

**PUBLICATION MINUTES OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-EIGHT MEETING OF  
THE CONTENT BOARD HELD ON 30 APRIL 2024  
CONNECTED MEETING HELD AT RIVERSIDE HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**Present**

|                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Clive Jones                | Chair                       |
| Dekan Apajee               | Member for England          |
| Simon Bucks                | Member                      |
| Maggie Cunningham          | Member for Scotland         |
| Bob Downes                 | Member                      |
| Will Harding               | Member                      |
| Peter Horrocks             | Member                      |
| Maria McCann               | Member for Northern Ireland |
| Ruth McElroy               | Member for Wales            |
| Cristina Nicolotti Squires | Executive Member            |
| Stephen Nuttall            | Member                      |

**In attendance**

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| Jamie Mordue  | Committee Secretary |
| Francesca Carter                                    | Head of Governance  |
| Other Ofcom colleagues attending for specific items |                     |

**Item 1: Welcome and introduction - oral**

1. Clive Jones welcomed attendees and Will Harding to his first Content Board meeting. Apologies had been received from Ali Marsden and Kim Shillinglaw.

**Item 2: Members' interests - oral**

2. There were no new interests to declare.

**Item 3: Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2024 and matters arising – Content Board minutes 187(23) and note of action points**

3. Ruth McElroy would provide an amendment to the minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2024, for approval at the Content Board meeting of 2 July 2024.
4. A summary of progress against action points had been circulated. There were no outstanding actions.

**Item 4: Chair's update – oral**

5. The Ofcom Board minutes of 13 March 2024 had been circulated for information. At the more recent Board meeting, on 17 April 2024, there had been a discussion on the approach to the new Three-year Plan, media literacy, and successes in the roll out of broadband.
6. The Ofcom Board and the Advisory Committee for Wales received presentations on public service media (PSM). A potential area of future focus for the Content Board might be loss of local media and the scrutiny that local media can provide. A paper on PSM had been submitted for discussion later in the meeting.
7. Discussions regarding recruitment of Content Board members would be held later in the week.

8. The Content Board **NOTED** the report from the Chair.

**Item 5: Broadcasting and Media Group and Online Safety Group Update – Paper CB 10(24)**

9. Members received an update paper on the Broadcasting and Media Group and the Online Safety Group.
10. A number of points were discussed by Members:
- (a) **Research:** Ofcom had published its research into politicians as presenters the previous week. Members discussed a number of issues arising from the research.
  - (b) **Future of news:** The consumption of news was changing in an increasingly online world. It was important for Ofcom to be seen not to be behind the curve and to ascertain what is the appropriate regulatory framework in relation to the delivery of news across platforms.
  - (c) **Misinformation/disinformation:** A roundtable was held with broadcasters to discuss misinformation and disinformation.
11. Members **NOTED** paper CB 10(24) and additional oral updates provided.

**Item 6: Update on Channel 4 relicensing statement and SMCP – Paper CB 11(24)**

12. Members had received an update paper on the forthcoming Channel 4 relicensing statement and the Channel 4 Statement of Media Content Policy.
13. At the end of the previous week, Ofcom received additional requested information from C4C in relation to statements made when faced with possible privatisation compared with when it launched its digital strategy, Fast Forward, in January 2024. The details had not yet been fully analysed.
14. The Channel 4 license renewal consultation closed in February. The Chief Executive of C4C since announced that the broadcaster would look again at the quota for productions in the nations. Ofcom expected a proposed quota, supported by evidence and setting out by what time it could be delivered. If the quota was revised, Ofcom would conduct a short consultation across June and July, with the intention of making a statement in September. There was conflicting information on whether productions did cost more in the nations.
15. When looking at what quota C4C could support in the nations, consideration would also need to be given to supporting C4C's future direction and digital transformation, which required making fewer programmes of greater value. Ofcom would test new proposals and supporting evidence from its original proposals. Members shared that there had been some calls for a minimum floor to the quota for each nation, which possibly tapered up over time.
16. When passed, the Media Bill would make significant changes to the way C4C could fulfil its remit and quotas. Ofcom needed to give confidence to the sector but was clear that the licence would need to evolve over time.
17. Ofcom had pushed C4C to develop plans for the period beyond the current strategy. C4C had published the Fast Forward strategy, which set out high level aspirations but not substantive detail. It would not be considered relevant for this licensing period.
18. Members **NOTED** paper CB 11(24).

**Item 7: PSM review - Scope – Paper CB 12(24)**

19. Members had received an update paper on the scope of the Public Service Media (PSM) review. The intention was to publish a launch document over the summer. The review would build on what Ofcom knew about what audiences wanted from PSM: trusted and accurate news, programming that brings us together and resonates with UK audiences, reflecting the diversity across the nations and regions of the UK. Previous research, including for Small Screen: Big Debate, highlighted that these were the priorities of audiences. It was noted that the Media Bill would also set out requirements for PSBs.
20. The review would also look at the financial sustainability of the PSBs and how this might change in the future. The intention was to assess recent trends and consider what potential scenarios could occur and to be bold in highlighting the opportunities for PSM as well as the risks.
21. It was noted that the review would draw on wider work across Ofcom, including the future of DTT, media literacy and the Local Media Review, which would be completed in the Autumn.
22. Members welcomed the focus of the review. It was suggested that the review look at PSBs collectively and individually and that regional current affairs might also be included. It was highlighted that Ofcom’s nations offices were well-placed to engage with stakeholders and ensure that there was a good level of understanding about the review. The importance of Welsh language issues was noted.
23. Members discussed the trade-offs between news and other content, in particular that news was cross subsidised by other revenue generating content.
24. Members noted that the creative industries was one of the largest UK exports and discussed the importance of nations and regions productions in enabling people to practice their crafts and develop the wider industry.
25. The next step would be to produce high level launch document, followed by a historic review of the collective performance of all PSBs and likely future considerations. A further document would set out the areas that Ofcom thought government should address and and what changes Ofcom might make to support the sustainability of PSM. The Content Board would be engaged on the programme of work, thoughts on potential future scenarios and options for high level recommendations. Ofcom was optimistic about its ability to influence.
26. Members **NOTED** paper CB 12(24).

**Information Items**

27. The Content Board **NOTED** the following information items:
  - DRCF workplan 2024-25
  - Minutes of the Ofcom Board (meeting held on 13 March 2024)
  - Minutes of the Communications Consumer Panel (meetings held on 15 February 2024 and 21 March 2024)

**Item 10: Any Other Business**

28. There was no other business.

**Item 11: Date of the Next Meeting**

29. The next scheduled Content Board meeting would be held on 2 July 2024.