

Cabinet – 13 December 2023

Tobacco Control Plan for Walsall 2023 to 2027

Portfolio: Councillor Flint - Wellbeing, Leisure and Public Spaces

Related portfolios: Councillor Perry - Deputy Leader - Resilient Communities

Service: Public Health

Wards: All

Key decision: No

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

Provide a co-ordinated approach to tobacco control in Walsall, maximising the health and economic benefits of this work locally, and supporting the national ambition for a smoke free generation.

2. Summary

This Cabinet report seeks approval of a new Tobacco Control Plan for Walsall (2023-2027) and approval to sign up to the Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet approves the revised Tobacco Control Plan for Walsall.
- 3.2 That Cabinet delegates The Safer Walsall Partnership Board to oversee the implementation of the local Tobacco Control Plan, with appropriate health partnership input provided through the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 3.3 That Cabinet authorises the Leader, Portfolio Holder for Wellbeing, Leisure and Public Spaces, Deputy Leader – Resilient Communities, Chief Executive and Interim Director of Public Health to sign the Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control, supporting the national ambition of being smoke free by 2030.

4. Report detail - know

Context

- 4.1 Smoking is the leading preventable cause of ill-health and premature death nationally. Smoking is also the single largest driver of health inequalities in England, accounting for half the difference in life expectancy between those living in the most and least deprived communities. Smoking is much more common among people with lower incomes.
- 4.2 In October 2023, the Prime Minister set out plans to introduce new legislation and policy to support the national ambition of being smoke-free by 2030 (as heralded in the Government's green paper on preventative health in 2019; Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s).
- 4.3 Government proposals will:
- Raise the smoking age by a year each year until it applies to the whole population.
 - Provide an additional £70 million investment each year over the next five years to expand locally delivered and cost-effective smoking cessation services.
 - Strengthen enforcement activity, with an investment of £30 million per year over the next five years to support agencies including local Trading Standards, HMRC and Border Force to take action to stop underage sales and tackle the import of illicit tobacco and vaping products at the border.
 - Increase restrictions to crackdown on youth vaping (e.g. regulating point of sales display)
- 4.4 Smoking prevalence amongst adults in Walsall is 13.8% which is above (worse than) the England average of 12.7%. Similar to the national pattern (referred to in 4.1), there are differences in smoking prevalence between certain population groups in Walsall. For example, 16.3% of Walsall residents employed in routine and manual occupations are smokers.
- 4.5 Smoking status of pregnant women at time of delivery is worse in Walsall (9.4%) compared to the England average (9.1%). There is limited robust local data on smoking amongst young people. However, nationally the percentage of 11- to 15-year-olds who have ever smoked has dropped between 2016 (16%) and 2021 (12%). An emerging area of concern is the increase in vaping amongst young people. Between 2020 and 2023, the percentage of young people who tried vaping rose from 13.9% to 20.5%.
- 4.6 Vaping is not for children and young people. Most vapes contain nicotine. Nicotine is highly addictive, and the developing lungs and brains of children and young people are more sensitive to its effects. Vapes can contain other harmful substances besides nicotine. Children and young people who use vapes may be more likely to smoke cigarettes in the future. Research has shown 14% probability that vape users (youth) went onto smoke cigarettes after 1 year, rising to 25% after 3 years.

- 4.7 Reducing the prevalence of smoking and those being initiated into smoking is seriously undermined by the availability of illicit and counterfeit tobacco in Walsall. The ingredients of illicit tobacco are not known or regulated. Whilst no tobacco is safe, illicit tobacco could contain higher levels of harmful chemicals.
- 4.8 Tobacco smuggling and the sale of non-duty paid tobacco are illegal acts often linked to highly organised criminal gangs who do not limit their activities to tobacco. These criminal activities damage the local economy and legitimate traders by gaining a competitive advantage at their expense and taking trade away from genuine businesses.
- 4.9 Between September 2021 and September 2023, Walsall Council Regulatory Services seized 20,224 illegal vapes, 392,917 illegal cigarettes and 199.05kg of illegal hand rolling tobacco.
- 4.10 Each year in Walsall, it is estimated that smoking costs approximately £106.4m. Revenue from cigarette and hand rolled tobacco taxation only brings in about £48.3m.
- 4.11 The £106.4m in costs are accrued in the following areas:
- Productivity loss (£86.4m) – smoking negatively affects earnings and employment prospects.
 - Healthcare (£10.8m) – these costs are a result of smoking-related hospital admissions and the cost of treating smoking-related illness via primary care services.
 - Social Care (£6.3m) – many current/ former smokers require care in later life as result of smoking related illnesses. The estimated overall cost to local authorities is split between £3m for residential care and £3.3m for domiciliary care.
 - Fire (£2.6m) – smoking materials are a major contributor to fires.
- 4.12 The Tobacco Control Plan for Walsall (2023 to 2027) aims to provide a co-ordinated approach to tobacco control, maximising the health and economic benefits to Walsall and its residents. By 2027 we aim to reduce smoking prevalence to lower than the regional average and be the most improved borough in the West Midlands by 2040. The draft plan is included in **appendix 1**. No one single measure will achieve a reduction in levels of smoking. Therefore, a combination of the following will be implemented:
- Effective leadership and partnerships - The Safer Walsall Partnership has committed to overseeing the implementation of the Tobacco Control Plan and this will ensure involvement from key partners. The Health and Wellbeing Board will provide appropriate health partnership input.
 - Enhanced local regulation and enforcement (sales of tobacco and vaping products)
 - Preventing residents from starting (smoking and/or vaping)

- Enhancing services to target those in greatest need (e.g. high risk groups such as residents with mental health conditions, routine and manual employees and pregnant women).

4.13 A key action within the plan is for large local organisations to sign up to the relaunched Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control (**see appendix 2**). The declaration was relaunched on No Smoking Day 2022 (9th March 2022) to bring it into line with the Government’s ambition for England to be smoke free by 2030. Since it was launched in May 2013, over 120 councils across the country have signed the Declaration. The previous Declaration was approved for signature by Cabinet on 26 October 2016 (see background papers).

Council Plan priorities

4.14 Walsall’s Tobacco Control Plan will support

The Council Plan priorities particularly:

- People can access support in their community to keep safe and well and remain independent at home.
- People are supported to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing, and quality of life.
- Supporting a dynamic, resilient, and diverse economy where businesses invest, and everyone has the right jobs and the right housing in the right place.

The ‘We Are Walsall 2040’ priorities particularly:

- ‘By 2040 people in all areas of the borough will live longer lives in better health, and we will have narrowed the gap in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy across all neighbourhoods.’
- ‘By 2040 people in Walsall will live more physically active lives – we will be the most improved borough for smoking rates and drug addiction in the region.’

4.15 Walsall Tobacco Control Plan will provide support to both residents and the local economy, reducing the harms caused by smoking and vaping. This will be as follows:

- Children and young people will be clear about the dangers/risks of smoking and vaping.
- Residents who smoke (who want support) will be able to access evidence-based interventions tailored to their individual needs.
- Tackling the sale of illegal tobacco and vaping products will reduce health implications. Whilst no tobacco is safe, illicit tobacco could contain higher levels of harmful chemicals. The same applies to illegal vapes.
- Tackling the sale of smuggled tobacco will reduce the amount of revenue in duty that is lost each year. It will also reduce the supply of cheaper products making price more of a barrier for those who otherwise would continue smoking.

- Local businesses will be supported to implement new Government Legislation on age restricted sales of tobacco and vaping products. This will reduce the risk of fines and potential imprisonment.

Risk management

- 4.16 Budget constraints may limit the Council's ability to deliver all aspects of the current plan to the maximum effect. Delivery of the plan will be monitored and assured through its accountability to the Safer Walsall Partnership Board.

Financial implications

- 4.17 Between 2014/15 and 2023/24, the stop smoking service budget has reduced substantially from £941,000 to approximately £329,000. This includes universal smoking cessation support (£220,000) and smoking in pregnancy support (£109,000). The service budget was reduced to achieve required savings by Cabinet.
- 4.18 In line with the proposed Government legislation (**see section 4.2 and 4.3**), an additional £70 million a year over the next five years (2024/25-2028/29) will be allocated to expand locally delivered and cost-effective smoking cessation services. The proposed funding uplift for each area is based on the prevalence of smoking in each local authority. For Walsall, the proposed allocation is up to £368,536, which will be received as a separate grant. These allocations are indicative but have been provided for planning purposes. Exact funding criteria and precise allocations will be communicated to local authorities through the formal grant agreement process.
- 4.19 The funding allocation will be ringfenced for the purposes of local authority-led stop smoking services. To receive the funding, local authorities must maintain their existing spend on stop smoking services.

Legal implications

- 4.20 There are no legal implications arising out of this report.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.21 Any procurement activity will be compliant with procurement policy

Property implications

- 4.22 There are no property implications arising out of this report.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.23 Smoking is one of the biggest causes of death and illness in the UK. Smoking causes 7 in 10 cases of lung cancer. It causes cancer in various other parts of the body (e.g. throat, stomach). Smoking damages the heart and blood circulation increasing the risk of heart attacks and strokes. In Walsall, 245 per

100,000 deaths are attributable to smoking. This is higher than the England average (202 per 100,000).

- 4.24 Stopping smoking at age 60, 50, 40, or 30 adds about 3, 6, 9, or 10 years of life expectancy respectively. For people who stop smoking before the age of 50 years, the risk of dying of smoking-related disease is reduced by 50%.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.25 Cumulative disadvantage increases the likelihood of smoking. Higher smoking prevalence is associated with almost every indicator of deprivation or marginalisation (e.g. unemployment, low income, homelessness).
- 4.26 Spending on tobacco consumes a high proportion of income of individuals with limited financial resources. Therefore, tobacco addiction can lock people into poverty as well as negatively impact on personal and family health. The nature of maintaining an addiction means that individuals can risk trying to reduce costs to sustain their ability to smoke. People and communities experiencing poverty are therefore at risk of being targeted by those selling illicit tobacco and the additional harms (**see section 4.12**) associated with these illegal products.
- 4.27 The Tobacco Control Plan for Walsall will provide a balance between preventative measures and targeted support. Targeted support will be designed specifically for certain groups that are at greater risk of harm from tobacco and vaping products (illicit and legal).

Staffing implications

- 4.28 There are no staffing implications arising out of this report.

Climate Impact

- 4.29 Smoking related litter is the most prevalent form of litter in England, making up 68% of all littered items.
- 4.30 Environmental impacts of vapes include littering, risks associated with unsafe disposal of their contents including lithium batteries and chemicals, and greenhouse gas emissions and water consumption, occurring during the manufacturing process.

Consultation

- 4.31 Walsall's updated Tobacco Control Plan has been informed by national guidance and benchmarking against equivalent plans in other local authorities. Consultation has taken place with relevant stakeholders, such as partner in ICB and education. The Tobacco Control plan includes actions to engage with high-risk target groups (e.g. pregnant women, routine and manual workers) to help shape policy and practice.

5. Decide

- 5.1 That Cabinet approves the revised Tobacco Control Plan for Walsall
- 5.2 That Cabinet delegates The Safer Walsall Partnership Board to oversee the implementation of the local Tobacco Control Plan, with appropriate health partnership input being provided through the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 5.3 That Cabinet authorises the Leader, Portfolio Holder for Wellbeing, Leisure and Public Spaces, Deputy Leader – Resilient Communities, Chief Executive and Interim Director of Public Health to sign the Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control, supporting the national ambition of being smoke free by 2030.

6. Respond

Subject to Cabinet approval of the recommendations, Public Health will work with relevant partners to progress the actions from the Tobacco Control Plan for Walsall.

7. Review

Regular performance reports will be provided to the Safer Walsall Partnership who will oversee implementation of the Tobacco Control Plan for Walsall.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Tobacco Control Plan for Walsall

Appendix 2: Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control

Background papers

Previous cabinet paper:

[Microsoft Word - cabinet report template tobacco control final.docx \(walsall.gov.uk\)](#)

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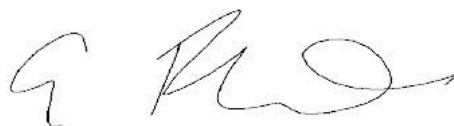
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30 November 2023



Councillor Flint
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30 November 2023