, Lottie Gosling.

Below are a summary of the discussion points and our response in writing.

1. Headcount / Budget update

We provided an update on recent discussions relating to the BBC's financial position and the request for PG to contribute to the wider savings required across the organisation. While there are still vacancies within PG, it was explained that, in light of the broader financial context, it is not possible to commit to a position of no compulsory redundancies. This was shared openly to ensure transparency should it have any bearing on the proposals.

Yameen asked if this might affect the creation of roles or bring budgets into scope. We confirmed that the proposals continue to be driven by new ways of working rather than headcount reduction. It was clarified that there was no original headcount savings target for PG and that, although there remain some unfilled roles, previous assumptions around reinvestment can no longer be relied upon.

Gavin raised the potential role of voluntary measures in supporting the delivery of savings, highlighting that, while AVR had previously been ruled out, it may be helpful to reconsider as it could encourage uptake and contribute to savings. Kevin asked about the availability of voluntary redundancy (VR) forms, and it was agreed that we would review the number of VR forms submitted to date.

Kevin also noted that some individuals may be reluctant to submit VR requests at this stage while awaiting further detail on counter-proposals and potential roles. While acknowledging the current position on AVR, he requested that this point be taken away and reconsidered, noting that it has been used elsewhere in the organisation.

Yameen raised a question about the origin of the savings requirement. We confirmed that this reflects ongoing and significant financial challenges across the BBC, with budgets not currently aligning and a need to identify savings as part of standard business planning and ExCo budget reviews. It was reiterated that these pressures are organisational rather than leadership-specific and will remain irrespective of changes at Director General level.

While continued engagement and transparency were welcomed, it was recognised that, for BECTU, a key concern remains securing assurances around compulsory redundancies, alongside understanding how the broader financial context informs the proposals.

Following the meeting, further discussions have taken place, and we can confirm that enhanced voluntary redundancy payments will not be offered.

2. PDLC

We discussed the PDLC and the intention to share more information with both BECTU and wider colleagues, to assist with some of the answers to the questions which have been raised on future ways of working.

We discussed our intentions to share a document on the PDLC with all colleagues at the end of next week, with the caveat that the proposed way of working in the PDLC document, without embedded delivery at team level, is subject to the outcome of this consultation and is also a draft working document. The purpose of this is to work in an honest and transparent way with teams. It was noted that the original request to pause sharing was due to the material being pre-proposal, and there was caution expressed about wider communication before discussions are further advanced.

Gavin requested the material to be shared with BECTU ahead of any broader circulation, given its potential impact. We confirmed that we are open to BECTU review, noting the importance of developing material that can ultimately be shared more broadly with a clear and agreed narrative. We agreed that Kelly or Jaime would meet with Gavin next week so that Gavin can review the content and give feedback on anything that is likely to be inflammatory or cause undue concern.

We have since discussed the PDLC with Kevin and agreed that BECTU will have until next week to review the documents. We have also agreed documents will not be shared more widely, both with Heads of or the wider Product Group until the review has been completed and feedback has been considered.

3. Transformation roles/ recruitment

We discussed the three transformation roles that were requested to be ring-fenced to colleagues in Delivery at last week's meeting. We explained that the business has since reviewed this position and confirmed that the two remaining roles will follow the standard BBC approach. This means that Category 1 at-risk colleagues will be considered first, alongside ring-fencing to Delivery and Portfolio Performance colleagues.

We heard and acknowledged the challenges raised, including the request for the roles to be frozen and brought formally into consultation. While we understand these concerns, we explained that the business position is that we need to move forward with these roles and that we are able to ring-fence them in the way outlined.

We agreed not to advertise the roles on 16 January as originally planned, to allow time for further conversations with colleagues. We further agreed that the roles will be advertised early next week, and both delivery and transformation colleagues will be able to apply.

4. Question/ Discussion on BECTU questions

Documentation and clarity

BECTU representatives asked for additional time to review the documentation in full and confirmed that a response to the initiative lead document had already been submitted, to be considered as part of the counter-proposals.

It was noted that some of the slides shared, including those relating to Kindred, were difficult to read due to image quality and resolution, and these have subsequently been re-shared in a better format.

Workload and Engineering Concerns

Anthony raised the overview of workload presented in the engineering slides, raising concerns that while the tasks associated with agile ceremonies were listed, it was felt that the broader preparation work was not fully reflected, including activities such as writing tickets and ongoing planning.

Further questions were raised about the role and involvement of Senior Software Engineers, including how their time would be impacted and the extent to which their workload has been accounted for within the proposals.

Anthony asked what mitigations are in place to ensure the same level of engineering output can be maintained. We explained that engineering is now organised around distinct product areas, with 11 Heads of Software Engineering leading teams with a greater number of engineering managers, providing clearer accountability and simpler escalation routes.

It was also noted that investment in tooling, including the move to JIRA Cloud, is intended to improve visibility and support SETLs by highlighting risks, capacity and delivery challenges earlier. We also highlighted that engineering teams have seen significant growth over time, while the number of products and initiatives has not expanded at the same rate, providing greater resilience and helping to balance workload and output.

Yameen explained that some Engineering teams are already successfully working in this way, and expressed concerns that it could have been tackled by looking at teams not currently working in this way rather than what he said would be perceived as a 'stick' for others

The meeting concluded in agreement that the next meeting will take place on Wednesday 21st January, where BECTU would take us through the counter proposal. We have since agreed that Wednesday's meeting will be working session with Heads of Delivery to work through the counter proposals, and a further meeting is to be scheduled for next week (w/c 26th January) to take the wider group through the proposals.

We trust this summarises the main points of the sixth consultation meeting.

With regards

Kelly Kowal
Director of Product Operations