Meeting of the BBC Board

MINUTES

21 November 2024
The Mailbox, Birmingham

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Chair's Introduction
2. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest
3. Minutes and Matters Arising
4. Board Reports
5. Executive Reporting
6. Tim Westwood Review: Board Statement
7. First Look Budget
8. iPlayer Strategy
9. AOB

ATTENDANCE

Present

• Samir Shah	Chair
• Tim Davie	Director-General
• Shumeet Banerji	Non-executive director
• Damon Buffini	Non-executive director (items 4 and 7 onwards)
• Robbie Gibb	Non-executive director
• Muriel Gray	Non-executive director
• Chris Jones	Non-executive director
• Charlotte Moore	Chief Content Officer
• Michael Plaut	Non-executive director
• 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 and Performance (items 5 and 7-8)
Rhodri Talfan Davies	Director, Nations (items 5 and 7-8)
Sarah Jones	Group General Counsel (items 5a and 6)
Peter Ranyard	Head of Corporate Legal (item 5a)
Alice Macandrew	Director, Corporate Affairs (item 6)
John Shield	Director, Communications (item 6)
Nick Wilcox	Legal Director (item 6)
Alan Dickson	Chief Financial Officer (item 7)
Rhona Burns	Finance Director, Financial Planning (item 7)
Holly King	Group Financial Controller (item 7)
Amanda Jones	Interim CFO, BBC Studios (item 7)
Tom Fussell	CEO, BBC Studios (items 7 and 8)
David Moody	Director, Strategy, BBC Studios (item 8)
Sophie Garnham	CRBA Director (item 8)

BOARD MINUTES 21 NOVEMBER 2024

1. Chair's Introduction

1.1 The Chair opened the meeting by reflecting on the themes of the speech he had delivered in Leeds that month and its reception by stakeholders.

2. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest

2.1 No apologies had been received.

2.2 No conflicts of interest were declared in addition to those already recorded.

3. Minutes and Matters Arising

3.1 The Minutes from the 17 October Board meeting were approved.

3.2 The Board noted the Matters Arising paper.

4. Board Reports

Commercial Board

4.1 The Board noted an update from the Chair of the Commercial Board. The Board noted that an overview of BBC Commercial and its strategy would come to the December meeting.

Sub-committee Reports

4.2 The Board noted and discussed written reports from the Northern Ireland Committee and the Charter Review Sub-group.

Respect at Work Update

4.3 The Board noted an update from the Respect at Work Review of organisational culture, which provided a summary of the project work so far.

5. Executive Reporting

Director-General and Executive Report

5.1 The Director-General briefed the Board on the departure of the Chair of Children in Need.

5.2 The Board noted updates on issues regarding high-profile staff.

5.3 The Board noted an update on the audience performance of the BBC's coverage of the US election. Strong worldwide interest saw 61 million unique global browsers accessing BBC News' digital journalism over the 5 and 6 November, with 9 million tuning into the overnight TV programme.

5.4 The Board noted that the National Audit Office had published its Value for Money review on BBC Studios. The strong commercial performance and creative delivery of Studios had been recognised.

5.5 The Board discussed the Chief Operating Officer's report. The Board noted that good progress was being made with the savings plans.

5.6 The Board discussed the reporting on bullying and harassment cases. Directors noted that work was taking place to improve the process for investigations.

Competition and Markets Authority: Update

[paragraphs 5.8 and 5.9 redacted for future publication]

5.7 The Board considered a paper which provided an update into the Competition and Market Authority's (CMA) investigation into alleged anticompetitive behaviour by the BBC and other broadcasters relating to the engagement of freelancers and employees for the production and broadcasting of sports events.

6. Tim Westwood Review: Board Statement

6.1 The Board approved a Statement from the Board, which would be issued on the publication of the Tim Westwood Review in response to its findings.

7. First Look Budget

7.1 The Board considered the first look budget for 2025 and a longer range three year plan for BBC Group, which set out the emerging high level financial shape of the BBC to 27/28.

7.2 Directors noted the timeline for Board engagement with the Budget, and were asked to provide feedback on the assumptions underpinning the plan and areas which required further focus. The Board noted that additional briefing sessions with non-executive directors would also be available.

7.3 The Board discussed macro-economic conditions, with particular regard to challenges in the current media market and the impact on BBC Group. It was agreed that a sensitivity analysis should be provided for the next Budget discussion in February.

8. iPlayer Strategy

[paragraphs 8.1-8.4 redacted for commercial confidentiality]

8.1 The Board considered an update on the iPlayer strategy as requested at its September meeting.

9. AOB

9.1 The Board requested that a session on high-level executive succession planning should be included on the forward business plan for 2025.