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NEWS

Cancer expert joins mast fight

November 6, 2003 12:10

A LEADING cancer research expert has claimed a controversial new radio system used by emergency services could constitute a health hazard.

Professor Sir David Lane made the statement in a letter contesting an application for a telecommunications system near his Scottish home.

He is the latest scientific heavyweight to raise questions about the impact on health posed by mobile phone masts.

The Evening News is fighting a campaign against the radio masts, which, experts say, carry similar health risks to mobile phone masts.

Sir David's statement led Norwich North MP Dr Ian Gibson to challenge the Government to conduct more research into health risks posed by masts.

He told the Evening News: "Sir David Lane is a big hitter in the cancer field, and when he speaks, we should listen.

"This can only influence the Government to start looking seriously into the effects of new technologies on our health."

Sir David's fears were echoed by former UEA scientist and radiation expert Pat Gowen.

He said: "These things are banned within reach of human habitation in lots of countries, but guess which is the one country which hasn't banned them yet.

"In Yorkshire, a lot of police went down ill when the system was introduced there, and it's about to come here to Norfolk.

"Some people get instant effects from this type of technology, but the really nasty things like cancer come ages later and it's difficult to prove the link."

It has been claimed that Tetra masts and handsets use signals which pulse at 17.6Hz, close to the 16Hz at which brain patterns operate.

Mr Gowen also feels more research needs to be done on the effects of the system on DNA.

He said: "It's probable that chromosomes get damaged which can cause mutations.

"I can't prove it yet, but we need to know if there is DNA damage."

Research by the Lancashire Police Federation revealed 170 officers claimed to have suffered side effects from the system ranging from nausea to deafness.

The Airwave radio system is rolling out across Britain in a £2.9 billion programme, and goes online next summer in Norfolk

Supporters of the system say it is harder to hack into than current networks, and gives better radio coverage.

In June, the Home Office announced a massive study which will monitor more than

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100,000 police officers for any impact short and long term on health.

Inspector Michael Lamb, of Norfolk Constabulary's Airwaves team, said: "The Lancashire research was flawed, and they take that view too, but that does not mean to say that the new research will not bring anything to the fore.

"You cannot say 100 per cent that any new technology is safe, but this is a lot safer than the existing system."

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