

From: David [dgordonbt@redacted](mailto:dgordonbt@redacted) Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry  
 Subject: Re: BBC and the Bell tapes  
 Date: 23 December 2016 at 15:46  
 To: Richard Bullick [richardbullick@redacted](mailto:richardbullick@redacted) Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry



The most likely scenario is BBC using tapes right after the Christmas break.

Something could spook it into going earlier, of course.

Andrew was working on his statement today.

I've forwarded you predictable BBC's response to request for Bell records.

They are clearly still holding out some hope of an Andrew interview.

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From: Richard Bullick <[richardbullick@redacted](mailto:richardbullick@redacted)> Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry  
 Sent: 23 December 2016 15:36  
 To: David  
 Cc: Simon Hamilton  
 Subject: Re: BBC and the Bell tapes

D

I don't want to disturb tj at the moment but what's your best guess re timing of tapes and do you know when Amc statement will be ready?

R

Sent from my iPhone

On 23 Dec 2016, at 15:25, David <[dgordonbt@redacted](mailto:dgordonbt@redacted)> Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry wrote:

I think we can very safely assume the BBC has a recording of Andrew McCormick telling JB that he believes OFMDFM spads including Tim pushed for RHI cost controls to be delayed in 2015.

Broadcasting that will be a big boost to Bell, irrespective of any facts. "Top civil servant backs Bell RHI claim"

Andrew is preparing a rebuttal statement and could still do a pre-emptive interview next week, but that obviously has to be decided upon and is not without risk.

You have some pre-emptive strike options yourself next week eg disclosing who actually did get involved in the 2015 decision. But I recognise that's a big

who actually did get involved in the 2015 decision. But I recognise that's a big call by itself.

In the meantime, Tim (or his lawyer) could at least give the BBC some pause for thought with a letter along these lines.

\* I understand the BBC may be preparing to again publish allegations that OFMDFM spads including myself pushed for RHI cost controls to be delayed in 2015.

\* I reiterate that these allegations are totally rejected by me

\* I understand that your grounds for publication may be a recording or other record of discussions between former DETI Minister Jonathan Bell and senior civil servant Andrew McCormick. It would be advisable to check with both men if they have any direct first-hand evidence of my alleged involvement or whether they were simply recycling speculation between each other. I am confident no such first hand evidence exists because I was not involved. It is surely the job of responsible journalists to ascertain the truth, rather than relying on hearsay. Any story alleging my involvement in RHI cost control decision making in 2015 would not be double sourced. It would be zero sourced.

\* It would also be advisable to check with Mr McCormick on his current thinking. His position as relayed to his Minister and reported to the Assembly on 19/12/16 by the First Minister does not support Mr Bell's allegation of OFMDFM Spad involvement.

\* You will note the documentary evidence already produced to undermine claims by former Minister Bell - claims that were prominently reported by the BBC. One of your BBC colleagues Michael Cairns has described this documentary evidence as an "Exocet to hole Mr Bell's claims below the water line" (Twitter post, 18/12/16). Inexplicably, this "Exocet" has received minimal coverage from the BBC to date.