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BBC HD gets go ahead from BBC Trust

Freeview viewers will still have to wait

by Stuart Miles published on 19 November 2007

The BBC Trust has approved the Beeb's proposals for its high definition channel BBC HD.

The Trust has approved the channel, which has been running as a trial on Sky, to launch on cable and Sky satellite as soon as possible.

The Trust has also said that it should launch on "Freesat" when the platform launches, and on Freeview as soon as feasible, although the Trust has said it will be instigating a further review of the service on Freeview which it expects to be able to launch next year.

The BBC had proposed launching a limited four-hour-a-day HD channel on Freeview, running overnight between 2am and 6am, until a full nine-hour version could be launched after digital switchover.

However the Trust's Diane Coyle said "The responses from the public and commercial stakeholders led us to conclude that it was not in licence-fee payers' interests to launch a four-hour overnight service at present.

"After considering all the evidence we are satisfied that the public value generated is sufficiently high and there is unlikely to be a negative impact on the market."

However, the Trust has stated that "The channel's purpose to showcase HD content from across the BBC portfolio should take precedence over its aim to simulcast prime-time BBC One."

The Beeb said in a statement that "Audiences can look forward to the likes of Earth - Power Of The Planet, Cranford, Torchwood, Hammonds Heroes, Diary Of Anne Frank, Around The World In 80 Gardens and Live At The Apollo in extraordinary sound and vision."

