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**Sent:** 05 January 2021 09:28

**To:** Licensing <Licensing@walsall.gov.uk>

**Subject:** Fw: Premises licence review. Fire Authority re-submission support of process.

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**278 Wolverhampton Road Walsall WS2 8RQ**

I refer to the review of a premises license called by Walsall Council's Trading Standards, In respect of the above premises

West Midlands Fire Authority would like to support the review particularly in respect of the trade of illegal cigarettes, for the following reasons.

**Fake cigarettes pose an even bigger fire risk than genuine ones, which are already the single biggest cause of fire deaths in the UK, accounting for one in three house-fire fatalities and 100 deaths a year.**

Since November 2011, every cigarette **sold** in the EU/UK must meet a reduced ignition propensity (RIP) requirement by having ultra-thin bands of slightly thicker fire-retardant paper at intervals down the length of the cigarette so that, once lit, it will self-extinguish if not actively smoked.

This reduces the fire risk from them being left burning in an ashtray, dropped, or from the smoker falling asleep, for example.

**Fire-safer cigarettes**

Described as a “watershed moment for fire safety in the UK” by the Chairman of London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority’s Community Safety Committee, it is estimated that the implementation of this legislation and the creation of fire-safer cigarettes could prevent 1,800 fires, 67 fire deaths and 600 casualties a year in the UK, or 1 life every five days.

However, the active word above is ‘sold’, meaning sold legally. What about the possibly hundreds of millions of counterfeit cigarettes smuggled into the country, and smoked by increasing numbers of people as the price of the genuine article continues to rise?

In Lincolnshire, a smoldering illegal cigarette brand, is thought to have started a house fire in Spalding in which a 71-year-old woman died.

Apart from the obvious fire risk, fake cigarettes carry huge health risks and are even more toxic than genuine brands, often containing noxious cancer-causing chemicals such as arsenic, lead, cadmium, benzene and formaldehyde, sawdust, tobacco beetles and, in some cases, rat droppings.

Illegal brands of cigarettes that do not carry the fire-retardant bands are widely smoked all over the UK, often in poorer communities in many of these households, children will also reside and may be sleeping when fires from cigarettes are started, often late at night.

West Midlands Fire Authority Supports the review as it believes the public safety objective is being undermined with the sale of potentially dangerous items and fully supports any actions taken by trading standards in respect of the premises which sell them.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

*Regards*

*Neil Aston-Baugh*

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**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE**

Making the West Midlands Safer, Stronger and Healthier

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