



House of Commons
Culture, Media and Sport
Committee

**Pre-appointment
hearing for Chair of the
BBC Board**

Third Report of Session 2023–24

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

*Ordered by the House of Commons
to be printed 13 December 2023*

HC 383

Published on 15 December 2023
by authority of the House of Commons

The Culture, Media and Sport Committee

The Culture, Media and Sport Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and its associated public bodies.

Current membership

[Dame Caroline Dinenage MP](#) (*Conservative, Gosport*) (Chair)

[Kevin Brennan MP](#) (*Labour, Cardiff West*)

[Steve Brine MP](#) (*Conservative, Winchester*)

[Clive Efford MP](#) (*Labour, Eltham*)

[Julie Elliott MP](#) (*Labour, Sunderland Central*)

[Damian Green MP](#) (*Conservative, Ashford*)

[Dr Rupa Huq MP](#) (*Labour, Ealing Central and Acton*)

[Simon Jupp MP](#) (*Conservative, East Devon*)

[John Nicolson MP](#) (*Scottish National Party, Ochil and South Perthshire*)

[Jane Stevenson MP](#) (*Conservative, Wolverhampton North East*)

[Giles Watling MP](#) (*Conservative, Clacton*)

Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No. 152. These are available on the internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Commons 2023. This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament Licence, which is published at www.parliament.uk/copyright.

Committee reports are published on the Committee's website at <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/378/culture-media-and-sport-committee/> and in print by Order of the House.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Rosie Akeroyd (Committee Specialist), Andy Boyd (Committee Operations Manager), Dr Conor Durham (Committee Specialist), Ollie Florence (Senior Media and Communications Officer), Natalia Janiec-Janicki (Assistant Clerk), Lois Jeary (Committee Specialist), Olivia Rose (Media and Communications Officer), and Ben Sneddon (Clerk).

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Culture, Media and Sport Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 6188; the Committee's email address is CommonsCMS@parliament.uk.

You can follow the Committee on X (formerly Twitter) using [@CommonsCMS](https://twitter.com/CommonsCMS).

Contents

1	Chair of the BBC Board	3
	The BBC	3
	The role	4
	Recruitment process	4
	Role of the Culture, Media and Sport Committee	5
2	The Candidate: Dr Samir Shah CBE	6
	Our questioning	6
3	Conclusions	8
	Appointment of Dr Shah	8
	Work of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport	9
	Appendix 1: Dr Samir Shah's CV	10
	Appendix 2: Questionnaire	12
	Formal minutes	16
	Witnesses	17
	List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament	18

1 Chair of the BBC Board

1. On 6 December 2023 the Government announced that its preferred candidate for Chair of the Board of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) was Dr Samir Shah CBE.¹ The previous post holder, Richard Sharp, stepped down on 28 April 2023, following an independent report that found he had breached public appointment rules by not disclosing a potential conflict of interest in his role in securing an £800,000 loan for the then Prime minister, Boris Johnson.² Professor Dame Elan Closs Stephens was appointed by the Secretary of State as Acting Chair on 2 June 2023 to take up the post on an interim basis from 27 June.³

The BBC

2. The BBC is a public corporation, established under Royal Charter. The Charter is the constitutional basis for the BBC, setting out its public purposes, guaranteeing its independence, and outlining the duties of its governing Board and the way it is regulated. The BBC's mission is to act in the public interest, serving all audiences through the provision of impartial, high-quality and distinctive output and services which inform, educate and entertain. Under the Charter, the BBC must promote the following five public purposes:

- 1) To provide impartial news and information to help people understand and engage with the world around them;
- 2) To support learning for people of all ages;
- 3) To show the most creative, highest quality and distinctive output and services;
- 4) To reflect, represent and serve the diverse communities of all of the United Kingdom's nations and regions and, in doing so, support the creative economy across the United Kingdom; and
- 5) To reflect the United Kingdom, its culture and values to the world.⁴

3. In the 2022–23 financial year, the BBC ran a £220 million operating deficit, based on a £5.725 billion income (including £3.741 billion in licence fee income) against £5.957 billion operating costs.⁵ The BBC fluctuates between surplus and deficit, with increased spending taking place in years with major broadcast events, such as international sporting tournaments and, specifically in 2022–23, coverage of the death and State Funeral of Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.⁶ The Corporation employs 21,840 full-time equivalent staff, and 424 apprentices.⁷

1 [Government announces preferred candidate for BBC Chair](#), Department for Culture, Media and Sport press release, 6 December 2023

2 Commissioner for Public Appointments, [Decision Notice: Appointment of the Chair of the Board of the British Broadcasting Corporation \(BBC\) 2020/2021](#), 28 April 2023

3 [Professor Dame Elan Closs Stephens appointed as Acting Chair of the BBC](#), Department for Culture, Media and Sport press release, 2 June 2023

4 Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Royal Charter for the continuance of the British Broadcasting Corporation, [Cm 9365](#), December 2016, para 6

5 National Audit Office, [BBC: Departmental Overview 2022–23](#), October 2023, pp 9–10

6 Ibid.

7 National Audit Office, [BBC: Departmental Overview 2022–23](#), October 2023, p14

The role

4. The advertisement for the Chair of the BBC Board set out that prospective candidates need to be able to demonstrate a commitment to the independence, mission and public purposes of the BBC, as well as demonstrating that they meet a majority of the following criteria to a high degree:

- Experience working at the highest level of public or commercial life in the UK and/or internationally;
- An understanding of the key challenges and opportunities facing the media and broadcasting market and/or the creative industries in the UK, and globally;
- The skills needed to be an effective Chair; including experience of exercising financial management and securing value for money;
- A proven ability to think through complex issues strategically, independently and imaginatively;
- Excellent communication and relationship management skills, and the ability to represent the BBC to a wide range of stakeholder groups, including audiences, parliamentarians and the media; and,
- Ability to challenge and vigorously scrutinise in the public interest, the operation of the BBC, including delivery of impartiality and global reach.⁸

5. The time commitment for the Chair will be at least 3–4 days per week and the pay £160,000 per annum. The Chair will be responsible for providing strong leadership of the Board and the role will require a greater level of public-facing, engagement and management activity than the other Board members.⁹

Recruitment process

6. The BBC Chair competition was launched on 7 August 2023 with a closing date of 18 September, and was advertised on the Cabinet Office Centre for Public Appointments website.¹⁰ The Department worked with Executive search firm Saxton Bampfylde who undertook a “search only” process to attract a broad list of candidates for the role.¹¹

7. A selection panel was made up of Susannah Storey (DCMS Permanent Secretary), and three independent members, Sir Ron Kalifa OBE, Bill Bush, and Hedley Finn OBE.¹²

8. A total of 37 candidates submitted applications before the deadline, of which 9 were female (5 undeclared), 4 from ethnic minority backgrounds (5 undeclared), 5 declared a disability (5 undeclared) and 11 lived outside London/South East (5 undeclared). Of the 10 candidates who met the job criteria and were shortlisted for interview, 3 were female (one undeclared), two of the shortlisted candidates were from a declared ethnic minority background (one undeclared). One of the shortlisted candidates declared a disability

⁸ [Department for Culture Media and Sport and Dr Samir Shah - Committee Requested Information](#)

⁹ [Department for Culture Media and Sport and Dr Samir Shah - Committee Requested Information](#)

¹⁰ Cabinet Office Public Appointments, [BBC Chair](#), 7 August 2023 (accessed 13 December 2023)

¹¹ [Department for Culture Media and Sport and Dr Samir Shah - Committee Requested Information](#)

¹² Ibid.

which impacted their ability to carry out daily activities at application. The Government did not provide the panel with information on the diversity of individual candidates.¹³

9. Following the interview process, seven candidates were found by the selection panel to be appointable to the position of BBC Chair.¹⁴ On the morning of 6 December, the Financial Times reported that Dr Samir Shah CBE was the Government's preferred candidate.¹⁵ That afternoon, the Government confirmed the announcement.¹⁶

Role of the Culture, Media and Sport Committee

10. The appointment process for the Chair of the BBC, as set out in the BBC's Royal Charter, includes a requirement that the appointment may only be made following a pre-appointment hearing and report by this Committee.¹⁷ Pre-appointment hearings are governed by Cabinet Office Guidelines agreed with the House of Commons Liaison Committee.¹⁸

11. The Committee's recommendation following the hearing is non-binding, although the report from a Select Committee holding a pre-appointment hearing should inform Ministers' decision-making on whether or not to proceed with an appointment. Our purpose in conducting this hearing is to satisfy Parliament that the post would be filled by someone of sufficient calibre and independence for the role.

12. The Committee considered the arrangements for the competition in July 2023 and in September informally agreed the date of 13 December for the pre-appointment hearing.¹⁹ The Cabinet Office guidelines include a requirement that the Department should provide the Committee with the information required to hold a hearing "at least seven working days in advance of the scheduled date, unless otherwise agreed."²⁰ Despite reassurances from the Department that the appointment process was proceeding on schedule, the Committee was contacted at the expiry of this deadline on the morning of Monday 4 December to seek an extension, while still maintaining the current date for the hearing.²¹ We finally received the required information to proceed with the hearing two and a half days later on the afternoon of Wednesday 6 December, some hours after the candidate's details had already appeared in the media.²²

13. Despite the failures of the Department to meet its obligations, we have proceeded with the hearing and report to avoid further delays for the BBC and Dr Shah.

13 [Department for Culture Media and Sport and Dr Samir Shah - Committee Requested Information](#)

14 Ibid.

15 [UK government appoints veteran TV executive Samir Shah as BBC chair](#), Financial Times, 6 December 2023

16 [Government announces preferred candidate for BBC Chair](#), Department for Culture, Media and Sport press release, 6 December 2023

17 Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Royal Charter for the continuance of the British Broadcasting Corporation, [Cm 9365](#), December 2016, para 22(5)

18 Cabinet Office, [Guidance: pre-appointment scrutiny by House of Commons select committees](#), January 2019

19 [Letter from Rt Hon Lucy Frazer MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport, relating to the BBC Chair](#), dated 13 July 2023 and [Letter from the Chair to Rt Hon Lucy Frazer MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport, relating to the BBC Chair](#), dated 24 July 2023

20 Cabinet Office, [Guidance: pre-appointment scrutiny by House of Commons select committees](#), January 2019, para 20

21 [Letter from the Chair to Rt Hon Lucy Frazer MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, relating to the Department's engagement with the Committee's work](#), dated 12 December 2023

22 [Department for Culture Media and Sport and Dr Samir Shah - Committee Requested Information](#)

2 The Candidate: Dr Samir Shah CBE

14. Dr Samir Shah CBE, has over forty years of experience in broadcasting. He joined London Weekend Television in 1979 as a researcher, then worked as a producer and director then editor. From 1987, he spent seven years at the BBC as Head of Current Affairs before moving to Head of Political Programmes, TV and Radio. He left the BBC in 1998 to purchase Juniper, an independent television and radio production company which makes programmes for the BBC, and which he still leads as the CEO. If appointed, Dr Shah will step down from his role immediately to resolve potential conflicts of interest.²³

15. Dr Shah has held numerous board and advisory appointments. He was a non-executive member of the BBC from 2007–2010 and member of the Public Service Broadcasting Advisory Panel in 2021, appointed to provide independent expertise and advice as part of the Government’s strategic review of public service broadcasting. He was Chair of the Museum of the Home from 2014–2022, and a trustee and Deputy Chair of the V&A from 2004–2014. He was also Chair of the Runnymede Trust between 1999–2009.²⁴

16. Dr Shah is currently Chair of One World Media, which receives sponsorship from the BBC. He also sits on the Cabinet Office’s Arts and Media Honours Committee, which is responsible for reviewing honours nominations for individuals in those fields.²⁵ Dr Shah has confirmed he is prepared to step down from both roles to avoid potential conflicts of interest.²⁶

17. In 2022, Dr Shah received the Radio and Television Society’s “Outstanding Contribution” award for his achievements in journalism. He was appointed a CBE for services to Television and Heritage in the 2019 Queen’s Birthday Honours. He was previously made an OBE in the New Year’s Honours list 2000. In 2007, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, and in 2022 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Television Society.²⁷

Our questioning

18. Prior to the announcement of Dr Shah as the Government’s preferred candidate, we supplied the Department for Culture, Media and Sport with a questionnaire to be returned to us ahead of the hearing to inform our consideration. This covered the candidate’s motivations for applying, their personal background, and their initial priorities for and views of the BBC.²⁸

19. In oral evidence we asked Dr Shah about the following specific matters:

- His reasons and motivations for applying for the post;
- His experience and background, including managing conflicts of interest;

23 See Appendix 2 and [Department for Culture Media and Sport and Dr Samir Shah - Committee Requested Information](#)

24 See Appendix 1

25 GOV.UK, [Honours Committees](#) (accessed 13 December 2023)

26 See Appendix 2 and [Department for Culture Media and Sport and Dr Samir Shah - Committee Requested Information](#)

27 See Appendix 1

28 See Appendix 2

- His vision for the BBC and views on the challenges facing the media, over the forthcoming decade;
- The reputation of the BBC and its culture, including on impartiality;
- Management of financial pressures and the future funding of the BBC, including the future of the licence fee;
- Personal independence of the Chair and institutional independence of the BBC from the Government;
- The position of the BBC in the nation and regions of the UK, and whether it is representative of UK audiences; and
- Parliamentary and public accountability for the BBC and its Chair.

3 Conclusions

Appointment of Dr Shah

20. Dr Shah has considerable experience of broadcasting that he will bring to the role, with a clear focus on factual content, especially in politics, news and current affairs. During the hearing, we examined his experience and vision for other aspects of the work of the Corporation, including drama, entertainment and music. We welcome Dr Shah's recognition of his need to gain further insight across the full breadth of the work of the BBC. If appointed, we expect him to be able to demonstrate what he has done to achieve this when appearing before the Committee next year as part of our scrutiny of the BBC.

21. In his written and oral evidence to the Committee, Dr Shah demonstrated awareness of the current and upcoming challenges facing broadcast media and the BBC specifically. His immediate priorities for the Corporation appeared narrowly focused on news and current affairs, but his broader view of the need for sustainable funding and continued, and ideally growing, relevance of the BBC showed a sound understanding of the requirements of the organisation and his responsibilities if appointed Chair. His recognition of the challenge of ensuring that the BBC is relevant to all audiences is welcome, as is his priority of ensuring that the nations and regions of the UK are represented by and benefiting from the work of the Corporation.

22. Dr Shah responded to our concerns about the BBC's impartiality and independence from the Government, and the need for accountability from the organisation and from the Chair specifically to Parliament and the public. We have no grounds for concern about Dr Shah's reported conflicts of interest, given his proposed mitigations, including resignations and recusal as required.

23. In addition to his extensive media background, Dr Shah's CV also includes considerable board-level experience in arts and heritage organisations and on bodies relating to race equality. However, his experience in providing leadership in large organisations is limited to his previous senior executive and non-executive roles at the BBC, the most recent of which ended in 2010. We explored this background in our hearing, focusing on financial management and organisational change, during which Dr Shah accepted that he did not have other experience at the scale of the BBC.

24. During our hearing, Dr Shah highlighted his significant experience with the BBC, but also relied on the more than 20 years since he was employed by the Corporation as a reason not to answer some of the questions we put to him. He was willing to be drawn on some issues, such as the BBC's social media guidelines and his opinions of Gary Lineker's adherence to them; however, on many other issues such as changes to local radio and cuts to Newsnight, he declined to express an opinion but undertook to write to the Committee with answers to some of the questions posed. We look forward to hearing from him shortly.

25. We were disappointed that Dr Shah was not willing to express a view on fundamental principles, such as board level interference in the BBC and other bodies and on political impartiality. In his evidence to us, Dr Shah did not sufficiently demonstrate the strength and character that is needed to challenge the executive leadership of the BBC.

26. While we are of the view that Dr Shah is appointable as Chair, we have serious reservations about his willingness to offer his opinions and insight on some of the most fundamental issues facing the Corporation, and his ability to provide the robust challenge that the BBC leadership requires at this time.

27. *If the Government chooses to proceed with the appointment of Dr Shah as Chair of the BBC Board, we expect him to appear before the Committee within the first three months of appointment to demonstrate that he has sufficiently considered and addressed our concerns.*

Work of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport

28. We are disappointed by the Department's engagement with the Committee prior to the pre-appointment hearing, and especially its failure to adhere to the Government's own guidelines requiring that committees are provided with the necessary information at least seven working days to prepare for a hearing.²⁹ The decision to provide the Committee with only four and a half working days to prepare, without explanation or apology, was compounded by the leaking of the Government's preferred candidate and a subsequent announcement of changes to the licence fee and a review into the funding of the BBC less than a day later. **We regret the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's approach to Parliamentary scrutiny and encourage Ministers and officials to engage more constructively with the Committee's work from this point forward.**

29 Cabinet Office (January 2019), [Cabinet Office Guidance: pre-appointment scrutiny by House of Commons select committees](#) para 20

Appendix 1: Dr Samir Shah's CV

Personal and Education

Name: Samir Shah

Date of Birth: 29th January 1952

Nationality: British

- Education: Latymer Upper School (1963–1969), London
- University of Hull (1970–1973): BSc Hons
- St. Catherine's College, University of Oxford (1974–1978): D. Phil
- London Business School (1994): SEP

Honours and Other:

- CBE, Queen's Birthday Honours 2019 (for services to Television and Heritage)
- OBE, New Year's Honours 2000 (for services to Equal Opportunities in Broadcasting)
- RTS "Outstanding Contribution/Lifetime Achievement" award 2022
- Fellow, Royal Television Society (Elected 2002)
- Member, British Academy of Film and Television Arts
- Fellow, Royal Society of Arts (Elected 2007)

Work:

1998 - present: CEO Juniper, an independent television and radio production company.

1987–1998: British Broadcasting Corporation

- 1987–1994: Head of Current Affairs, TV
- 1994–1998: Head of Political Programmes (News and Current Affairs), TV and Radio

1979–1987: London Weekend Television

- Researcher, producer, director, editor

1978–1979: Home Office Intelligence Unit

Board and other Appointments

Arts and Heritage:

Arts and Media Honours Committee (2022-). Chair of the Museum of the Home (2014–2022); member of the Cultural Recovery Board (2020–2021); Heritage Advisory Board (2020). Deputy Chair, V&A (2012–2014) & Trustee, V&A (2005–2014); (Chair, Museum of Childhood; member, V&A Commercial Board; member, the Gilbert Trust for the Arts).

Media:

Non-Executive Director of the BBC Board (2007–2010); member of the Future of Public Service Broadcasting (2021); Board member, BAFTA (2015–2017); Chair, One World Media (2020-)

Multicultural:

Commissioner on Government (Sewell) Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (2021); Member, PM's Holocaust Commission (2014 – 2015). Chair of the Runnymede Trust (1999–2009);

Academic:

2019 Visiting Professor of Creative Media, Oxford University (Faculty of English), 2006 - 2017 Special Professor, University of Nottingham

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

Motivation

1) What motivated you to apply for this role, and what specific experiences would you bring to it?

It's all about the BBC and its future. The BBC is one of the country's greatest assets and faces many challenges. My motivation was simply this: if I can help the BBC meet these challenges, it would be an honour.

My experience falls into three broad categories: (1) Entrepreneurial/commercial—I have run my own business for over twenty years; (2) Public life. I have been engaged in public life, and chaired many organisations, for many years. This include being on the Board of the V&A, the BBC, CRB (Cultural Recovery Board), and the Museum of the Home; and (3) creative life, I am a programme-maker and journalist committed to public service broadcasting.

2) If appointed are there specific areas within your new responsibilities where you will need to acquire new skills or knowledge?

I suspect many areas! I do know the BBC quite well, having been involved with it – one way or the other – for decades. However, it is a huge organisation spread across the country. The BBC has driven change, moving people and productions out of London. I would need to get a proper handle on its width and depth in the Regions and Nations.

The BBC is more than News. It is drama, comedy, entertainment and education and much else. I am a huge consumer of these services. But I will need to get a professional understanding of the major issues and challenges facing those parts of the BBC activities with which I am less familiar.

3) How were you recruited? Were you encouraged to apply, and if so, by whom?

One Friday afternoon—I think in September—Andrew Neil called me. He alerted me to the post and tried to persuade me to go for it. Andrew can be quite persuasive! I then sounded out a few other confidants who encourage me to apply. So, I did.

Personal Background

4) Do you currently or potentially have any business, financial or other non-pecuniary interests or commitments, that might give rise to the perception of a conflict of interest if you are appointed? If so, how do you intend to resolve any potential conflicts of interests if you are appointed?

Yes. Several.

- i) I run and own Juniper an independent production company. The company has made programmes for C4, Nat Geo, C5 and...the BBC.

- ii) I plan to disinvest totally from Juniper, financially, editorially, in every way. I will need some time to resolve contractual issues and, of course, to ensure Juniper staff are looked after.
- iii) Mohit Bakaya, the BBC's Director of Speech and Controller of Radio 4. Mohit is my brother. I have asked the BBC to alert me should an issue concerning Mohit comes to the main board. This will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis though I suspect those moments will be rare indeed. But, if there is a conflict of interest, I shall recuse myself.
- iv) Arts and media Honours Committee. I have been advised by DCMS that this is a conflict of interest, and I should step down. I shall.
- v) One World Media is a charity that champions journalism from the Global South. I am its Chair. The BBC is one of its media sponsors. I shall resign.
- vi) Impartiality Review. I am co-author (Madeleine Sumption, Director Migration Observatory, Oxford) of a review on how impartially the BBC covers small boats and migration. It has been commissioned by the BBC Board. It is expected to finish before—should I be successful—I am officially in post. Should this not be the case, I will take advice from the BBC. I may need to recuse myself and Madeleine will have to complete.

5) If appointed, what professional or voluntary work commitments will you continue to undertake, or do you intend to take on, alongside your new role? If any, how will you reconcile these with your new role?

I am on the RTS (Royal Television Society) journalism awards committee and a Chair of juries. I shall step down from this work.

My work as Chair of One World Media is voluntary. I have covered this above—I shall be resigning were I to be appointed.

6) Have you ever held any post or undertaken any activity that might cast doubt on your political impartiality? If so, how will you demonstrate your political impartiality in the role if appointed?

None whatsoever.

7) Do you intend to serve your full term of office?

Yes.

The BBC

8) If appointed, what will be your main priorities on taking up the role?

In the first year, I can think of three matters requiring urgent attention:

- vii) General Election. Next year is likely to be election year. It is BBC journalism's World Cup. We need to be match fit. We need to have figured out everything from studio debates to allocation of airtime. BBC coverage must be beyond reproach.

- viii) Out and About. I shall go around the Nations and Regions. I want to get to grips with what's happening in the N&R, what their concerns are, assess the impact of things like the changes in local radio or the movement of productions and people out of London.
- ix) Review our coverage of Israel/Gaza, What lessons can be learnt? Do the Editorial guidelines need reviewing (I believe there is one scheduled) and, if so, in what ways?

9) What challenges do you think BBC will face over your term of office?

Funding pressures will dominate. A 30% drop in real income over the last ten years has been hard. The impending settlement over the increase in the licence fee will create added pressure. But, most of all, will be Charter Review and, inter alia, will determine the shape, structure and size of any new Licence Fee arrangements. It's vital that there is a successful settlement when discussions start in earnest about Charter Renewal. There's been a good deal of debate about this: the HoL produced a report last year. We should be open-minded and engage constructively. What matters is to hold fast to the concept of universality. Not only does it mean overall cost is reduced, but it means that every citizen has a stake in the BBC. This collective ownership confers on the BBC the bounden duty to reflect the needs and interests of all its different users, and on the British people, the right of collective accountability and the power to monitor its performance.

Relevance. We need to think about this in two ways: distribution platforms—the way we reach audiences; and content—what we put on those platforms. The move from linear to on-demand is inexorable and unstoppable. But the immediate challenge here is to balance the needs of those licence fee payers who continue to use linear delivery, even as the BBC moves inevitably to on-demand services. We need to keep a weather eye on this balancing act, to ensure our mission to be of value to every household in the country keeps on track.

But whatever the delivery systems, it's the content the BBC produces that matters. Ironically, the massive explosion of choice and the increase in competition for viewers offers the BBC an enormous opportunity to make itself indispensable—by prioritising distinctiveness. As the provider of trusted and impartial news in a world of disinformation; or as the producers of innovative, original, and British content in a world of risk-averse programming of global appeal. And that's before we discuss the BBC's educational services, the programmes that serve the Nations and Regions and the extraordinary impact of the BBC on local economies and communities through the development of cultural hubs across the country.

Finally, Governance. Charter Renewal, the Media Bill and the Mid Term review will transform the governance landscape. All aspects of the BBC's role will be reviewed and re-set. During this period the Chair, and the Board, should engage constructively with stakeholders and ensure that the whatever the new rules covering governance, accountability and regulation are, the Chair's unique role at the BBC is protected. This is to act in the public interest, safeguarding the BBC's editorial independence, especially its commitment to impartiality, but also having the tools to hold management to account for how it spends public money on behalf of the British people.

One further point. The BBC may look like a large corporation, but it doesn't function like one. It is a multi-site organisation with multiple locations and facilities throughout the

United Kingdom. There are great strengths to this decentralisation including serving the diverse needs of its audience and promoting regional and local content and perspectives. But in governance terms it raises many issues: from ensuring accountability, transparency and resource allocation to striking the right balance between local autonomy and centralised governance and oversight.

10) What criteria should the Committee use to judge your and the BBC's performance over your term of office?

The BBC is constantly facing two types of situations: acute and chronic. The Committee should assess my, and the BBC's, performance in how we have handled these situations.

Acute:

Every now and then, the BBC runs into a storm of criticism. Often it is about impartiality and its coverage of a particular story. Sometimes it's rather different (e.g. Huw Edwards, Tim Westwood).

The committee should judge my performance, and the BBC's, by how well we have handled such "storms". Have we responded in an open, transparent and respectful way? Have we understood the various shades of opinion on the subject? Was the decision proportionate, sensible and carried out in a calm and thoughtful manner? Criteria could include quantitative measures such as public polling to qualitative ones such as commentariat opinion or, the views of parliamentarians.

Chronic:

Funding, as set out above, is a perennial. A key judgement will be how well have we argued the case for the licence fee, and what to make of any new arrangements in size, shape and structure. Will the new arrangements safeguard the future sustainability of the BBC?

Relevance

Does the BBC remain relevant to the British licence fee payer—in all his or her diversity (geographic, ethnic gender and class)? This is being constantly monitored and measured by the BBC. Has the BBC improved its performance in these indices? How far have I, and the BBC, managed to move the dial in a positive direction?

Finally.

An all-embracing question: is there more support for the BBC when my terms is over than when it started?

Formal minutes

Wednesday 13 December 2023

Members present:

Dame Caroline Dinenage, in the Chair

Kevin Brennan

Steve Brine

Clive Efford

Julie Elliott

Rt Hon Damian Green

Simon Jupp

John Nicolson

Draft Report (*Pre-appointment hearing for Chair of the BBC Board*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 28 read and agreed to.

Appendices agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Third Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No.134.

Adjournment

Adjourned till Tuesday 9 January at 9.30 am.

Witnesses

The following witness gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the inquiry publications page of the Committee's website.

Wednesday 13 December 2023

Dr Samir Shah CBE, Government's candidate for Chair of the BBC Board

[Q1-131](#)

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2023–24

Number	Title	Reference
1st Special	Draft Media Bill: Government Responses to the Committee's Twelfth and Thirteenth Reports of Session 2022–23	HC 155
2nd Special	Connected tech: smart or sinister?: Government and the Information Commissioner's Office Response to the Committee's Tenth Report of Session 2022–23	HC 302

Session 2022–23

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Amending the Online Safety Bill	HC 271
2nd	Promoting Britain abroad	HC 156
3rd	Reimagining where we live: cultural placemaking and the levelling up agenda	HC 155
4th	What next for the National Lottery?	HC 154
5th	Economics of music streaming: follow-up	HC 874
6th	Current issues in rugby union	HC 1018
7th	Sustainability of local journalism	HC 153
8th	Appointment of Richard Sharp as Chair of the BBC	HC 1147
9th	Football governance	HC 1288
10th	Connected tech: smart or sinister?	HC 157
11th	Connected tech: AI and creative technology	HC 1643
12th	Draft Media Bill: Radio Measures	HC 1287
13th	Draft Media Bill: Final Report	HC 1807
14th	NFTs and the Blockchain: the risks to sport and culture	HC 598
1st Special	Major cultural and sporting events: Government Response to Committee's Ninth Report of Session 2021–22	HC 452
2nd Special	Influencer Culture: Lights, camera, inaction?: ASA System and CMA Responses to the Committee's Twelfth Report of Session 2021–22	HC 610
3rd Special	Influencer Culture: Lights, camera, inaction?: Government Response to the Committee's Twelfth Report of Session 2021–22	HC 687

Number	Title	Reference
4th Special	Rt Hon Nadine Dorries MP	HC 801
5th Special	Promoting Britain abroad	HC 1103
6th Special	Reimagining where we live: cultural placemaking and the levelling up agenda	HC 1104
7th Special	What next for the National Lottery?: Government and Gambling Commission Responses to the Committee's Fourth Report	HC 1208
8th Special	Economics of music streaming: follow-up: Government Response to the Committee's Fifth Report	HC 1245
9th Special	The sustainability of local journalism: Government Response to the Committee's Seventh Report	HC 1378
10th Special	Appointment of Richard Sharp as Chair of the BBC: Government Response to the Committee's Eighth Report	HC 1641
11th Special	Football Governance: Government Response to the Committee's Ninth Report	HC 1850
12th	What next for the National Lottery?: National Lottery Distributors' Response to the Committee's Fourth Report	HC 1913

Session 2021–22

Number	Title	Reference
1st	The future of UK music festivals	HC 49
2nd	Economics of music streaming	HC 50
3rd	Concussion in sport	HC 46
4th	Sport in our communities	HC 45
5th	Pre-appointment hearing for Information Commissioner	HC 260
6th	Pre-appointment hearing for Chair of the Charity Commission	HC 261
7th	Racism in cricket	HC 1001
8th	The Draft Online Safety Bill and the legal but harmful debate	HC 1039
9th	Major cultural and sporting events	HC 259
10th	Another pre-appointment hearing for Chair of the Charity Commission	HC 1200
11th	Pre-appointment hearing for Chair of Ofcom	HC 48
12th	Influencer culture: Lights, camera, inaction?	HC 258
1st Special Report	The future of public service broadcasting: Government Response to Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 273

Number	Title	Reference
2nd Special Report	Economics of music streaming: Government and Competition and Markets Authority Responses to Committee's Second Report	HC 719
3rd Special Report	Sport in our communities: Government Response to Committee's Fourth Report	HC 761
4th Special Report	The future of public service broadcasting: Ofcom Response to Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 832
5th Special	The Draft Online Safety Bill and the legal but harmful debate: Government Response to the Committee's Eighth	HC 1039

Session 2019–21

Number	Title	Reference
1st	The Covid-19 crisis and charities	HC 281
2nd	Misinformation in the COVID-19 Infodemic	HC 234
3rd	Impact of COVID-19 on DCMS sectors: First Report	HC 291
4th	Broadband and the road to 5G	HC 153
5th	Pre-appointment hearing for Chair of the BBC	HC 1119
6th	The future of public service broadcasting	HC 156
1st Special Report	BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2018–19: TV licences for over 75s Government and the BBC's Responses to the Committee's Sixteenth Report of Session 2017–19	HC 98
2nd Special Report	The Covid-19 crisis and charities: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2019–21	HC 438
3rd Special Report	Impact of Covid-19 on DCMS sectors: First Report: Government Response to Committee's Third Report of Session 2019–21	HC 885
4th Special Report	Misinformation in the COVID-19 Infodemic: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report	HC 894