

Editors' Code of Practice Committee

Minutes of the Editors' Code of Practice Committee meeting held at the offices of the Newspaper Society/NPA, 18-20 St Andrew Street, London, on 5 December 2012.

Present:

Chairman: Paul Dacre (NPA)

Jonathan Grun	(NPA)	Colin Grant	(NS)	Damian Bates	(SNS)
John Witherow	(NPA)	Ian Murray	(NS)	Harriet Wilson	(PPA)
		Mike Sassi	(NS)		
		Hannah Walker	(NS)		

Attending: Lord Hunt (Chairman, PCC); Michael McManus (Transition Director, PCC); Ian Beales (*Secretary*).

Apologies were received from Neil Benson.

Minutes of the meeting on 18 April 2012 were approved and signed.

Matters arising:

- There were no matters arising.

Leveson Report: The Chairman and Lord Hunt outlined the industry's options being discussed with government and others following publication of the Leveson Report. It was noted that Lord Justice Leveson had said it was not his role to establish the Code and that his Report appeared not to be determinate about it.

Post-Leveson Review: It was agreed the Committee should initiate a post-Leveson Review of the Code as soon as possible, and that lay members should be recruited in time to take part in that process. As an initial response, the committee agreed that:

- The Code's definition of the public interest should be revised with urgency, in light of the Leveson Report, to take into account the definition of the public interest published by the Director of Public Prosecutions in his recent Guidelines for Prosecutors.
- A new Compliance Clause should be included, requiring editors to offer readers a clear and effective means of making complaints; and to publish corrections and apologies promptly, preferably without recourse to the new Regulator. In cases where it was not possible to reach agreement by negotiation, editors should publish adjudications, and approved corrections and apologies, in positions required by the Regulator.

The Committee agreed that the review of the Code, recommended by Lord Justice Leveson, should invite suggestions from the public and, that newspapers and magazines should be encouraged to urge readers to contribute. The Committee should also review *The Editors' Codebook* to ensure - in the light of Leveson - that editors and journalists were given the best guidance on good practice. The committee decided consideration of earlier suggestions for changes to the Code - suspended pending the Leveson Inquiry - should be incorporated into the new review.

Lay membership: The Committee accepted Lord Leveson's recommendation to appoint lay members. The Committee at present comprises 13 editors, plus the Chairman and Director of the Press Complaints Commission as observers. It was proposed that the number of editors should be reduced by three, to 10, with five lay individuals - including the Chairman and Director of the new regulator - joining the Committee as full members.

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It was agreed the lay membership should be recruited as soon as appropriate appointments validation procedures had been clarified and established and that the review should then follow as a matter of urgency.

Retiring member: The Chairman thanked Colin Grant, who was retiring from the Committee.

Next meeting: It was agreed the Chairman should call the next meeting once current issues over the shape of the new regulatory body had been resolved so that the post Leveson Review could proceed.