

# THIS IS LANCASHIRE

## **A honey trap set by phone masts**

FEARS that radiation from phone masts is killing bees could affect decisions over the location of masts in Bolton.

Radiation from masts has been blamed for dwindling honey bee populations, with scientists claiming it interferes with the insects' navigation systems and stops them finding their way back to their hives.

Research by Landau University in Germany found that 70 per cent of bees exposed to radiation failed to find their way back to their hive after searching for pollen and nectar.

[Bolton Council](#) planners will now investigate the claims following a request at a full council meeting by Conservative planning committee member Cllr Norman Critchley.

The evidence could be used in future decisions on applications for mobile phone masts in the borough.

Cllr Critchley raised concerns about the possible loss of honey and said he had also heard that radiowaves from the masts could also affect migratory birds.

He said bees had aided the medical profession over thousands of years and honey-based dressings could help in the fight against superbug MRSA.

Cllr Ebrahim Adia, executive member for development, agreed to ask the council's planning improvement working party, made up of two councillors from each of the three parties on the council, to look into the matter.

The party meets quarterly to look at improvements to the planning system.

Cllr Adia said: "Our powers in relation to phone masts are somewhat limited but in spite of that, we are proud as a council to promote bio-diversity and ecology as part of the planning process."

Some beekeepers in Britain have reported losses exceeding the usual 10 per cent of colonies that die during winter.

But beekeeper, Keith Hibbert, who keeps bees in New Springs, Wigan, said he was sceptical of the phone mast claims.

Mr Hibbert, of Fallbirch Road, Horwich, said: "I have lost more bees over the winter than I would in a normal winter and I'm not quite sure why.

"But I'm not aware of any phone masts nearby and it may have been because I was away for a while and wasn't there to tend to them."

3:42pm Friday 27th April 2007

*By Rob Devey*

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