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Our ref: SB/2018



Durham County Council
Licensing Services
PO Box 617
Durham
DH1 9HZ

22 November 2018

Dear Sir / Madam

**Re – M & A General Stores (Lifestyle Express) 44 Middle Street, Blackhall,
Hartlepool, TS27 4EA.**

I represent County Durham Public Health department within Durham County Council which is a responsible authority under the Licensing Act 2003.

Due to information contained in this review Public Health wish to record their support for a licensing review of the premises above.

Tobacco control and tobacco control strategies in County Durham that; reduce smoking prevalence, reduce the disease burden that smoking has on our communities; and the impact smoking has on mortality rates are a key focus for Public Health. In this respect, the removal of illicit tobacco is one of the key strands in tobacco control strategies.

While all tobacco kills, illicit tobacco causes additional problems to communities on many levels. Firstly, in the protection of children, illicit tobacco has been proven to provide an opportunity for young people to bypass the 'over 18' law which most honest retailers abide by. The selling of illicit tobacco is therefore making it easier for children and young people to procure cigarettes and so become addicted. Children and young people are often aware who is selling illicit tobacco and at pocket money prices.

Under crime and disorder, we know that illegal tobacco products brings crime to local communities. Those people supplying illicit tobacco are frequently involved in other criminality such as illicit alcohol, illegal drugs and illegal money lending (loan sharks).

Adult & Health Services
Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham DH1 5UG
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Illicit tobacco undermines the work of Public Health to reduce smoking and to reduce the health harms that smoking causes in communities. Cheap tobacco encourages smokers to keep smoking; to smoke more and can break their will-power to quit. It frustrates the maintenance of price as one of the key drivers to reduce smoking rates.

Public Health believe the role of the premises licence holder and designated premises supervisor are positions of responsibility. Given the information above Public Health would have no confidence that the premises in question and the premises licence holder and designated premises supervisor can be considered as a responsible licence premises and a responsible licensee.

Therefore, on behalf of Public Health, I would support the application by Durham County Council to review the premises licence.

Gill O'Neil
Deputy Director of Public Health
County Durham Public Health