



Cllr John Williams

Leader of the Council

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Our Ref: JRW/EF

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Dear

RE: Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control

In December 2013 Taunton Deane Borough Council became the 31st council and first District Council in England to sign the Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control. This is a Declaration which commits councils to tackle the harm smoking causes our communities. It has been endorsed by, among others, the Public Health Minister, Chief Medical Officer and Public Health England. I'd like to encourage your council to join us and sign up to the Declaration.

The Declaration commits councils to:

- Reduce smoking prevalence and health inequalities
- Develop plans with partners and local communities
- Participate in local and regional networks
- Support Government action at national level
- Protect tobacco control work from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry
- Monitor the progress of our plans
- Join the Smokefree Action Coalition

You can find out more about it here: www.smokefreeaction.org.uk/declaration/

The Declaration started life at Newcastle City Council in May and since then councils from across the country and representing all the major parties have approved and signed up.

Tobacco related disease remains the single greatest cause of preventable deaths in England – killing over 80,000 people every year, more people each year than obesity, alcohol, road accidents and illegal drug use put together.

Thousands of children also suffer harm as a result of smoking. The Royal College of Physicians estimates that each year over 300,000 visits to the GP are made by children as a result of second hand smoke. Cancer Research UK also estimates that 463 children in England start smoking every day.

Although smoking has fallen from 40% to 20% since 1980 there has been little change within our poorest communities and smoking is responsible for half the difference in life expectancy between the richest and poorest. There can be no doubt that, in the context of our public health responsibilities, smoking is one of the greatest challenges facing us today.

In response, this Declaration has been developed to provide a very visible opportunity for local government to: publically acknowledge the significant challenge facing us; voluntarily demonstrate a commitment to take action; and to publish a statement of our dedication to protect local communities from the harm caused by smoking.

I have enclosed a copy of the Declaration.

If you would like any further information or details about the declaration please do not hesitate to contact Hazel Cheeseman from the Smokefree Action Coalition at admin@smokefreeaction.org.uk or on 020 7404 0242.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Williams', written in a cursive style.

CLLR JOHN WILLIAMS
Leader of the Council

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