

Broadcasters' Liaison Group (BLG) meeting – 17 November 2020

Note of conclusions and action points

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Present: Ric Bailey (BBC), Tabby Karamat (BBC), Sion Pugh (S4C), Chris Wissun (ITV), Heather Curley (STV), Chris Hagan (UTV), Jacqueline McIntyre (BBC NI), Alice Hickey (BBC), Nick Powell (ITV Wales), Tim Burke (BBC), Janet Maclay (Channel Five), Claire Telford (Wireless Group), Alasdair MacLeod (BBC Scotland), Joan Darroch (STV), Dominic Harrison (Channel 4), Kirsty Warwood (Channel 4), Mark Sunderland (ITV) and Martin Forward (BBC Wales)

Craig Westwood (the Electoral Commission- observer member) and Niki Nixon (the Electoral Commission- observer member).  
rom Ofcom.

Apologies: Rhys Evans (BBC Wales) and Iestyn Morris (S4C)

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**MEETING** For item 8 only, t

notes of the last BLG annual meeting of 21

e a couple of matters they  
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or electoral area were  
parties and independent  
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til close of nominations and  
had reached the required

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The tension between providing airtime to political parties whilst also having concerns about the content of a PEB was raised by some members. The SNP case was noted in this context

- The BLG raised with the Commission the issue of candidates appearing in their own ward or electoral area in political broadcasts. It was noted it was a perennial issue. However, the production guidelines are clear and specifically noted local landmarks so there was no intention on amending the guidelines at this time.

#### **4. PARTY REPRESENTATIONS**

- The BLG had not received any party representations for this meeting. The Yorkshire Devolution Movement had sent a letter to Ofcom which had been copied to the BBC.

#### **5. LOOKING FORWARD**

- Next Spring there would be the following elections:
  - Scottish Parliament
  - Welsh Parliament (Senedd)
  - GLA elections
  - English Locals
- The BLG discussed the criterion used by each Broadcasters in the last set of corresponding elections as well as how the recent elections may have affected those parties' electoral support. For example it was discussed how much weight should be provided to parties in respect of votes cast in the European Parliamentary elections. Further the issue on how to approach parties that had rebranded or had a series of defections when considering a party's previous electoral support was discussed. As always it is a matter for each broadcasters on how they want to decide such an issue and the broadcasts allocated to each qualifying party.

#### **6. OFCOM UPDATE**

- Ofcom noted that most of the complaints

- It was reflected that the situation was slightly different in respect of PBBs as the qualifying threshold required that the party holds one seat in the relevant Parliament.
- Members also raise the topic of accuracy in political broadcasts. Ofcom stated that such broadcasts were non-news so accuracy provisions for news programme did not apply but Rule 2.2 of the Ofcom Code material misleadingness was a relevant consideration.
- Ofcom is also communicated some staffing changes at the organisation and who would be the day-to-day contact for broadcasters.

#### **7. BLG WEBSITE**

- The website had been revamped and was under the BBC banner.

#### **8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- There was no other business discussed.