

Note of the 255th Meeting of the Ofcom Board, held on 18 September 2018

Introduction

Members were welcomed to the 255th meeting of the Ofcom Board. Polly Weitzman, and Jenny Leyland (Assistant Corporation Secretary) attended throughout. Kevin Bakhurst (Group Director, Content Media Policy) and other Ofcom colleagues attended for part of the meeting.

Declaration of Interests

1. Ben Verwaayen had been asked to sit on a selection panel for Comreg.

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2018 and matters arising

2. The minutes of the Ofcom Board meeting held on 17 July 2018 were approved for signature as a correct record. There were no matters arising.

Chairman's report

3. Corporation Secretary: Jacqui Gregory had joined Ofcom as Corporation Secretary with effect from 20 August 2018. She had a pre-existing holiday commitment and had therefore sent apologies for this meeting. Steve Gettings was attending in her place. Steve would be leaving Ofcom in October 2018, after 12 years working in a wide variety of roles, with the last two years as Corporation Secretary. The Chairman and Board recorded their appreciation to Steve for his contribution.
4. Ofcom Board Recruitment: The Chairman updated the Board on the ongoing DCMS recruitment process for an Ofcom Deputy Chairman, for a Board Member with the necessary expertise to chair the Risk and Audit Committee, and for a Member for Wales.

Chief Executive's Report

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

Reports from Non-Executive Members

6. Bob Downes reported on recent meetings including with the new Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands in the Scottish Government, and with communications providers.
7. Graham Mather informed the Board that he had been asked to be a member of a CAA selection panel, but that it did not relate to the sectors Ofcom regulates.
8. Tim Suter and Polly Weitzman updated the Board on the progress of ongoing investigations into the due impartiality of news and current affairs programmes on the RT news channel.

Representation and Portrayal on BBC Television

9. Earlier in the year Ofcom had launched the first BBC thematic review, looking at the representation and portrayal of people on BBC television. The Board was invited to comment on a draft of the report. The report would be published in the autumn. The final draft would be cleared for publication by the Chief Executive and the Group Director, Content and Media Policy.

Annual Report and Performance Report on the BBC

10. Ofcom would be publishing its first Annual Report and Performance Report on the BBC in the autumn. The paper provided to the Board set out the key themes to be brought out in the Annual Report. The final draft of the report would be cleared for publication by the Chief Executive and the Group Director, Content and Media Policy.

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

11. The Board was updated on proposals for the award of 700 MHz and 3.6-3.8 GHz spectrum.

State of the Market Overview

12. The Board discussed an information paper which set out key strategic developments that had taken place in the sectors that Ofcom regulates over the last 12 months and considered the outlook in those sectors.

Proposed Reappointment to the Community Radio Fund Panel

13. The Board agreed that Wendy Pilmer's term as Chair of the Community Radio Fund Panel should be extended by three years to 31 December 2021.

Appointments to the Communications Consumer Panel/ACOD

14. The Board approved a recommendation to ask DCMS to appoint three new members to the Communications Consumer Panel/ACOD.

Information papers

15. The Board noted the following information items:

15.1 Board Forward Agendas

15.2 Minutes of the meetings of the Content Board (5 June 2018), and Communications Consumer Panel/ACOD (14 June 2018).

Any other business

16. There was none.

Date of the next meeting

17. The next Board meeting will be held on 2 October 2018.

2 October 2018