

YORKSHIRE AND LINCOLNSHIRE REGIONAL AUDIENCE COUNCIL MINUTES

Tuesday 10 May 2011 at 6pm
BBC Hull

Present: Steve Marshall (Chair)
Denis Price
John Richmond
Claire Ramsden
James Trowsdale
Allys Clipsham
Jan Mills
Pamela Whalley
Deborah Wrapson
Patricia Caley
Honey Jackson
John Killelay
Glenn Ramsden
Odette Millar

Apologies: Joanne Harrison
Chris Hawkins

BBC Representatives:

David Jennings	Head of Region
Carol Cooke	Public Accountability Manager

1. Welcome and introductions

The chair welcomed every one to the meeting and members introduced themselves. There were two apologies for absence.

2. Minutes of previous meeting held on 21 February 2011 and matters arising

There were no matters arising and the minutes were passed as being an accurate record.

There was discussion about regional programmes being covered by national presenters, as members felt that it was better and more cost efficient to use regional reporters. The chair referred to Helen Boaden's response to this issue at the ACE meeting.

3. Programme & service review

3.1 Royal Wedding: BBC coverage

Comments from the council included the following:

Pre wedding coverage

- Members felt that the coverage was too low key, repetitive, with the same jokes repeated, in general too many references to Princess Diana and too much material which was speculative.
- The Lancaster Bombers were mentioned but there should have been more information on more recent aircraft.

On the day coverage

- Members felt that the camera work was stunning.
- There was a global and inclusive feel; the BBC coverage was more knowledgeable than Sky and did convey the joy of the couple.
- It was felt that there could have been more research on minor royals as there was sometimes a lack of detail, but the low level of information of celebrities was good.
- Local coverage was good and people felt that the coverage of street parties connected people on the Mall with people in Lincolnshire.

Post wedding coverage

- Other news in Libya and Osama Bin Laden overshadowed the royal wedding
- Members felt that Fearne Cotton was dreadful; that she did not have enough to say and the programme makers did not know how to wrap up the programme.
- I TVs coverage was more of a celebration

Chair's summary

Some members thought the pre wedding coverage was repetitive, with the same jokes repeated, too many references to Princess Diana and too much material which was speculative. Most people watched BBC for on the day coverage and were very impressed by the stunning camera work. The BBC coverage was more knowledgeable and conveyed the joy of the Royal couple, but it was felt that ITV coverage seemed more light hearted. Members said Fearne Cotton was inappropriate; she did not have enough to say and the producers did not know how to wrap up the programme. Post wedding coverage was overshadowed by events in Libya and stories about the death of Osama Bin Laden. People felt the regional coverage of street parties connected people on the Mall with people from the region, from East Yorkshire to Lincolnshire.

3.2 Local Radio Service Licence

Particular reference to Sport, Faith, Minority/Specialist programming, Social media - Facebook, Twitter

Comments from the council included the following:

Sports coverage –

- Sports Talk was well balanced and light; even if you are not a particularly sport interested person you can still get a local feel.
- After a big Lincoln City match there was good coverage which enabled you to keep up with what was happening.
- Several people's networks value being able to listen and the coverage provided a really good service for people in cars or people gardening, indeed one member went to a Lincolnshire match and took a radio to listen to commentary as he felt that it conveyed the excitement of sporting events.
- Rugby League coverage got people interested.
- Swimming was covered.
- It was felt by some that there was too much emphasis on Lincolnshire and not enough on women's sports.

BBC response

Because of contractual issues the coverage cannot appear online, but Lincoln Ladies was being covered by a commentary.

Faith

- One members networks did not listen to faith programmes although they were a faith based network.
- It was felt by some members that faith based programmes were all Christian based but did not go into faith issues rather they covered stories about the Salvation Army band or repairing a church roof.
- One Jewish member said that two of her contacts did appear on faith based programmes.

Action

HLRP will look at the faith programme in Lincolnshire and Humberside and come back with comments.

Charlie Partridge and Simon Pattern will provide some information for the September meeting.

BBC response

The ambition was to put faith across the output. The faith slot had moved to an earlier time, as before it had been pitched against the Radio Four slot, and also to accommodate information (e.g. schools closures, travel news etc) at a time of the day when it was most useful. The faith contributor was on five days a week and perhaps this was too much. The work was under review and it was useful to hear what RAC members had to say. Farmers often enjoyed something which made them think at the start of the day but this slot is too early even for them.

Minority specialist programmes

- Members wanted to know why there was emphasis on gardening programme and suggested a 'do it yourself programme' instead.
- One member said there were lots of Polish people in the region and there did not seem to be anything on local radio for them.

BBC response – the best thing we can do is programmes which bring communities together. There is a diversity panel at the BBC and people from different communities are invited to speak, and leads to other activity.

Social media

- A member followed Peter Levy on Twitter, and other people follow on Facebook, but other members wondered if the BBC should recommend social networking sites as they are private companies.
- Members felt that the BBC cannot afford to neglect the social networking sites. They did not want to know what other people felt about news stories but there was interest in what people thought of other programmes.
- Twitter made people feel that local radio was part of the family but it was pointed out that references to Twitter and Facebook could make older people feel isolated.

BBC response

Social networking has become part of communication for lots of people but it can be alienating for some older people.

One member wondered why local radio targeted over 50s and suggested that this was not a recipe for longevity. However it was agreed that people tend to come to local radio when they are older and interested in their region.

Chair's summary

Sports Talk was well balanced, light, gave a local perspective and appealed to listeners who were not particularly interested in sport. Several networks valued sports coverage and felt it provided a good service for people in cars or gardening, or indeed attending matches. Some minority sports, like swimming was covered but it was felt that there was too much emphasis on Lincolnshire and not enough on women's sports.

Faith programmes were not generally appreciated. One member's faith based network did not listen to faith programmes and some members said the faith based programmes were all Christian based but did not go into faith issues rather they covered stories about the Salvation Army band or repairs to a church roof.

One member said that there were too many gardening programmes and too few programmes which catered for the large Polish population in the region.

Members felt that the BBC cannot afford to neglect social networking sites, and agreed that they did not want to know what other people felt about news stories but were interested in what people thought of other programmes. Twitter made people feel that local radio was part of the family, but it was pointed out that references to Twitter and Facebook could make older people feel isolated

3.3 Local Radio Link Reports

The BBC Humberside link reported

General comments from my networks are positive with particular praise for the work of Andy Comfort and Peter Levy who cover an eclectic range of listener generated national and local topics with balance and skill. A cause for concern voiced by my networks mirrors that mentioned by John in his report. There is considerable speculation over local radio stations being 'morphed' into Radio 5 Live. BBC local radio is valued highly and we are told is cheap to operate.

In discussion with Simon I mentioned the listeners' preferences, and my own, for jointly presented programmes where duo's such as Carl Wheatley and Ruth Barcroft and Neil Rudd with Amanda Thompson have appeared on the Saturday morning slot although it's appreciated that they are more expensive. Simon mentioned that as a decline in Saturday's listening audience had been noticed, he was trying out other presenters. He confirmed that sensible programme sharing with BBC Radio Lincs allowed him to re-allocate resources which made dual presenter programmes possible. Referring to audience figures he quoted two Trust pilots, BBC Radio Sussex and Surrey programme sharing with BBC Radio Kent and closer to home, a share involving Leeds, Sheffield and York, both with no discernable loss of listeners. A further point was that 34 hours of output for BBC Radio Lincolnshire was produced by BBC Radio Humberside with four and a half hours produced by Radio Lincolnshire for Radio Humberside.

At the time of writing no schedule changes of note have been effected and the imminent summer holiday period will provide opportunities to try out presenters in different roles. Members felt that sharing an afternoon programme with BBC Radio Lincolnshire worked well but that if there was a major story then the stations would have to go back to their default position.

The BBC Lincolnshire link reported:

Local radio link mentioned Delivering Quality First, and mentioned the anomaly of BBC Lincs getting more local news on weekday evenings.

Action

Carol Cooke to send local radio link people's email addresses to all members so that they can be contacted if they wish to raise anything.

4. Reports

4.1 Head of Region's report

The report was circulated in the meeting pack.

In addition the HLRP said that BBC Humberside had won a Sony Award for sport and there would be a new Look North Editor appointed soon.

4.2 English Regions draft objectives and Local Radio Performance

A member queried the first point about television, and wondered if the action plan was designed to look at cuts in regional news but keep programmes like *EastEnders* as they brought in huge audiences.

Another member suggested that the BBC should have been fulfilling the objectives already.

4.3 Chair's Report

- Audience Council England (Draft January minutes)

The Chair thanked members for their comments on *Blue Peter* and drew members' attention to the fact that RAC feedback on *Late Kick Off* had resulted in a more regular, earlier and fixed time slot.

Pixelation will be raised at next meeting.

5. Trust business & feedback

5.1 BBC Trust Workplan 2011/12

5.2 BBC Trust appointments: Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Several members asked if the link between Diane Coyle and Rory Cellan-Jones would compromise the separation between the BBC and the BBC Trust.

6. Outreach

6.1 Local Radio Service Licence Review

Carol Cooke handed out flyers, explained what was involved in outreach activity and asked members to email her with their availability to attend the events in Hull and Lincoln. .

7. Burning issues – *Delivering the purposes and matters of trust*

There were no burning issues.

8. Any other Business

Members felt that there had been too much coverage of the death of Osama Bin Laden.

9. Date of next meeting:

13 June 2011 Lincoln Cathedral 3.30-5.30 pm

14 June 2011 The University Union Building, University of Hull 12 – 2 pm

For Information: Audience Council Recruitment Campaign Statistics 2011
2010 - 2011 RAC Attendance

Endnote

[We aim to make as much of the minutes available as possible. However, there will be times when sections of the minutes will be withheld from publication. These will be kept to a minimum and clearly marked.]