

## Broadcasters' Liaison Group (BLG) Conference Call– 21 April 2017

### Note of conclusions and action points

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Present: Ric Bailey (BBC), Tabby Karamat (BBC), Alasdair MacLeod (BBC Scotland), Lisa Morgan (S4C), Chris Wissun (ITV), Emily Barber (Channel 4), Gordon Macmillan (STV) Joan Darroch (STV), Chris Hagan (UTV), Jacqueline McIntyre (BBC NI), Alice Hickey (BBC), Rob Shepherd (BBC) Martin Forward (BBC Wales) Nick Powell (ITV Wales), Janet Maclay (Channel Five), Jimmy Buckland (Wireless Group) Jo Verrill (Global Radio) Craig Westwood (Electoral Commission)

Apologies: Kathleen Carragher (BBC NI), Rosalind McInnes (BBC Scotland) Tom Hourigan Absolute/Bauer Media

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### **1 NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The meeting notes of the last BLG annual meeting of 17 November 2016 were circulated and attendees were asked to consider these notes and respond with any comments. The notes are not a full record of the meeting but note the conclusions and action points.

### **2 OFCOM UPHELD COMPLAINT IN RESPECT OF SNP PPB**

- Ofcom had upheld the complaint that a SNP PPB broadcast in October 2016 had unfairly used footage of Mr Sheddon an East Lothian farmer and his farm. The Ofcom decision noted that BLG Guidelines had been re-issued to the parties in July 2016, when the details of the autumn broadcast allocations were being communicated.
- Members considered the Ofcom's finding and agreed that the parties should be reminded of their responsibility to ensure compliance with the Production Guidelines. Members discussed how the importance of such third party consents could be better communicated to the political parties and, in turn, to any independent production companies used by the parties to create political broadcasts. It was agreed that this issue would be raised for discussion in future meetings.

### **3 THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION'S ROUNDTABLE MEETING**

- The BLG had previously agreed to send a representative to future meetings held by the Electoral Commission, along with other bodies such as the Advertising Standards Authority, to discuss some of the issues raised by the EU referendum. Chris Wissun and Ric Bailey of the BLG had attended the last meeting on 14 March 2017 to ensure the broadcasters' views and experience of these matters were taken into account and reported back to members during the call.

### **4 TIMETABLE OF ELECTION PERIOD**

- The meeting had been convened following the decision to call an early General Election for 8 June 2017. Members had received a copy of the Parliamentary briefing paper which outlined

the election timetable. It was noted that the Election Period would come into effect on 3 May 2017 (the dissolution of Parliament) 25 working days before polling day. Confirmation of the final allocation of PEBs would occur once nominations had closed.

- The BLG discussed the timetable for the local elections being held on 4 May 2017 and any outstanding PEBs.

## **5 ALLOCATIONS OF PEBs AND ASSESSMENT OF ELECTORAL SUPPORT**

- The members discussed the Ofcom PEB criteria for the General Election and the current and past electoral performances of the various parties in respect of each of the Nations. However, it was confirmed that each broadcaster come to its own decision on PEB allocation.
- The Members considered the digest of electoral statistical information produced by Ofcom for the local elections [an updated version of the digest for the General Election was published on 8 May 2017]. It was also noted that further polls would shortly be produced that members may find useful in coming to their assessment on evidence of current support.

## **6. PRODUCTION GUIDELINES**

The Guidelines had recently been updated and it was agreed that no further amendments were required at this time.

## **7 BLG WEBSITE**

All members were asked to submit the schedules for broadcasts so these could be included on the BLG website.

## **8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

It was agreed that a further conference call could be arranged if needed ahead of the General Election.