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Attendees

Present
Mark Thompson (Chair), Director-General
Mark Byford, Deputy Director-General (Chaired the meeting from item 6 onwards)
Lucy Adams, Director, BBC People
Sharon Baylay, Director, Marketing, Communications & Audiences (MC&A)
Jana Bennett, Director, Vision
Tim Davie, Director, Audio and Music (A&M)
Erik Huggers, Director, Future Media and Technology (FM&T)
Zarin Patel, Group Finance Director
Peter Salmon, Director, BBC North
Caroline Thomson, Chief Operating Officer
Marcus Agius, Senior non-executive director
Val Gooding, Non-executive director
Mike Lynch, Non-executive director
David Robbie, Non-executive director
Samir Shah, Non-executive director
Robert Webb, Non-executive director

With
Jessica Cecil, Head of the Director-General’s Office
Lynsey Tweddle, Head of the Executive Unit (secretary)
Jo Clarke, Assistant Head of the Executive Unit
John Tate, Director, Policy and Strategy (item 2)
Gautam Rangarajan, Head of Strategy (item 2)
Roly Keating, Director of Archive Content (item 2)
John Linwood, Chief Technology Officer (item 3)
John Smith, Chief Executive, BBC Worldwide (item 4)
Anna Mallett, Controller, Business Strategy (item 4)
David Moody, Director of Strategy, BBC Worldwide (item 4)
Chris Day, Group Financial Controller (item 5)
Ed James, Head of Corporate Performance Reporting (item 5)
Helen Boaden, Director, BBC News (item 6)
Ric Bailey, Chief Adviser, Politics (item 6)
Sue Inglish, Head of Political Programmes, Analysis and Research (item 6)
Nicholas Eldred, Group General Counsel (item 8)
Balbir Binning, Controller, Fair Trading and Compliance Officer (item 8)
1 Minutes from the Executive Board meeting on 11 January 2010

1.1 The minutes from the January Board were approved, with some minor amendments.

2 Strategy Review

2.1 This paper provided a draft summary of the Strategy Review.

2.2 Following the Board discussion, it was agreed that the SR should return for further consideration prior to the next Board meeting.

3 Technology Strategy

3.1 The Board noted that the aims of the Technology Strategy and its principles had been approved by the Board in December 2009. However, at that time the Board had asked for the item to return to enable a wider, more general discussion of technology matters.

3.2 The Board agreed it was important to ensure the right balance was struck between managing technology services in-house and outsourcing.

3.3 The Board discussed the BBC’s funding model and agreed this should aim to incorporate an element of flexibility to enable the technology function to operate as effectively and efficiently as possible. It was noted that BBC People, Workplace and FM&T were working together to review how best to balance technology, culture and environmental requirements in order to deliver the BBC’s efficiency plan.

(Note: Marcus Agius and David Robbie left the meeting during discussion of the next item).

4 BBC Worldwide Strategy

4.1 This paper set out BBC Worldwide’s (BBCW) revised three year rolling business strategy (and accompanying five year financial plan) as requested as part of the BBC Executive Commercial Review of BBCW approved by the BBC Trust and announced in November 2009. It was noted that the strategy was presented for discussion at this stage and would return to the Executive Board for approval.

4.2 Overall, the Board broadly supported the direction of the strategy. However, it was agreed that further work was required and that the strategy should return to the Board for further discussion before progressing to the Trust.

4.3 The Board noted that Sharon Baylay was now a member of the BBCW Board.

5 Budget 2010/11 – 2012/13

5.1 This paper updated the Board on the progress on production of the BBC Budget for the three years to 31 March 2013.
5.2 The Board briefly discussed the progress on production of the Budget and the timetable, noting that a special Board meeting to approve the budget would take place later that month.

(Mark Thompson and Tim Davie left the meeting after the budget item. The remainder of the meeting was chaired by Mark Byford).

(Mike Lynch left the meeting during discussion of the next item).

6 BBC Election Coverage

6.1 This session/presentation provided an opportunity for the Board to be updated on the BBC’s planned coverage of the election.

6.2 The Board noted that the televised debates would be called ‘prime-ministerial’ rather than ‘leader’ debates. Leader debates would also take place in the Nations, with smaller parties represented elsewhere – for example on the Ten O’Clock News. The Board discussed the role of the digital correspondent and welcomed the assurance that the BBC would prioritise accuracy above all in its coverage. The Board also received an update on plans for younger audiences.

7 Director updates

a) Audiences and all services

7.1 Sharon Baylay updated the Board on key highlights for the previous month.

b) Journalism

7.2 Mark Byford provided an update on Journalism matters.

c) Regulatory and industry

7.3 Caroline Thomson provided an update on regulatory and industry matters. The following paper was also considered:

Final update on progress against Health and Safety Executive Report 2007 action plan

7.4 This paper updated the Board on progress against the Action Plan to address the findings of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) 2007 Report.

7.5 The Board noted the closure of the HSE intervention and supported the new safety action plan for 2010.

d) Finance

7.6 The Board noted the update on the BBC’s financial position and the continuous improvement programme.
Papers for approval

8  Compliance Report Q3 2009/10

8.1 This paper presented the Compliance Report for the third quarter of 2009/10.

8.2 The Board discussed and noted the report.

9  BBC Mobile Applications: News and Sport

9.1 This paper described a proposal for BBC News and Sport mobile applications (Apps), the strategic rationale and the regulatory implications.

9.2 The Board noted that the proposal involved repackaging existing content rather than creating new and agreed that the proposal should be extended to other providers in addition to Apple.

9.3 The Board approved the proposal, noting the development for BBC Mobile and the approach to developing mobile Applications as well as the Fair Trading and State Aid guidance, and the proposed mitigations. It was noted that the approach would now be followed for development of future Applications, which should not require consideration by the Board.

10 Performance Evaluation of the BBC's On Demand Offerings

10.1 This paper presented the Executive's performance evaluation of the four on-demand offerings that were approved by the Trust in April 2007 – namely, seven-day catch-up TV over the Internet; seven-day catch-up TV over cable; simulcast TV over the Internet; and non-DRM audio downloads over the Internet (i.e. podcasting).

10.2 The Board approved the findings of the performance evaluation and agreed that the paper could be submitted to the Trust.

11 Future Governance of W1 Programme

11.1 This paper set out a revised governance structure for the W1 programme, noting that it would seek to build on the transformational plans in hand and under development whilst not compromising the existing construction and technology workstreams. This evolution would develop the W1 Project into a more integrated programme focused on delivering benefits beyond 2012.

11.2 The Board noted the changes to the governance structure and approved the paper for onward submission to the Trust.

12 Quarterly Property update Q3 (October – December 2009)

12.1 This paper provided the third quarterly property update to the Board for 2009/10.
12.2 The Board approved the paper for onward progression to the Trust.

13 Performance update on the Strategic Contract Portfolio

13.1 This paper provided an update on the performance of the BBC's portfolio of strategic contracts, in line with the recommendations of the National Audit Office review of the BBC's major contracts.

13.2 The Board noted the paper.

14 BBC response to the Trust’s Fair Trading Appeal Investigation into the BBC’s acquisition of the FA Cup radio sports rights

14.1 This paper set out the management response to the BBC Trust's fair trading appeal investigation regarding the BBC's acquisition of the radio broadcasting rights to the FA Cup for the period 2008/9 to 2011/2.

14.2 The Board approved the management recommendations to address the issues raised by the Trust.

15 BBC response to the Government Review of Free-to-Air Listed Events

15.1 This paper set out the BBC's response to the Government consultation on the review of free-to-air listed events. It was noted that the BBC Trust was expected to add its own commentary to the BBC submission.

15.2 The Board agreed the submission and approved it for onward progression to the Trust.

16 Any other business

16.1 No other business was raised.

Papers for noting

17 Summary of papers and actions from Finance Committee

17.1 The Board noted the summary of discussions and actions at the Finance Committee meetings held on 18 and 21 December 2009 and 5 January 2010.