

# Tories step in to BBC row with local papers

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[Jeremy Hunt](#), the Conservative's shadow media secretary has stepped in to the [row](#) between the BBC and local newspapers. The BBC wants to increase its online local coverage but the local papers see that as a threat. They are already under pressure with collapsing advertising revenue and they fear that a more local BBC service will take eyeballs away from their own online offering.

In a [speech](#) hosted by Polis at the LSE tomorrow morning he will say:

*"In an increasingly difficult advertising market why should local newspapers have to face the additional threat of subsidised competition from the BBC? I don't think they should and I hope the BBC Trust takes a strong stance on this proposal. These proposals also threaten the development of new ultra local television services, something I think we should be helping not stifling. This is a big test for the Trust and one in which I hope they stand up to the BBC management."*

The [Telegraph](#) reports that:

*Under the plans, the number of local websites would increase to 65 and be expanded to include three daily bulletins for news, sport and weather. The service, which the BBC wants to introduce from next year, will cost £68m over the next five years, and £23m a year thereafter. The BBC insists that it will stay clear of local paper staples such as jobs, holidays and property, and has proposed "a self-imposed limit" of no more than 10 local video stories a day.*

*However, the Newspaper Society, the trade body which represents local newspapers, has expressed fears that the plans will damage business.*

*"The BBC should not spend public money duplicating local news services already provided by existing local media companies," said David Newell, the society's director. This was acknowledged by the BBC when it withdrew its plans for ultra-local television last year. Yet proposals to strengthen the BBC's local online news services are simply ultra-local TV in a different guise."*

We only have a few seats left for Mr Hunt's speech tomorrow, so contact us at [polis@lse.ac.uk](mailto:polis@lse.ac.uk) if you want to reserve a place.

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