

**MINUTES OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND EIGHTY FIRST MEETING OF
THE OFCOM BOARD HELD ON 22 MARCH 2021
MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

Present

Maggie Carver	Interim Chair
Kevin Bakhurst	Executive Member and Group Director, Broadcasting & Online Content
Melanie Dawes	Executive Member and Chief Executive
Angela Dean	Non-Executive Member
Bob Downes	Non-Executive Member
Lindsey Fussell	Executive Member and Group Director, Networks & Communications
David Jones	Non-Executive Member
Graham Mather	Non-Executive Member
Tim Suter	Non-Executive Member
Ben Verwaayen	Non-Executive Member

In attendance

Martin Ballantyne	General Counsel
Jacqui Gregory	Corporation Secretary

Other Ofcom colleagues:

Kerri-Ann O’Neill	People & Transformation Director
Jane Rumble	One Ofcom Change Director
Melissa Tatton	Group Corporate Director

Item 1: Chair’s Introduction – oral

1. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and thanked Board Members for making themselves available at short notice.
2. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, asked that the Board’s congratulations be conveyed to all those colleagues who had worked on the Wholesale Fixed Telecoms Market Review 2021-26 which had been published on 18 March 2021.

Item 2: Ofcom Five Year Location Strategy, 2021-2026– Board Paper 27(21)

3. The Chair introduced this item advising that, following the Board meeting on 17 March 2021 when the Board expressed some concerns about the proposal to open a new location hub in Manchester, she had spoken with all the Non-Executive Directors individually to talk through their concerns which she had then summarised and relayed to Management. These had been reflected on by Management, who had modified the proposal, as appropriate.
4. The Board welcomed the modified proposal and, in particular, the more flexible and agile approach to building the Manchester hub steadily and the intention for more decision makers to be spread across all Ofcom locations. In response to requests made by the Board, Management undertook to:

- circulate to Board Members a summary of Ofcom’s current locations, lease expiry dates and costs, so that the Board were aware of Ofcom’s starting position from a location perspective;
- present to a future Board Meeting (once the COVID restrictions on office-based working had eased) a Five Year view of Ofcom’s office locations which would include the opportunities for expansion in different locations should this prove necessary and appropriate; and
- to update the Board on Ofcom’s property needs following the Future Ways of Working trials, given that post the current COVID restrictions, there was a likelihood of colleagues working differently and not being fully office based.

5. The Board, unanimously:

- **AGREED IN PRINCIPLE** to the following:
 - That an office hub be set up in Manchester from 2021/2022, primarily to accommodate staff in the target growth areas of online safety and telecoms security, together with staff required to help Ofcom develop its technology, digital and data capability.
 - The Manchester hub being developed with a “start-up” mindset. It would be built steadily – starting with a temporary hub space with some of the new roles in online harms and telecoms security. Ofcom would learn from the Future Ways of Working trials before committing further. The project would aim to be as cost effective as possible, with the Board approving all property decisions, as usual.
 - It was intended that more decision-makers would be situated in all Ofcom locations and Ofcom would ensure a culture of cross-fertilisation, facilitating integrated ways of working across all locations. Over time, the aspiration was that there would be a mix of roles in Manchester, like the Edinburgh base, adding to the sum of the whole organisation and not exclusive to one team. The Manchester hub would mean that Ofcom would change the way it works in every location and ensure that more of its work was delivered from outside London in the future.

Item 3: Any Other Business

6. There were no additional matters raised at the meeting.