

BBC BOARD - ENGLAND COMMITTEE

Minutes

25th September 2025

BBC Channel Islands, Broadcasting House, St Helier

Members:

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| Robbie Gibb | Non-Executive Director (Chair) |
| Michael Plaut | Non-Executive Director |
| Jason Horton | Chief Operating Officer (for the Director Nations) |
| Robert Thompson | Director, Local Production |

With:

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| Adrian Mills | Business Operations Director, Local |
| Samantha Sing | Divisional Finance Director |
| Chris Burns | Controller, Local Audio Commissioning (<i>item 3</i>) |
| Stephanie Marshall | Senior Head of Content Production (<i>item 4</i>) |
| Matthew Price | Assistant Editor, Channel Islands (<i>item 4</i>) |
| Rebecca Davis | Head of Audience Research (<i>item 6</i>) |
| Anjla Kumar | Senior Finance Business Partner (<i>item 7</i>) |
| Mark Grinnell | Executive Lead, Nations |
| Jon Petrie | Commissioning Director, Comedy |

Apologies:

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| Rhuanedd Richards | Director Nations |
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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, Nations, report
- 6 Audiences
- 7 Finance
- 8 AOB and Close

1. Welcome and Previous Minutes

- 1.1 The minutes from the previous meeting (2nd July 2025) were approved.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed Robert Thompson to the England Committee as Interim Controller of Local Production while Jason Horton is Interim Chief Operating Officer for Nations and will speak for the Director of Nations during this Committee.
- 1.3 The Chair welcomed the Business and Operations Director, Adrian Mills back to the England Committee following his attachment.
- 1.4 The Chair welcomed Stephanie Marshall to attend the meeting as Senior Head of Content Production for the South West.
- 1.5 The Nations Finance Director, Samantha Sing, would attend this and future England Committee meetings.
- 1.6 Following an item at the BBC's Nominations Committee, Jon Petrie is joining the England Committee as a regular guest from the BBC Content division.
- 1.7 The Chair expressed thanks to the team and leadership at BBC Channel Islands for their time and the tour of BBC Radio Jersey and Channel Islands TV.
- 1.8 Two England Editorial Standards meetings had been convened since the previous Committee and a review of progress would be held by the Chair after the Committee.
- 1.9 The next England Committee would be held in BBC Birmingham.

2. Director, Local Production, Report

- 2.1 The Committee heard a summary of the interim Director's first three weeks in role including site visits and editorial observations.
- 2.2 The Director outlined plans for the Senior Leadership Team to meet and discuss depth of editorial quality and volume of news coverage in newsrooms in BBC Local.
- 2.3 The Committee discussed the tracking and moderating of outcomes of thematic reviews in BBC Local output.
- 2.4 The Director of Comedy discussed engagement with local stakeholders for screenings of new productions including *Mammoth* on BBC One.
- 2.5 'Lead from Here' training would embed culture training in BBC Local.
- 2.7 Sport is a driver for building new audiences in Sounds and Local performance with highlights including visualised content in transfer deadline day.
- 2.8 A Local Awards event would be held to recognise hard work across Local.

3. Controller, Local Audio Commissioning, Report

- 3.1 The Controller gave an overview of the *Make A Difference* Awards. The season of award shows is reaching a conclusion with events having been held in Local and Nations radio stations. There would be a plan to bring a bigger BBC coherence to future Awards seasons.
- 3.2 There is now a *Make A Difference* radio show each week broadcast across the Local Radio network to exploit more of the editorial offer from the various awards. The Committee discussed the relevance of the coverage across the network, and how the sense of pride and inspiration can extend beyond the local area in which the story was originated.
- 3.3 The Committee discussed the slate of podcasts across BBC Local and the accompanying audience consumption.
- 3.4 The Committee would receive a strategy paper for Podcasts which would include audio data and costs.
- 3.5 The Committee discussed Farm Watch coverage across BBC Local.

4. Regional Report

- 4.1 Recruitment and staff retention is the biggest operational challenge for the BBC in the Channel Islands because of the cost of living in both Guernsey and Jersey along with the non-local working population cap in the Islands. The BBC pays a Channel Islands weighting financial allowance for Island workers.
- 4.2 The investment of the new TV studio fit has been a significant investment in BBC Channel Islands output and a new gallery system (IGS) would be fitted in line with the rest of the operation across Local.
- 4.3 The BBC Jersey building is not modern. Improving the quality of the working environment was discussed in Committee.
- 4.4 The Assistant Editor discussed coverage of recent news stories and the relationship with Network for elevating local story coverage to main News bulletins.
- 4.5 The Committee heard about the work the team in the Channel Islands are undertaking in their editorial plans.

5. Nations Director Report

- 5.1 The Chief Operating Officer offered congratulations to the interim Director of Local Content Production on his appointment.
- 5.2 Senior Leaders from Nations division had met to discuss audience portrayal, stakeholder engagement, priorities for growth in digital, sport, audio and video and News.
- 5.3 Ownership of the stakeholder relationships in England would be increased in areas like the North and Midlands as support to each Region during the run up to the Royal Charter.
- 5.4 The Interim Director Nations has met with teams in Belfast, Edinburgh, Leeds, Bradford, Liverpool, Wrexham, Oxford, Bristol, Birmingham, Salford and visited BBC Local teams in London.
- 5.5 The Committee heard about the Nations work to grow impact, tone of voice, attribution and prominence, celebrating local identities and the launch of the new BBC 'Made of' Campaign which celebrates the Nations and Regions.
- 5.6 A deeper Nations relationship with the BBC Content division will result in a new commissioning buying model and structure to ensure the commissioning of portrayal for Devolved Nations.
- 5.7 There is now a regular routine meeting between the Nations and News division.
- 5.8 The Committee heard about the work on Culture in Nations and tackling poor performance via the *Call it Out* campaign.
- 5.9 The Committee received an update on Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS) content and forthcoming Election plans.

6. Audiences

- 6.1 The Committee heard a summary of the key performance of BBC Local and the Channel Islands and wider South West BBC region for audiences.
- 6.2 There would be a review of audience and editorial offer for BBC London in a future Committee (mid 2026). The thinking from the thematic review of portrayal would be included in this report.

7. Finance

- 7.1 The Committee heard a summary of spending, which is still on track against targets for the financial year and are post the *Value for All* changes and now considered business as usual.
- 7.2 The Committee discussed the allocation of spend in England on BBC Orchestras.

8. AOB & Close

- 8.1 There were no other matters arising.
- 8.2 Date of next England Committee is 4th Feb 2026 in Birmingham.

ENDS