

SWT Scrutiny Committee - 4 September 2019

Present: Councillor Gwil Wren (Chair)

Councillors Libby Lisgo, Sue Buller, Norman Cavill, Dixie Darch, John Hassall, John Hunt, Sue Lees, Dave Mansell, Hazel Prior-Sankey, Phil Stone, Nick Thwaites, Danny Wedderkopp, Keith Wheatley and Loretta Whetlor

Officers: Andrew Randell, Emily Collacott, Paul Fitzgerald, Chris Hall and Malcolm Riches

Also Present: Councillors Simon Coles, Marcus Kravis and Federica Smith-Roberts

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

24. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Aldridge.

Councillor Whetlor attended as a substitute for Councillor Aldridge.

25. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Scrutiny Committee

(Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 17 July circulated with the agenda)

Resolved that the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 17 July be confirmed as a correct record.

26. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Whetlor declared an interest as a resident of Watchet in relation to item 7.

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Councillor or Clerk of a County, Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Reason	Action Taken
Cllr N Cavill	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Hunt	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Lees	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Mansell	All Items	Wiveliscombe	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr H Prior-	All Items	SCC & Taunton	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Sankey		Charter Trustee		
Cllr D Wedderkopp	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr G Wren	All Items	Clerk to Milverton PC	Personal	Spoke and Voted

27. Public Participation

The following members of the public made statements below in relation to 5G Technology:-

Sue Pilkington

Some of the 5G tech will be mounted on 4G masts we already have but the full blown roll out to support the Internet of things will require many many more masts and small cells which are planned to be placed very close together and mounted on our houses, offices, public buildings. (They will be more heavy duty Most community light poles are not strong enough to hold the 5G equipment so they will be replaced by much taller wider poles with cell antennas .This is called "hardening" the poles but basically it means the poles will be much wider and thicker metal.)

The 5g 26GHZ and above require masts much closer together as the signals don't travel as far meaning masts every 300m or so. This bandwidth is being sold off later this year.

Man-made electromagnetic spectrum ranges from 100KHz to 300GHZ, this spectrum is divided into bands, which are auctioned off by the Governments to the highest bidder. The current bands we are using for 3 and 4G are saturated, meaning we have used them all up due to so many wireless devices. So higher available bands are being sold to the telecoms so we are moving from sub-millimetre into millimetre waves. The new infrastructure is costing LOTS of money, so to re-deem the costs the telecoms industry needs new products to sell to re-coup their investments. Hence the Internet of things and smart technology. So the argument that 5G technology is good for the planet because they are energy efficient doesn't really stand up, due to the massive amount of infrastructure and manufacturing, by one estimate, four hundred times more towers than are currently deployed (see 1)

The 5g technology is totally different to 4g, it utilises phased arrays and beam forming. This tech has been used in military applications and in crowd control devices.

We know there are cancer clusters around masts and they devalue your property by as much as 20% according to research.

Millimetre waves haven't been used in human populations before and there has been no testing done, so this to me is very concerning. No consideration has been taken for people that suffer with electrsensivity (see 2), which is a recognised condition in Sweden.

Planning laws are being revised such that telecoms have a right of access to property and one cannot object to their placement. This is being decided without our consent or consultation.

The signals don't travel through wet trees and therefore if the small cells cannot be placed to achieve a clear line of sight they will be felled. One solution to this is to have extremely high masts as high as Nelsons column bar 2 meters which is being discussed in the news this week.

As well as being unsightly and I am sure very unwelcome right on your doorstep, we have to remember

All of this infrastructure will be beaming out pulsed microwave radiation which has harmful biological effects as proven in thousands of studies and in growing public health records is already causing all sorts of health conditions

5G will utilize current 3G and 4G wireless frequencies already in use and also add even more radiation.

The citizens of Taunton would please like to be consulted on this proposed infrastructure in our communities and would like the council to find out how it is being rolled out, when it is being rolled out, by who, and how we can stop it with your help.

We need local councils at every level to join together to lobby central government and apply the precautionary principle to the 5G rollout so we can thoroughly research the infrastructure and access whether the people of Taunton, Somerset and the UK really want it.

Charlie Kay

Governments and big tech companies claim that 5G technology will be good for water and fuel efficiency to farming and agriculture, and a cure for climate change. HOWEVER, Governments, 5G and SMART profiteers are overlooking fundamental points which are contrary to our Green goals.

5G and smart technology will consume significant amounts of energy. It will also encourage more consumerism as trillions of new gadgets all become 'smart'. There will be millions of tiny micro-transmitters embedded in common domestic objects. Even in babies nappies, and there is a petition to stop this (see 1) These transmitters contain rare and precious metals including gold, copper, silver and lithium, all of which have to be mined. Mining is the second most polluting industry in the world

In our Smart future, once or twice in a lifetime items will become upgradable just like our mobile phones, providing more fodder for an already insatiable consumer economy. Our old gadgets and appliances will all eventually be thrown away creating even more waste. And how are we disposing all this waste? Perhaps they will be shipped to Malaysia along with all our adult diapers and Sainsbury bags!

5G and Smart technology will require a huge quantity of fuel, water and raw materials to manufacture all these gadgets and power the NEW masts and the servers that support them!

The new Blue LED street lights which implement 5G technology are bad for humans and wildlife disrupting our circadian rhythm. Have we NOT even considered the damage caused by the disposal of all the old lamp posts? This is not responsible sustainability.

Does massive open-air farming factories using automatic irrigation systems, 5G farm animal checkers and drones to check on livestock, using self-fertilising genetically modified crops sound natural? Farmers in France are raising the alarm of livestock deaths and low production they believe caused by EMR's (see 2)

EMR has been proven to disrupt the migration and orientation of birds, insects and marine animals. Even at existing levels of pollution, birds are losing their way on long-established migration routes. A world blanketed by 5G coverage could permanently destroy the delicate and finely tuned internal navigation systems of countless species across air, land and sea, with knock-on effects of unfathomable magnitude.

Adding to this there will be a constellation of 20,000 satellites which are being launched into space by rockets, releasing exhaust gases (see 2,3) (adding to Carbon Emissions and Ozone Depletion) Do we trust Elon Musk from SpaceX to protect space and the atmosphere?

We need to be concerned about our trees because Millimetres radio waves suffer attenuation from trees and tree canopies. Some trees will have to be cut down if they stand in the way of the millimetre waves.

The Lancet notes that: "The potential effects of these anthropogenic electromagnetic fields on natural electromagnetic fields, such as the Schumann Resonance that controls the weather and climate, have not been properly studied. Similarly, we do not adequately understand the effects of anthropogenic radio-frequency electromagnetic radiation on other natural and man-made atmospheric components or the ionosphere." Isn't it fair to say we should be checking what type of effect 5G might have on the world's weather and climate patterns? We all want to make our planet healthy again in intelligent ways and not merely replacing one form of pollution - fossil - with another - EMR. Electro-Magnetic Radiation isn't green it is a pollutant (the industry and Insurance Companies have already acknowledged this fact) and that we need to act urgently to reduce the amount of EMR in our environment, not add more!.

The Rural Connected Communities competition is the latest wave of £200 million funding to pioneer 5G testbeds across the country and deliver the benefits of the highest speeds of mobile connectivity available. But at a cost to the health of us all? The pioneering industries Nicky Morgan talks about don't have to be based around 5G and EMR. We need real green solutions not this smart agenda fuelled by big tech and governments.

Karen Churchill

Vital information about cellular damage happening at intensities well below the levels set by the guidelines is now fully established and desperately needs to be heard. 1000'S of studies on animal, human, plants and public health statistics together give scientific certainty of harmful biological effects of 4G radiations.

Pulsed 5G microwave radiation will be even worse. The 5g pulsing mechanism causes unpredictable results. The guidelines assume an additive effect but research shows that you get can spikes where two pulses together have a hugely more harmful effect than if you add the effects of each together. Also pulses can cancel each other when the second pulse is a different polarity and there will be many of those in 5G signals. (the pulsed waves are unpredictable compared to the steady source effects included in the safety guidelines.)

Until recently scientist didn't know the mechanisms of how damage occurred.

Dr Martin Pal and Dr Heroux have recently had breakthroughs with this though. They have identified and proven that there are disruptions to the voltage gate calcium channels in the cell membranes, changes in the energy production in the mitochondria

and disruptions to the DNA. This research has been cited by other scientists many times and is another measure of scientific credibility.

The tech companies claim that the mm waves of 5g will be less damaging as they don't penetrate into the body as deeply but the magnetic aspect of the radiation does and this magnetic component affects these calcium channels too and so 5g high end will affect the whole body.

When the vgcc sensors are stimulated by the cell phone or wifi Ca floods into the cell and the bodies homeostatic mechanism go to work using energy the body could well use for other things .

High intracellular calcium effects correct functioning of the nervous system and helps explain the neuropsychiatric effects of emfs anxiety, Alzheimer, ADHD , concentration , sleeping and memory lapses, depression amongst others.

There has been a vast increase in early onset Alzheimer with the increase of cell phone usage.

Dr Martin Pall describes how this intracellular calcium leads on to oxidative stress and increase in free radicals , which then explains the development of cancers. The 2016 NTP study has proven the link of EMFs to Shwannoma cancers in rats.

The changes in ATP and mitochondria functioning helps us understand the changes in the reproduction system that is being reliably seen in research studies. There are many studies in rats and mice showing in utero exposures cause drop in reproduction in the first and then increasing in the second to litter to near sterility in the third litter. In females there are spontaneous abortions seen in animals and human studies. The public health information shows drops in fertility in tech advanced countries to below replacement levels, including South Korea who have a 30 percent drop. Men after 2 hours of exposure to cell phone radiation have vast drops in sperm count, mobility and viability with breaks in the DNA.

With this amount of research available and the public health information showing the damage we already have with EMR exposures of 4G and the pulsed waves of 5G being worse and vast increases in exposure the internet of things implies, I request the Council action immediate halt to the roll out of 5g and they demand the PHE to review their guidelines.

I request that someone from the Council attend the International radiation conference in London on September 28th where the researchers who are the source of this information will impart the details I have started to outline here in depth. Thank You.

Louise Thomas

The Government takes its advice regarding the new 5G technology from Public Health England.

PHE is the national body that takes the lead on public health matters involving radio frequency electromagnetic fields, or radio waves, which are used in the telecommunications industry. However, Public Health England is ignoring the peer reviewed research and the International appeals from doctors and scientists. PHE continues to take its advice from the World Health Organisation and the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP).

The ICNIRP is an NGO under German law with no international legal status. It appoints its own members, none of whom is a medical doctor, operates with zero transparency and is accountable to no one. It is an institute of electrical and electronic engineers, It also disclaims all responsibility on its website for any of its information (see 1) including its own guidelines, which are based on cherry-picked science.

The ICNIRP has been widely accused of having conflicts of interest and links to the telecoms industry. (see 2 and printed handout). ICNIRP has also has been accused of corruption.

According to Investigate Europe a team of investigative journalists from the EU, many governments are taking advice from a small circle of radiation safety authorities who reject alarming research and who set the radiation safety limits. Of 13 ICNIRP scientists, six are members of at least one other advisory committee. In the WHO group, this applies for six out of seven. Every third researcher in the EU commission that gave radiation advice in 2015 was represented in other groups. This constitutes a monopoly of opinion.

In the light of these findings and evidence would the Scrutiny committee acknowledge the urgency for our local council to bring this information to our communities in Taunton and to central government and to lobby PHE and Nicky Morgan, Digital Secretary. As you can hopefully understand we are very concerned that the government is not aware of these facts and we wish to shed some light on this situation and present the facts above.

Carol Lydiate

All investment involves managing risk. I work at Musgrove and have seen first-hand the due diligence work the hospital management has been undertaking in preparation for the proposed merger with Somerset Partnership. Every aspect of the work of both trusts has to be taken into account, with the benefits weighed against the risks to ensure that there are no unexpected surprises after the merger. Without this due diligence work the merger would not be approved by NHS Improvement. It would be foolishness indeed to allow it.

Interestingly, the same approach does not appear to have happened with regards to 5G, which should, therefore, legitimately be recognised as a 'hazard' as no independent, authoritative assessment of the safety of 5G technology has been undertaken, despite warnings by hundreds of scientists about its health risks. As elected representatives of the people living in Taunton and its surrounding districts I would remind the Scrutiny Committee that as a body the Council has a responsibility to ensure that what the public in this area are being exposed to is going to be safe. Not to do so would be to put us all at great risk in respect to our health and privacy. The telecoms companies concerned, who no doubt are confident of the benefits of 5G to businesses and individuals, seem to care only about the financial rewards and nothing about the risks and damage to humanity and the planet as a whole.

Of particular concern is that no-one will be able to opt out of this roll-out and if anyone wants to protect themselves they must do such things as hard wire their homes and hope that they do not live with a cell tower outside their home (which

could not only have privacy and health risks, but have the added risk of devaluing their property). There is no getting away from the fact that we are being experimented on with no idea of what the consequences are going to be in 10, 20, 30 year's time.

It is particularly worrying that following the hundreds of reports by scientists around the world that their concerns about 5G are falling on deaf ears. Their expert opinion discarded.

The benefits of 5G could be immense to society, we cannot deny that, and no-one would want to stand in the way of progress unnecessarily, but, if this experiment goes wrong and the scientists are proved right, we are facing an unmitigated disaster for the planet - a game changer for humanity and indeed all of creation.

As a group here today we would implore the Council to do what it can to slow down the roll-out of 5G by applying the precautionary principal until such a time that the technology can be proved to be safe.

On 27 August the government announced that bigger and taller mobile phone masts could be built without councils' permission across the countryside under a proposed overhaul of planning rules in England. In part this is to speed up the roll out of 5G networks and improve mobile coverage in rural areas. This could mean masts of over 82ft high. It is stated that these masts could carry more equipment and potentially stop the proliferation of other masts or even take away some. The issue with 5G though is the higher frequency which doesn't travel as far as 3G or 4G and therefore needs more cell towers closer together. I am not sure how this will therefore work.

A question to the Council - how does it feel to have the option of denying the building of masts in an area taken out of your hands?

The subject of 5G is a vast one and multi-layered. We cannot do it justice here in a few 3 minute slots. We would encourage you all to look at the evidence for both sides of the coin and take into account the many reports and videos that have outlined concerns to alert the public.

The risk is great and in the interest of survival we must all ask the question, do the benefits outweigh the risks or should caution be shown?

Thank you.

Warwick Lydiate

As with other issues going on at the moment, are there agendas behind 5G that we don't know about yet? For example...

1 What is 'big data', and what is 5Gs function in providing this?

2 What is the 'Internet of Things'? And connected with that, is it true that every so called 'smart device' is actually a data gathering machine informing business and

/ or government about each of our choices and decisions? What data do 'they' want from us? Is it just about selling us stuff, or is it something else?

3 5G may facilitate driverless cars / vans. Do we want driverless vehicles? Have we been asked?

4 Is the impetus to begin making money out of 5G overriding the importance of adequately testing its safety and reliability?

5 Is it true that companies like Huawei are looked on unfavourably by western businesses and governments, because they may not share the information they gather on us? Who are safest, most reliable companies to provide 5G?

6 Do we know what 5Gs role in public surveillance will be? Do you feel that our every movement should be under surveillance? Will 5G override our right to privacy?

7 Does the government intend to override any objections raised by local councils and citizens, and press ahead with it anyway? How do you feel about this?

8 If democracy depends on an informed public (and local council), to what extent is this threatened by insufficient data on 5G or AI?

As councillors, do you know the answers to these questions? Should the public know before this technology is simply presented to us?

The Chairman thanked all members of the public for their statements and requested ongoing dialogue; so that further consideration could be given to setting this as a Scrutiny item at a stage where further information is available around the rollout and the role of District and County Councils in 5G technology implementation.

28. **Scrutiny Committee Action Plan**

(Copy of the Scrutiny Committee Action Plan, circulated with the agenda).

Resolved that the Scrutiny Committee Action Plan be noted.

29. **Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan**

(Copy of the Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan, circulated with the agenda).

Councillors were reminded that if they had an item they wanted to add to the agenda, that they should send their requests to the Governance Team.

Resolved that the Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan be noted.

30. **Watchet Harbour Update. Presentation of the Localities Manager (Verbal**

Update).

The Localities Manager provided a presentation with the Mud Working Group in relation to Watchet Harbour.

During the discussion, the following points were made:-

- Previous solutions were discussed when Watchet was still a commercial Harbour.
- The economic benefits of the Harbour were considered along with the economic findings of the Mud working group.
- Previous enquiries made in relation to Hinkley funding had been unsuccessful.
- The Health and Safety impact of the Harbour users was considered. Risk assessments had been undertaken and it was likely that the Harbour Master would be increasing their contracted hours.
- A full depth dredge and water injection dredge was estimated to cost £500k. This maintenance would be from the dredger acquired from the Marina operator with Somerset West and Taunton to borrow the dredger to undertake work on the outer harbour.

Resolved that:-

The Scrutiny Committee thanked the Localities Manager and working group and officer for their ongoing work and noted the update.

31. Financial Monitoring - 2019/20 as at 31 July 2019. Report of the Finance Business Partner (attached).

The Section 151 Officer and Finance Business Partner presented the Financial Monitoring Report.

During the discussion, the following points were made:-

- An increase in the members allowances budget was considered
- An increase in the Deane Helpline service was due to the increased levels of pay for those on standby. The work of The Deane Helpline was commended.
- A £300k overspend for homelessness services was considered, this was a similar situation to the previous year.
- Concerns were expressed over a loss of pest control provision, further clarification was requested if this was a Councillor decision.
- A comparison was requested over previous quarters and years in future reports.
- Concerns were expressed over Councillors access to accounts and lack of interim budget updates between quarters.
- Activity in the Capital Programme was considered, budget changes above £50,000 would be included for transparency. If underspends were encountered in the HRA, the budget would get rolled over in to the next financial year.

Resolved that:-

1. It is recommended that Scrutiny notes the Council's forecast financial performance for 2019/20 financial year as at 31 July 2019.
2. It is recommended that Scrutiny notes the planned request to Full Council to

approve the Housing Director / Head of Function, in consultation with the Housing Portfolio Holder, to have delegated authority to approve changes to the budgeted spend for all of the HRA capital schemes, whilst remaining within the approved capital programme for 2019/20. The reason for this is help address flexible delivery of the programme in year.

32. **Corporate Performance Report and Update on Development of Future Reporting. Report of the Head of Performance and Governance (attached)**

The Business Intelligence and Performance Manager presented the Corporate Performance Report and Update.

During the discussion the following points were made:-

- The shortage of planning staff and difficulties of recruiting in this area was discussed.
- Processing of planning applications at the end of July was at 80% so there had been significant improvement in the service.

Resolved that:-

The Scrutiny Committee noted the new report being developed which would bring together finance information, risk monitoring and performance reporting. The first report would be produced for the end of November (month 8).

(The Meeting ended at 9.15 pm)