

**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**  
**Wednesday 11 September 2019**

**1. QUESTION FROM GABRIELE SIMONS (IN ATTENDANCE)**  
**Re: Presentation to Council on 5G**

Considering the known health implications of 5G, I would like to request permission for a 20-30 minute (max.) presentation at the Council's October meeting.

Is Council prepared to receive vital information on behalf of this and future generations?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART**

*The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public and supports such engagement, in line with the Council's public participation scheme. Members of the public can ask a question of the Leader or relevant Cabinet Member at meetings of the Cabinet and Council or make a representation of up to 3 minutes at meetings of the full Council. At Council, there is a maximum 30-minute time allocation for public participation, which includes oral representations and questions. Part of the reason for this is so the Council has sufficient time to attend to its other business. It is therefore not possible to allow one person the full 30-minute allocation, to the disadvantage of other members of the public who may wish to speak to or ask a question of the Council on matters affecting the County.*

*All Councillor contact details are available on the Council's website. Members of the public can use this mechanism to disseminate any vital and in-depth information to Councillors for their consideration relating to the health implications of 5G. These would of course be considered by Councillors before any debate. The Council will always willingly receive vital information on any matter.*

**2. QUESTION FROM TERE WELLS (MRS) (IN ATTENDANCE)**  
**Re: 5G: Health and Environmental Hazard Documentation**

If the responsibility to Halt 5G, or the increased risk of harm by ANY non-ionising radiation frequencies across Devon is beyond that of DCC (& respective Local Councils), then who are the said Councils responsible to for this risk of potential harm?

At what point & when does the responsibility of Due Diligence & Duty of Care pass back to the higher governing body or overruling party/authority? Will that higher authority release/exempt DCC from their responsibility of Due Diligence & Duty of Care that they (DCC) are unable to apply regarding this risk?

I would also appreciate your looking at this evidence below alongside the Public questions on that day relating to the very real concerns of Devon residents.

<https://devoncc.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/PublicDocs/Democracy/EXdK0x1zASpFpV4Y5IRpO1IBzfOxoXWHL0mMAI296aniEA?e=oaxCgg>

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*Devon County Council has no statutory health protection responsibility for potential effects of 5G. The responsibility for determining the level of risk associated with 5G and monitoring evidence relating to this and other mobile technologies sits with Public Health England.*

*I also confirm that I will consider this evidence and encourage my colleagues to do the same.*

**3. QUESTION FROM LISA GOUDIE (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)**

**Re: Independent Research on Stop 5G**

Could you consider looking at the independent research on Stop 5G on Earth and in Space.

More than 10,000 peer-reviewed scientific studies demonstrate harm to human health from RF radiation. The effects are detrimental to public health.

This is beyond research to what ICNRP and PHE are providing.

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*Public health information on the health effects of 5G is provided nationally by Public Health England and any additional evidence is reviewed regularly by their specialist advisers. We also review any significant information available on the impact of non-ionising radiation.*

**4. QUESTION FROM CHARLIE KAY (IN ATTENDANCE)**

**Re: Halting 5G in Exeter**

How can DCC help us to stop the roll out of 5G in Devon?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*DCC will keep its public website updated with information provided by Public Health England, the statutory agency responsible for specialist public health advice. Devon County Council will ensure District Councils, as Planning Authorities, are aware of this information (Devon County Council is not itself a Planning Authority).*

**5. QUESTION FROM GEORGIE GOLDEN (IN ATTENDANCE)**

**Re: Zero Carbon Target Dates**

In February this council bravely and democratically voted to reject the adoption of what is called "zero carbon emissions" target of 2030, opting instead for a 2050 target. However, I notice that the target now seems to be 2030. Therefore, my question is when and how was this council's democratic decision overturned?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*In declaring a Climate Emergency in February this year, this Authority noted that it had no mandate to set a specific target for the achievement of carbon neutrality for Devon as a whole. Instead, it resolved to facilitate stronger Devon-wide action through collaboration at a strategic, community and individual level. It was on this basis that Devon County Council convened the establishment of the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group to provide the strategic coordination of a collective response to the Devon Climate Emergency and achieve the reduction of carbon emissions to net-zero by 2050 at the latest. This Group has recently appointed a Net Zero Task Force to produce an evidence-led Devon Carbon Plan, including consideration of the earliest, credible date that should be set for net-zero emissions. Options*

*drawn up by the Task Force will be tested and refined at a series of citizens' assembly meetings and the draft Plan will be subject to full public consultation.*

*Further detail relating to the Devon Climate Emergency and the work of the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group is available online at:*

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/energyandclimatechange/devon-climate-emergency>

**6. QUESTION FROM RHIANNON AUGENTHALER (IN ATTENDANCE)**

**Re: 5G and ICT Roadmap**

During the Council meeting on 25th July, one of the responses from Councillor Croad said that 'as a County Council we have no current plans to make use of 5G in our "ICT" roadmap to 2020'. Looking at the ICT roadmap it is clear that you will be using technology (the internet of things, artificial intelligence and chatbots) that is supported by 5G and harmful wireless technology.

Therefore, what are DCCs plans beyond 2020 with regard to the internet of things, artificial intelligence and chatbots?

With the roadmap referring to partnership working and other enterprises being encouraged to innovate and run services that would have traditionally been delivered by the council, Does the Council retain overall authority in decision making in what these companies are putting on our streets and does the Council have any authority to remove any infrastructure in the future that is harmful?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR PARSONS**

*The Council's technology roadmap beyond 2020 is in the very early stages of development, but there is little doubt that the Council will be interested in developing services based upon Internet of Things (IoT) systems where such systems can offer improvements in the services provided to citizens. Use of Artificial Intelligence and chatbot services in order to improve service efficiency and enhance interactions with citizens will be considered and deployed where appropriate. These services will be deployed using the most appropriate technology, which may be broadband, 3/4G wireless or other new communication technologies including LoraWAN. They are unlikely to use 5G networks as the roadmap from the major service providers does not envisage sufficient 5G coverage across Devon until after the end of the next Council Digital and Technology roadmap.*

*The Council will not deploy services based on technology infrastructure that the UK Government has advised represents a significant risk to public health. Where such a risk is identified in relation to existing technology infrastructure, the Council will decommission affected services.*

**7. QUESTION FROM DAVID ROCHESTER (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)**

**Re: Carbon Neutrality Dates**

Will Devon County Council follow the lead of East Devon District Council and adopt the principles set out in the EDDC resolution shown below which has now been adopted.

RESOLVED;

1. To sign up to and endorse the Devon Climate Change Emergency Declaration, but, rather than the Devon-wide target of carbon neutrality by 2050, adopt a target of 2040, and commit to bringing the target of 2040 forward whenever new circumstances arise which make an earlier date viable and achievable.

2. To embed tackling the Climate Emergency as a key strategic priority of all parts of East Devon District Council, and reflect this as a priority in the new Council Plan and future updates of Services Plans and relevant corporate policies.

3. To seek out and engage with regional and national stakeholders, including MPs, Extinction Rebellion, academics, Citizens' Action groups, the UK Climate Change Committee, the UK Youth Climate Coalition, the Government, and global organisations, for as long as the Declaration is in force within the District.

4. To publicise the dangers posed by the Climate Emergency to the district and the planet through the council's social media and print media presence, with reference to robust academic findings by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the UK Climate Change Committee, and other institutions.

#### **REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*Devon County Council has adopted and is working to the principles set out in the Devon Climate Declaration agreed through the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group. Whilst this Group is working collectively to achieve net zero carbon emissions across Devon by 2050 at the latest, this does not represent its target; instead, this will be established through the work of the newly established Net Zero Task Force through its production of an evidence-based Devon Carbon Plan. Prior to that, in line with the Declaration, this Authority has committed to review its internal plans to reduce its carbon emissions, which will be considered by this Cabinet over the coming few months; this will require further action across all relevant Service areas.*

*In relation to engagement with others, a clear process for this has been agreed through the production of the Devon Carbon Plan. To help facilitate this, Devon County Council has committed funding to the staging of a Citizens' Assembly, the detailed approach to which is currently being considered in partnership with the University of Exeter.*

*This Authority's approach to publicising climate change is evident from its published Climate Change Strategy and its ongoing media activity, available via the County Council's web site.*

#### **8. QUESTION FROM ELLA DANGERFIELD (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)**

**Re: Reductions in Commuting and Increasing Public Transport Use**

As transportation accounts for over 40% of carbon emissions in Devon, can DCC advise what plans are in hand to reduce commuting and increase the use of public transport?

#### **REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*Devon County Council continues to maintain support for public transport in contrast to many other parts of the country. In 2019/20 it is financially supporting the public and community transport network to the value of approximately £6.0 million per annum. This supports around 20% of the total bus network in the County. This is on top of the £9.3million budget fulfilling our statutory duty to provide the National Bus Pass.*

*Public Transport is an important way for many people to get to work wherever possible our aim has been to maintain the existing network and make use of available developer funding and other external sources to improve services around new developments. We aim thereby to encourage the public transport habit early on with new developments.*

*We will continue to work closely with the rail sector with more improvements to train services in Devon planned towards the end of this year.*

*For trips where public transport is more difficult the aim is to increase opportunities for Park & Ride, with larger sites on main arterial roads and smaller local ones on other roads, which can provide opportunities for lower carbon onward travel.*

*Within the main urban areas the aim is to further develop the pedestrian/cycle routes.*

*Community groups, residents and employers can help by passing on sustainable and active travel advice. For employers, a range of information is available and our biggest bus company is willing to discuss discount fare schemes. Similarly, schools can encourage families to use their car less and in particular encourage active travel options for their pupils which have wider health benefits.*

**9. QUESTION FROM HELENA WHITTEN (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)**  
**Re: Woodland Tree Planting Scheme**

Cornwall County Council have launched a mass woodland tree planting scheme to cover 20,000 acres, in order to help tackle the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency. They say that trees will be planted "on our streets, in our hedgerows and through the creation of new woodlands and forested areas."

Can Devon County Council commit to a similar scheme, with land being made available immediately, in order for woodland to reach maturity (and therefore to have developed maximum properties as a carbon sink) before the Council's 2050 deadline for net zero carbon?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*Devon County Council is currently reviewing its internal plans to reduce carbon emissions and other ways in which it might improve its environmental performance, including support for biodiversity. These processes will include consideration of ways to support new tree planting within Devon, the detail of which will be made available through action plans which will be made public through the County Council's web site.*

**10. QUESTION FROM FLORENCE JACKMAN (IN ATTENDANCE)**  
**Re: Immediate Actions for Carbon Reductions**

What steps will DCC take to make reductions in County wide carbon emissions which can be implemented immediately in 2019, prior to a full action plan being put in place?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*A list of the projects which Devon County Council is already pursuing to reduce its carbon emissions and implement its Climate Change Strategy is available on its web site at:*

*<https://www.devon.gov.uk/energyandclimatechange/strategy/climate-change-strategy/reducing-emissions>*

*In line with the Devon Climate Emergency Declaration, the Authority is reviewing its current carbon strategy. A more ambitious target to reduce emissions and ways in which to achieve this will be considered by this Cabinet later this year.*

**11. QUESTION FROM ROBERT VINT (ATTENDANCE TBC)**  
**Re: Target Dates for Carbon Neutrality**

DCC and DCERG currently have a target date of 2050 for Carbon Neutrality - but Exeter, Plymouth, Torbay, Teignbridge DC and Mid Devon DC, 19 Towns and 9 parishes so far are aiming for 2030 or earlier. Will this Cabinet and the Council help ensure that DCERG commits to developing a plan that will accord with the ambitions of these authorities and enable and assist them in achieving their earlier target dates?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*Whilst the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group is currently working to achieve net zero carbon emissions across Devon by 2050 at the latest, this does not represent a specific target. Instead, this target will be established through the work of the newly established Net Zero Task Force through its production of an evidence-based Devon Carbon Plan. Devon County*

*Council is currently reviewing its own carbon strategy and Cabinet will consider a revised target for carbon emissions and ways to implement this at a forthcoming meeting.*

**12. QUESTION FROM GEORGE CURRY (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)**

**Re: RegenSW representation on the DCERG**

RegenSW represents all the renewable energy and community energy businesses in Devon but is not currently a member of DCERG. Instead, businesses are represented by the LEP - an organisation whose sole remit is to promote economic growth, a remit which could be in conflict with the actions required to reduce climate change. Can DCC confirm that RegenSW will be invited to join DCERG?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*The Devon Climate Emergency Response Group (DCERG) is a strategic-level coordination body. The Net-Zero Task Force (NZTF) that reports to the DCERG, is a group of specialists representing various aspects of societal changes necessary to decarbonise in Devon, which has been tasked with developing the Devon Carbon Plan. Kerry Hayes, part of the Regen team, sits on the NZTF. Additionally, Patrick Devine-Wright who chairs the NZTF is a non-Executive Director of Exeter Community Energy, and a further member of the Task Force, Ian Hutchcroft, is Chair of Plymouth Energy Community. The challenges and opportunities surrounding the decarbonisation of energy are well represented on the NZTF.*

**13. QUESTION FROM KATHERINE ARMITAGE (IN ATTENDANCE)**

**Re: Insurance and 5G Illnesses**

Have DCC noted that any future illness, debilitating adverse effects to themselves, their staff & the public are completely uninsurable by any agency or underwriter for the effects from EMF's/RW's? Microwave Radiation of all levels.

If there are no concerns regarding Health & Safety on ANY level to any person then why is there no insurance available?

Given that the above are uninsurable, where do the Public Health & Safety guidelines stand for DCC members, staff & the general public?

What evidence of proof to public Health & Safety was provided & by which INDEPENDENT scientific medical body provided the evidence?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*Devon County Council has no statutory health protection responsibility for potential effects of 5G. This is the responsibility of the Health and Safety Executive.*

*Public health information on the health effects of 5G is provided nationally by Public Health England and any additional evidence is reviewed regularly by their specialist advisers.*

*The Council is aware there is no cover on its own insurance policy for illnesses caused by 5G but, any such claim would need to be made against the network provider, not the Council.*

**14. QUESTION FROM GODFREY WHITEHOUSE (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)**

**Re: On Shore Wind Farms and National Contracts for Difference (CfD) scheme**

The Government Committee on Climate Change has called for giving the go-ahead to onshore wind. Onshore wind is the cheapest form of renewable energy in the UK. Will DCC do everything in its power to encourage and promote new onshore wind installations in Devon including lobbying the Government to allow onshore wind to take part in the national Contracts for Difference (CfD) scheme?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*The Net-Zero Task Force will be reviewing the range of transformational changes necessary across society to decarbonise Devon most effectively, including how and where our electricity is generated, the barriers that will need to be overcome and the opportunities available. Activity to lobby organisations that are key to unblocking barriers and seizing opportunities, including government, with a collective voice from Devon will form part of the Devon Carbon Plan.*

**15. QUESTION FROM ANNE BENTHAM (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)**

**Re: Communication Regarding Climate Emergency**

I am concerned that we have been in a declared climate and ecological emergency situation for several months and I have not received any direct and informative communication from DCC to tell me this. What immediate action is DCC taking to ensure that the facts are disseminated directly to the wider public (to reach all the county's citizens) so that everyone becomes fully aware that we are in an emergency situation and that systemic and structural changes will be required to mitigate and adapt to the reality of that emergency?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*Devon County Council is just one of the organisations working collectively via the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group to address the Devon-wide climate emergency. In addition to the information available on the Devon Climate Emergency web pages, news releases have been issued regularly since February 2019 by Devon County Council (via its online Devon News Centre) and the other partners on the Response Group; many have been published by news outlets and all have been posted on social media platforms. Furthermore, features have appeared on television and radio news programmes and updates have been provided to town and parish councils. A communications plan will be developed by the Climate Emergency Project Manager once they are in post.*

**16. QUESTION FROM JONATHAN BURNS (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)**

**Re: Urban Street Lighting and Future Technology**

Why are upgrading revisions to the urban street lighting of Devon being carried out which will, with minimal further upgrading, enable the future incorporation of wireless spectrum broadcast?

A response to this question must be contextualized by the understanding that I, as a public citizen of Devon, I have a reasonable fear of harm to my health from the proliferation of this future technology, which has had no prior safety testing carried out upon it to establish whether, or not it is safe to roll out to the public domain.

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*The primary purpose of the Street Lighting Upgrade is to reduce energy consumption and maintain a safe and effective asset for the future. In parts of the county (principally Exeter) communication networks are already being used to control lighting and due to obsolescence need also to be upgraded. The current options available for this upgrade do not use 5G technology, and are already in wide use across the country.*

**17. QUESTION FROM STEWART JOHNSTON (IN ATTENDANCE)**

**Re: Justification for the Rollout of 5G Technology**

Bearing in mind what Environment Minister Céline Fremault (CDH) told Bruzz. "The people of Brussels are not guinea pigs whose health I can sell at a profit. We cannot leave anything to doubt," she added: "I cannot welcome such technology if the radiation standards, which must protect the citizen, are not respected, 5G or not." Also, bearing in mind that plans for a pilot project to provide high-speed 5G wireless internet in Brussels have been halted due to fears for the health of citizens, according to reports.  
<https://www.brusselstimes.com/brussels/55052/radiation-concerns-halt-brussels-5g-for-now/>

How can Devon County Councillors justify the roll out of 5G in Devon, which has been shown to particularly effect children who are more vulnerable to microwave technology due to their developing brains and which a report from Devon resident Barrie Trower has shown to have an impact on human fertility (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLVlbPtNrVo&t=2412s>) which will in turn have an adverse effect on future generations?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*Public health information on the health effects of 5G in England is provided by Public Health England and any additional evidence is reviewed regularly by their specialist advisers.*

**18. QUESTION FROM PETER SCOTT (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)  
Re: Pension Fund and Fossil Fuel Companies**

Can DCC advise what proportion of their pension fund is invested in companies associated with fossil fuel production and what steps are they taking to divest such investments?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART**

*Any issues relating to the Pension Fund are a matter for the Investment and Pension Fund Committee and do not fall within the remit of the Cabinet.*

*However, I will arrange for the Chair of the Investment and Pension Fund Committee to send a written response to your question.*

**19. QUESTION FROM PIPPA HARVEY (IN ATTENDANCE)  
Re: Scrutiny of 5G**

Please could DCC set up a scrutiny meeting to focus on the dangers of 5G

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART**

*The Cabinet does not direct or influence what the Council's Scrutiny Committees considers and / or reviews. The Work Programme of the Scrutiny Committees is a matter for them and they consider their upcoming work programme at their respective meetings.*