Executive Board

7 April 2008
1100 – 1500
Rm 3028, Broadcasting House

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Attendees

Present
Mark Thompson (Chair)  Director-General
Jenny Abramsky  Director, Audio and Music
Jana Bennett  Director, Vision
Tim Davie  Director, Marketing, Communications and Audiences
Ashley Highfield  Director, Future Media and Technology
Caroline Thomson  Chief Operating Officer
John Smith  Chief Executive, BBC Worldwide
Marcus Agius  Senior non-executive director
Val Gooding  Non-executive director
David Robbie  Non-executive director
Mike Lynch  Non-executive director (by telephone)
Robert Webb  Non-executive director

With
Jessica Cecil  Head of the Director-General's Office
Lynsey Bigger  Head of the Executive Unit
Jo Clarke  Assistant Head of the Executive Unit
Philippa Gay  Head of Strategy, Vision Productions (item 3)
Pat Loughrey  Director, Nations and Regions (item 3)
Gautam Rangarajan  Head of Policy and Development (item 3)
Bal Samra  Director, Vision Operations & Rights (item 3)
David Fawcett  Head of Policy Development (item 4)
Shaun Day  Chief Economist (item 4)
Kerstin Mogull  Deputy Director, Policy & Strategy (items 5, 6 and 7)
Paul Rudkin  Strategy Manager (item 5)
James Micklethwait  Head of Strategy, FM&T (items 6 and 7)
Chris Kane  Head of Corporate Real Estate (item 9)

Apologies
Mark Byford  Deputy Director-General
Steve Kelly  Director, BBC People
Zarin Patel  Group Finance Director
Samir Shah  Non-executive director
Agenda

1 Minutes of BBC Executive Board on held on 28 February 2008 and 10 March 2008.

2 Director reports
   a) Audiences and all services
   b) Journalism
   c) Regulatory and industry
   d) Commercial
   e) Finance
      • Finance report

3 Network Supply Review

4 Release of Jam Nations content

5 Statements of Programme Policy 2008/09

6 Technology Strategy

7 iPlayer
   a) Series stacking
   b) Pre-booking
   c) Streaming

8 The Trials Register

9 Quarterly Property Update

10 Appointment of new Chair of the BBC's Independent Charitable Appeals Advisory Committee (AAC)

11 Any other business

For noting

12 BBC World Service Performance Review 2007-08

13 Minutes and Actions from Finance Committee
1 Minutes of BBC Executive Board held on 28 February 2008 and 10 March 2008.

1.1 The minutes were approved and the summary for publication noted.

1.2 The Board noted that the budget had progressed through the Trust and the outstanding technology elements would be addressed by the technology strategy, being discussed by Executive Board at the meeting.

2 Director reports

a) Audiences and All services
2.1 Jana Bennett provided a short update on audience figures and services for the last month, noting key highlights for Vision, Audio & Music and New Media.

b) Journalism
2.2 Mark Byford provided an update on journalism matters.

c) Regulatory and industry
2.3 Caroline Thomson provided an update on regulatory and industry matters.

d) Commercial
2.4 John Smith was not at the meeting but a paper providing an update on commercial matters had been circulated in advance.

e) Finance report
2.5 Zarin Patel introduced the finance report which summarised the 2007/08 financial results for the BBC for the year to February 2008.

3 Network Supply Review

3.1 Caroline Thomson introduced this paper which, following on from earlier Board discussions, set out the Network Supply Review (NSR) team’s recommendations. This would be presented to the Trust in due course.

3.2 The Board approved the Network Supply Map for programme production and the top level recommendations for how to implement the Network Supply Map, to enable a fully costed implementation plan to be developed. The Next Steps were also endorsed.

4 Release of Jam Nations content

4.1 The paper outlined what content was available, what it would cost to prepare it for release, together with an outline process and timetable. It also considered the public value which would be created and the potential market impact assessment.

4.2 The Board endorsed the assessment and proposed approach to releasing Nations content, prior to submission of the paper to the Trust.
5 Statements of Programme Policy 2008/09

5.1 This paper explained that the Statements of Programme Policy (SoPPs) were the BBC’s annual promises to viewers, listeners and users about individual BBC services. The SoPPs were prepared by BBC Management but Trust approval was required before SoPPs could be published. Based on the annual performance meeting, the Trust had made its own recommendations and these were reflected in the paper.

5.2 The Board approved the 2008/09 SoPPs for onward progression to the Trust.

6 Technology Strategy

6.1 The Board noted that there was an outstanding action for the Trust to approve a Technology strategy as part of the transitional arrangements between the Board of Governors and the Trust. This had been raised when the Trust reviewed management’s six year framework, Delivering Creative Future in the summer of 2007 and subsequently at the Trust Finance and Strategy Committee in September 2007. The scope of the paper being presented to the Board had been agreed with the Trust Unit.

6.2 The Board approved the technology strategy for onward submission to the Trust, subject to comments made.

7 iPlayer

Series stacking
Pre-booking
Streaming

7.1 The Board considered these three papers together. The series stacking paper explained BBC management’s proposed approach to the implementation, monitoring and reporting of series stacking following conditional approval by the Trust of the BBC iPlayer. The Board noted that ‘pre-booking’ was a proposed feature that would allow users to pre-order the download of a TV programme via the iPlayer. The paper on streaming costs had been requested by the BBC Trust in December 2007. It assessed the implications of adding streaming functionality for the on-demand services Public Value Assessment (PVA) and Market Impact Assessment (MIA) conclusions.

7.2 The Board noted that streaming was not a viable option when the iPlayer proposals were put to the Trust but that since then, streaming had become not only possible but standard elsewhere and expected by online users of this kind of service. The addition of streaming in the launch proposition in December 2007 had made an important contribution to the current success of iPlayer, without representing a fundamental change in the public value equation.

7.3 The Board noted the definition of ‘stackable’ series and the terms of the annual 15% quota. It was agreed that the papers should be amended to refer specifically to pre-booking for ‘video’ downloading, as Radio downloads had already been available for some time.

7.4 The Board approved the approach to series stacking and the analysis of pre-booking functionality into the iPlayer. The broad conclusions of the streaming paper were noted. All papers were endorsed for onward progression to the Trust.
8 The Trials Register

8.1 This paper explained that under Protocol D8 (The Handling of Public Service Pilots and Trials) the Executive Board was required to provide to the Trust a register of pilots and trials, updated on a quarterly basis. The paper contained the current Trials Register updated with feedback from the divisional trials representatives.

8.2 The Board confirmed that the Trials Register was up-to-date, accurate and comprehensive and could progress to the Trust.

9 Quarterly Property update

9.1 This paper was the fourth quarterly property update of 2007/08. The report provided an update on the implementation of the BBC’s property strategy and an overview of property issues across the BBC.

9.2 The Board noted that the Finance Committee would normally review the report before Executive Board but because of timings this had not been possible. This aspect of scrutiny therefore formed part of the Executive Board discussion.

9.3 The Board noted the update and endorsed it for onward progression to the Trust.

10 Appointment of new Chair of the BBC’s Independent Charitable Appeals Advisory Committee (AAC)

10.1 Jessica Cecil introduced this paper which outlined the remit of the AAC and reminded the Board of its responsibility with respect to making appointments to the AAC. The Board discussed the background and references of the proposed candidate which were summarised in the paper.

10.2 The Board endorsed the appointment of Stephen Dunmore as Chair of the BBC’s independent Charitable Appeals Advisory Committee.

11 Any other business

11.1 No other business was raised.

For noting

12 BBC World Service Performance Review 2007-08

12.1 This paper summarised the performance of the BBC World Service in 2007-08. It was noted that the World Service’s Annual Review would be presented to the Executive Board in June.

12.2 The Board noted the performance review.

13 Minutes and Actions from Finance Committee

13.1 This paper reminded the Board that the Finance Committee (FC) was established under the delegated authority of the BBC Executive Board and that the purpose of the FC was to
ensure the practice of good financial governance across the BBC and the enforcement of the BBC’s Investment Policy and Guidelines.

13.2 In line with the standing orders of the FC this paper provided the Executive Board with summary minutes of recent FC meetings, covering details of all business covered and key actions and outcomes agreed.

13.3 The Board noted the summary minutes and actions.