

BBC BOARD - ENGLAND COMMITTEE

Minutes

4th February 2026

BBC Birmingham, The Mailbox

Members:

Robbie Gibb	Non-Executive Director (Chair)
Michael Plaut	Non-Executive Director
Rhuanedd Richards	Director, Nations
Robert Thompson	Director, Local Production

With:

Adrian Mills	Business Operations Director, Local
Samantha Sing	Divisional Finance Director
Chris Burns	Controller, Local Audio Commissioning (<i>item 3</i>)
Kaye Wright	Senior Head of Content Production (<i>item 4</i>)
Sophy Jacob	Digbeth Project Lead (<i>item 5</i>)
Tim Burke	Head of Editorial Standards (<i>item 7</i>)
Rebecca Davis	Head of Audience Research (<i>item 8</i>)
Anjla Kumar	Senior Finance Business Partner (<i>item 9</i>)
Mark Grinnell	Executive Lead, Nations
Jon Petrie	Commissioning Director, Comedy

Agenda:

- 1 Welcome and previous minutes
- 2 Director, Local Production, report
- 3 Controller, Local Audio Commissioning, report
- 4 Regional report
- 5 Digbeth Project
- 6 Director Nations report
- 7 Editorial Monitoring report
- 8 Audiences
- 9 Finance
- 10 AOB and Close

1. Welcome and Previous Minutes

- 1.1 The minutes from the previous meeting (25th September 2025) were approved with no conflicts raised.

2. Director, Local Content Production, report

- 2.1 The Committee noted recent successful editorial output and events. This included coverage of the closing event for City of Culture in Bradford, BBC Children in Need and Make a Difference.
- 2.2 Recent editorial highlights included 'NHS Day', visualised coverage of transfer deadline day in sport, and multimedia reporting of the Huntingdon train attacks in Cambridgeshire. The Committee noted additional coverage of recent storms in the South West and of water supply shortages in the South of England.
- 2.3 The Committee noted plans for local creative hubs to innovate some of the pilot projects which have been undertaken in England, this would add depth to some of the journalism undertaken.
- 2.4 An ongoing savings challenge was noted, including proposals to restructure investigations teams and Deputy Managing Editor structures in England.
- 2.5 The Chair requested a report on hybrid working to establish an understanding of the utilisation of workplaces in Nations, this would be reported back to a future Committee.
- 2.6 The Committee noted culture work being undertaken in Local in England and received a report on recent disciplinary cases upheld.

3. Controllers report – audio

- 3.1 The Committee heard an update on Local Radio performance in the RAJAR audience listening figures which were published on the day of the Committee.
- 3.2 The Committee noted recent sport content which had been broadcast on linear output and also shared on digital.
- 3.3 The Committee noted podcast programmes which have been produced in Local teams which have also been transmitted on Radio 4, including the podcast *The Sanctuary*.
- 3.4 The Committee noted work on seven Local radio stations which have the potential to significantly grow audience figures given their location and population coverage.

4. Regional Report

- 4.1 The Committee noted plans for the BBC's move to the Tea Factory in Digbeth in 2027 from the existing Mailbox site.
- 4.2 The Committee noted recent editorial moments, including the Whitchurch canal collapse in Shropshire, and coverage of Ozzy Osbourne's funeral cortege.
- 4.3 The Committee noted that sport output is driving significant audience growth in the Midlands along with an update on the performance of regional TV output in the East and West Midlands and WM Radio performance.
- 4.4 The Committee noted editorial plans for election coverage in the region and more widely in the BBC Local network in England. Plans include a proposition for an 'audience facing' tool which is being piloted to enable community level detail on election issues.
- 4.5 The Director Nations updated on Across the UK work which had been approved by the Executive Committee of the BBC.

5. Digbeth

- 5.1 The Committee heard about the development and scope of the Tea Factory project in the Typhoo Wharf development to regenerate a building in Digbeth in Birmingham. This would become the new BBC base for the Midlands.
- 5.2 The Committee noted the timeline and plans and history of the project and the lease details.
- 5.3 The committee noted that work officially started in 2024 and heard about plans for the technical and studios fit out of the site.
- 5.4 The principles of the project include full accessibility and environmentally sound.

6. Director Nations

- 6.1 The Committee noted the approval from the Executive Committee to review the BBC Bristol Whiteladies Road public service site with a view to a decision on how best to continue the BBC base in the city.
- 6.2 The Committee noted the financial challenge facing the Nations division and wider BBC expected in the 28/29 period given a shortfall in license fee income.

7. Editorial Monitoring

- 7.1 The Committee noted outcomes from the recently formed Editorial monitoring group in Local including proactive checking of content from across the TV, Radio and Digital newsgathering teams in newsrooms in England.
- 7.2 The Committee discussed recent audience engagement and feedback.
- 7.3 The Committee would review the implementation of the conclusions of the thematic reviews on tax and spend, migration and portrayal in a future meeting.

8. Audiences

- 8.1 The Committee noted the performance of True Crime podcasts (including *Assume Nothing* which had also delivered on Radio 4 replay with audiences) and the cadence of sport content which is delivering online performance.
- 8.2 A 'Social dashboard' would be presented to the next Committee which would include granular insight about audience 'needs and wants.'
- 8.3 A future Committee would receive an update on the quantitative research which is being commissioned and the 'dial' research into BBC London.

9. Finance

- 9.1 The Committee heard an update on financial performance since the previous committee.

10. AOB & Close

- 8.1 There were no other matters arising.
- 8.2 Date of next England Committee is 25th June 2026 in London.

ENDS