

Report To:	Safe , Sustainable Communities Committee	Date:	18 January 2011
Report By:	Corporate Director Education &Communities	Report No:	SCS/11/46/MMcN
Contact Officer:	Martin McNab	Contact No:	714246
Subject:	Age Restricted Sales Enforcement		

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of the measures taken by Safer & Inclusive Communities in stepping up enforcement of tobacco sales law and working in partnership with HM Revenue and Customs to tackle illicit sales of tobacco.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 This report seeks to update committee on the progress of the service in contributing to the Scottish Governments outcomes aimed at reducing the percentage of young people smoking.

2.2 The Scottish Government allocated £1.5m per annum to local authorities to enable them to step up enforcement of tobacco sales law and to enable them to work in partnership with HM Revenue & Customs to tackle illicit sales of tobacco. Inverclyde Council's share of this funding amounted to £26,000.

2.3 The Council's Trading Standard service, now part of Safer & Inclusive Communities, had been reduced in number to one officer and therefore we were not initially in a position to contribute effectively to the delivery of the outcomes. The funding was therefore used to create an additional Trading Standards Officer post which was filled in January 2010.

2.4 Since the post was filled the tackling of underage sales in general, albeit with a particular focus on tobacco sales, has been a priority of the service. This report details the action taken to date and the future enforcement programme.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- a. Note the contents of this report; and
- b. Receive update reports on progress as appropriate.

John Arthur
Head of Safer & Inclusive Communities

4.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4.1 Inverclyde Council received £26,000 per annum from the Scottish Government to fund its contribution to the Scottish Government's outcomes as set out in "Scotland's Future is Smoke Free: A Smoking Prevention Action Plan". The outcomes relevant to underage sales of tobacco are detailed below.

4.2 In Inverclyde, very little could be achieved with the staffing levels pertaining in Trading Standards. The funding was therefore used to contribute towards the costs of an additional Trading Standards Officer who joined the Service in January 2010.

4.3 With the additional officer in post, a programme of education and advice to traders was launched in June. A trial of card readers to assist retailers in verifying "young Scot" cards has also taken place and the service has begun to carry out informal test purchases.

5.0 Outcomes and Outputs

5.1 The Scottish Governments outcomes relating to under age use of tobacco are:

- To reduce the level of smoking amongst 13 year old girls from 5% in 2006 to 3% in 2014;
- To reduce the level of smoking amongst 13 year old boys from 3% in 2006 to 2% in 2014;
- To reduce the level of smoking amongst 15 year old girls from 18% in 2006 to 14% in 2014;
- To reduce the level of smoking amongst 15 year old boys from 12% in 2006 to 9% in 2014; and
- To reduce the level of smoking amongst 16 to 24 year olds from 26.5% in 2006 to 22.9% in 2014.

5.2 In seeking to contribute to these outcomes the service has delivered the following outputs to date:

- An Age Restricted Sales pack has been produced and delivered to 71 retailers together with an advisory visit;
- Card readers to assist retailers in verifying "Young Scot" cards have been ordered and trialled in a number of retailers;
- An initial informal test purchase exercise has been carried out using a volunteer who has done similar work for Renfrewshire Council. This exercise was to gauge the level of compliance in retailers who had already received the advisory visit. Officers visited 28 premises over two weekends, 18 of which (64%) supplied tobacco illegally. All those visited have been written to to advise them of the result of the visit; and
- The Service has worked with HM Revenue & Customs in an operation targeting sales of illegal tobacco from a local business.

5.3 The outputs above will be followed up with the following in the New Year:

- A further 53 retailers will receive the Age Restricted Sales pack and advisory visit;
- It is hoped that, subject to some technical adaptations, card readers will be supplied free of charge to retailers across Inverclyde. These can be used to verify age for all age restricted sales. Inverclyde will be the first Council in Scotland to trial these across its area;
- The informal test purchase exercise will be carried out in a number of further retailers; and
- Those retailers who have sold tobacco illegally in the informal sampling exercise will be subjected to formal test purchasing with the appropriate enforcement action taken if they continue to sell tobacco illegally.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Finance:

Costs will be contained within existing service provision and funding allocation

6.2 Personnel:

None currently

6.3 Legal:

None