Executive Board

11 July 2008
1000 – 1430
Rm 5126, White City

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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
Stephen Kelly, Director, BBC People
Zarin Patel, Group Finance Director
John Smith, Chief Executive, BBC Worldwide
Caroline Thomson, Chief Operating Officer
Mike Lynch, Non-executive director
David Robbie, 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
Richard Hooper, External Guest, observer
Helen Boaden, Director, News (items 1 and 2)
James Heath, Head of Strategy, Journalism (item 2)
Pat Loughrey, Director, Nations & Regions (item 3)
Bal Samra, Director, Vision Operations & Rights (item 3)
Kerstin Mogull, Deputy Director, Strategy & Policy (items 3 and 5)
Philippa Gay, Head of Strategy, Vision Productions (item 3)
Chris Kane, Head of Corporate Real Estate (item 4)
Helen Latham, Head of Strategic Planning, BBC Workplace (item 4)
Richard Deverell, Controller, BBC Childrens (item 5)
William Greswell, Head of Strategy, BBC Vision (item 5)
Stuart Etherington, Outgoing Chair of the Charitable Appeals Committee (item 6)
Diane Reid, Charitable Appeals Advisor (item 6)
David Ramsden, Chief Executive Officer, Children in Need (item 6b)
John Tate, Director of Policy & Strategy (item 7)
Anna Mallett, Head of Strategy (item 7)
David Moody, Director, Strategy & Business Development (item 7)
Cary Wakefield, Marketing Project Manager, Worldwide (item 7)

Apologies
Mark Byford, Deputy Director-General
Marcus Agius, Senior non-executive director
Val Gooding, Non-executive director
Samir Shah, Non-executive director
Sharmila Nebhrajani, Acting Director, Future Media and Technology
1 Minutes of BBC Executive Board held on 9 June 2008 and the Executive Board conference held on 22 April 2008.

1.1 The minutes were approved, subject to the addition of a reference indicating when Ashley Highfield left the room for discussion of Project Kangaroo. The summary for publication was noted.

2 Director reports

a) Audiences and all services

2.1 Tim Davie 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.

Management Response to the Trust Review of Network News Coverage of Nations & Regions: action plan

2.4 Mark Byford introduced this paper which explained that management was required to submit an ‘action plan’ outlining how it intended to respond to the Trust’s recent review of the network news coverage of the UK’s four nations.

2.5 The Board reviewed the action plan and approved it for onward submission to the Trust, subject to the inclusion of a paragraph highlighting the regions of England as well as the Nations.

c) Regulatory and Industry

2.6 Caroline Thomson provided an update on regulatory and industry matters.

Trials Register and Syndication Report

2.7 Caroline Thomson introduced these two papers. The Board confirmed that the Trials Register was up-to-date, accurate and comprehensive and noted the ten listed Syndication Arrangements. Both papers were approved for onward progression to the Trust.

d) Commercial

2.8 John Smith provided an update on commercial matters.

e) Finance report

Finance report (May 2008)

2.9 Zarin Patel introduced the finance report which summarised the 2007/08 financial results for the BBC for the year to May 2008 and highlighted the key points.

2.10 The Board noted the report.
3 Network Supply Review

3.1 This paper reminded the Board that in September 2007 BBC Management had proposed a review of the supply of network television programming to be led by the Chief Operating Officer. The paper also reminded the Board of the recommendations that had been approved and explained that the BBC Direction Group and Finance Committee had approved the indicative cost of implementation to 2012 and funding.

3.2 The Board approved the 2008-16 strategy for the supply of network television from the UK and the recommendations for implementation. The Board also approved the use of a portion of the central ‘strategic reserve’ to fund the implementation of the 2008-12 plan, noting Finance Committee’s comments that transition costs should be kept as low as possible.

4 Property

Quarterly property update

Corporate property plan – 6 monthly update

4.1 The Board considered these two papers together. The quarterly property update provided an update on the activities of BBC Workplace together with key property metrics. It had been presented to the Finance Committee on 26 June 2008 and had since been updated. Following Board approval of a Corporate Property Plan (CPP) in January 2008, this paper set out progress six months on, covering the period to June 2008.

4.2 It was noted again that English Heritage had recommended listing parts of Television Centre.

4.3 The Board agreed that, in light of the current economic climate, it would be sensible to review the property strategy in the autumn, with Caroline Thomson, Zarin Patel and David Robbie meeting in advance of this to consider recommendations.

4.4 The Board approved the quarterly property report for onward progression to the Trust and noted the Corporate Property Plan 6 monthly progress report.

5 BBC Executive submission to the BBC Trust’s Review of Services for Children

5.1 This paper sought approval for the Executive’s submission to the BBC Trust’s Review of Children’s Services for children aged 12 and under. The paper outlined the key points in the submission and addressed the role of the BBC in providing for children in the UK, performance of the BBC’s offer to children in this age group, future strategy, and proposals for changes to service licences.

5.2 The Board asked that the submission refer to the reach of news to 18 year olds and under, noting the current struggle to maintain and increase this. The Board also asked that an explicit placeholder be included in the submission with respect to the links with the learning strategy. The public service benefits of CBeebies and CBBC were discussed, including online safety aspects.

5.3 Vision Board (who had discussed the paper after submission to the Executive Board) had emphasised that it should be considered a ‘multiplatform’ as opposed to ‘genre’ licence.
5.4 The Board talked generally about ensuring the desired outcome of the strategy was clear in the submission. It was also recognised that this submission was more succinct than the previous submission to a Trust service licence review (bbc.co.uk) demonstrating progress made on refining the amount of information required.

5.5 The Board approved the submission for onward progression to the Trust, subject to comments made.

6 Annual Reports

BBC Charity Appeals Annual Report

6.1 This paper provided the Executive Board with an overview of the BBC’s Charity Appeals for the period 2007/8 and updated the Board on the work of the BBC’s independent Appeals Advisory Committee (AAC) and the Appeals Unit. Under governance arrangements put in place in June 2006, the AAC reported to the Executive Board.

6.2 The Board thanked Stuart Etherington for his chairmanship of the AAC as he was stepping down after five years in the post. Among the key headlines, the Board noted that over £100m raised through appeals had been reported that year, strategic objectives had been implemented, a stronger network of regional and national appeals had been developed, and a seminar for those involved in the Disasters Emergency Committee and relevant parts of the BBC had been held to create better understanding.

6.3 The Board noted the report.

Children in Need Annual Report

6.4 This paper provided an update on the activities of the BBC Children in Need Appeal for 2007/08 and was submitted in line with the governance arrangements for the Charity, which had been agreed by the BBC Executive Board and BBC Trust in 2007.

6.5 The Board congratulated David Ramsden on a successful year, noting that £37m had been raised, more than a 10% increase on the previous year, at a particularly challenging time. This success was attributed to the creative and practical support received from across the BBC, a modest investment by Children in Need in its own editorial support and a new Pudsey and accompanying promotional campaign. The geographical presence of Children In Need had also been widened creating a solid foundation.

6.6 The Board noted that Stevie Spring had been recruited as the new Chair of Children in Need and it was suggested that it would be useful for all Executive Board members to meet her. Board members were also encouraged to take their teams on visits to look at the projects funded by Children In Need.

6.7 The Board noted the report.

7 Global BBC brand

7.1 This presentation outlined the work taking place on marketing the BBC brand internationally. The Board discussed the challenges around branding and the airing of BBC content on non-BBC related public service networks worldwide. The Board also asked that the presentation be amended to include radio before being presented to the Trust.
8 Journalism Production Tools

8.1 This presentation was not considered by the Board as there was insufficient time but it was agreed that the briefing could be presented to the Trust.

9 Any other business

9.1 Mark Thompson reminded that Board that it was Jenny Abramsky’s last Executive Board meeting. The Board thanked Jenny for her outstanding commitment to the BBC and her contribution to the Board.

For noting

10 Minutes and Actions from Finance Committee

10.1 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.

10.2 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.

10.3 The Board noted the summary minutes and actions.

11 Finance Committee Standing Orders

11.1 This paper presented revised Standing Orders for the Finance Committee which reflected Caroline Thomson becoming a second alternate chair in certain circumstances and the new finance protocols.

11.2 The Board noted the revised Finance Committee Standing Orders.