

Note of the 254th Meeting of the Ofcom Board, held on 17 July 2018

Introduction

Members were welcomed to the 254th meeting of the Ofcom Board. Polly Weitzman, Steve Gettings (Corporation Secretary) and Jenny Leyland (Assistant Corporation Secretary) attended throughout. Alison Crosland (Group Director, Corporate Services Group), Philip Marnick (Group Director, Spectrum) and other Ofcom colleagues attended for part of the meeting.

Declaration of Interests

1. There were no new interests to declare.

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2018 and matters arising

2. The minutes of the Ofcom Board meeting held on 19 June 2018 were approved for signature as a correct record. There were no matters arising.

Ofcom Board Recruitment

3. The Chairman updated the Board on the ongoing DCMS recruitment process for an Ofcom Deputy Chairman and a Board Member with the necessary expertise to chair the Risk and Audit Committee.

Chief Executive's Report

4. Sharon White presented her report, which covered key developments since the last Board meeting.

Report from the Chairman of the Content Board

5. Tim Suter reported on matters discussed at the Content Board on 10 July 2018.

Report from other Non-Executive Members

6. Graham Mather referred to his recent visit to the Baldock Monitoring Station which had been an interesting and positive experience.
7. Bob Downes referred to the recent publication by the Scottish Government of a consultation to establish a Consumer Panel in Scotland. He updated the Board on a recent meeting with the Director of the BBC in Northern Ireland.

Financial Update

8. The Board had approved the budget in March 2018 at a level of £121.4m, subsequently raised to £124.2m following additional funding from DCMS for new work on the USO and

Cyber. In order to produce the Quarter 2 reforecast, a thorough review of all cost centres had been undertaken to identify any areas of underspend and create some financial headroom to fund priorities which had emerged since the original budget was set. Following discussion, the Board approved the Quarter 2 Reforecast 2018/19.

Update on Proposals for the Award of 700 MHz and 3.6-3.8 GHz Spectrum

9. The Board was updated on plans to award spectrum in the 700 MHz and 3.6-3.8 GHz..

Future of Online Regulation Update

10. Public debate on a range of online policy issues was continuing to intensify. The Board was updated on a proposed publication in the autumn of a discussion document which would draw out the key lessons from the regulation of content standards – for broadcast and on-demand video services – and the possible insights that these might provide to policy makers into the principles that might underpin any new models for addressing harmful online content. This will be published alongside market research on peoples’ experience of harmful content and privacy on social media.

Content Board: Revised Terms of Reference

11. The proposed revised terms of reference for the Content Board would formalise the arrangements for deciding in advance the key areas of content policy where the Ofcom Board would like to receive advice from the Content Board. The Content Board would meet less frequently than in the past but with individual members being consulted outside of meetings to help support policy making in their relevant area of expertise, with involvement at an early stage in policy development. The Content Board had discussed the proposed changes to the terms of reference and way of working and had given a positive response. The Board approved the proposed revised terms of reference.

Annual Review of the Delegations Framework

12. The Board approved proposed amendments to the Delegations Framework.

Reappointment to the Communications Consumer Panel/ACOD

13. The Board agreed that a recommendation should be made to the Secretary of State that the term of office of a member of the Communications Consumer Panel and ACOD be renewed.

Board Effectiveness Review

14. The Board noted the outcome of the Board Effectiveness Review 2018 and agreed the recommendations resulting from it.

Information papers

15. The Board noted information papers on the following topics:

- 15.1 Brexit Update
- 15.2 Board Forward Agendas
- 15.3 Minutes of the meetings of the Nations Committee (13 March 2018); Advisory Committee for England (25 April 2018); Content Board (24 April 2018); Ofcom Spectrum Advisory Board (8 May 2018); Communications Consumer Panel/ACOD (17 May 2018).

Any other business

- 16. There was none.

Date of the next meeting

- 17. The next Board meeting will be held on 18 September 2018

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