

Dial M for mistrust

Next Tuesday the States will be asked to look at whether putting up masts for mobile phones is a danger to our health

A MOBILE phone is a luxury that few people nowadays could live without. There are actually more mobile phones registered in our 45 square miles than there are people living here, and today three companies are battling to control the market.

But the increase in the number of telecom providers - prompted by the ending of Jersey Telecom's monopoly in 2002 - has led to a demand for more antennae. Reluctant to share masts with JT, Cable & Wireless and Jersey Airtel have made 33 planning applications between them, with new submissions coming in every week.

The issue became so controversial that last month Planning Minister Freddie Cohen agreed to freeze applications for four weeks while the risks to the environment and health were considered.

Evidence

Fears about the environmental impact of hundreds of masts dotted all over the Island are obvious, but the risks to health are more contentious. The issue of whether the radiation emitted by phone masts is harmful is hotly debated, and because mobile phones are still relatively new, there is little concrete evidence on either side.

What is clear is that both mobile phones and their base stations give off emissions in that they act as two-way radios which expose people nearby to radio-frequency radiation. The question is, how harmful are these emissions?

While radiation is given off by many household appliances, including televisions, radios and microwaves, people are not subjected to this 24 hours a day, unlike phone masts. It is exactly these concerns that have led two States Members to oppose the proliferation of phone masts in the Island.

Deputy Pat Ryan will ask the States next week to set up a committee of inquiry to look into the matter, with a six-month freeze on all planning applications until the results are published. His plans are supported by Senator Ben Shenton, who is concerned that the ef-

fects of masts on health have not been looked at properly.

Senator Shenton asked questions in the States last week of Health Minister Stuart Syvret, prompting him to agree with the proposed six-month freeze on the building of masts.

Deputy Ryan has argued that the States must strike a balance between having Islandwide coverage for mobile phones and spoiling the countryside with telegraph poles.

"How good a mobile network do we want? I'm sure we could have the best network in the world if we had really powerful masts 150 metres at the end of every road," he said. "There is a balance to be struck between competition and the benefits that brings, and the over-proliferation of masts, with the disadvantages that brings."

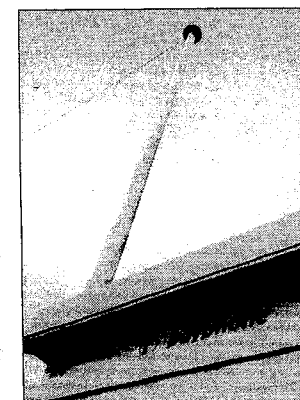
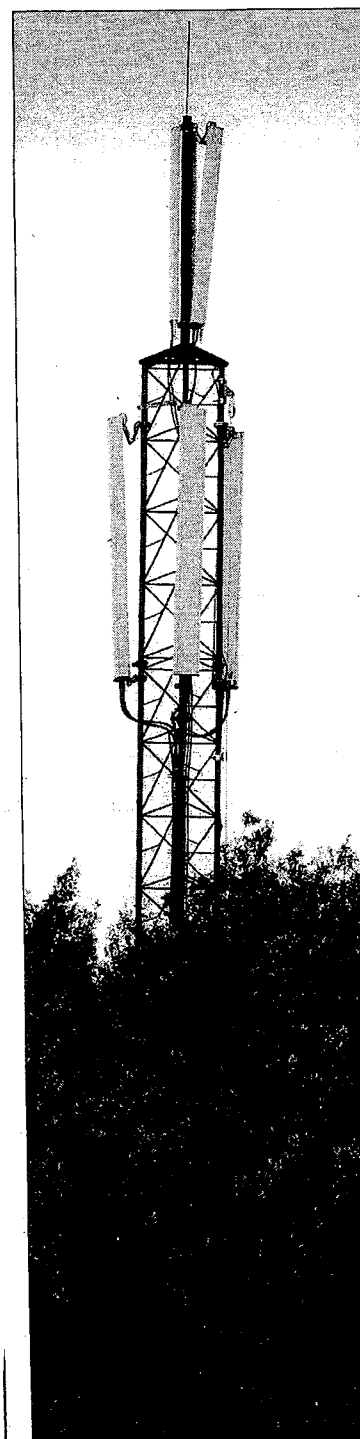
Deputy Ryan said that it was not the end of the world if a mobile network did not cover the furthest corners of the Island, especially if it meant having fewer masts. "I am concerned about the health side but I haven't done much in the way of research," he said. "There is a lot of conflicting information, but we don't want to get it wrong."

Senator Ben Shenton, on the other hand, has been looking into the health effects of the masts for some time and is concerned that much of the evidence that they are harmless is outdated. A lot of the literature published by independent observers, he said, suggests that the radiation which emanates from the masts is far from harmless.

Contradiction

"The general consensus regarding our so-called mobile phone mast experts seems to be: 'They are perfectly safe but I would not want one near my house'," he said. "This is a contradiction that can be explained by the fact that while the industry assures us that mobile base stations are safe, there is a large body of evidence that says they are not."

Senator Shenton cites the Santini report, produced in 2000 by the Louis Pasteur Institute in Paris, which claims that



The phone masts at Gorey (left) and St Catherine (above)



Senator Shenton: 'The decision to license four operators can be described in one word: idiotic'

Education ban mobile masts at schools

By Orlando Crowcroft

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MOBILE phone masts will not be allowed at schools or leisure centres, Education Minister Mike Vibert has said.

Senator Vibert said that applications to build on Education department land will be refused by his department because of public fears about the health risks.

He said that although he personally did not believe that the radiation from base stations was harmful, he accepted that many people did and he did not want to aggravate their fears.

'I adopted the policy that I do not allow any applications to go forward on schools and leisure centres.

'Because of public concern I have adopted the precautionary principle,' he said.

'Experts do not think they cause adverse health effects but I accept

Public concern leads to precautionary measure

that people are concerned. There is a well-known principle that if there is any doubt at all and if there is public concern, then there is no need to aggravate it,' he said.

Senator Vibert has asked the Planning department to produce a map of all the mobile phone masts and all the schools and nurseries in Jersey so he could see how close they are.

But he did not know whether his department would start to oppose planning applications for masts nearby, as not enough was known about the issues.

'I do not know yet,' he said. 'Hopefully we will have more information by then.'

His comments come as the four-

week freeze on planning applications for masts, imposed by Planning Minister Freddie Cohen, ends this week.

But the States will debate a proposition by Deputy Patrick Ryan for a Committee of Inquiry to look at the health and environmental risks of base stations on 21 November.

A group called the Jersey Mobile Mast Concern Group has been set up in recent weeks and distributed a pack of information to all States Members.

They call for the 'precautionary approach', supported by Senator Vibert and Health Minister Stuart Syvret, be adopted until the States know for sure what the risks are.

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Left: The mast which has been erected near Millbrook Park
Picture: MATTHEW HOTTON (00400083)

Below: The issue of mobile phone masts has been an emotive one for some time. Here, Planning Minister Freddie Cohen accepts a petition against their proliferation in the Island
Picture: DAVID FERGLISON (00325240)

there is evidence of adverse health effects on people living within 300 metres of a phone mast.

The Senator also points out that the Education Department are not allowing the building of masts at schools, nurseries or leisure centres. If the radiation is harmless, he says, why the need for these precautions?

But as far as Senator Shenton is concerned, it was the decision to allow so many operators into the Island which was in itself flawed logic.

'Idiocy'

'The ironic thing is that it is very doubtful that Jersey can support four mobile phone operators,' he said, 'and I would suggest that the incumbents take a very close look at their business plans before they throw more money at this small and mature telecommunications market. The decision to license four operators can be described in one word: idiotic.'

Senator Shenton has been in talks with a newly established Jersey Mobile Mast Certain Group, who last week sent an information pack to all States Members about the health risks associated with mobile phones. They point to the fact that much of the

research cited by mobile phone companies as 'proof' that masts are harmless is actually sponsored by the companies themselves.

The group, who are remaining anonymous, want Jersey to take up a precautionary principle - as in the United States, Australia and New Zealand - which means that instead of trying to prove harmful effects outright, they are erring on the side of caution. This was supported by Senator Shant Szyver in the States last week and is part of Deputy Ryan's proposition.

The group say: 'Worldwide research links the pulsing from masts to the disruption of sleep patterns and degradation of our immune system. What world-renowned independent scientists say - and much of this is accepted by the Health Protection Agency - is that very low-level radiation emitted by masts suppresses the level of the hormone melatonin in our system. Melatonin is produced by the pineal glands when we sleep to scavenge the toxins in our bodies, including damaged cells, DNA and the pre-cancer cells that we all produce.'

The States will decide on Deputy Ryan's proposition which would see a committee of inquiry into the health and environmental risks of base station radiation on 21 November.



No more phone masts!

A NEWLY formed pressure group are calling on States Members to put a halt to the erection of new mobile phone masts until the full health risks have been assessed.

The Jersey Mobile Mast Concern Group have written to all politicians to outline their worries about the harmful effects which they say may be associated with them.

The group are deeply disappointed that the Council of Ministers will oppose any delay in allowing further masts and say that Ministers are ignoring the available evidence. The States will tomorrow consider setting up a committee of inquiry on the issue and spokesman Jim Drew said that the group simply want them to maintain the status quo until the full effects are known.

Coverage

'What we are saying is that we have enough masts to provide full Island coverage already, and before we go ahead and quadruple the number let us know what the health risks are,' he said.

'We accept that the case that they are harmful has not been proven but equally no one can say that the case has been proven that they are not.'

In their letter they claim that masts are 'globally considered to be a serious threat to the well-being of those who are exposed to them'.

'Scientists and doctors have confirmed effects to health can include learning, concentration and behavioural disorders, extreme fluctuations in blood pressure, heart rhythm

On eve of debate, group calls for ban until health risks are known

By Anthony Lewis

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disorders, heart attacks and strokes among an increasingly younger population, brain-degenerative diseases, cancerous afflictions including leukaemia and brain tumours,' they write.

They say that there have only been six studies purely on the effects of phone masts and all have concluded that there were harmful health effects.

States Members have also received a letter from Dr Granville Langly-Smith, in which he says politicians should give more time and attention to the issue.

'If mobile phones and the telephone masts were a new drug on the pharmaceutical market, they would have to be proved safe before being put on the market. However, for some strange reason with telephone masts they have to be proven unsafe rather than safe.

'With the proposed proliferation of telephone masts it will mean that Jersey will be a massive concentration of electromagnetic smog - a zone of constant radiation. Do people not realise this, or are they not concerned about the diseases of tomorrow?' he writes.

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Letters to the Editor

FOCUS ON Telephone masts

Danger from masts is real

● From Dr Granville Langly-Smith.

EXTENSIVE scientific research has proved that telephone masts are causing grave dangers to our health. So why are the Council of Ministers threatening to triple the number of masts on the Island, thereby putting commercial interests ahead of the health and safety of us Islanders? It behoves States Members to give much more time and attention to this exceedingly serious issue.

We are not just referring to increases in cancer, but also our general health. Scientific studies irrefutably show major pathological changes in our blood composition when exposed to telephone microwaves. This can only lead to increased dangers of blockages in our smaller blood vessels. Inevitably there will be a higher incidence of strokes, thrombosis and cataracts. The TNO Institute's research on behalf of the Dutch Government (2003) states: 'Telephone mast transmitters cause headaches, dizziness, tinnitus and nausea.'

If mobile phones and the telephone masts were a new drug on the pharmaceutical market, they would have to be proved safe before being put on the market. However, for some strange reason, telephone masts have to be proven unsafe rather than safe. Everyone knows that radiation is unsafe and yet there seems to be total apathy to the fact that our government is preparing to sell us down the river because of commercial pressure.

There are multiple scientific studies showing the bombardment of the brain with radiation every time anyone uses a mobile phone. With children this onslaught is 50% worse than with adults and the majority of the brain is irradiated. With the proposed proliferation of telephone masts it will mean that Jersey will be a massive concentration of electromagnetic smog - a zone of constant radiation. Do people not realise this, or are they not concerned about the diseases of tomorrow?

There also appears to be double standards regarding these telephone masts. A transmitter mast was erected near a primary school in the south of England in 2004. When it was activated, eleven of the children went into nauseous states and one collapsed. They all de-

veloped nose bleeds. It is now deemed prudent not to erect aerials near kindergartens, but what about the rest of the population? Does that mean they are somehow immune to radiation!

I understand farmers in Jersey are being paid for allowing the telephone companies to erect masts on their land. I hope they realise what the consequences could be for their livestock. In 1995 transmitter network masts were erected in the Bavarian village of Schnaitsee. Within a short period the cows in the neighbourhood farms exhibited deterioration in their general health. They suffered from eye inflammations, fertility problems, miscarriages and serious physical deformities and reduced milk production. Two of the cows were moved to a farm some 20 kms away and immediately showed signs of recovery. As soon as they were returned to the old habitat the problems started again. When these events at Schnaitsee were made public, other farmers and vets in areas near transmitter masts added similar experiences.

Professor Rudiger, a researcher in cell biology at the University of Vienna, has confirmed that radio frequency waves can lead to genetically toxic effects. He states: 'Genetic toxicity is one of the key elements in knowing and understanding tumours. It is the first event that must take place in the cell before there is any chance of a tumour occurring'.

Precaution appears to be thrown to the wind and responsibility ignored in preference to commercial pressure. The claims that the smog of radioactivity which will be produced by these radio masts is safe and harmless have not been proven. I would like to see one study to convince us that radioactivity from the proposed multiple telephone masts is safe. I feel this issue is extremely serious and States Members have the gravest responsibility for the future health of Jersey.

Everyone knows radioactivity is dangerous, so let us see this certification of safety.

A copy of this letter has been sent to every member of the States.

The Wing, Homestead, Vallée des Vaux, St Helier.

JEP 20/11/06

The balance of health and modern life

● From Jack Jones.

IT is apparent from the recent arguments regarding the phone masts, for and against, that no-one really knows what effect the electro-magnetic microwaves from additional phone masts will have on people's health.

Mobile phones serve a useful role in modern life and as such masts are necessary, but in moderation. One issue that has not been mentioned is the accumulative effect of electro-magnetic microwaves. Every additional phone mast will add to the radiation from electro-magnetic microwaves that already bombard our environment, which includes items such as TV, hi-fi and DECT cordless telephones.

When it comes to health issues, we have only to look to recent history to realise the limited value of corporate sponsored scientific research. For decades cigarette manufacturers successfully hid the dangers of smoking until someone was brave enough to blow the whistle. The whistleblower lost their job and, as the story goes, materially suffered.

At the Mast Sanity website there are cases of people within the telecom industry who have questioned the health safety results of the sponsoring companies' research. Their fate has been the same as the tobacco industry's whistleblower. It is naive to imagine that monetary or telecom corporate interests do not reign supreme.

Moreover, no-one has mentioned the Tetra masts that emit stronger electro-magnetic microwaves and are the pre-

ferred masts in the UK, and subsequently Jersey, for the police and essential services. Another question is whether Jersey uses BT's phone masts as some of these may be Tetra. On the subject of Tetra and phone masts in general, the following website is of interest: 222.mastsanity.org.

From an environmental viewpoint (JEP, 8 November) more of the smaller masts are favoured to larger ones. Health and environment are both important issues, but surely, health has to be the primary consideration? That article also stated that all applications for masts were frozen until the debate on 21 November. That may be so. However, from a reliable source, I understand that Home Affairs is completely autonomous and does not have to apply to Planning and Environment.

Effectively, that means that Home Affairs can place masts where and as strong as they like without reference to any department. This surely deserves further investigation.

The government appears to be in a no-win situation, but hopefully health considerations will take precedence over commercial interests. So, while those in power struggle with the difficult dilemma of the environment versus mobile phone convenience, revenue versus health issues, some open information from Home Affairs as to their position with regard to planning, style and type of masts would not only be enlightening, but may benefit the whole debate.

Hollyoaks, Cleveland Road, St Helier.

What's the hurry?

● From Lee Popejoy.

I REFER to the JEP article of 17 November about how the Council of Ministers are reluctant to investigate the health risks associated with mobile phone masts. Chief Minister Frank Walker gives as a reason the fact that the potential risk from masts is less than from a mobile phone itself.

Secondly, he asks us not to forget that mobile phone technology is by no means the biggest transmitter of electro-magnetism into the environment; that we have television and radio and that this is 'infinitely more harmful.' Furthermore, he tells us, 'there is no new adverse health evidence.'

No matter how cunningly masts can be disguised as telephone poles so as to blend in with the environment no one is ever going to be convinced that they are so safe one could have one in the living room if one wanted. Doubts about the safety of mobile phone masts have nothing to do with the visual impact they may have.

We are told that levels are 1/1000th the recommended levels. How do we know, however, whether this only refers to the very high doses, such as X-rays, which could easily cause damage to tissue? It is the less direct effects we are concerned with, to name one: sleep disruption.

Unlike TV and radio, while the transmitters are less powerful, the radiation from mobile phones is highly localised. I think we have a right to know just by how much the levels of radiation will rise. If, say, it is proposed that a mast be erected 50 yards away, exactly by how much does it raise the level of radiation over that from more distant sources?

I believe such tests should be carried out so that everyone, no matter where they live, can find out just how much radiation they are being subjected to in comparison to other places. Not



Just because a mast can be cunningly disguised as a tree doesn't mean it is safe

making such information available is only going to make people suspicious. If it is perfectly safe, there should be nothing the States have to fear from conducting such an inquiry designed to alleviate public fears.

Also, if certain States Members are so convinced that all the proposed masts will get the green light, why such a hurry that they can't await the results of an inquiry?

**Omega, Chemin du Moulin,
St Omer**

Mobile phone mast petition presented

By Orlando Crowcroft

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A PETITION signed by over 1,000 Islanders against the building of mobile masts near schools and homes in Jersey has been handed over to the Planning Department.

Deputy Anne Pryke received the petition - organised by the Jersey Mobile Mast Concern Group - less than a week before Minister Freddie Cohen is due to begin processing applications for masts.

But representatives of the group, who believe that the emissions from phone masts have an adverse effect on health, are not holding out much hope that their point of view will be taken into account.

Emissions

'I don't think it's going to make any difference but we got our point of view across,' said group member Christine Garnier.

She added that the group would continue to press the point that emissions from masts are harmful.

'We're not going to step down the pressure. We're not scaremongering and we're not trying to get rid of these masts. We're just saying that people should look into it for themselves and we just want the States to be realistic.'

Granville Langly-Smith, another group member, agreed that the petition was unlikely to stop Planning approving masts. 'I don't have much optimism. If they don't want to hear it then they won't,' he said.

But Dr Langly-Smith said it was positive news that the new Health, Social Security and Housing scrutiny panel were to start looking into the issue next month.

'Scrutiny is going to get going at the end of the month and we hope to bring experts and scientists over to give evidence.'



Members of the Jersey Mobile Mast Concern Group hand over their petition to Deputy Anne Pryke outside the Planning Department at South Hill Picture: ROB CURRIE (00418300)

Mrs Garnier added that the JMMCG hoped to get the public more involved over the coming months.

'We would like to get a couple of scientists over and possibly have some public meetings,' she said.

A six-month moratorium was imposed on the passing of planning applications for phone masts after a failed debate in the States in November.

During the sitting - when a proposition to set up a Committee of Inquiry was debated and withdrawn - it was agreed that the new scrutiny panel, headed by Deputy Alan Beecroft, would look into the health concerns of emissions.

IN BRIEF

Ferry transfer

HIGH cross-winds in the English Channel prevented the fast ferry Condor Express travelling from Weymouth today. Cars and passengers were transferred to the conventional vessel Commodore Clipper and two extra sailings of Condor to St Malo were put on to ensure all passengers could travel.

Flight delayed

A NUMBER of Flybe passengers heading for Bristol yesterday had to fly later to Exeter and be transported by coach to their destination as a result of a problem with a flight display screen on board the aircraft. A new screen had to flown in from Birmingham to replace the faulty one. Other passengers rebooked to travel today.

Court trial

A MAN accused of grave and criminal assault, three offences of malicious damage and breach of probation is to appear before the Royal Court, Scott Leonard Furlong (22), of St James Street, was remanded in custody when the Magistrate's Court committed him for trial yesterday.

Lawyers' law

FORMAL responsibility for disciplining lawyers was passed to the Law Society of Jersey at the start of the year when a new law came into force. The society will have the power to discipline, fine or suspend lawyers, except those working for the public sector.

5 Hour flooring sale

Antagon
Architectural Centre