Meeting of the BBC Scotland Committee

MINUTES

Monday 25th March 2019
Aberdeen

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Minutes from 31st October 2018 meeting
3. Director's Report
4. Update on the Scotland Channel: one month on
5. Audience Performance in Scotland
6. Finance Report
7. The Marketplace and External Environment
8. AOB and date of next meeting
ATTENDANCE

Members:
• Steve Morrison    Non-executive director (Chair)
• David Clementi    Chairman
• Donalda MacKinnon Director, Scotland
• Ian Small     Head of Policy and Corporate Affairs, BBC Scotland

With:
• Alice Dickerson    Senior Adviser (Secretary)
• Steve Carson    Head of Multi-Platform Commissioning (items 3 & 4)
• Ian Haythornthwaite Chief Finance and Operating Officer, BBC N&R
• James Holden    Director of Marketing and Audiences, BBC News
• Lesley Farquharson Head of Audience Research, BBC Scotland (item 4)
• Mairead Ferguson    Head of Marketing, BBC Scotland (item 4)
• Hayley Valentine    Editor, The Nine (item 4)
• Gary Smith    Head of News and Current Affairs, BBC Scotland (item 4)

Apologies:
• Ken MacQuarrie    Director, Nations and Regions
1. **Welcome and introductions**

1.1 The Committee agreed that the stakeholder lunch which had been held immediately before the committee meeting with representatives from Aberdeen’s cultural, media and economic sectors had been informative and useful. Discussion had included reaction to the launch of the Scotland Channel, the changing nature of the Aberdeen and North East economy and culture, and BBC coverage of issues related to Aberdeen.

2. **Minutes from 31st October 2018**

2.1 The minutes of the last Committee meeting were approved.

3. **Director’s Report**

3.1 The Director of BBC Scotland provided the Committee with an overview of forthcoming 19/20 editorial highlights as included in the BBC’s 19/20 Annual Plan.

3.2 The Committee was also updated on events and engagement since the last committee meeting, including the launch of the Scotland Channel. The Director of BBC Scotland provided an update on recent appointments and the recruitment of new posts for the Scotland Channel.

4. **Update on Scotland Channel**

4.1 The Committee congratulated the Channel team on a successful launch and first month of transmission and thanked them for their hard work and effort to date.

4.2 The Committee considered audience reaction to the Channel for the first three weeks of transmission, including the performance of the Channel in comparison to other channels in Scotland, the demographic profile of the audience and how the audience changed across the schedule. The Committee also considered the performance to date of The Nine and noted that the audience remains steady across the hour.

4.3 The marketing and promotion of the Channel to date was considered and the importance of off-air promotion was noted. The Committee was informed that a further promotional push is expected to take place in the autumn.

4.4 The Committee asked BBC Scotland management to look into whether it is possible to increase the frequency by which Debate Night goes on location.
5. **Audience Performance in Scotland**

5.1 A paper on the performance of TV and Radio services in Scotland was noted and it was agreed that some of the key themes that it raised should be considered at forthcoming Scotland Committee meetings.

6. **Finance report**

6.1 A financial update paper was noted. It was noted that the next Scotland Committee meeting will focus on the 18/19 accounts as well as consider 19/20 financial planning.

7. **The Market Place and External Environment**

7.1 The Head of Policy and Corporate Affairs informed the Committee that Ofcom had published an updated BBC Operating Licence in January. The key changes were noted. BBC Scotland remains in discussion with Ofcom on a number of matters, including clarification around requirements for access services and changes required related to Gaelic programming. The Committee asked BBC Scotland to continue to discuss the definition of ‘peak-time’ with Ofcom.

7.2 The impact of a number of planned medium-wave transmitter closures was noted, as was Channel 4’s decision to make Glasgow one of its two creative hubs.

7.3 The Committee noted that an MOU between the BBC and Creative Scotland had been signed. The Committee agreed to return to the subject at a later committee meeting.

7.4 The Committee noted that PACT had written to the Chairman about BBC Scotland’s multi-platform production team. A review of TV production in Studios and the public service in the Nations will be carried out and the Committee will be consulted.

7.5 Recent political engagement was noted in addition to ongoing correspondence with Rangers Football Club.

8. **AOB**

8.1 There were no items of other business. The Committee noted the forward schedule for 2019/20 Scotland Committee meetings.