



Meeting of the BBC Board

MINUTES

18 March 2025
Broadcasting House, London

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Chair's Introduction
2. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest
3. Minutes and Matters Arising
4. Board Reports
5. Executive and Director-General Report
6. Workplace Culture Review
7. 2025-2026 Approvals
8. Editorial Guidelines
9. FM Contract Extension
10. 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
• 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

Paul Oldfield	Chief of Staff to the Chair and Director-General
Chris Sandford	Company Secretary
Jo Clarke	Secretary to the Board
Rhodri Talfan Davies	Director, Nations (items 4 and 6a)
Kate Phillips	Interim Director, Content (items 4, 6 and 9)
Kerris Bright	Chief Customer Officer (item 5 and 6a and 6b)
Uzair Qadeer	Chief People Officer (item 5)
Grahame Russell	Change Associates (item 5)
Stephanie Wheeler	Change Associates (item 5)
Gautam Rangarajan	Director, Strategy and Performance (items 6)
Alan Dickson	Chief Financial Officer (item 6a)
Tom Fussell	CEO, BBC Studios (items 6a)
Rhona Burns	Finance Director (item 6a)
Holly King	Group Financial Controller (item 6a)
David Jordan	Director, Editorial Policy and Standards (item 7)
Alice Macandrew	Director, Corporate Affairs (item 9)

BOARD MINUTES 18 MARCH 2025

1. Chair's Introduction

- 1.1 The Chair summarised the substantive business of the day, which would focus on the emerging findings of the Workplace Culture Review and the approval of the 2025-2026 Budget, Audience metrics and Annual Plan.

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 27 February Board meeting were approved.
- 3.2 The Board noted the Matters Arising.

4. Board Business and Reports

Sub-committee Reports

- 4.1 The Board noted and discussed a written report from the Editorial Guidelines and Standards Committee. The Board approved a proposal to undertake a Thematic Review of BBC coverage of the Israel/Gaza conflict. The proposed Terms of Reference would return to the Board in June following consideration by the Committee.
- 4.2 The Board noted an oral report from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee. Preparations for the year-end were progressing well following improvements to the process. The most recent meeting had included substantive sessions on physical security risks and how to address them, and consideration of an external assurance report on the BBC's handling of whistleblowing and bullying and harassment cases. The internal audit assurance report had also been discussed and the audit plan for the coming year agreed.
- 4.3 The Board noted an oral report from the Chair of the Scotland Committee on its most recent meeting, which had taken place in Glasgow. Matters for discussion had included plans for drama in BBC Scotland.

- 4.4 The Board noted an oral report from the Chair of the Wales Committee on its most recent meeting, which had taken place in Merthyr Tydfil. Matters for discussion had included a deep-dive on sports content in BBC Wales. The meeting was followed by a focus group session with local students on their consumption of media.

Board Effectiveness Review

- 4.5 The Board discussed the proposed action plan in response to the Chris Saul effectiveness review, which was discussed at a Board session on 27 February.
- 4.6 The Nominations and Governance Committee had discussed an outline of the response at its March meeting and proposed detailed actions on two areas: the Board's overall calendar and meeting schedule; and the issue of escalation and reputation management.
- 4.7 The Board considered the proposed framework for the escalation of matters of reputational risk, informed by the effectiveness review and an accompanying independent benchmarking exercise.
- 4.8 The Board approved the new process and related actions, noting that an updated schedule of Matters Reserved to the Board would return for sign-off at the next Board meeting.
- 4.9 The Board discussed the proposal to amend the calendar and focus of Board meetings, which had emerged from the effectiveness review. The Nominations and Governance Committee had discussed and agreed the suggested six meetings through the year and an additional awayday session, along with key planning principles, which included planning two meetings a year outside of London and including regular non-executive only sessions.
- 4.10 The Board approved the revised schedule of meetings, along with the associated planning principles. The scheduling of Board sub-committees would also be re-visited to ensure effective alignment.

5. Executive Reporting

Executive and Director-General Report

- 5.1 The Director-General opened the session by reporting on the past month's audience performance, which had continued to be strong. Board members noted that the BBC had completed negotiation of an extension to the rights to cover the Six Nations tournament, along with ITV, until 2029.
- 5.2 The CEO, News and Current Affairs provided an updated on the immediate remedial actions taken in News to address the compliance failings identified following issues with

the film *Gaza: How to Survive a War Zone*. Separately, Directors noted an update on engagement with the independent production company responsible for making the film.

5.3 The Board noted and discussed plans for a survey of BBC account holders, which would launch shortly as part of the BBC's preparations for Charter renewal.

5.4 The Chief Operating Officer updated the Board on a number of staff and organisational changes at senior executive level.

iPlayer Strategy

5.5 The Board noted an update on iPlayer strategy.

6. Workplace Culture Review

6.1 The Board welcomed Grahame Russell and Stephanie Wheeler, from Change Associates, for an update on the progress with the review and initial discussion of the emerging findings.

6.2 The final report would come to the April meeting of the Board.

7. 2025-26 Approvals

Group Budget 2025-26

7.1 The Board considered the 2025/26 BBC Group Budget, which had been presented for approval by the BBC Board in the context of the 3 year plan.

7.2 The Board noted that following the review of the Draft Budget at the February Board meeting, amendments had been made to the phasing of the commercial dividend and the investment in premium video.

7.3 The Board discussed the planning assumptions underlying the Budget, including the assurance around licence fee income forecasts and World Service funding. Directors also discussed longer term financial planning, including proposals around raising additional capital, which would return to a future meeting following further discussion by the Commercial Board.

7.4 The Board approved the 2025/26 BBC Group Budget.

Audience Metrics 2025-26

- 7.5 The Board considered a paper setting out the metrics and targets for audience performance over the coming year. Directors noted that they were informed by market context and trends, strategic interventions and the proposed budget.
- 7.6 The Board discussed the rationale for the inclusion of new metrics and changes to the targets for the coming year, with a particular focus on those for “brand power”; “for me” and impartiality.
- 7.7 The Board approved the audience performance metrics and targets for 2025-26.

The Annual Plan 2025-26

- 7.8 The Board reviewed the final draft of the 2025-26 Annual Plan.
- 7.9 The Board approved the Annual Plan, subject to a number of drafting amendments.

8. Editorial Guidelines 2025

- 8.1 The Board considered a paper detailing the outcome of the public consultation on the draft Editorial Guidelines. It also outlined other changes made by the Editorial Policy team since discussion of the draft Guidelines at the Editorial Guidelines and Standards Committee [EGSC] and the Board in October 2024. Directors noted that the paper had been discussed at EGSC on 6 March 2025 and the revised Editorial Guidelines approved for submission to the Board.
- 8.2 The Board discussed the outcome of the public consultation and changes to the Guidelines which had resulted from it.
- 8.3 The Board noted the next steps to publication and the communications plan for the launch of the new Guidelines, which was likely to take place in June.
- 8.4 The Board approved the final text of the Editorial Guidelines 2025.

9. FM Extension

- 9.1 The Board approved a proposal to begin the re-procurement of the contract for the BBC’s FM broadcast transmissions.

10. AOB

10.1 The was no other business.