

# Minutes of the 76<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Communications Consumer Panel

on 6 April 2011 at 11.00 hours

Riverside House, 2A Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HA

## Present

### Consumer Panel

Bob Warner (Acting Chair)

Fiona Ballantyne

Kim Brook (ex-officio member)

Colin Browne

Roger Darlington

Maureen Edmondson

### In attendance

Alistair Bridge

David Edwards

Fiona Lennox

Ofcom colleague (item 5)

### Apologies

Anna Bradley (Chair)

	Action
<p><b>1. Welcome and introduction</b></p> <p>1.1 Bob Warner would Chair the meeting as Anna Bradley was unable to attend. Anna's appointment would end on 9 April 2011 and Members wished to record their thanks and appreciation of her contribution as Panel Chair over the last three years. Kim Brook, former Panel member for Wales, had recently been appointed to Ofcom's Advisory Committee for Wales. He was attending the Panel meeting in an ex-officio capacity.</p> <p>1.2 Alistair Bridge had moved to a new role in Ofcom but was attending in a handover capacity. Members also wished to record their thanks to Alistair Bridge, Emily Keaney, Nicola Ebdon and Lou Sanders for all their hard work as members of the Panel's outgoing support team.</p> <p>1.3 Fiona Lennox was welcomed to the meeting. David Edwards would continue to act as the secretary for monthly Panel meetings.</p>	
<p><b>2. Declaration of members' interests</b></p> <p>2.1 Members declared no additional interests.</p>	
<p><b>3. Minutes of the meeting on 16 March 2011, matters arising and progress on actions</b></p> <p>3.1 Members <b>APPROVED</b> the draft minutes for signature by the Chair.</p> <p>3.2 It was <b>NOTED</b> that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The policy positions paper had been drafted but required some further editing. When finalised, it would be published and circulated to interested parties, eg Ofcom's Advisory Committees and to the Consumer Forum for Communications.</li><li>• The Panel blog had been deactivated and archived on the Panel</li></ul>	BW

<p>website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Panel philosophy paper had been drafted by Damian Tambini and Bob Warner would circulate the draft to members for comment. The paper would help to inform wider debates about the future of consumer advocacy, including responses to the Government's forthcoming consultation.</li> <li>• Members discussed the Panel Implementation Plan and <b>AGREED</b> that thought should be given to the format of this going forward.</li> </ul>	<p>BW</p> <p>FL</p>
<p><b>4. Update on Panel transition to 2011/12</b></p> <p>4.1 Bob Warner reported that Ofcom had agreed to provide the Panel with the resources to allow it to continue its work in 2011/12, albeit with a reduced level of support and a reduction in budget. In the context of a reduced Panel research capacity and recalling that the Ofcom Chairman Colette Bowe had suggested that the Panel might wish to input to Ofcom's research programme, it was <b>AGREED</b> that Ofcom should be invited to discuss its consumer research plans with the Panel at its next meeting. It was also <b>AGREED</b> that Colette Bowe would be invited to attend a small number of Panel meetings during the year. Members' preference was to continue to meet monthly and it was <b>AGREED</b> that meetings would be from 9.30am to 2.30pm.</p>	<p>FL</p>
<p><b>5. Monetisation of data report</b></p> <p>5.1 The Panel <b>CONSIDERED</b> its draft research report on online personal data and proposals for engagement following publication. Members <b>NOTED</b> a number of comments made in response to the draft report, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The possible provision of 'top tips' for consumers;</li> <li>• the need for some editing and, where possible, reduction in the length of the report, in particular the opening sections covering legislation present and future;</li> <li>• the need to make clearer the argument that personal data has a monetary value;</li> <li>• that consumers were not always aware of the benefits arising from use of their online data and that there was a role for consumer education, eg about cookies and use of different web browsers;</li> <li>• inclusion of the research data as an annex to the main report with the latter providing a summary of findings.</li> </ul> <p>5.2 Members <b>AGREED</b> that prior to publication, the report should be revised to take account of comments. It was also <b>AGREED</b> that consideration would be given to seeking a partner to co-host the stakeholder event as part of the follow-up to publication.</p>	<p>FL</p> <p>FL</p>
<p><b>6. Panel Annual Report</b></p> <p>6.1 The Panel <b>CONSIDERED</b> a draft of its annual report 2010/11. Alistair Bridge had drafted the document and had discussed it with the outgoing Panel Chair, who had made a number of suggestions: that in addition to details of the Panel's proactive work, the report should include details of its role in advising Ofcom and of situations where Ofcom had been held to account; and that the foreword should refer to the changes expected in the consumer</p>	

<p>landscape and to the reduction in the Panel resource. Members <b>NOTED</b> that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the section on working with others could be expanded to include work already undertaken to influence the future consumer landscape;</li> <li>• reference could be made to the Panel’s strategic approach in anticipating problems in the market;</li> <li>• reference should be made to the Panel’s work on digital inclusion;</li> <li>• the news release accompanying publication of the annual report should reference the contribution of the outgoing chair to the work of the Panel;</li> <li>• although the annual report would be published in soft copy, a small number of hard copies could be printed and sent to a selection of key stakeholders or bodies.</li> </ul> <p>6.1 The Panel expected to publish the annual report in tandem with its work plan.</p>	
<p><b>7. Panel Work Plan 2011/12</b></p> <p>7.1 There was extensive discussion of the Panel’s work plan for the coming year, taking account of the Panel’s aspirations and the resources available. Members <b>NOTED</b> that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Panel should focus on three objectives: promoting the interests of consumers; influencing positively the consumer landscape; and discharging its obligations under the Communications Act 2003;</li> <li>• the Panel’s budget for research and consultancy was limited to £100k and its staff resource reduced and so there would need to be trade-offs between intensive work in some areas and a watching brief or periodic review in others;</li> <li>• given the reduced level of resource, it was <b>AGREED</b> that it was not considered feasible for the Panel to adopt an advisory role in relation to postal services;</li> <li>• the Panel should review its media strategy, and it was <b>AGREED</b> that the Panel’s media adviser Siân Evans should attend a Panel meeting to discuss this further;</li> <li>• the Panel would seek to identify areas of work undertaken by others where the Panel could contribute rather than take the lead;</li> <li>• the key areas where the Panel wished to make a difference were: influencing the consumer landscape; preparing for the Communications Bill; next generation services; broadband speeds; mobile coverage and usability, spectrum clearance and auctions; traffic management and net neutrality; switching; and digital participation.</li> </ul> <p>7.2 It was <b>AGREED</b> that Fiona Lennox would map and rank the potential issues that the Panel could address and how against the resources available to it, eg by research, consultancy or otherwise; share with Panel members by email; and present for discussion and decision at the next meeting. It was further <b>AGREED</b> that a consultation would be undertaken to allow stakeholders to comment on the work plan. Although consultation would delay publication the Panel felt that it was acceptable.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">FL</p> <p style="text-align: center;">FL</p>
<p><b>8. Panel position paper on Consumer Advocacy</b></p> <p>8.1 The Panel <b>CONSIDERED</b> a draft of its position paper on Consumer Advocacy. Members <b>CONFIRMED</b> the intention to make a constructive contribution to debates about the future consumer landscape. It was <b>AGREED</b></p>	

<p>that Bob Warner would revise the paper, taking account of members' comments on the draft, circulate to members and seek to finalise the paper during the coming weeks.</p>	<p><b>BW</b></p>
<p><b>9. Any Other Business</b></p> <p>9.1 The Government was expected to consult on the competition landscape. It was <b>AGREED</b> that Fiona Lennox would confer with Ofcom colleagues and determine whether this was a matter for discussion at a future Panel meeting.</p>	<p><b>FL</b></p>

.....Chairman .....Date