



## Meeting of the BBC Board

### MINUTES

21 March 2024  
Broadcasting House, London

#### ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Chair's Introduction
2. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest
3. Chair's Conflicts of Interest
4. Minutes and Matters Arising
5. Committee Reports
6. Future Strategy
7. Licence Fee and Revenue
8. Budget Update
9. Planning for 2023/24
10. Executive Report
11. Thematic Reviews
12. Regulatory Update
13. Papers for Approval
14. AOB

## **ATTENDANCE**

### Present

- Samir Shah Chair
- Tim Davie Director-General
- Shumeet Banerji Non-executive director
- Damon Buffini Non-executive director
- Robbie Gibb Non-executive director
- Muriel Gray Non-executive director
- Chris Jones Non-executive director
- Charlotte Moore Chief Content Officer
- Nicholas Serota Non-executive director
- Michael Smyth Non-executive director
- Marinella Soldi Non-executive director
- Leigh Tavaziva Group Chief Operating Officer
- Deborah Turness CEO, News and Current Affairs

Apologies: None

### With

- Phil Harrold Company Secretary
- Jo Clarke Secretary to the Board
- Gautam Rangarajan Director, Strategy (item 6 onwards)
- Alice Macandrew Director, Corporate Affairs (item 6 and 12)
- Shirley Cameron Director, Revenue (item 7)
- Kerris Bright Chief Customer Officer (items 7 and 8)
- Alan Dickson Chief Financial Officer (item 8)
- Rhona Burns FD, Financial Planning (item 8)
- Holly King Group Financial Controller (item 8)
- Lorraine Burgess Chief Financial Officer, BBC Studios (item 8)
- Tom Fussell CEO, BBC Studios (item 8)
- Rhodri Talfan Davies Director, Nations (item 8)
- Toby Philipps Corporate Development Director (item 8)
- Phil Kemp Strategy Director (item 9)
- Madeleine Sumption Co-chair, Thematic Review of Migration (item 11)
- Peter Johnston Director, Editorial Reviews and Complaints (item 11)

Simon Coates

Paul Oldfield

Chris Rowsell

Senior Editorial Policy Advisor (item 11)

Controller, Policy (item 12)

Controller, Regulation (item 12)

## **BOARD MINUTES 21 MARCH 2024**

### **1. Chair's Introduction**

- 1.1 The Chair set out his plans for future Board meetings, which included returning to monthly sessions and taking the Board out into the Nations and regions with greater frequency.

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

- 2.1 There were no apologies for the meeting.
- 2.2 No conflicts of interest were declared in addition to those already recorded.

### **3. The Chair's Conflicts of Interest**

- 3.1 The Board considered a paper outlining the incoming Chair's potential conflicts of interest that were raised during the appointments process by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and detailed how Dr Shah and the BBC proposed to manage them. It was decided by the DCMS that none of the issues should prevent Dr Shah from becoming Chair.
- 3.2 The Board noted that the BBC's Nominations and Governance Committee had discussed the conflicts, and the proposed management of them, at its meeting on 5 March. The Committee recommended that the management of conflicts as set out in the paper and the minutes of the Nominations Committee.
- 3.3 The Board approved the recommended approach to the management of Dr Shah's remaining conflicts of interest, and noted the commitment he had made to the BBC by stepping down as CEO of Juniper Productions, which would either be sold or wound up, and stepping down from a number of public positions.

### **4. Minutes and Matters Arising**

- 4.1 The Minutes from the 23 January Board meeting were approved.
- 4.2 The Board noted the Matters Arising paper. Directors noted an update on how current legal cases and issues would be reported to the Board in future.

## **5 Committee Reports**

- 5.1 The Board noted and discussed written reports on the most recent meetings of the Nations Committees, the Commercial Board, and the Editorial Guidelines and Standards, Remuneration and Audit and Risk Committees.

## **6 Future Strategy**

- 6.1 The Board approved a document to be published setting out the next phase of the BBC's strategy, subject to drafting amendments.

## **7. Licence Fee Collection Plan 2025-25**

- 7.2 The Charter requires the Board to ensure "that arrangements for the collection of the licence fee are efficient, appropriate and proportionate". The Board considered a paper as part of the oversight arrangements through which the Board meets this obligation, which set out the key elements of the 2024-25 Licence Fee Unit plan for licence fee collection.

- 7.3 The Board discussed the plan, which was focused on the approach to collection in the context of the BBC's current funding and enforcement model.

- 7.4 The Board approved the Licence Fee collection plan for 2024-25.

## **8. Budget 2024-25**

- 8.1 The Board considered the 2024-25 budget, in the context of the three year plan. Directors noted the additional information and analysis which had been added following the Board's briefing on 14 March.

- 8.2 Directors discussed how the business might approach the delivery of an additional 170 million pounds worth of annual savings by 27 /28. The Board approved the approach and agreed that progress and, when approved, implementation should be tracked and reported to the Board on a regular basis with a specific focus on ensuring the BBC operated within cash headroom through to 27 /28.

- 8.3 Directors also considered and agreed the proposal to explore a number of options designed to create additional value for the BBC. The Board approved a mandate to BBC Finance to evaluate the options in detail on behalf of the whole BBC Group as soon as possible and report back to an upcoming meeting. Progress updates on the work would be provided to the Board on a regular basis.

8.4 The Board approved the BBC budget for 2024-25 noting the significant projected deficit for that year.

## **9. 2024-25 Planning**

### *Audience Scorecard Targets for 2024-25*

9.1 The Board considered a set of audience targets for 2024-25. The proposed targets had been developed in a two-stage process using statistical modelling techniques to produce a base trend forecast for 2024-25 performance, correcting for factors such as sports events cycles; and applying consideration of anticipated changes in the market and other factors, such as BBC budget allocations to inform them.

9.2 The Board approved the targets for 2024-25. Further work would be undertaken to look at how the BBC measured the delivery of its duties on universality and impartiality.

### *Annual Plan*

9.3 It is a requirement of the BBC Charter that the BBC publishes an Annual Plan before the start of a new financial year. The Annual Plan must set out the BBC's strategic priorities, creative plans, provision for World Service and Nations & Regions, and its compliance with general duties and budget for 2024-25.

9.4 The Board approved the Annual Plan for publication, subject to a number of drafting points.

## **10. Executive Report**

10.1 The Board noted and discussed the Executive Report which covered the period since the last meeting of the Board. Discussion focussed on the Chief Operating Officer's report with particular regard to staff matters. The Board agreed that a session with the BBC's Next Generation Committee should be arranged.

10.2 The Board noted a verbal update on the progress of investigations relating to BBC talent. The Board agreed that on completion of these a set of learnings regarding the most effective of conducting such investigations should return to the Board.

## **11. Thematic Reviews**

### *Thematic Review of Migration*

- 11.1 The Board welcomed Madeleine Sumption to discuss the thematic review of BBC content on migration which she and Samir Shah were invited by the Board to undertake in April 2023. It included a foreword explaining the circumstances that led to her sole authorship; an executive summary setting out its principal findings; and an appendix outlining the methodological approaches adopted in carrying out the Review, together with a list of content watched, listened to and read. The Board noted that the resulting report had been reviewed and discussed by the Editorial Guidelines and Standards Committee.
- 11.2 The Board discussed the report and commended the clarity and insight of its approach. Directors noted that a implementation plan and Board statement reflecting feedback from the Board on the report and its findings would come to the next meeting of the Board for approval ahead of publication.

### *Third Thematic Review: Terms of Reference*

- 11.3 The Board considered a paper which set out the brief and approach for the third thematic review on Portrayal and Representation, which would examine the BBC's record in portraying and including the full range of interests and views across all the audiences it serves.
- 11.4 The Board noted that the proposal had come forward to the Board following discussion and agreement at the Editorial Guidelines and Standards Committee ["EGSC"].
- 11.5 The Board approved the terms of reference for the third thematic review on Portrayal and Representation as well the selection of Chris Banatvala and Anne Morrison as the co-chairs of the review.
- 11.6 The Board noted and agreed that work on related issues would be addressed through a separate internal exercise which would be reported to the EGSC.

## **12. Regulatory Update**

[12.3 redacted subject to future publication]

### *Licence fee Funding Review*

- 12.1 The Board noted an update on the Government's Funding Model Review.

## *Contestability*

12.2 The Board considered a paper which set out plans across Network and Nations to ensure that the BBC's TV and Online contestability requirements were met by the end of 2027.

12.3

## **13. Papers for Approval**

13.1 The Board noted and approved the updated dividend guidance.

13.2 The Board noted the new arrangements for BBC World Service news operations in India.

13.3 The Board approved the financial investment case for *EastEnders* 2024-25.

13.4 The Board noted the key changes within the proposed YouView shareholders' agreement and the revisions to the Freeview (DTVS) shareholders' agreement; the additional financial commitment to YouView's funding; and, associated competition and regulatory legal advice.

13.5 The Board approved a resolution to update the individuals authorised to sign on behalf of BBC Public Service with respect to the public service debt facility.

## **14 AOB**

14.1 The Board noted an update on the plans for the Board awayday in Glasgow.