

BBC seeks views of community news websites and bloggers

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Today the BBC is unveiling plans to formalise its commitment to 'hyperlocal' bloggers and community news providers online, as part of its ongoing work to support local journalism.

Following the creation of a Local Journalism Working Group last year, which includes representatives from regional newspaper groups, academics and hyperlocal organisations, the BBC is now setting out its commitment to hyperlocal publishers in support of this burgeoning area of citizen engagement.

The aim of the proposals are to strengthen links between the BBC, hyperlocals and other established forms of local media, as well as directing BBC audiences to the best stories online and ensuring the right credit is given to external news sources.

Controller of BBC English Regions, David Holdsworth, will discuss the proposals with Midlands based hyperlocal publishers today, and is seeking views on them from hyperlocal bloggers across the country.

The BBC proposals include:

- Introducing an external linking system, currently being rolled out to all BBC website Local Live streams across the country, to hyperlocals and bloggers; ensuring their content is showcased and credited on the BBC website
- Including hyperlocal providers in training and events as part of its media partnership work
- Inviting hyperlocal bodies to be represented on the Local Journalism Working Group and other relevant panels
- Ensuring all local BBC teams are aware of hyperlocals operating in their area
- Promoting an updated register of hyperlocal sites, expected to be published at the end of the year
- Engaging with partners from across the hyperlocal community and other external media to establish a Hyperlocal Forum to meet twice a year from November

The Forum will also work with other organisations including Nesta and the Carnegie Trust to shape proposals.

Controller of BBC English Regions, David Holdsworth, says: "The BBC highly values its relationship with all contributors to local journalism. Hyperlocal bloggers provide a unique view of their communities and have a close relationship with their audiences, operating in a space not served by the BBC.

"The input of hyperlocal organisations to forums such as the BBC's Local Journalism Working Group has proved invaluable in building a broader and more inclusive picture of the media landscape across the country.

"I'm now calling on hyperlocals to comment on these proposals so we can continue building our partnership and ensure their strongest stories can be showcased on the BBC website."

Dave Harte, Senior Lecturer in Media and Communication at Birmingham City University and publisher of a hyperlocal blog for Bournville, says: "It has been clear from the research that myself and others have undertaken over the last few years that the hyperlocal sector in the UK is making a significant contribution to the local news landscape.

"There are plenty of examples of hyperlocal journalism doing an excellent job of keeping citizens informed and holding local power to account. As the sector matures and tests new ways to become sustainable, it's right that the BBC should support it through this initiative and recognise the value it creates for citizens."

The BBC is asking hyperlocal websites to respond to these proposals by 30 September and will publish a summary of responses in November.

Notes to Editors

A 2014 academy study suggested that there were 408 hyperlocal news sites nationwide. Source: Andy Williams, Dave Harte & Jerome Turner (2014): The Value of UK Hyperlocal Community News, Digital Journalism.

Information on how hyperlocals bloggers can respond to the BBC proposals is [here](#)

More information on how the BBC is working with local newspapers and news sources is [here](#)

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