

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

**1. QUESTION FROM LISA GOUDIE (IN ATTENDANCE)**  
**Re: Public Health England and Safety Tests**

Are PHE insulting our intelligence by avoiding the question asked about providing a realistic safety test or could it be that the question was misunderstood? Would it be futile to rephrase or repeat the question?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*It is the role of Public Health England to provide scientific advice on health risks to Local Authorities on all matters including radiation. I have approached them for a detailed response on some of the concerns that have been raised by members of the public in Devon. I am providing the detail of the response because I believe this is important.*

*"In relation to 5G, PHE has committed to monitoring the evidence and revising its advice, should this be necessary. There are mechanisms in place to ensure that PHE maintains its independence, professional and scientific standards. Since the winding up of the Advisory Group on Non-ionising Radiation (AGNIR), PHE looks to the Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (COMARE) to deliver an expert review report in this area if and when sufficient new evidence has accumulated. COMARE is a long-standing expert committee of the Department of Health and Social Care. It has a published code of conduct, abides by the code of practice for scientific advisory committees (CoPSAC 2011) and has published a declaration of members' interests. Its terms of reference are to assess and advise government and the devolved administrations on the health effects of natural and man-made radiation and to assess the adequacy of the available data and the need for further research. The current published work programme of COMARE (April 2019 – March 2020) includes a statement that COMARE will be kept up to date on studies of the possible health effects of electromagnetic fields (EMFs) through published information from a range of sources, as it becomes available. COMARE will evaluate the evidence to determine if further review is warranted.*

*"It is not just PHE and COMARE that are keeping this area under review. The European Union's Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) has published an opinion on electromagnetic fields that was last updated in 2014; the Committee undertook a public consultation on the opinion between February and April 2014, considered all points raised and made revisions where appropriate. The comments received and the Committee's responses are publicly available on the European Commission's web site. Members of SCENIHR are required to be established scientists with over ten years of professional experience appointed following an open call and all have to declare possible conflicts of interest prior to participating in the work; these declarations are all published.*

*"Much has been made of the age of the current guidelines from the International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), which were published in 1998. However, ICNIRP has been working on revised guidelines and a draft document was subject to public consultation between July and October 2018 along with two supporting documents. It is worth noting that while the draft guidelines, which are still available on the ICNIRP web site, differ from the 1998 guidelines, they would not prevent the operation of 5G networks. The Commission is currently considering the comments*

*received during the public consultation prior to finalising the new guidelines. Once finalised they will be published on the Commission's web site along with all comments received on the draft and the Commission's responses to them. Members of the Commission are elected after an open call for nominations and anyone employed by industry is ineligible for election. Members are required to comply with the ICNIRP policy of independence and to make a declaration of personal interests. ICNIRP's budget relies entirely on support from public bodies and it publishes its annual financial report online.*

*"All ICNIRP documents are freely available from its web site ([www.icnirp.org](http://www.icnirp.org)) and include a recent note evaluating two radio frequency animal carcinogenicity studies published in 2018 (the NTP and Ramazzini studies).*

*"Finally, it is worth noting that the World Health Organisation (WHO) is currently revising its Environmental Health Criteria on radiofrequency fields.*

*"Inevitably there will always be intervals between the publication of expert reviews of the data, but this does not mean that evidence is not being considered. Most importantly, if there was compelling new evidence that changed the current evaluation then both national and international bodies would highlight this without delay."*

*I can confirm that Devon County Council will be keeping itself fully updated on the expert bodies' advice on health matters.*

**2. QUESTION FROM TERE WELLS (IN ATTENDANCE)**

**Re: Sharing Information with other Councils on 5G and EMF Transmissions**

I would like to thank DCC for going to Scrutiny on the issue of 5G & EMF Transmissions and I am happy to help in that process in any way I can.

Outside of the Scrutiny process, I would like to ask if DCC will be talking to & discussing with other Members of the LGA to help raise awareness of 5G & all EMF transmissions, so other Councils can become more proactive in protecting the communities they serve.

Perhaps DCC have already been connecting with & sharing information with other Councils on this issue?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*Scrutiny will report back to Cabinet when the review is completed and is grateful for the public interest shown by responses to the engagement. Several other councils have already looked at the issue of 5G, as well as Devon. We have asked policy and scrutiny colleagues across the country to share their work with us, and in turn will share the results of our Scrutiny Spotlight review in the form of a report and any recommendations that it formulates.*

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

**Re: Street Furniture and Frequency Levels**

Can Devon County council please provide me with transparent information on what exactly is installed on the lampposts that do fall under the duty/responsibility of Devon County Council?

To be more specific with my question.... During the council meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019 the question "Are any streetlamps or other highways furniture owned by the council currently used for 5G?" which had been asked by councillor Connett had been answered by Councillor Hughes with the following response: "Not that we are aware."

Can you please find out and let me know what frequencies and what wavelength in the non-ionizing radiation spectrum including everything in the current sub 10 gigahertz range of communications technology are emitted by the street lamps and other highways furniture owned by the council and whether or not they emit (even low levels of) the same frequencies constantly, day and night or whether the frequencies vary during times when they are being switched on or off?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES**

*Devon County Council have not installed, approved, or requested the installation of 5G capability on our street furniture, including streetlights.*

*The Harvard Central Management System for streetlights uses WIMAC and GSM frequency bands. There are SIM cards operating at 3G within the remote monitoring for traffic systems, on some Variable Message Signs and Parking Guidance Systems, and a few Road Weather Stations, situated across the County and other traffic equipment such as traffic counters.*

**4. QUESTION FROM JONATHAN BURNS (IN ATTENDANCE)**

**Re: Clarification over Responsibilities for Street Furniture.**

Will DCC please advise precisely why it consistently maintains that all modifications to its infrastructure, pursuant to communications technology, is the sole preserve of second tier authorities, because this is a planning matter?

Second tier authorities are equally adamant that this matter is not within their purview.

Any planning issues which may otherwise have been relevant to the answer are negated by the Communications Act 2003 and therefore relieve the second tier authorities of powers to act.

*(Clarification (DCC has a Street Lighting Team, which second tier authorities do not have and for the scope of this question, "communications technology" includes any frequency or wavelength in the entire non-ionising EMR spectrum which is both in existence already, and which has potential for the future. Any reply relating to 5G will be taken to incorporate this consideration)*

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES**

*Devon County Council expects anyone wishing to locate any equipment on/in our asset, to request permission to do so from us. If the equipment required planning approval it would be for the relevant second tier planning authority to determine. Once telecommunications equipment is in place it can be upgraded without the consent of the asset owner.*