MINUTES OF THE BBC TRUST MEETING

Held on Tuesday 19 April 2016
at the BBC Trust, 180 Great Portland Street, London

Present:

Rona Fairhead  Chairman
Sir Roger Carr  Vice-Chairman
Sonita Alleyne  Trust member
Richard Ayre  Trust member
Mark Damazer  Trust member
Mark Florman  Trust member for England
Bill Matthews  Trust member for Scotland
Aideen McGinley  Trust member for Northern Ireland
Nick Prettejohn  Trust member
Elan Closs Stephens  Trust member for Wales
Suzanna Taverne  Trust member
Lord Williams  Trust member

From the Trust Unit:

Alex Towers  Director, BBC Trust
Peter De Val  Head of Legal
Alison Gold  Head of Public Services Strategy
Rachel Hallett  Adviser, Governance
Georgina Hodges  Chief Research & Audiences Adviser
Kath MacLeod  Head of Communications
Fran O’Brien  Head of Editorial Standards
Tristan Pedelty  Head of Policy & Charter
Gareth Tuck  Chief Financial Adviser

From the BBC Executive:

Tony Hall  Director-General
Anne Bulford  Managing Director, Finance & Operations
James Harding  Director, News & Current Affairs
Phil Harrold  Company Secretary
Tunde Ogungbesan  Head of Diversity
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34 **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

34.1 The Trust approved the minutes of the meetings held on 16 and 17 March as an accurate record of proceedings. It noted the matters arising from the meeting.

35 **REPORTS FROM TRUST COMMITTEES**

35.1 The Chair of the Complaints and Appeals Board reported that the Panel had asked the Executive to consider whether the methods and processes offered for payment of the TV licence were accessible and appropriate.

35.2 The Chair of the Value for Money Committee reported that the committee had discussed the draft NAO report on project management and Trust response.

35.3 The Chair of the Services Committee reported that it had approved the Executive’s Distribution Guidelines; these would support the Trust’s Distribution Framework. The committee had also discussed budget reduction plans for BBC Monitoring in 2017/18, and approved the Executive’s proposal to revise the terms of the BBC’s participation in Freesat to enable pay-IP sports services to join.

35.4 The Chair of the Editorial Standards Committee said that the Executive had presented work on impartiality. He noted that the EU referendum campaign period had now begun and that the Executive would keep the committee updated on referendum coverage including levels of complaints.

36 **DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

36.1 The Director, BBC Trust presented his report, which provided an overview of activity undertaken by the Trust, including work on Charter review.

36.2 He noted that the final National Audit Office report on project management would be circulated to all members (see minute 35.2). The Trust confirmed that it was content for the Value for Money Committee to approve the Trust’s final response.

36.3 The Director proposed a change to Protocol F3 – Audience Councils, delegating authority to extend Audience Council members’ terms from the full Trust to the Trustee of the relevant nation. Trust members approved the amended protocol.
He noted a small change between the forecast for the Trust Unit's 2015/16 financial results which Trustees had received last month, and the most recent figure. The final, audited figures would be published in the 2015/16 Annual Report and Accounts.

**CHAIRMAN’S UPDATE**

37.1 The Chairman began by congratulating Sonita Alleyne on her nomination for the shortlist of New View 50, a list of the most influential black, African and minority ethnic professionals within the public sector.

37.2 The Chairman outlined the results of the Trust’s annual board evaluation process in which it had considered the performance of the board and its committees. The board was viewed to be operating well, with notable improvements in key areas. Members noted the strong performance of the Chairman, the committees and recognised the work of committee chairs. They also acknowledged the quality of the Director’s leadership of the Trust Unit and the support and advice provided by the Unit.

37.3 Members agreed actions for the coming year, and expressed a wish to ensure any new governance structure should benefit from the Trust’s experience and the legacy of its successful work.

**CHARTER REVIEW**

38.1 The Head of Policy & Charter updated Trust members on the progress of work on Charter Review.

38.2 He noted that the Government’s White Paper on the new BBC Charter could be published within the next month. Members considered the full range of issues under discussion with DCMS, including the BBC’s mission and public purposes, distinctiveness, BBC Worldwide, and distribution strategy.

38.3 The Trustees acknowledged that it needed to look at independence in aggregate with four areas of concern:

38.3.1 Charter length: Trust members agreed that an 11-year charter would give the BBC the ability to plan and invest on a long-term basis and protect its editorial independence; they expressed concern that a wide-ranging mid-term review of the Charter itself could erode this.
38.3.2 Appointments: Trust members discussed how appointments to a new BBC board might be made. They noted that the new board would be closer to editorial decision-making than the Trust, and therefore that independence from Government would be even more important. They agreed that the process for appointments should be transparent and clearly set out in the new Charter and Agreement.

38.3.3 Future funding and Charter processes: These needed to be transparent processes – open to public scrutiny in some form.

38.3.4 NAO: Trust members wanted to ensure that if there was to be a greater role for the NAO, there needed to be protections for editorial, creative and commercial matters, and that it should be clear their work had to support the Board.

38.4 The Chairman said that she would convey the Trust’s position on the key issues in forthcoming ministerial meetings.

39 DIRECTOR-GENERAL’S REPORT

39.1 The Director-General reviewed some recent BBC content, including the Rob and Helen storyline on The Archers which had sparked debate on the issue of domestic abuse. He noted that the BBC had signed a deal to broadcast the FA Cup for the next five years, and highlighted the upcoming launch of the BBC Shakespeare festival with content across the BBC.

39.2 He updated the Trust on actions taken following the Dame Janet Smith review. These included a review of policies and procedures, Executive Board work on tackling the cultural issues raised by the review, and the airing of the programme Abused: the Untold Story.

39.3 The Director-General also updated Trust members on the Executive Board’s recent and upcoming work on Charter review, and clarified its position on those issues that members had discussed earlier in the meeting.

40 THE FUTURE OF NEWS

40.1 The Director, News & Current Affairs updated the Trust on the Future of BBC News project.

40.2 The project began in January as a reaction to falling News reach (particularly amongst younger audiences) and the need to make savings
following the licence fee settlement; the working assumption was that News would need to contribute around £80m in savings. It had received input from around 1,200 staff in News and was structured around four headings: content, output, reaching everyone, and the way we work.

40.3 The Director, News & Current Affairs explained to Trust members that announcements would be made in phases. This was to ensure that Trust or Executive Board approval could be sought where necessary, and that decisions were backed up with sufficient data and considered in the context of BBC-wide savings.

40.4 He had announced to staff earlier that day that News would be focussing on making content more accessible via mobile devices, and had set out resulting plans for the organisation of BBC News, Mobile and Online.

40.5 Future phases of the project would cover leadership priorities; online creative review; options for the news channels; the organisation of newsgathering; changes to the way news staff work; investments in the World Service Group; and how the BBC serves its local audiences.

40.6 He said he expected to report to the Executive Board in July following more work and research on the cost and editorial implications of different options.

41 BBC DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STRATEGY 2016-2020

41.1 The BBC’s Head of Diversity and Inclusion presented the proposed new BBC strategy on diversity and inclusion.

41.2 He explained that the strategy set 2020 targets for diversity for both on-air portrayal and the workforce, including senior leadership. He noted that the targets had been set with reference to demographic data from across the United Kingdom, and benchmarking against other broadcasters.

41.3 He said that the strategy sought to embed into BBC culture respect for the ways in which people differ, including non-visible differences such as thought processes, social background and education.

41.4 The Head of Diversity and Inclusion also updated Trust members on Project Diamond, a Creative Diversity Network project in which the BBC would work together with other broadcasters to collect and publish comparable diversity data. The project was due to launch in the early summer.
41.5 The Trust approved the new strategy, which would be launched at the end of April.