

Sefton's Digital Strategy 2024 - 2027 - Consultation

Comments and Council Responses from the Questionnaire

The activity ran from 15/07/2024 to 18/08/2024 and there were 55 responses to this survey

Who responded - Summary

90.91% of respondents were Sefton residents

5.45% of respondents were from businesses located in Sefton

Just over 50% of respondents were aged between 50 and 70 years of age, with the next two largest cohorts being aged between 70 and 79 (16.36%) and then between the ages of 30 to 39 (12.73%). The gender split between male and female respondents was equal and just over 18% of respondents considered themselves to have a disability.

Summary of Responses to closed questions in relation to the proposed themes

Proposed Themes	Response
Developing Sefton as a Digital Place. This means making sure that all residents and businesses are able to take advantage of technology	80% of respondents agreed that this was an important theme
Create strong Digital Foundations. We want to build strong digital tools. This means Sefton will have the right technology to help people use online services.	83.64% of respondents agreed that this was an important theme
Supporting an enhanced Customer Journey. We aim to improve the customer experience. This means making it easy for everyone to use Council Services	89.09% of respondents agreed that this was an important theme
To develop our Data and Intelligence. We will use our data smartly. This means using information to make our services better for the community.	83.64% of respondents agreed that this was an important theme
Support the workforce of the future. We support our workers in the digital future. This means helping staff do their best and provide great services for Sefton residents.	87.27% of respondents agreed that this was an important theme

There were several comments received on the proposed themes, all of which were operational in nature and did not require any changes to the strategy documentation. Responses to each will be provided via the Sefton Your Say Consultation Website.

Summary of Responses to closed questions in relation to key issues

Key Issues	Response
More access to digital resources in our libraries and public spaces.	74.54% of respondents agreed that this was important
Provision of free public Wi-Fi.	76.36% of respondents agreed that this was important
Supporting our young people to be ready for the jobs of the future.	90.01% of respondents agreed that this was important
Access to Digital Skills Training for those seeking work.	89.09% of respondents agreed that this was important
Be able to complete transactions (like payments or reporting) online with Sefton Council.	74.54% of respondents agreed that this was important
Access to council meetings and events online.	65.45% of respondents agreed that this was important, however 18.18% of respondents felt it was neither important nor important.
How important it is to provide digital support for local businesses.	61.82% of respondents felt that this was important with over 14.5 % neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the importance and just over 9% stating that they did not know, this may be reflective of the profile of respondents.
Use new technology to make communities safe and healthier.	78.18% of respondents agreed that this was important
Use of technology such as Air Quality sensors. These sensors will help reduce pollution and make the air cleaner	78.18% of respondents agreed that this was important
Working with partners to improve internet and mobile networks. This will help everyone stay connected and access services easily.	83.64% of respondents agreed that this was important
That the Council makes sure that all its digital services are safe and follow national rules.	92.72% of respondents agreed that this was important
For Sefton to use new technology such as Artificial Intelligence (AI). This will help	This was an incredibly mixed response with just less than 40% of the respondents

improve customer services and make things easier for everyone.	thinking this was important with 25% saying they didn't think it was important, and over 36% stating they didn't know or that it was neither important nor not important. <i>This highlights the important of clear communications and engagement around any use of AI to ensure that residents are informed about its use, the benefits transparency arrangements in place, this will be address via any projects in this space during the life of the strategy</i>
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There were a number of comments received in response to the question “Do you think there are other important issues that should be part of Sefton’s Digital Strategy over the next three years?” all of which were operational in nature and did not require changes to the strategic documentation. Responses to each will be provided via the Sefton Your Say Consultation Website.

Feedback Received outside of Formal Consultation

In advanced of formal consultation, the following communication was received via an email to Your Sefton your Say.



Chairman Mr. Brian Stein CBE,
EM Radiation Research Trust, Chetwode House, Leicester Road, Melton Mowbray,
Leicestershire LE13 1GA

For the attention of Sefton Council Councillors

Further to previous emails regarding concerns against the threat of Sefton Council rollout of 5G and the IoT Digital Strategy 2024 -2027 Consultation.

Please find enclosed a new study published on 5G case studies and note that some of the symptoms experienced were so severe causing people to abandon their homes for good.

How will Sefton Councillors deal with claims for compensation if residents are forced to abandon their homes for good due to 5G wireless pole outside their homes?

Please include this information within the consultation.

Press release June 20, 2024

The first study in the world on 5G health risks published

'5G has been rolled out since 2019/2020. A Swedish research team has published the first study to date on how human health is affected by radiation from 5G base stations. The results show that 5G greatly increases radiofrequency radiation exposure and that ill health occurs fairly immediately after 5G is switched on near people's homes. The study also included three children aged four to eight years. In several cases, the symptoms were so severe that people had to abandon their homes for good.

The new study is a compilation of seven previously separate case studies published in 2023 and 2024. All case studies and the new compilation were conducted by physician and researcher Dr Lennart Hardell from the Swedish Environment and Cancer Research Foundation in collaboration with Mona Nilsson from the Swedish Radiation Protection Foundation. During the years 2021-2023, they have studied a total of 16 people's self-assessed health after 5G base stations or masts were established near their homes. Measurements of radiation from 5G have also been carried out in the homes.

The measurements show that 5G gives rise to extremely high exposure to pulsed radio frequency (RF) radiation, significantly higher than from previous generations of mobile telephony. In several cases radiation reached several million microwatts per square meter ($\mu\text{W}/\text{m}^2$) peak levels in the studied homes, which are levels more than 100 000 times higher than the levels recommended as appropriate maximum exposure by other researchers.

These high levels caused symptoms of ill health in several of the people studied within 24 hours after 5G was switched on. The most common and severe symptoms were sleep disturbance, fatigue, headache, irritability, concentration problems, impaired short-term memory and skin problems. These symptoms correspond to the symptoms described more than 50 years ago as an effect of exposure to radiofrequency or microwave radiation, known as microwave syndrome or radiofrequency sickness.

This first and unique study of the health effects of 5G clearly shows that 5G causes ill health in people living within a distance of 3 to 538 meters from 5G base stations/masts, even though the levels of measured RF radiation are significantly lower than the limits adopted by most countries. These limits allow exposure to 10 000 000 $\mu\text{W}/\text{m}^2$ measured as RMS (root mean square) averaged over 6 minutes, that only protects against instantaneous heating (thermal effects) and does not protect against the effects found in the new study. In an apartment only 20 meters from a 5G base station, the maximum measured RF radiation was just over 135 000 $\mu\text{W}/\text{m}^2$ (RMS average over 2 minutes) for the case with by far the highest radiation exposure. This level caused very severe symptoms within a week and the occupant had to leave the apartment for good.

The study also shows that when people moved to another home where the radiation was significantly lower and with no 5G base stations nearby, the symptoms subsided and disappeared completely in most cases after a short period. This reinforces that it was 5G that caused the reported symptoms.

The study confirms the warning of serious potential human health consequences due to the 5G roll out submitted by scientists and doctors in the 5G appeal to the EU (5gappeal.eu) and that the current limits for maximum allowed exposure do not protect against adverse health effects. 259 scientists have called for the limits to be improved (emfscientist.org).

- "5G is a gigantic experiment with public health that is being carried out and is accepted by the authorities and politicians....5G has been rolled out without any research showing that this new technology is not harmful to human health", says Lennart Hardell.

- "These results make it clear that 5G poses health risks to those living near base stations or cell towers because the radiation increases so massively. So far, there is no study of long-term health effects and the consequences could be very serious if people continue to be chronically exposed to these high levels of radiation from 5G", says Mona Nilsson.

Facts about the new 5G study:

Study published in: Reviews on Environmental Health with open access. Hardell, Lennart and Nilsson, Mona. "Summary of seven Swedish case reports on the microwave syndrome associated with 5G radiofrequency radiation" Reviews on Environmental Health, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1515/reveh-2024-0017>.

Number of people included: 16

Number of case studies on which the study is based: 7

Year the case studies were conducted: 2021-2023

Age of studied persons: 4 - 83 years

Distance to 5G base stations or mobile towers: 3 - 538 m

Highest measured radiation (max peak): >3 180 000 $\mu\text{W}/\text{m}^2$ (microwatts per square meter)

Maximum measured radiation (RMS average over 2 minutes): 135 000 $\mu\text{W}/\text{m}^2$

Most common and severe symptoms during 5G exposure: Difficulty sleeping, fatigue, headaches, irritation, difficulty concentrating, impaired short-term memory, skin problems

Recommended maximum value (Europa EM EMF guidelines): 0.1-100 $\mu\text{W}/\text{m}^2$

Thermal limits (ICNIRP/FCC) adopted by most countries: 10 000 000 $\mu\text{W}/\text{m}^2$

Thermal limits based on: Heating effects observed within 1 hour

EuropaEM EMF guidelines maximum value is based on: demonstrated effects of prolonged whole body exposure'

Download here: <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/reveh-2024-0017/html>

Regards

Eileen O'Connor

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Response from Sefton Council

Sefton Council public health team have consulted with colleagues in the UK Health Security Agency who provide expert guidance on health protection matters, including advice regarding non-ionising radiation impacts on health.

The UK Health Security Agency have reviewed the evidence and provided the information below in relation to the safety and health impacts of radio waves, including 5G.

Review of current evidence

The health effects of exposure to radio waves have been researched extensively over several decades, and very many publications can be found in scientific journals and elsewhere.

Guidelines set by International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) on limiting exposures to electromagnetic fields (EMF) have been developed based on careful analyses of the accumulated evidence. ICNIRP published updated guidelines on exposure to radio waves in 2020.

UKHSA is aware that different groups have concerns about EMFs and where they have proposed alternative limits, these do not appear to have a scientific rationale based on health effects in the same way as the ICNIRP guidelines. In formulating its advice, UKHSA aims to draw out a consensus position based on the totality of the scientific evidence through a process of systematic, critical and impartial review of the published literature.

UKHSA bases its opinion on evidence reviews from authoritative bodies that consider the whole-range of evidence available, taking account of the scientific quality and relevance of individual studies to human health, in developing their conclusions. The typical types of evidence reviewed are the human laboratory and epidemiological studies, animal studies and cellular studies. This is the approach adopted by officially mandated authoritative organisations such as, ICNIRP and the World Health Organization (WHO). UKHSA is not aware, therefore, that these initiatives are driven by any scientific evidence that has been overlooked in its own advice.

Summary of evidence and public health impacts

Many exposure measurements have been made at publicly accessible locations near to base stations and these have consistently been well within the ICNIRP guidelines.

It is possible that there may be a small increase in overall exposure to radio waves when 5G is added to an existing network or in a new area. However, the overall exposure is expected to remain low relative to guidelines and, as such, there should be no consequences for public health.

Further information

Please see the following webpages containing UKHSA's published advice on 5G and mobile phone base stations:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/5g-technologies-radio-waves-and-health/5g-technologies-radio-waves-and-health>.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phone-base-stations-radio-waves-and-health/mobile-phone-base-stations-radio-waves-and-health>