



Meeting of the BBC Board – Scotland Committee

Minutes

12th March 2025

Pacific Quay - Glasgow

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

- 1 Introduction and minutes of previous Scotland Committee
- 2 Director, Scotland Report
- 3 News Changes initial review
- 4 Market report
- 5 Director, Nations Update
- 6 Audiences
- 7 Finance
- 8 AOB

ATTENDANCE

Members:

- Muriel Gray, Non-Executive Director (Chair)
- Samir Shar, Chair, BBC Board
- Rhodri Talfan Davies, Director, Nations
- Hayley Valentine, Director, Scotland
- Luke McCullough, Corporate Affairs Director, Nations

With:

- Gail Capaldi, Senior Finance Business Partner
- Mark Grinnell, Executive Lead (*secretary*)
- Jon Petrie, Commissioning Director, Comedy
- Lesley Farquharson, Audience Research Manager
- Gary Smith, News Controller
- Paul Oldfield, Company Secretary

1. Introduction and minutes of previous Scotland Committee

- 1.1 The minutes of the previous Committee meeting (9th October 2024) were approved and no new conflicts were presented.
- 1.2 The Chair congratulated the incoming Scotland Director on her appointment and achievements in her new post and the Director of Corporate Affairs on his recent promotion.

2. Director, Scotland Report

- 2.1 The Committee heard a summary of the incoming Director's priorities. These include a strong focus on editorial; relationship building with audiences in Scotland and the wider BBC and industry; and building a great internal culture.
- 2.2 There has been a deep-dive into BBC Scotland editorial content.
- 2.3 The Committee were briefed on proposed changes to the BBC Scotland senior leadership team, to focus more closely on the editorial.
- 2.4 Introductory engagement with the party leaders of the SNP, Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrats and Scottish Greens commenced in December 2024.
- 2.5 In January 2024, the Director, Scotland gave evidence to the Scottish Affairs Committee at Westminster, alongside Head of Commissioning, and Head of Gaelic Services and Inclusion. Also in January, the Director gave evidence to the Constitution External Affairs and Culture Committee at the Scottish Parliament alongside the BBC Director General.
- 2.6 There will be an announcement of a restructure of drama content in Scotland. This includes increased investment into the genre and the decommissioning of a long running title.
- 2.7 The BBC is planning to announce a plan to exceed the minimum OFCOM criteria for portrayal and production and talent spend to avoid reliance on substantive base alone. This would be discussed at the BBC Board.

3. News Changes initial review

- 3.1 The Committee heard a summary of the recent changes made to News output in Scotland. These included: launching *News at 7* to replace *The Nine*; extending the duration of *Reporting Scotland* for news events; launching *Scotcast*; increasing website resourcing and additional *Debate Night* episodes.
- 3.2 The summary of these content and programme changes has significantly increased audience consumption since launch.

4. Market Report

- 4.1 Forthcoming changes to BBC Sounds could potentially cause issues to the ability to hear BBC Radio nan Gàidheal internationally. A solution to prevent this from happening is being sought.
- 4.2 A Screen Scotland report by O&O has generated significant stakeholder and sector interest, alongside political and audience queries.
- 4.3 The Committee noted the Scottish Government has concluded that legislation would not be an effective way of dealing with the complexities of media reporting on child homicide cases.
- 4.4 BBC Scotland held a screening at V&A Dundee to support the launch of the new two-part series *Icons of Style*. Celebrating Scotland's fashion scene.

5. Director, Nations update

- 5.1 The Director added his congratulations to the incoming Scotland Director on her appointment and successes to date and also congratulated the Corporate Affairs Director on his recent promotion within the Division.
- 5.2 The Committee heard a summary of the current position in bidding for sport coverage.
- 5.3 The carriage of radio on the FM network would be a matter discussed in future Committees.
- 5.4 The Committee discussed the plans for stakeholder engagement in the bid for the BBC's Royal Charter renewal.

6. Audiences

- 6.1 The Audience Research Manager reported on consumption and perception of BBC content amongst audiences in Scotland.

7. Finance

- 7.1 The Committee heard the latest accounts and finance forecast.

8. AOB

- 8.1 There were no other matters arising.
- 8.2 The next Scotland Committee meeting would be held on 24th July in Edinburgh.