

Stephen Abell

From: Stephen Abell
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To: PCC
Subject: PRIVATE; CODE COMMITTEE AGENDA
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Dear Commissioners

I attach the agenda for the Editors' Code Committee meeting for next week. I also attach the report I circulated on the last meeting.

In accordance with the view of the Governance Review (and the Commission), I would like to give the opportunity for Commissioners to make any comment on this agenda. This will help inform what Peta and I say at the meeting.

I will offer a few notes on the relevant items below:

5. The Chairman of the PCC has raised the issue of the industry's reaction to the Bribery Act (due to come into effect in April), which has the potential to impact on investigative journalism. It is not specifically a matter for the PCC at this point, but we are requesting that the Code Committee look at the effect of a law that has the possibility to imprison journalists for making inappropriate payments.
6. This item follows our last meeting. We have asked the Code Committee to examine whether Clause 15 should be amended to cover defendants specifically. This will be discussed at the meeting. There is an argument that Clause 16 could be expanded to cover defendants in ongoing trials, alongside convicted and confessed criminals.
7. The Code is about to be changed to require corrections / apologies to be agreed by the PCC in advance. The Committee are to discuss whether the Code should be amended to add the same requirement for upheld adjudications (perhaps saying that they should be agreed with the PCC Director, who has been given devolved power from the Commission). This is not a formal proposal at this stage, but a topic for discussion.
8. It will be discussed whether the Code Committee should make any public statement on phone hacking.
9. The Code Committee is examining whether it can improve its transparency, especially by publishing minutes and/or agendas.
10. The Code Committee is about to publish an update for its online Codebook, taking into account recent decisions and offering specific guidance in the listed areas.
11. Recent suggestions from the public are for the Code to be amended in the following areas: to prohibit the promotion of sexual violence by lads mags; to enforce declarations of corporate hospitality by journalists; to require a right of reply to all religious letters; and to prohibit the public display of indecent front pages.

Should any Commission wish to comment on any of these points, do please let me know by Wednesday next week. I am happy, as ever, to discuss on the phone.

Very best

Stig

Stephen Abell
Director