



## Meeting of the BBC Board

### MINUTES

11 February 2021  
Held Via Video Conference

#### ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest
2. Minutes and Matters Arising
3. Executive Reports
4. Verification Review
5. Licence Fee 2022
6. Perceptions of the BBC
7. Certification of Performance Delegation
8. Committee Reports
9. AOB

## **ATTENDANCE**

### Present

- David Clementi            Chairman
- Tim Davie                 Director-General
- Shirley Garrod            Non-executive director
- Tanni Grey-Thompson    Non-executive director
- Ian Hargreaves            Non-executive director
- Tom Ilube                 Non-executive director
- Charlotte Moore          Chief Content Officer
- Steve Morrison            Non-executive director
- Nicholas Serota           Non-executive director
- Elan Closs Stephens      Non-executive director
- Leigh Tavaziva            Group Chief Operating Officer
- Fran Unsworth             Director, News and Current Affairs

Apologies: There were no apologies

### With

- Phil Harrold                Company Secretary
- Jo Clarke                    Secretary to the Board
- Bob Shennan                Group Managing Director (items 1-5)
- Gautam Rangarajan        Group Director, Strategy and Performance (items 1-6)
- David Jordan                Director, Editorial Policy and Standards (items 1-3)
- Glyn Isherwood             Chief Financial Officer (item 3a)
- Kerris Bright                Chief Customer Officer (item 3b and 4)
- Clare Sumner                Director, Policy (items 3b, 4 and 5)
- Helen Charles              Head of Policy (item 4)
- Peter Archer                Controller, Strategy (item 6)
- Giovana Ruaro                Head of Social Listening (item 6)

**1. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest**

- 1.1 There were no apologies for this meeting.
- 1.2 The Chairman welcomed Leigh Tavaziva, the BBC's Chief Operating Officer, to her first meeting of the Board following her recent appointment.

**2. Minutes and matters arising**

- 2.1 The minutes from the 17 December meeting were approved.
- 2.2 The Board noted the Matters Arising paper and updates on the actions from the last meeting.

**3. Executive Reports**

- 3.1 The Director-General noted that the reporting for this meeting would focus on the performance of the Christmas and New Year schedule, and updates on operations, finance and editorial standards. The full reporting pack would go forward to the Board meeting on 25 February.
- 3.2 There had been a very positive response to the new education provision, some of which was now available on TV as well as online. A wide-range of services and programming on mental health was also being prepared and would launch the following day under the title of "Headroom".
- 3.3 The Director-General briefed the Board on Ofcom's removal of the Chinese Global Television Network's UK broadcast licence and the implications for the BBC's operations in China.
- 3.4 The Board noted an update from the BBC Group Managing Director on the measures that had been put in place to manage the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on staff and broadcast continuity. The high numbers of staff being required to self-isolate due to potential contact with the virus was causing operational strain across the organisation, but comprehensive planning around maintaining broadcast continuity had provided adequate mitigation so far. Lateral flow tests were now available for those going on to BBC sites and proximity devices had also been introduced to help maintain social distancing.
- 3.5 The Chief Content Officer provided an update on the performance of the programming over the Christmas period. The constraints on production which the pandemic had

caused during the year meant that programmes planned for Christmas had not been available. This had been mitigated by the addition of films and acquisitions to the schedule and the promotion of smaller dramas. Despite this, audience performance had held up well and iPlayer had been particularly strong during the period. On Radio, interest in political events in the US had driven high audiences to the *Americast* podcast with Emily Maitlis and Jon Sopel. In the Nations, BBC Scotland had seen the highest ever numbers for its Hogmanay programming.

3.6 The Chief Financial Officer provided an update on income and expenditure.

3.7 The Board noted the Editorial Standards Report.

#### *Over 75's Licence Fee Policy Implementation*

3.8 The Board noted an update on the implementation programme for the over 75's licence fee policy. The Board noted that a six months progress report for the programme would be published the following week.

#### **4. Verification Review**

4.1 The BBC is required by Agreement Clause 51 to “review the costs, benefits and feasibility” of verifying that BBC iPlayer users are covered by a TV licence to improve enforcement and to facilitate the ability of UK licence fee payers to watch BBC iPlayer abroad. The review had been undertaken in conjunction with Deloitte and the report was now ready for submission.

4.2 The Board approved the submission of Deloitte’s verification review report to the Secretary of State. The Board also approved the accompanying letter from the Chair and Director-General of the BBC, subject to minor drafting amendments.

#### **5 Licence Fee 2022**

5.1 The Board noted an update on the 2022 licence fee review and discussed the proposed submission to the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. The submission would return to the next meeting of the Board on 25 February.

**6 Perceptions of the BBC**

6.1 The Board noted a presentation about perceptions of the BBC.

**7 Certificate of Performance Delegation**

7.1 The BBC was obliged through its Broadcasting Act and Wireless Telegraphy Act licences to clear its Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) services from the 700 MHz spectrum band by April 2020, with the obligation extended until August 2020 due to Covid-19. The BBC is compensated for its costs of meeting this requirement through a grant mechanism operated by Ofcom, providing the BBC complies with certain terms and conditions. One such condition is the submission of annual Certificates of Performance, which Ofcom requires to be approved at Board level, or delegated to a named individual.

7.2 The Board approved the delegation of authority to the Group Chief Operating Officer, Leigh Tavaziva, or their equivalent, to sign the BBC’s future annual Certificates of Performance for the 700MHz spectrum clearance programme.

**8 Committee Reports**

8.1 The Chairman of the Fair Trading Committee reported on its most recent meeting. The Committee had been joined by Deloitte to discuss this year’s assurance planning report. Other items for discussion had included the quarterly management report and the management of trading and separation issues in international news services.

Approved by the Board: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairman)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date)