

BBC BOARD - ENGLAND COMMITTEE

Minutes

2nd July 2025, 10.00-13.00

BBC Leeds, Broadcasting House

Members:

Robbie Gibb	Non-Executive Director (Chair)
Michael Plaut	Non-Executive Director
Rhuanedd Richards	Director, Nations
Jason Horton	Director, Local Production

With:

Judith Byrne	Business Operations Director, Local
Chris Burns	Controller, Local Audio Commissioning
Katrina Bunker	Senior Head of Content Production (item 4)
Rebecca Davis	Head of Audience Research (item 6)
Anjla Kumar	Senior Finance Business Partner (item 7)
Mark Grinnell	Executive Lead, Nations

Apologies:

Jon Petrie	Commissioning Director, Comedy
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Agenda:

- 1 Welcome and previous minutes
- 2 Director, Local Production, report
- 3 Controller, Local Audio Commissioning, report
- 4 Regional report
- 5 Director's report - Nations
- 6 Audiences
- 7 Finance
- 8 AOB and Close

1. Welcome and Previous Minutes

- 1.1 The minutes from the previous meeting (13th February 2025) were approved with no conflicts.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed Non-Executive Director, Michael Plaut to the England Committee as a regular member. Also attending the Committee for the first time were Rhuanedd Richards, Interim Director of Nations; Judith Byrne, Interim Business and Operations Director for BBC Local services in England; and Chris Burns, Audio Controller.
- 1.3 The Chair expressed thanks to the Committee for attending the stakeholder event held in Bradford on 1st July in which there had been feedback and support for the BBC's coverage of Bradford 25 – City of Culture and a discussion about the legacy in the run up to the Royal Charter renewal.
- 1.4 The Chair noted thanks to Patricia Hidalgo for attending the England Committee as a guest from the Content division. Following an item at the BBC's Nominations Committee, Jon Petrie (Director Comedy Commissioning) has been selected to join the England Committee for the forthcoming 12 months.
- 1.5 The first England Editorial Standards meeting will be held in July as approved in the previous meeting and would be reviewed in a forthcoming Committee. The Chair would attend future meetings.
- 1.6 The Chair praised the work of the BBC Leeds editorial team after meeting them in the newsroom, TV and Radio studios before the Committee.
- 1.7 A piece of work from Audiences would inform the editorial group along with a review of editorial story choices made in BBC Local over the previous 12 months.

2. Director, Local Production, Report

- 2.1 The Committee heard a summary of recent editorial successes, including a regular cadence of iPlayer Specials including the Great Waste Scandal & Killed by the Internet along with the Investigation into Leaseholds and Ask Angela from BBC Local Investigations.
- 2.2 The Committee noted sustained digital growth and stability in linear consumption by audiences.
- 2.3 The Committee noted innovative new ways of working in London and the East, West and South-West with streaming digital content in 'hold to account' interviews and event coverage.

- 2.4 There had been an increase in sport consumption on digital following investment in the Local sport product.
- 2.5 The Chair congratulated the BBC Local teams for award success at both National & Regional RTS & Aria nominations.
- 2.6 The Committee noted the completion of the Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS) procurement and the commencement of new contracts.
- 2.7 The Committee noted the implementation of a new Editorial Standards Group for Local which had been discussed in the previous Committee.
- 2.8 The new BBC building in Cambridge is now operational and the new technology use in the building will become a template for new ways of working in other development sites, such as Digbeth in Birmingham
- 2.9 The Committee noted the results from the BBC Staff Survey amongst members of staff in local, which is trending above the BBC average. The Director will share the action points with the Committee.
- 2.10 Discussion over the question of ‘do you see yourself working at the BBC in the next five years”
- 2.11 BBC Local would implement the findings of the Culture Review across the Nation in line with the overall BBC Group Strategy.
- 2.12 The Committee noted the growth strategy for Local to focus on depth, context and analysis in storytelling across platforms, using our specialists and reporters to develop a regular cadence of journalism and features that deepens the audience experience.
- 2.13 In preparation for Royal Charter, work had begun amongst staff and the leadership team.
- 2.14 Discussion about quality of new talent on social media in news output.

3. Controller, Local Audio Commissioning, Report

- 3.1 The Committee heard an update on the BBC Local podcast pipeline with brands like Crime Next Door & Love Bombed and mini-brands such as In Court & Secret/Hidden.
- 3.2 The Committee noted there are two annual commissioning rounds held across BBC Local.
- 3.3 Make A Difference brand is now rolled out across Nations and supported by the network output such as The One Show.

- 3.4 At the start of the Premiership, BBC Local will be launching Football feeds for every EFL club after a successful pilot the previous year.
- 3.5 There is a new routine of meetings in BBC Local Radio teams where broadcast output is reviewed. This takes place after the release of each set of RAJAR audience figures.
- 3.6 BBC Local Radio has a new breakfast brief which has been written in collaboration with leaders and communicated to staff.
- 3.7 A future Committee would receive a deep-dive on the style and delivery of social media content created by BBC Local teams in News.
- 3.8 Training work has been undertaken by producers and presenters in Local Radio stations.
- 3.9 New breakfast shows have been launched in the last twelve months on stations including BBC Radio Derby and BBC Radio Merseyside.
- 3.10 The Committee noted plans for big moments across BBC Local in the next 12 months including BBC Children In Need, Farm Watch and the Make a Difference Awards.

4. Regional Report

- 4.1 The Committee heard a summary of work in the period since the England Committee last met in the region including the performance of broadcast and digital output.
- 4.2 The Committee watched a showreel of content made in the region, including coverage of the BBC's City of Culture Bradford.
- 4.3 The Committee discussed the stakeholder engagement session held in Bradford before the meeting.

5. Nations Director Report

- 5.1 The Director praised the regional team for their work on Bradford and output generally.
- 5.2 The Director updated the Committee on her work for the Executive Committee on the Across the UK initiative which would champion and represent the Nations and Regions of the UK.

- 5.3 A plan would be put together for coverage of forthcoming Elections and a close working relationship with the BBC News division.
- 5.4 The Committee heard the Director's overview of priorities for her time in the role, including developing the responsiveness of digital output relating to where audiences live.
- 5.5 The Director outlined her priority for making the BBC culture to be acceptable.
- 5.6 Radio visualisation remains a priority in the Nations.
- 5.7 The Director will visit as many Nations and Regions offices in the next 12 months.
- 5.8 In September there will be a group meeting to plan around priorities for the coming months.

6. Audiences

- 6.1 The Committee heard a summary of the key performance of BBC Local and the region amongst audiences.
- 6.2 The Committee discussed TV news consumption. A meeting of 1830 programme Editors would be convened.

7. Finance

- 7.1 The Committee heard a summary of spending, which is still on track against targets for the financial year.
- 7.2 BBC Local will achieve savings targets without compulsory redundancies.
- 7.3 There would be a report in the next committee on staff numbers for hybrid and office working to evaluate the occupancy of BBC Local buildings.

8. AOB & Close

- 8.1 There were no other matters arising.
- 8.2 The next meeting would be held on 23rd September in BBC Channel Islands.
DATE TO BE REVISED FOR EGSC
- 8.3 The BBC Local Awards would be held in in Bradford on November 6th.

ENDS