

Chris Rowsell
Controller, Regulation
BBC Policy

via email

3 September 2024

Dear Chris,

BBC Bitesize: Phase 2 developments – Materiality Assessment

Thank you for sharing the BBC's materiality assessment on the BBC Bitesize Phase 2 developments. Ofcom will not require the BBC to undertake a Public Interest Test ("PIT") and I am writing to explain our reasoning.

Background

On 6 February 2024, we received a note from the BBC in respect of Phase 1 of its proposals to develop BBC Bitesize, which found that the proposals were 'business-as-usual', and therefore did not require a materiality assessment. The Phase 1 developments are distinct from those covered by the materiality assessment and our assessment of it, set out in this letter.

On 30 July 2024, we received a materiality assessment from the BBC in respect of the proposed Phase 2 developments to BBC Bitesize involving the following:

- integrating third-party Artificial Intelligence ("AI") learning tools;
- exploring the potential for chatbot interface and assessment functions; and
- aligning the Bitesize app and web platform to deliver a seamless proposition to audiences.

We understand the BBC intends to implement these Phase 2 developments from late 2024 to 2026/7.

Our assessment

We have considered whether the BBC's proposals are material, i.e. whether they may have a significant adverse impact on fair and effective competition. In reaching our view, we have reviewed the BBC's materiality assessment, conducted our own desk research and considered additional information that the BBC provided to us.

We note, in particular, that the BBC has engaged proactively with stakeholders and that the feedback has been largely supportive. The BBC has also adjusted elements of its proposal in response to specific stakeholder concerns.

We also note that the developments are focussed on introducing additional functionalities, rather than providing new forms of content. In addition, we understand that students typically use multiple education services (including Bitesize) for study / revision.

In conclusion, we agree with the BBC that the proposed Phase 2 developments to BBC Bitesize are not a new UK Public Service¹ and are not a change that may have a significant adverse impact on fair and effective competition. As such, this is not a material change.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ali-Abbas Ali', written in a cursive style.

Ali-Abbas Ali

¹ The proposed developments fall within the existing scope of BBC Online and are not a new UK Public Service.