

Department of Neighbourhood Services

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East Ayrshire
COUNCIL

Rec'd 23/02

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21 February 2007

Our Ref: WS/ PLT /SMcD

John Glen
Scottish Executive Health Department
Tobacco Control Division
3 E (R)
St Andrew;s House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Dear Sir

**CONSULTATION ON SMOKING PREVENTION WORKING GROUP
REPORT: TOWARDS A FUTURE WITHOUT TOBACCO**

I refer to the above consultation document issued for comment. In discussion with the Chair of Community Services of East Ayrshire Council I would offer the undernoted comments on behalf of East Ayrshire to the recommendations made in the report of the Smoking Prevention Working Group.

Targets

- The gradual reduction in targets to 2025 relative to the percentage of boys, girls and 16-24 year old smokers is realistic and is supported.

Research

- It is essential that work continues in researching attitudes, behaviour and evaluation of any new and proposed measures. Resources to carry out the research and evaluation process require to be identified and maintained.

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Reducing Availability

- Enforcement proposals as outlined in recommendation 5 in terms of the use of proof of age, active best purchasing and prosecution with heavy fines will ensure that emphasis is placed on enforcing the legal age of purchase. However, additional resources will require to be identified to ensure the effectiveness of enforcement by Trading Standards Officers. In addition further staff training will be required in certain areas.
- Support is given to the introduction of a negative licensing scheme whereby vendors who repeatedly offend could be prohibited from selling tobacco products as outlined in recommendation 6. Clarification would be required on the legal process, definition of vendor and any appeals process and procedure.
- It is noted that proposals to amend the current offence of selling tobacco products to anyone under the age of 16 by raising the minimum age to 18 are currently being consulted upon separately and general support is given to this.
- It is noted that Ministers have acted on pricing of tobacco products and taxation policies together with proposals to tackling smuggling of tobacco products and that the UK Government have been written to relative to these recommendations (8 and 9; 13 to 16). This action is supported.
- The proposal of the use of graphic photographs of smoking related diseases to be displayed on cigarette packs has previously been consulted upon and is supported.
- The proposal to provide a single list of brands and prices of cigarettes at the point of sale rather than prominent display of cigarettes is supported. Enforcement issues relative to this require to be addressed.

Discouraging Young People from Smoking

- I would suggest that only when a reassessment has been carried out as indicated in recommendation 21 that any consideration of reform can take place. Current practice may be deemed to be appropriate.
- Given the new smoke-free legislation, schools will have no smoking policies which prohibit smoking on school premises which promotes the health and wellbeing of pupils and staff (recommendation 24).
- Further research is needed to assess whether existing support systems in schools require to be amended or revised relative to smoking, if not already done (recommendation 25).

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In general, support is given to the recommendations outlined in the report with consideration given for further development in certain areas. It is essential that any proposed Action Plan is fully resourced and that a realistic measure of performance in the proposals is developed.

I trust the above comments are of use to you and I would like this opportunity of thanking you for issuing the consultation to East Ayrshire Council for comment.

Yours sincerely



W Stafford
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

c.c. Fiona Lees, Chief Executive