

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Thursday 22 July 2021

1. QUESTION FROM MS T WELLS (NOT PRESENT)

Re: 5G Energy Consumption

5G requires complex, energy hungry infrastructure - small cells every 150metres & many more MIMO (multiple input & multiple output) antenna. Various sources including the IEE (The Institute of Electrical Engineers) say a 5G mast/base station would consume 1.5 - 3 times the power of a 4G base station, with 5G, more base stations will be required.

Moving towards their own Zero Carbon Initiative, how will that increase in consumption translate into Carbon emissions & footprint & can DCC tell me how they plan to offset this huge increase in energy consumption? Will renewables be able to provide sufficient energy to power this rollout?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART

This is not a question that DCC are in a position to answer and should be directed to Ofcom who are responsible for the issuing of 5G licences. DCC is not in a position to calculate the specific energy consumption and carbon footprint for the activities undertaken by others.

2. QUESTION FROM MS R AUGENTHALER (NOT ATTENDING)

Re: 5G Mast Consumption

What will be the electricity power consumption of one 5G base station (mast)?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART

This is not a question that DCC are in a position to answer and should be directed to Ofcom who are responsible for the issuing of 5G licences. DCC is not in a position to calculate the specific energy consumption and carbon footprint for the activities undertaken by others.

3. QUESTION FROM MS S DENNIS (ATTENDING)

Re: Devon Pension Fund Carbon investment

The Devon Pension Fund currently reduces its carbon intensity by 7% per annum. This is not quick enough to avoid the financial risk of stranded assets

(i.e. assets losing value as global markets turn away from fossil fuels). It is also not consistent with the Climate Emergency Declaration that DCC made in 2019. Can Devon County Council request that the Investment and Pensions Committee ask Brunel Pension Partnership to offer a fund which does not include the assets of companies whose main business is the production and distribution of fossil fuels .PLEASE can this be done within the next year in order to help mitigate the effects of the climate emergency on us all and our children's future?"

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MORRISH

The Devon Pension Fund has committed to achieving net zero investment portfolios by 2050, earlier if possible. We have already made considerable progress towards achieving that, with a 37% reduction in the Fund's carbon footprint from a baseline position of March 2019.

The Devon Fund has a fiduciary duty to achieve the best return it can for its members, at an appropriate level of risk. Set within that, the Fund recognises the risks associated with climate change and looks to play its part in tackling the issue of climate change.

Climate change is not just about the suppliers of fossil fuels, it is an issue for the whole economy. Those companies who consume fossil fuels in the course of their business all have a role to play in adapting their approach to reduce their carbon emissions, as do the fossil fuel companies.

This is why the Devon Fund and the Brunel Pension Partnership on their behalf, dedicate significant resources to ensure that we are engaging with companies on the issue, to use our influence as shareholders to seek solutions rather than just disinvest, which will actually make very little difference to how the companies concerned operate.

The Devon Fund invests via the Brunel Pension Partnership, who are seen as leaders in the investment world in their approach to climate change. Brunel are already working on the issues that the questioner raises, and climate change considerations alongside other Environmental, Social and Governance issues play a part in their manager selection processes for all their actively managed portfolios.

The vast majority of the Devon Fund's exposure to fossil fuel companies is via passive portfolios, which are lower cost in terms of fees, but invest in funds that track indices such as the FTSE All Share, and therefore own shares in all the companies within the index. Therefore, as Shell and BP are among the larger companies within the FTSE All Share index the Devon Fund has significant exposure to them. However, Brunel are working with FTSE Russell, the index providers, to develop climate transition indices that will focus on companies that are transitioning their businesses to support the zero carbon objective. Funds tracking these new indices are set to be launched later in the year, and the Devon Fund can then consider whether it wishes to shift its passive investments to the new funds.

**4. QUESTION FROM MR J BETTS (ATTENDING)
Re: Carbon Emissions and Transport Schemes**

In Devon 40% of carbon emissions are associated with transport**, and this is the sector that is most challenging for carbon reductions. And yet Devon County Council is still authorising new road schemes in Devon. Just recently the upgrade of the Newton Abbot link road has been announced at a cost of £45 million yet the Government's own £276bn road building strategy is being withdrawn in the light of its Transport Decarbonisation Plan announced on 14th July 2021***. When will Devon County Council stop spending money on carbon increasing roadbuilding, and start investing significantly on transportation schemes that will rapidly reduce emissions?"

** A Review of Devon County Council's Climate Change Strategy:
https://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0028/83557/DCC-climate-change-review-report-v5.pdf

*** Transport Decarbonisation Plan
<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/transport-decarbonisation-plan>

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART

The Council's Transport Infrastructure Plan (TIP) is a living document and is always under review to ensure it is in line with a range of local and national policies. Many of the projects emanate from the Local Plans to ensure appropriate infrastructure is in place to support proposed development. Devon Climate Declaration, to which this Authority is a signatory, and recent Government policy announcements like the *Transport Decarbonisation Plan* and the *Gear Change* walking and cycling and *Bus Back Better* strategies will ensure that all existing and emerging transport projects will focus on climate change, along with a range of other criteria, such as economy, road safety, air quality and other local conditions. We look forward to Government providing additional funds to enable us to invest on transport schemes to reduce carbon emissions.