

Raidió Teilifís Éireann
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of RTÉ
held on Thursday 8 February 2024 at 10am Hybrid

Present: Siún Ní Raghallaigh (Chair)
Anne O'Leary
Aideen Howard
Susan Ahern
David Harvey
Daire Hickey
PJ Mathews
Jonathan Ruane
Kevin Bakhurst (Director General)

In Attendance: Robert Shortt, Group Secretary
Mike Fives (Group Financial Controller)
Conor Mullen (Head of Strategy & Commercial Compliance)
Richard Dowling (FoI Officer)
Adrian Lynch (Deputy DG)
Richard Waghorn (Dir of Ops & Technology)
Daniel Coady (Dir of Legal)
Caoimhe Stafford (Data Protection Officer)
Vicky Mac Andrias (Project Manager)
Grace Berkery (Head of Corporate Strategy)
Bernard Coen (Head of Distribution & Strategic Partnerships)
Niamh O'Connor (Deputy Director of Content)
Troy Bannon (Head of Property & Services)

1. Minutes

The Minutes of 30 November 2023, 13 December 2023 and 23, 24, 25 January 2024 were approved. The Board noted the contents of the Tracker.

2. Declarations of interest

None.

3. Matters Arising

SA noted the cancelling of the 18-24 Unit in the November minutes and requested an update on what's being done for that cohort of the audience.

4. Director General's Report – Kevin Bakhurst

KB said work is continuing to be done in detail on the Strategy with AL now working full time on it. KB said it would come through the Strategy Sub Committee before coming to the full Board.

The recent Townhall with staff had circa 800 attendees in person and online and the plan is to hold them monthly.

A request came in from the EAC Governance and Culture regarding a number of individual cases which did not feature in the McCann Fitzgerald Report into VEP's. KB's view is, based on legal advice, he is precluded from providing them to the EAC.

KB said the organisation is maintaining a recruitment freeze, by and large, with some exceptions in the areas of digital and technology.

SNR said the Board did not receive projected cashflow figures before this meeting and requested they be provided.

SA asked if a Chief Risk Officer features as part of plans for the Leadership Team. KB agreed it was an essential role but he awaits the recommendations from the EAC's before finalising decisions on that and other roles.

KB provided an update on LF sales which have recovered and were 4% down yoy at the end of January. Sponsorship for coverage of the Olympics and Paralympics has been secured. Details are being worked out on the VEP plan for this year.

KB also discussed the Registers of Interest and External Activities [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. KB also informed the Board about the Register of Gifts.

KB said the next set of JNLR's are good for R1 with not much change for 2FM and Lyric holding steady. Weekly Editorial Oversight Group meetings are up and running again.

KB also informed the Board of his intention to respond to a letter from Imelda Munster TD outlining RTÉ's decision to abide by the position of the EBU Executive on the Eurovision song contest.

A discussion ensued on further changes to Leadership Team roles and what procedures pertained to senior executives who left the organisation in the past and what happens if others leave in the future.

DHI asked what Board oversight was in place. SNR said the Terms of Reference of the REMCO had been amended to ensure there would be oversight. Both KB and SNR expressed their satisfaction with how the Director of HR has handled matters in this area.

KB ended his report by informing the Board of the cost of maintaining the ageing buildings on campus and the additional [REDACTED] cost to repair the roof of the TV building.

4. Committees

The chairs of the Board's committees and subcommittees presented their reports.

Audit & Risk

New Terms of Reference for the ARC were agreed.

Proposed: Jonathan Ruane
Seconded: Susan Ahern

Remuneration & Management Development

The minutes of three recent REMCO meetings were brought to the attention of the Board by SNR.

Strategy

JR said the Strategy Sub Committee is working through the process of completing the Strategy but it won't be finished until the EAC's reports are published. JR said additional meetings will be required before final sign off by the full Board.

Digital

[REDACTED]

Programme

AH presented the minutes of the last Programme Committee meeting and noted that its Terms of Reference have been updated. AH said tickets to Concert Orchestra events to facilitate the attendance of Board members needs to be managed. SNR agreed it should be formalised.

Audience Council

SA outlined the makeup of the new Audience Council and asked for Board feedback on whether the Minutes of its meetings be published, following a query from the FOI Officer.

CEL

DH outlined the activity in CEL and work ongoing in relation to the Guide [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

5. **Commercial & Financial Update – Mike Fives & Conor Mullen**

(MF and CM joined the meeting)

CM went through the draft figures on commercial income for 2023. CM also highlighted how this year is off to a really good start, particularly on sponsorship with deals already in on the Olympics and Paralympics.

MF said SCOPE is the main outstanding issue in forecasting costs. The draft 2023 figures show lower operating costs versus Budget.

MF detailed how LF sales have recovered but it's still unclear what portion of that is catch up from those who didn't pay when due in the second half of last year.

[REDACTED]

SNR said it was a good idea and would be scheduled.

(MF and CM left the meeting)

6. **Freedom of Information – Richard Dowling**

RD outlined the role of the FoI Officer in RTÉ and the obligations of the organisation in relation to Freedom of Information. RD also gave details of the appeal by RTÉ against a decision by the Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Information (OCEI).

KB said the appeal was taken to protect RTÉ's journalistic sources.

DHI asked about the costs involved. RD said it was difficult to predict at this point as European legislation is involved. SNR said the Board should get information on costs as the appeal progresses.

RD explained what's covered under FoI and agreed to investigate the provision of RTE email addresses for Board members to conduct Board business.

(RD left the meeting)

7.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

First Dates S10

Proposed: Jonathan Ruane
Seconded: Daire Hickey

Cleaning Services Contract – Troy Bannon

The Board considered the Cleaning Services Contract. TB said it was for three years with an option to extend and has flexibility. The Board resolved to approve the contract.

Proposed: Anne O’Leary
Seconded: Aideen Howard

Lease of Premises in Athlone – Troy Bannon

The Board considered a Lease of Premises in Athlone. TB also discussed the need to find a long-term home for some of the archive material currently at Furze Road. The Board resolved to approve the Lease.

Proposed: David Harvey
Seconded: Aideen Howard

9. AOB

The Board approved the Clarification of Approval Process for Multi-Year Variable Contracts.

JR raised the issue of FoI and a general discussion ensued over how it affected the way the Board conducted its business.

The discussion then turned to the upcoming appearance of the Board at the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media.

There being no more business to discuss, the meeting ended.



Signed: _____
Chair