



Meeting of the BBC Board

MINUTES

22 July 2021

Held Via Video Conference

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest
2. Minutes and Matters Arising
3. Committee Reports
4. Executive Reports
5. Dyson Report Actions
6. World Service Five Year Review
7. Arts Strategy
8. Brand Modernisation
9. The BBC's Relationship with "Big Tech"
10. Delivering to Our Diversity Commitments
11. AOB

ATTENDANCE

Present

- Richard Sharp Chairman
- Tim Davie Director-General
- Shirley Garrood Non-executive director
- Robbie Gibb Non-executive director
- Tanni Grey-Thompson Non-executive director
- Ian Hargreaves 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
- Gautam Rangarajan Group Director, Strategy and Performance (items 4 and 8-10)
- Glyn Isherwood Chief Financial Officer (item 4a)
- David Jordan Director, Editorial Policy and Standards (item 4a)
- Clare Sumner Director, Policy (items 4b and 4c)
- Kerris Bright Chief Customer Officer (items 4c and 8)
- Sarah Jones Group Legal Counsel (item 5)
- Santanu Chakrabarti Head of Audience Research (item 6)
- Jane Lingham Director, Marketing (item 8)
- Chris Moody Woolf Olins (item 8)
- Wendy Aslett Director, HR (item 10)
- Anne Foster Senior Head of HR (item 10)

1. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest

- 1.1 There were no apologies for this meeting.
- 1.2 There were no conflicts of interest declared.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

- 2.1 The minutes from the 7 and 18 June Board meetings were approved.
- 2.2 The Board noted the Matters Arising paper and updates on the actions from the last meeting.

3. Committee Reports

- 3.1 The Chair of the Commercial Holdings Board reported on its most recent meeting. The quarterly Board pack and updates from the subsidiaries had been discussed. The first budget reforecast showed a positive EBITDA performance. The move of Global News Limited into BBC Studios had taken place on 1 July as planned and the Board thanked the CEO and his team for their work in making the transition as success. The Board had approved a one-off dividend to the public service for the year 2021-22 for investment in Content, given the additional production costs incurred by Covid-19 during the year and to cover the costs of the move of GNL into BBC Studios. The Board also considered BBC Studios' growth plans and BBC Group routes to market strategy. The Board considered options for BBC Studioworks and agreed the proposals in relation to studios in the nations, including the recommendation that studios in Dumbarton and Pacific Quay would remain in the public service. The Board also approved the BBC Studios Pay Gap Report.
- 3.2 The Chair of the Remuneration Committee reported on its most recent meeting. The Committee had reviewed a paper providing further analysis of the pay gaps among black and disabled employees and proposals to address some of the structural issues that contributed to them. The Committee also noted the BBC Studios Pay Gap Report. The Committee also considered an analysis of the BBC's senior leadership group and benchmarking on Executive Committee members' remuneration. The Committee also noted an update on the voluntary redundancy exercise which had taken place last year.
- 3.3 The Chair of the Scotland Committee reported on its most recent meeting. The Committee had been briefed on recent audience and market trends in the performance

of *Reporting Scotland* and the BBC Scotland channel, including *The Nine*. The Committee noted that *Reporting Scotland* played a different role to some of the other regional bulletins and that the news environment in Scotland was different to other parts of the UK. The Committee discussed the plans for operational and editorial activity around the COP26 summit, to be held in Glasgow later in the year. Plans were being developed for programmes hosted from Scotland including the involvement of key content strands and special broadcasts, with a particular focus on younger audiences. Subject to security considerations, there could also be an opportunity for stakeholder engagement.

- 3.4 The Chairman reported on the most recent meeting of the Nominations Committee. The process for a Northern Ireland member of the Board was to be restarted by the DCMS.

Nominations Committee: Appointments to Committees

- 3.5 The Board considered a paper from the Nominations Committee which proposed a number of appointments to committees. The Board noted that a further review of committee membership would take place when the current non-executive vacancies on the Board had been filled.
- 3.6 The Board approved the following appointments to committees:
- Robbie Gibb was appointed as Chair of the Fair Trading Committee as of 1 August 2021 until further review.
 - Tanni Grey-Thompson was appointed to the England Committee up until the end of her appointment term on 31 December 2021.
 - The Chairman was appointed to the Scotland Committee until further review.
 - The Chairman was appointed to the Audit and Risk Committee until further review.

Serota Review

- 3.7 The Board noted an update from Nicholas Serota on progress with his panel's review looking into the editorial practices and procedures at the BBC. The panel's report would come to the Board in September.

4. Executive Reporting

- 4.1 The Director-General reported that the previous month had seen high levels of reach, largely driven by Sport programming. The Euros had been a huge success with 44 million people overall watching the tournament on the BBC; and the 6.9 million requests on iPlayer/Sport online for the final set a new record. Wimbledon had also performed well with audiences, with 7.8m people watching the men's final at peak and a reach of almost 26 million people over the fortnight.

- 4.2 The large number of people being contacted by the NHS App and requiring self-isolation was proving challenging. Business and broadcast continuity measures had been implemented and were being actively managed by the executive. It was likely however, that the move to a hybrid working model would be slower than originally planned due to staff pressures.
- 4.3 In content news, changes to Radio 1 had been announced this month with a new drivetime team and a show from Salford for the first time. Audiences would return to the Royal Albert Hall for the Proms this season, with additional safety measures being put in place.
- 4.4 The Board noted the publication of Ofcom's public service broadcasting review and its further consultation on regulating the BBC.
- 4.5 The Director-General briefed the Board on plans for the World Service. Directors discussed the editorial review process for the foreign language services and noted that the Safeguarding Impartiality training was being rolled out across all territories.
- 4.6 The Director, Content provided an update on divisional matters. A new line-up for *Question of Sport* and a new host for the return of *The Weakest Link* had been announced. *Motherland* had doubled its audiences in its most recent season and would move to BBC One on its return. The acquisition of the new version of *Gossip Girl* for iPlayer had been announced as part of the offer for younger audiences.
- 4.7 The Director, News and Current Affairs, provided an update on divisional matters and performance. High profile news stories continued to drive high levels of reach to BBC News' services.
- 4.8 The Board noted an update on operational matters, including the critical project list and risk report. Further measures to enhance technological and broadcast resilience were being assessed. The Diversity and Inclusion project would be added to the critical project list to monitor progress against targets.
- 4.9 The Board noted a financial update from the Chief Finance Officer. Licence fee income remained within forecast and commercial performance was improving.
- 4.10 The Board noted the quarterly Editorial Standards Report, which provided an update on complaints and compliance with editorial guidelines. Ofcom had upheld the BBC's position regarding complaints which had been expedited for its consideration during the election period. The Board noted the process for sharing editorial learnings through the BBC's Editorial Standards and Complaints Committee, editorial networks and divisional Boards.

LF2022 Update

- 4.11 The Board noted an update on discussions with the DCMS regarding the 2022 licence fee settlement.

Over 75s Licence Fee Policy: Update to the Determination

- 4.12 The Board considered a paper which submitted for approval a General Notice which formally closed the policy transition and an update to the Determination to extend the period during which easy payment plans could be offered to over 75s licence holders.
- 4.13 The Board approved the closure General Notice and the variation to the Determination.

5. Dyson Report

- 5.1 The Board noted an update on progress completing the actions arising from the findings of Lord Dyson's report into the circumstances around Martin Bashir's interview of Diana, Princess of Wales for *Panorama* in 1995.
- 5.2 The Board approved the proposed approach and key principles for dealing with compensation claims relating to the interview based on the BBC's acceptance in full of the findings in the Dyson Report.

6. World Service Five Year Review

- 6.1 The Broadcasting Agreement with the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport requires the BBC to review the World Service as a whole at least once every five years and to publish any review carried out. At this meeting the Board considered the draft BBC World Service Review 2016-2020.
- 6.2 The Board noted that the Review demonstrated audience growth of 43 per cent: from 246 million in 2016 to 351 million in 2020, which exceeded the milestone in the licence of reaching 330m by 2020. Also, the service was rated the number one international news provider on measures of quality and impact in 2020, achieving the licence target for the BBC to be rated higher than relevant international competitors.
- 6.3 The Board approved the World Service Review 2016-2020 for publication and thanked Fran Unsworth, Director, News and Current Affairs, and the World Service teams for their achievement.

7. Arts Strategy

- 7.1 The Board noted and discussed a paper summarising the BBC's new Arts and Classical Music strategy, primarily with regard to BBC Four. Directors welcomed the inclusion of live performance along with the Channel's archive Arts and Music content. The Board noted that BBC teams would be exploring the potential for cross platform collaboration during the summer.

8 Brand Modernisation

- 8.1 The Board noted a presentation demonstrating the new brand design system for BBC services.

9 The BBC's Relationship with "Big Tech"

- 9.1 This discussion was deferred until a future meeting.

10. Delivering to Our Diversity Commitments

- 10.1 The BBC has committed to creating a workforce which reflects more accurately the audiences it serves. In order to achieve that the following targets have been set for 2026 across the BBC Group at all levels: 50% women and 50% men; at least 20% Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff; and at least 12% disabled staff. A number of initiatives were also being considered to increase the socio-economic diversity of the BBC's workforce. Directors also discussed the best approach to ensuring that the BBC's workforce was more reflective of all of its audiences in terms of the range of their views.
- 10.2 The Board considered a paper which set out the plan for achieving the diversity targets. Directors noted that HR had worked with each division to draw up specific divisional transformation plans over a five year period and workforce planning sessions would take place through the year and beyond. The plans included new approaches to recruitment, robust succession planning and the further development of the apprenticeship and traineeship schemes. Directors noted that the Diversity and Inclusion plan and the BBC's diversity commitments had now been added to the Critical Projects Portfolio. This would ensure more detailed oversight of all aspects of workforce and creative diversity initiatives, with a monthly report submitted to the Operations Committee and subsequently to the quarterly Audit and Risk Committee.
- 10.3 The Board discussed the paper. It was clear that one of the key challenges in meeting the diversity and inclusion targets was in the retention of staff once they had been

recruited. Directors concluded that a more systematic approach to exit interviews should be adopted.

10.4 EHRC Update

10.4 The Board noted an update on the implementation of the EHRC recommendations.

11. AOB

11.1 There was no other business.