

Brixham Town Council

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To:	Full Council	Date:	16.01.20
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Purpose of Report

The Town Council has received correspondence from members of the public who are concerned about health implications in respect of the 5G network. A member of the public addressed the Town Council on 1st August during the open public session raising concerns to public health on the release of 5G. This report has been compiled to provide Councillors with information that is accessible online.

Concerns raised by a Brixham Resident

Below is an extract from a letter received by Town Councillors from a Brixham Resident.

Please could I have a minute of your time to read my letter which concerns the rollout of 5G in Brixham.

I'm not sure if you are aware but there are no studies to prove 5G is safe. However there are numerous scientists worldwide that say it will have detrimental effects on not only humans, (young children being especially effected), but all wildlife, from bees to bats and trees included.

Berry head is an AONB, with beautiful trees that provide a home to wildlife. The greater Horseshoe Bat (now in decline), lives in one of the few remaining sites in Northern Europe at Berry Head.

The new 5G technology requires many more cell phone masts and various other street furniture to link its network. Indeed 5G works completely differently compared to the other 2g, 3g, and 4g technologies. This increase in cell masts, according to some experts, may also increase the health risks to residents in Brixham.

Other towns and cities have halted, banned or are currently campaigning to stop the 5G rollout. These include: Geneva, Brussels, Mill Valley in California (as well as many other states in America), Glastonbury and Totnes. These campaigns are growing daily in various locations as people are waking up to the impact that 5G will have on life as we know it.

Wikipedia

Geneva's plan to upgrade to 5g was stopped for the same reason Brussels did, because of radiation laws.

January 2019, 180 doctors from 36 countries sent letters to the EU demanding a moratorium on 5G coverage until potential hazards to human health have been fully investigated. How exposure to electromagnetic fields could affect humans remains a controversial area.

Studies have not yet yielded clear evidence of the impact on mammals, birds or insects. The lack of clear evidence to inform the development of exposure guidelines to 5g technology leaves open the possibility of unintended biological consequences.

August 2019

A court in USA, decided that 5G technology will not be deployed without environmental impact and historic preservation reviews.

I have great concerns that 5G will be another human mistake, the same way as asbestos poisoning, smoking, and thalidomide. It appears there is no proof, research or study to be found to say this new wave of technology is safe, the technology and street furniture upgrades will be like nothing we have ever seen before.

Please could you consider raising this issue at your next meeting?

'To halt the rollout of 5G in Brixham, until further evidence has been established showing there will be no adverse health effects from this new technology that may harm residents of Brixham'.

What is 5G?

5G is the fifth-generation mobile network technology. It follows previous mobile generations 2G, 3G and 4G.

According to sources online 5G is:

- set to be far faster and more reliable, with greater capacity and lower response times;
- likely to be defined by any single form of technology;
- is referred to as “the network of networks” for the way it binds together multiple existing and future standards, including current advanced 4G networks;
- is set to open up a whole new set of use cases such as superfast mobile broadband with no need for landlines, super smart factories, car to car and car to infrastructure communication, driverless cars, holographic technology, the arrival of 5G phones and devices such as 5G TVs and remote / distance health care for patients

Which networks offer 5G in the UK?

According to Money Saver, the following networks offer 5G in the UK

EE

Belfast, Birmingham, Cardiff, Edinburgh, London and Manchester are the first to have it. EE listed the following locations in its 2019 UK roll-out:

Bristol, Coventry, Glasgow, Hull, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield.

EE listed the following locations for 2020:

Aberdeen, Cambridge, Derby, Gloucester, Peterborough, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Southampton, Wolverhampton and Worcester.

Vodafone

Vodafone originally launched its 5G network in Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow, Liverpool, London and Manchester but now extends to Birkenhead, Bolton, Gatwick, Lancaster, Newbury, Plymouth, Stoke-on-Trent and Wolverhampton. It has also planned the following locations by the end of 2019:

Blackpool, Bournemouth, Guildford, Portsmouth, Reading, Southampton and Warrington.

Three

Three have launched 5G broadband services in 2019 to selected London postcodes. They also claimed to be "building the UK's fastest 5G network" and introduced a 5G home broadband service. Whilst initially limited to London but there were plans to extend to 24 other locations by the end of 2019:

Birmingham, Bolton, Bristol, Bradford, Brighton, Cardiff, Coventry, Derby, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Hull, Leicester, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Middlesbrough, Milton Keynes, Nottingham, Reading, Rotherham, Sheffield, Slough, Sunderland and Wolverhampton.

O2 launched 5G in October

From October 2019, O2 planned to initially launch 5G in areas of Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh, London, Slough and Leeds. They have also said they expect 5G to be live in a total of 20 towns and cities by the end of 2019, and a total of 50 towns and cities by summer 2020.

Advice from Public Health England

When questioned, Torbay Council advise that:

Public Health England's Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards (CRCE) takes the lead on public health matters associated with radiofrequency electromagnetic fields, or radio waves, used in telecommunications. A summary of their advice on radio waves can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/electromagnetic-fields#radio>

In addition, CRCE have provided us with the following information:

- Over the decades since 2G, 3G and 4G base stations were introduced throughout the UK, many measurements have been made, and these continue to show that exposures of the general public to radio waves are well within the international guideline levels that are used in the UK. These guidelines are from the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) and these underpin health protection policies in the UK and Europe.
- In relation to 5G user devices and networks, the technology is at an earlier stage but the same technical standards based on the ICNIRP guidelines will apply to new products that are developed. The UK network operators are already committed to complying with these guidelines.
- The higher spectrum frequencies being discussed for future use by 5G are the same as have been used for microwave links and other types of transmitters over many years. The main difference in the use of higher frequencies is that there is less penetration and absorption of radio waves into body tissues.
- A large amount of scientific evidence has emerged over the past few years on the topic of exposure to radio waves. With development of 5G, overall exposure levels are expected remain low relative to the guidelines, and there should be no consequences for public health.

Public Health England will continue to monitor the evidence applicable to this and other radio technologies.

UK Government

In October 2019, the UK Government issued a press release advising Councils not to block 5G over health scares.

Below is an article taken from ukauthority.com

Minister for digital and broadband Matt Warman will tell councils that planning permission for 5G equipment should only be refused when there are legitimate grounds and evidence.

In a letter to planning authorities, the junior minister in the Department for Digital, Media and Sport will point out the Government's commitment to networks capable of gigabit speeds including 5G mobile, given the expected economic benefits.

Some local authorities have refused permission for 5G masts after having been lobbied by campaigners who fear the health impact of 5G signals, including Haringey in London and Brighton and Hove, although both refusals were made on visual impact grounds.

"Safety is always going to be paramount when we roll out new technologies and innovations, however there is currently no compelling evidence to back up concerns about 5G," said Warner.

"We want to support work that will bust health myths over 5G and provide evidence based reassurance to the public. The benefits of 5G are huge – both to people's everyday lives and to the economy."

The Government is consulting on simplifying planning rules to improve rural mobile coverage, including changing the permitted height of new masts. The National Association of Local Councils has argued that its members, town and parish councils, should continue to be consulted.

Research carried out by Brixham Town Council's Community Health Working Group

Following the August Full Council meeting, the Community Healthcare Working Group were asked to carry out research and report their findings to the Town Council. Unfortunately, no report has been received to date and it has been considered by some Councillors that the item should be returned to the Full Council agenda for further discussion.

Planning Permissions for Telecom Masts

At present, new telecoms masts up to 15 meters in height can be built in a 'non-protected area' without planning permission. Highways and residential areas have a height restriction of 20 meters in 'protected areas'.

While consideration is given to the mast's visual impact, the mast is automatically permitted in principle. Of immediate concern is that masts on existing sites in both protected and non-protected areas can be increased in height to 20 meters without prior approval, while an existing mast can grow from 20 meters to 25 meters in non-protected areas without approval.

Other Town Councils

Online research advises that the following Town Councils have adopted a precautionary principle to the release of 5G in their area:

- Glastonbury Town Council
- Frome Town Council
- Shepton Mallet Town Council
- Totnes Town Council
- Kingsbridge Town Council

What is a precautionary principle?

It is a strategy for approaching issues of potential harm when extensive scientific knowledge on the matter is lacking. It emphasizes caution, pausing and review before leaping into new innovations that may prove disastrous.

The principle is often used by policy makers in situations where there is the possibility of harm from making a certain decision (e.g. taking a particular course of action) and conclusive evidence is not yet available. For example, a government may decide to limit or restrict the widespread release of a medicine or new technology until it has been thoroughly tested. The principle acknowledges that while the progress of science and technology has often brought great benefit to humanity, it has also contributed to the creation of new threats and risks. It implies that there is a social responsibility to protect the public from exposure to such harm, when scientific investigation has found a plausible risk. These protections should be relaxed only if further scientific findings emerge that provide sound evidence that no harm will result.

Town Council Planning and Regeneration Committee

On 4th November 2019 the Council's Planning and Regeneration Committee considered an application for an existing telecom mast at Brixham Rugby Club increasing the height from 15m to 20m. No objections were raised, and Torbay Council were advised of this recommendation.

Recommendations

The Town Council is a statutory consultee for all planning applications. Based on the recommendation submitted to Torbay Council by the Planning and Regeneration Committee, it is recommended not to take any further action.