

# 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 18 April 2012.*

## **Present:**

*Chairman:* Paul Dacre (NPA)

Jonathan Grun	(NPA)	Neil Benson	(NS)	Lisa Burrow	(PPA)
Richard Wallace	(NPA)	Colin Grant	(NS)	Harriet Wilson	(PPA)
John Witherow	(NPA)	Ian Murray	(NS)		
		Mike Sassi	(NS)		
		Hannah Walker	(NS)		

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

**Apologies** were received from Damian Bates and Geordie Greig.

**Membership:** The Chairman welcomed Michael McManus, Director of Transition of the PCC.

**Minutes** of the meeting on 29 November 2011 were approved and signed.

## **Matters arising:**

- The secretary reported that Code changes affecting prominence of adjudications and public interest compliance had come into effect on 1 January.
- *The Editors' Codebook* had been amended accordingly, but the secretary proposed to delay a fuller revision until the shape of self-regulation was finalised. This was agreed.

**Leveson Inquiry:** The Chairman and Lord Hunt updated the committee on current proposals or options for the future of self-regulation, consistent with keeping in step with the Inquiry, while avoiding the need for statutory controls.

**Lay membership:** Possible options for admitting lay members to the Code Committee were considered. Subject to agreement with PressBoF, it was agreed that an appropriate lay representation might be 5 lay members to 10 editorial members. This could be achieved by:

- Reducing the current 13 editorial members (including chairman) to 11, with ratios to be decided by the trade associations or the new regulatory body.
- Confirming the Chairman and Director of the PCC or regulatory body as full lay members of the committee.
- Three other lay members should be recruited, who - in the short term at least - should preferably have past or existing experience as eminent lay members of the PCC.

**External review:** The committee agreed in principle there should be a triennial external review of the Code conducted by an appropriate independent figure, possibly an academic with departmental back-up resources. The committee would determine the terms of reference and selection process after investigating arrangements in similar regulatory systems.

**Public interest:** The committee deferred consideration of a review of public interest definitions, pending a parallel consultation by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

**Annual Code Review:** The committee reviewed the submitted suggestions, but decided to defer any immediate action, pending the outcome of the Leveson Inquiry and the re-shaping of the regulatory regime; or to allow further investigation with those seeking the amendment.