

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC
Wednesday 15 January 2020

1. QUESTION FROM MR C JENKINS (IN ATTENDANCE)
Re: 5G and Insect population

Given the rapid decline in insects, so essential for pollination and as a food source for other wildlife, what evidence is there that 5G will not cause a further decline in the insect population?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD

There is scientific evidence to suggest that electromagnetic radiation (EMR), such as that utilised by 5G technologies, has the potential to produce detrimental effects on wildlife. For example, studies have shown that EMR has the potential to disrupt the magnetic orientation used by migratory bird species (Engels *et al*, 2014) and also insects such as honey bees (Sharma & Kumar 2010).

More recently, EKLIPSE (an EU-funded Coordination Action under the Horizon 2020 programme) published a thorough review of scientific literature on impacts of artificial EMR on wildlife. Whilst this noted the potential risks of EMR to the physiological mechanisms of insects (e.g. affecting movement), current evidence is limited by the number and quality of studies. They also concluded that there is currently very limited evidence for effects on the diversity or abundance of insects (Malkemper *et al*, 2018). The associated international web conference arranged by EKLIPSE concluded that, *'there is an urgent need to strengthen the scientific basis of knowledge on EMR and their potential impacts on wildlife. In particular, there is a need to base future research on sound, high-quality, replicable experiments so that credible, transparent and easily accessible evidence can inform society and policy-makers to make decisions and frame their policies'* (Goudeseune *et al*, 2018).

Within the UK, the invertebrate charity, Buglife, has already highlighted the need for such detailed research to gain a proper understanding of these issues. However, these potential risks have to be considered in the context of the wide range of other proven threats to insect life, such as habitat loss, pesticide use and climate change, which are already having a profound effect on insect populations and the wider ecosystem.

In this context, regardless of the potential implications of 5G or other forms of EMR, there is a clear need for collective action in Devon (as elsewhere) to address the conservation of insect life. An example of this is the work promoted through the Devon Local Nature Partnership, including DCC's own Pollinator Action Plan.

References:

MALKEMPER Erich P.*, TSCHEULIN Thomas*, VANBERGEN Adam J.*, VIAN Alain*, BALIAN Estelle, GOUDESEUNE Lise (2018). The impacts of artificial Electromagnetic Radiation on wildlife (flora and fauna). Current knowledge overview: a background document to the web conference. A report of the EKLIPSE project. * These authors contributed equally to this work. [View Here](#)

GOUDESEUNE Lise, BALIAN Estelle, VENTOCILLA Jorge. (2018). The impacts of artificial Electromagnetic Radiation on wildlife (flora and fauna). Report of the web conference. A report of the EKLIPSE project. [View here](#)

SHARMA Ved, KUMAR Neelima (2010). Changes in honeybee behaviour and biology under the influence of cellphone radiations. *Current Science*, **98**.

ENGELS, Svenja, SCHNEIDER, Nils-Lasse, LEFELDT Nele, HEIN Christine M., ZAPKA Manuela, MICHALIK Andreas, ELBERS Dana, KITTEL Achim, HORE P. J., and MOURITSEN Henrik (2014). Anthropogenic electromagnetic noise disrupts magnetic compass orientation in a migratory bird. *Nature*, **509**.

2. QUESTION FROM DAVID ROCHESTER (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)

Re: Marsh Barton Station

In May 2019 I asked the following question
'UK government statistics show that over 40% of CO2 emissions in Devon are from transportation. Given our impending Climate Crisis it is essential that travel by car is diminished. Can the Council confirm that they will provide sufficient funding for Marsh Barton and Edginswell stations to be developed promptly and indicate how they intend to increase capacity on the Avocet line and rail services to Cranbrook, both of which are anticipated to reach capacity by 2023'.

Can the Council now advise when a planning application for the Marsh Barton station will be submitted and confirm that Devon CC have indicated to the Peninsular Transport SSTB that local rail services have to be prioritised ahead of further road building

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR DAVIS

There is funding in place to deliver Marsh Barton Station and we expect to submit a planning application in May 2020. In my roles as Chair of the Peninsula Rail Task Force and Vice Chair of the Peninsula Transport Sub National Transport Body I can assure you we are actively lobbying for further investment in rail to improve resilience, connectivity, capacity and comfort on our services. We have seen in recent years rolling stock improvements, which has increased capacity for passengers; resilience works completed north of Cowley Bridge and works start on the mainline between Dawlish and Teignmouth. The new timetable changes has increased frequency of trains between Paignton and Exmouth, consistently fast journey times to London and we remain hopeful of plans for a passing loop near Cranbrook to deliver improved reliability, diversionary capacity and increased frequency of local services to east of Exeter destinations. In October last year I met with the Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris to express our concerns that the Peninsula rail network is currently entirely powered by diesel and that we want the Government to explore discrete electrification and options for non-fossil fuel solutions for rail services in the future as part of our commitment to decarbonising transport in the South West.

3. QUESTION FROM TERE WELLS (IN ATTENDANCE)

Re: Public Questionnaire and 5G Scrutiny

Now that the Public Questionnaire concerning 5g has been closed, please will DCC advise by which date we need to be ready for our witnessing and how and in what format we may prepare for our comment in the Spotlight Review/Scrutiny process.

(We wish to be as well prepared as possible to make the process as helpful and valuable as possible for the Council.)

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD

The Council received over 1200 responses to its 5G survey with a high number of respondents also wishing to attend the Scrutiny Spotlight Review meeting and speak to Councillors on this topic. Officers are currently analysing the survey results and working to set a date in February for this event. All respondents who expressed an interest in attending the event will be contacted with the full details and will be given as much advance notice as possible.

4. QUESTION FROM RHIANNON AUGENTHALER (IN ATTENDANCE)

Re: ICNRIP Guidelines and Solutions to Health Consequences.

ICNRIP has recently published guidelines for protection against adverse health effects of non-ionizing radiation. These guidelines state clearly that it is necessary to limit exposure to electric and magnetic fields.

The rollout of 5G would result in blanket coverage of emf 24/7 with 5G enabled lampposts every 150 meters additionally to an increased amount of phone masts.

As a consequence of that it would be impossible to follow the safety guidelines mentioned above: to limit exposure. Everybody, including pregnant women, young children and all other members of vulnerable groups, every insect, every tree would be exposed to emf radiation 24/7 without having any choice and without being able to limit their exposure.

People might suffer serious health consequences as a result of this.

Which solutions to this problem does Devon County Council suggest?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD

The Council has previously published a statement on Health Risks from 5G Technologies Deployment which can be found at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/economy/infrastructure/health-risks-from-5g-technologies-deployment/> . The Council follows Public Health England's advice on matters concerning the protection of the health of the population.

As set out in our statement, Devon County Council has no plans for 5G installations on lampposts. However, changes to planning regulations following the national consultation may place this matter outside the control of local authorities.

5. QUESTION FROM LISA GOUDIE (IN ATTENDANCE)

Re: Corporate Telecoms

Sometimes it is quite distressing to having the realisation that the never-ending greed of the corporate telecoms are imposing such a proven, dangerous threat upon us, all in the name of progress and subsequently using the media to ban informative adverts and discredit decent professionals. It makes a disturbing scenario that the health of people, (especially pregnant women) animals, birds, bees and trees etc do not fit into their equation.

Do you think that this is progress or a distinct decline in morality?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD

The expansion of telecommunications including access to the internet has brought with it considerable benefits both globally and locally. With regard to health risks, the Council has previously published a statement on Health Risks from 5G Technologies Deployment which can be found at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/economy/infrastructure/health-risks-from-5g-technologies-deployment/>. We have been advised by Public Health England that the health risks of 5G are judged to be low, and as with many things in life, it is a matter of us having to balance risks and benefits.

6. QUESTION FROM JONATHAN BURNS (IN ATTENDANCE)

Re: ICNIRP Guidelines and PHE Integrity

ICNIRP only sets guidelines for exposure limits to EMFs: it does not mandate regulations which must be followed without question, or punitive consequence. Many other countries across the globe set far lower, safer guidelines in spite of these bodies.

ICNIRP self-selects and self-appoints its members only from sources and bodies which promulgate only known industry supporting views. None have mainstream medical training and the newly appointed Chair is a psychologist.

ICNIRP guidelines were set in 1998, based upon guidelines 1,000 times higher than actual safe limits, taken from a US Navy report dated 1953 by a German WWII émigré scientist invited to live and research in the US by the US military in 1946. This scientist already knew that there were adverse health effects at levels lower than the guideline figure.

ICNIRP has never stated anywhere that EMFs do not cause harm to health.

As PHE base their advice upon ICNIRP guidelines, why would anyone forced to refer to these agencies not continue to question the integrity of both PHE and ICNIRP to the extent that the above facts do not convincingly demonstrate independence, or impartiality, or appropriate health background, and do not require compliance?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD

The Council has previously published a statement on Health Risks from 5G Technologies Deployment which can be found at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/economy/infrastructure/health-risks-from-5g-technologies-deployment/>. The Council follows Public Health England's advice on matters concerning the protection of the health of the population.

At last month's Cabinet I provided a detailed statement quoting directly from Public Health England regarding the integrity of advice provided nationally to all local authorities. Taking into account the published research and current international guidance, Public Health England considers the risks low and therefore unlikely to cause harm to the public's health. For completeness, I am reproducing Public Health England's response here again:

"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) 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."

**7. QUESTION FROM CHARLIE KAY (IN ATTENDANCE)
Re: Free Talk by Independent Researcher on WiFi**

As most of you are probably receiving correspondence from your constituents regarding EMR and EMF's and it is a difficult subject to find out what is really going on are Councillors aware that we have a managed to engage one of the world's leading independent researchers on Wi-Fi, Barrie Trower, to give a free talk on the evening of Feb 3rd at the Phoenix Exeter. If not, you are all cordially invited.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD

Thank you for the invitation. I will ensure this information is passed on to all County Councillors by our Democratic Services Team.