

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL - REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Health Select Commission
2.	Date:	31st May, 2012
3.	Title:	Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Products: Department of Health Consultation
4.	Directorate:	Public Health

5. Summary

A UK-wide consultation seeking views on whether tobacco products should be sold in standardised, plain packaging has been launched by the Department of Health. The government is exploring whether action on tobacco packaging has the potential to bring public health benefits over and above those from current initiatives.

The Rotherham Tobacco Control Alliance has put together a draft response which is attached for information, and the Health Select Commission is encouraged to submit a separate response also.

The deadline for responding to the consultation is 10 July 2012.

6. Recommendations

That the Health Select Commission:

- **Discuss and consider the consultation document and questions**
- **Agree a response to be submitted to the consultation by 10 July 2012**

7. Proposals and details

The Department of Health are seeking feedback on whether there might be public health benefits from the introduction of standardised tobacco packaging in addition to policies which are currently in place; including legislation ending the permanent display of tobacco products by retailers. They are also seeking to understand what other effects there may be should standardised tobacco packaging be introduced.

The consultation ends on 10 July 2012 and responses are invited from any interested person, business or organisation.

Why they are consulting

The Government has an open mind at this stage about introducing standardised packaging and is seeking views from interested parties to understand the impact and potential benefits or risks in doing so.

While 'plain packaging' is a term commonly used in connection with policies about regulating tobacco packaging, in practice packs would not actually be plain. For example, they would be required to have coloured picture warnings and brand names would still appear in a standardised form. The term 'standardised packaging' is considered to be a more accurate description of the policy concept and, therefore, it is used throughout this consultation document.

The Department of Health has commissioned a systematic review of the evidence on plain tobacco packaging. The review was supported through the Public Health Research Consortium (PHRC), a network of researchers funded by the Department of Health's Policy Research Programme. The report represents the work and views of the authors, not necessarily those of the Department of Health. The Public Health Research Consortium report is available on the Department of Health Website (see link below).

Standardised packaging could consist of, for example:

- no branding
- a uniform colour
- standard font and text for any writing on the pack

Views are also sought on whether there might be other implications if standardised packaging requirements were introduced, including any potential effect on the illicit tobacco market. The consultation asks for views on whether:

- tobacco packaging should remain unchanged
- plain packaging should be adopted
- a different option should be considered

Responding to the consultation

The Rotherham Tobacco Control Alliance has put together a draft response, which is attached with this report for information. The Health Select Commission is encouraged to submit a separate response also to help strengthen the influence on the government's decisions.

The full consultation document is attached with this report and the full list of questions can be found on page 13.

8. Finance

There are no direct financial implications associated with this consultation.

9 Risks and Uncertainties

Smoking remains one of the most significant challenges to public health. Each year it accounts for over 100,000 deaths in the UK and one in two long-term smokers will die prematurely from a smoking disease.

That is why health ministers across the UK have a responsibility to look closely at initiatives that might encourage smokers to quit and stop young people taking up smoking in the first place.

Responding to this consultation is an opportunity to influence the Government's decision on standardised packaging.

10 Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Tobacco control remains a key priority in improving health and reducing inequalities. The outcome of this consultation could have a significant impact on reducing smoking prevalence in Rotherham.

11 Background Papers and Consultation

Consultation on Standardised Tobacco Packaging (attached)

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/2012/04/tobacco-packaging-consultation/>

The Public Health Research Consortium report

http://phrc.lshtm.ac.uk/project_2011-2016_006.html

Rotherham Tobacco Control Alliance – draft response (attached)

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