



## **Meeting of the BBC Editorial Guidelines and Standards Committee**

### **MINUTES**

14 May 2024

Boardroom 3028, Broadcasting House, London

### **ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

1. Minutes of the 7 March Meeting and Matters Arising
2. Thematic Review Updates
3. Revision of the Editorial Guidelines
4. Complaints Reporting
5. Senior Editorial Policy Adviser's Report
6. Emerging Editorial Risks and Issues
7. Committee Report for the Annual Report and Accounts
8. AOB

## ATTENDANCE

### *Members:*

- Nicholas Serota                      Non-executive director (Chair)
- Tim Davie                              Director-General
- Robbie Gibb                          Non-executive director
- Deborah Turness                      CEO, BBC News and Current Affairs

### *With*

Samir Shah	BBC Chair
Rhodri Talfan Davies	Director, Nations
Caroline Daniel	Editorial Advisor
Michael Prescott	Editorial Advisor
David Jordan	Director, Editorial Standards and Policy
Peter Johnston	Director, Complaints and Editorial Reviews
Jo Clarke	Secretary to the Committee
Rizwana Rahmani	Executive Lead, Editorial Policy and Standards
Jonathan Munro	Deputy CEO News and Current Affairs
David Grossman	Senior Editorial Policy Advisor
Helen White	Project Manager; Serota Implementation Project (item 2)
Simon Coates	Senior Advisor, Thematic Reviews (item 2)

## APOLOGIES

None

## EDITORIAL GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES

### **1. Minutes from the 7 March Meeting and Matters Arising**

- 1.1 The minutes of the meeting on the 7 March were approved.

#### *Matters Arising*

- 1.2 The Matters Arising paper was noted.

### **2. Thematic Review Updates**

#### *Thematic Review of Migration: Publication and Implementation*

- 2.1 The Committee noted an update on the publication of the Thematic Review, which had taken place on 7 May, and the subsequent roll-out of the six key points, wider recommendations and learning materials. Madeleine Sumption, co-chair of the thematic review of migration, would be taking part in a briefing session for presenters. The Committee discussed how best to implement the findings of the review, particularly in the Nations and Regions, and how to keep teams alert to them when important stories on the topic arose.

#### *Thematic Review of Representation and Portrayal: Terms of Reference*

- 2.2 The Committee considered the final terms of reference for the third thematic review on representation and portrayal, following review and approval by the two co-chairs, Chris Banatvala and Anne Morrison.
- 2.3 The Committee discussed the methodology employed by the review and agreed that it was important to include the audience research which had been commissioned for Across the UK, and ongoing “for me” audience research.
- 2.4 The Committee approved the final terms of reference for publication.

### **3 Revision of the Editorial Guidelines**

- 3.1 The Committee noted an update on the revision of the Editorial Guidelines, which were now being prepared for public consultation.

## **4. Complaints**

### *Analysis of Editorial Complaints Stage 2*

- 4.1 The Committee considered a paper providing a full account of the findings of ECU and the status of Ofcom complaints during the previous period. The report set out performance against KPIs, a list of the upheld or resolved complaints, with links to the published summaries of the findings, and highlighted key themes and significant not upheld cases.
- 4.2 The Committee discussed a number of recent complaints and findings.

### *Complaints Reporting*

- 4.3 The Committee noted the Stage 1 complaints reports for March and April and February and the Ofcom monthly reports covering the same period.

### *Summary of Middle East Complaints*

- 4.4 The Committee discussed the complaints summary. There had been a number of editorial errors which had generated complaints.

## **5. Senior Editorial Policy Advisor Report**

- 5.1 The Committee noted the Senior Advisor report. The Committee discussed the reporting of the International Court of Justice finding on the Middle East conflict and why media organisations had misinterpreted the judgement. Directors also discussed the nature and substance of the complaints being received from both sides of the conflict; it was agreed that Peter Johnston would provide an analysis.

## **6. Emerging Editorial Risks and Issues**

### *Emerging Issues*

- 6.1 The Committee discussed some of the key areas of risk in BBC coverage over the coming period and how they were being addressed.

### *Election coverage*

- 6.2 The Committee noted an update on an editorial issue which had arisen during the London mayoral elections where a Conservative PEB had been rolled-out instead of a Labour one.
- 6.3 The Committee discussed the editorial risks around covering the General Election. The Committee agreed that care would be needed around the reporting of opinion polls.

### *Internal Audit: Implementation of the Serota Recommendations and Impartiality Plan*

- 6.4 The Committee noted the positive internal audit and agreed that regular reporting on the progress of any ongoing recommendations should come to the Committee on a six monthly basis.

## **7 Committee Report for the Annual Report**

- 7.1 The Committee considered the draft report regarding the Committee's activities over the year for inclusion in the Annual Report 2023-24. Committee members were requested to send any drafting amendments to the Director, Editorial Reviews and Complaints.
- 7.2 The report was approved, subject to drafting amendments. It was agreed that the Chair of the Committee would sign-off the final draft for publication in the report.

## **8. AOB**

- 8.1 The Committee noted that Ofcom would attend the next meeting.