



## Meeting of the BBC Board

### MINUTES

23 May 2019

Broadcasting House, London, W1A 1AA

#### ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest
2. Minutes from the 17 April Board Meeting
3. Ofcom Session
4. Over 75's Licence Fee Concession Consultation
5. Executive Reports
6. International Broadcasting Strategy
7. Local Democracy Foundation
8. Committee Reports
9. AOB

## ATTENDANCE

### Present

- David Clementi Chairman
- Tony Hall Director-General
- Simon Burke Non-executive director (items 4-10)
- Tim Davie Chief Executive Officer, BBC Studios
- Tanni Grey-Thompson Non-executive Director
- Ian Hargreaves Non-executive director
- Tom Ilube Non-executive director
- Ken MacQuarrie Director, Nations and Regions
- Steve Morrison Non-executive director
- Nicholas Serota Non-executive director
- Elan Closs Stephens Non-executive director
- Ashley Steel Non-executive director
- Fran Unsworth Director, News and Current Affairs

Apologies: None

### With

- Phil Harrold Company Secretary
- Jo Clarke Secretariat Manager
- Glyn Isherwood Chief Financial Officer
- Bob Shennan Group Managing Director
- Sharon White Chief Executive Officer, Ofcom (item 3)
- Siobhan Walsh Director, Content Policy, Ofcom (item 3)
- Chris Rowsell Head of Policy (item 3)
- Gautam Rangarajan Director, Strategy (items 4 and 5)
- Clare Sumner Director, Policy (items 1-5)
- Kerris Bright Chief Customer Officer (item 4)
- Pipa Doubtfire Head of TV Licensing (item 4)
- John Shield Director, Communications (item 4)
- Paul Oldfield Controller of Policy (item 4)
- Laura Kuenssberg BBC News Political Editor (item 5)
- Katy Adler BBC News Europe Editor (item 5)
- David Jordan Director, Editorial Policy and Standards (item 5)
- Charlotte Moore Director, Content (item 5)

- James Purnell            Director, Radio and Education (items 4 and 5)
- Bal Samra                Commercial Director (item 5)
- Jessica Cecil             Project Director (items 6 and 7)
- Matthew Barraclough   Senior News Editor (item 7)

## BOARD MINUTES – 23 MAY 2019

### **1. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest**

1.1 There were no apologies for this meeting.

### **2. Minutes from the 17 April Board**

2.1 The minutes from the 17 April Board meeting were approved.

2.2 The Board noted the Matters Arising.

### **3 Ofcom Session**

3.1 The Board was joined by Sharon White, Chief Executive, Ofcom and Siobhan Walsh, Director, Content Policy, Ofcom to discuss regulatory issues.

### **4 Over 75s Licence Fee Concession Consultation**

4.1 At its April meeting the Board discussed the consultation responses in detail and requested additional work to support its decision-making process. This work was presented to the Board at this meeting and discussed.

4.2 For this meeting, the Board was also provided with a draft updated Equality Impact Assessment. The Board was asked to consider the needs set out in section 149 of the Equality Act, in this case with particular reference to the issues raised around the impacts on women, the disabled, those with long term health issues such as dementia.

4.3 The Board assessed the consultation and wider engagement responses the BBC has received, together with the draft Equality Impact Assessment and the additional work. The Board discussion included the broad policy options of copying the scheme, restoring the scheme or reforming it.

4.4 The Board agreed that that they had a current preferred policy option in mind, however they had not taken any final decision. They agreed that a further meeting should be scheduled to allow more time to discuss the equality impacts, to consider whether they were in a position to take a decision and to set out their reasons for that decision, or whether further work was required for considering the preferred or other policy options.

## 5. Executive Reports

*Laura Kuenssberg and Katya Adler*

- 5.1 The Board welcomed Laura Kuenssberg and Katya Adler, BBC News Editor for Political and European coverage respectively, to the Executive Reporting session of the meeting. Directors thanked them for their hard work in covering the complex and rapidly moving story of 'Brexit' to audiences over such a lengthy period. The Board discussed the European and domestic political environment.

*Board and Commercial, Financial and Operations Quarterly Report*

- 5.2 The Director-General reported that it had been a strong month creatively. *Line of Duty* had closed with the biggest TV audience of the year so far, the impact of *Climate Change the Facts* had been significant, and the last RAJAR quarter of the year showed a strong performance for radio. In addition, the BBC had done well at the Bafta ceremonies this month, with sixteen awards for Craft and sixteen awards in the broadcast TV categories.
- 5.3 The first diversity and inclusion advisory group session had been held this month, chaired by non-executive Director, Tom Ilube. Also, the first report on the 50:50 project, which challenged teams across the organisation to achieve 50% female contributors in English language news, current affairs and topical programmes, had been published. Led by teams across the BBC, the project had transformed representation of female contributors on air.
- 5.4 The NAO's Value for Money review of the BBC's pay management was published this month, with a positive view of the work which had been done in recent years.
- 5.5 The Director, Content, provided an update on the performance of BBC Content with audiences. It was clear that a significant shift to on-demand viewing was taking place across all age-groups, but especially among the young. The ability to extend the viewing period for programmes on BBC iPlayer would help to respond to changing audience behaviour.
- 5.6 The Director of Radio and Education provided an update on performance. The BBC had done extremely well at the British Podcast Awards, with six Gold awards among others, across a wide range of topics. The RAJAR results for the first Quarter of 2019 had been released. The schedule changes on BBC Radio 2 and BBC Radio 6 Music had been well received by audiences.
- 5.7 The Director of News provided an update on performance. Brexit coverage continued to be popular, but the tragic shooting in New Zealand had also been followed closely by audiences. The *'We Are Bradford'* project had pioneered a new approach to

newsgathering by speaking directly to audiences on the ground to find out what was important to them. There were plans to replicate the project in other areas.

- 5.8 The Director, Nations and Regions, provided an update on audiences and activities. *Wales: Land of the Live*, a major natural history project, was currently being aired on BBC One Wales. The Northern Ireland news agenda had been dominated by the shooting of the journalist Lyra McKee, and local news teams had been working closely with network news in covering the story. The Board noted that the BBC was currently testing 5G mobile broadband as a distribution platform for Radio in Stronsay, Orkney, as part of the Rural First consortium.
- 5.9 The Chief Executive Officer, BBC Studios provided an update on performance. Cash management had improved year on year and was currently ahead of budget. *Killing Eve* Series Two, had launched in the US. The first two episodes had reached nearly double the audience of Series One, with younger people accounting for 42% of viewing.
- 5.10 The Board noted the Editorial Standards Report. The Board noted that the target times for complaints response turnaround at Stage 2 were below target. This was because of a planned delay in the announcement of a finding. The Board discussed complaints about audience composition for programmes such as *Question Time*.
- 5.11 The Board considered the Commercial, Financial and Operations Quarterly Report.

#### *Britbox Commercial Materiality Assessment*

- 5.12 After considering a detailed materiality assessment, the Board concluded that the BBC's involvement in Britbox was not material. The Board authorised the team to discuss the assessment with Ofcom.

## **6 International Broadcasting Strategy**

- 6.1 The Board received an update on the BBC's international strategy.

## **7. Local Democracy Foundation**

- 7.1 The Board received an update on proposals for the development of a foundation to support local reporting supporting democracy.

## **8 Committee Reports**

- 9.1 The Chairman of the Editorial Guidelines and Standards Committee reported on its most recent meeting. The Committee had considered the roll-out of the Editorial Guidelines and received an update on Ofcom's News and Current Affairs Review.
- 9.2 The Chairman of the Fair Trading Committee reported on its most recent meeting. The Committee had met with Deloitte in preparation for the Fair Trading Audit and discussed the implementation of Ofcom's new trading and separation rules.
- 9.3 The Chairman of the Scotland Committee reported on the most recent meeting of the Committee, which had taken place in Edinburgh. The Committee had discussed various topics including audience performance across Scotland.
- 9.4 The Chairman of the Commercial Holdings Board reported on its most recent meeting. The Board had discussed the performance of all the commercial subsidiaries, notably the first full year performance for BBC Studios, and the completion of the UKTV transaction.

### *Roll out of the Editorial Guidelines*

- 9.5 The Board noted a paper setting out plans for the roll out of the new Editorial Guidelines.

## **10 AOB**

- 10.1 There was no other business.