

## Slough Borough Council

**Report To:** Slough Health and Well-being Board  
**Date:** 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024  
**Subject:** Slough Tobacco Control Network – Update  
**Chief Officer:** Tessa Lindfield, Director of Public Health  
**Contact Officer:** Janet Ige, Public Health Lead – Adults  
**Ward(s):** ALL  
**Exempt:** NO  
**Appendices:** None

### 1. Summary and Recommendations

1.1 The report summarises the Slough Tobacco Control Network's recent initiatives to reduce smoking rates and address youth vaping, highlights their alignment with the proposed Tobacco and Vapes Bill, and recommends that the Health and Wellbeing Board endorse the bill to strengthen local tobacco control efforts.

Please indicate which priority in the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, [Slough Wellbeing Strategy 2020 – 2025](#), your report links to:

Priority 1 – Starting Well	Priority 2 - Integration	Priority 3 – Strong, Health and Attractive Neighbourhoods	Priority 4 – Workplace Health
	The Slough tobacco control network plays a crucial role in integration and joined up working across various partner organisations to reduce inequalities in health via tobacco control	The network and initiatives led by SBC tobacco control team provide services and oversee projects that address the impact of smoking on residents' health and well-being, thereby supporting a stronger, healthier Slough.	

1.2 Consideration:

- Information
- Discussion
- Decision
- Endorsement

## Recommendations:

- 1.3 The Health and Well-being Board is recommended to:
- (a) Note the update and activities of the Slough Tobacco Control Network.
  - (b) Endorse the new Tobacco and Vapes Bill, noting its benefits in strengthening provisions and measures to tackle the adverse effects of tobacco on Slough residents.

## Reason:

- 1.4 The continued endorsement ensures sustained momentum and alignment across the Tobacco Control portfolio of work.

## Report

### Introductory paragraph

- 2.1 This report demonstrates how the initiatives undertaken by the Slough Tobacco Control Network align with and advance the Council's vision and corporate priorities. By actively working to reduce smoking rates, address health inequalities, and create smoke-free environments, the network supports the Council's commitment to improving the health and well-being of residents. The collaborative efforts detailed herein contribute to fostering strong, healthy, and attractive neighbourhoods, protecting young people from the harms of tobacco and vaping, and promoting a culture of wellness across the community. Through evidence-based programs and strategic partnerships, the network's activities not only tackle immediate public health challenges but also pave the way for sustainable, long-term benefits that resonate with the Council's strategic objectives and vision for a healthier Slough.

### Options considered

N/A

### Background

- 2.2 Smoking rates in Slough's adult population have historically been above the national average. However, recent data suggests a significant decrease in prevalence from 15.2% in 2022 to 8.3% in 2023 which is lower but not statistically significantly lower than the England average of 11.6%. Despite this positive trend, substantial inequalities persist among key groups, particularly among adults in routine and manual occupations and those with long-term mental health conditions, who continue to exhibit higher smoking rates.
- 2.3 **The Slough Tobacco Control Network was established in 2020 with a primary mission to tackle inequalities in health via tobacco control.** The network collaborates with various stakeholders, including the Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, education institutions, health services, and fire services, to achieve the following objectives:
- Protect children and prevent young people from taking up smoking.

- Normalise a smokefree lifestyle.
- Support smokers to quit.
- Reduce illicit tobacco in the community.
- Raise the profile of tobacco control through marketing and communication programs.
- Reduce health inequalities.

The network was suspended late 2020 due to Covid-19 pandemic and was reinstated in 2023. The network has been actively engaged in multiple initiatives to reduce smoking prevalence and address emerging challenges such as youth vaping. Below is a comprehensive overview of these activities:

## 2.4 Youth Vaping Prevention Programme

Following extensive research on the drivers and deterrents of vaping, the network engaged with the current stop-smoking service provider to address an under-performance in the delivery of stop-smoking service for young people by converting service provision to a stop-vaping service for a target group. A Youth Vaping Cessation Programme was launched in October 2024 through Health and Wellbeing Slough. The programme's key objectives are to help young people quit vaping and reduce vaping rates in schools. Key components include:

- **Very Brief Advice (VBA) Training:** Provided to parents, teachers, and professionals working with children to raise awareness about the health impacts of vaping and discourage initiation.
- **Partnerships:** The provider collaborated with local youth organisation Aik Saath, school nurses, and youth workers to develop the programme based on community insights.
- **Cessation Support:** Offers a 6–12 week cessation programme with behavioral support and Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRTs) for individuals aged 12-18.
- **Educational Initiatives:** Slough Borough Council is partnering with schools and youth organizations to support the delivery of education and awareness activities that inform students about the risks of smoking and vaping.

## 2.5 The Stop Smoking Service

The Slough Stop Smoking Service, a central part of the integrated health and wellbeing service, offers comprehensive, personalised support to individuals seeking to quit smoking:

- **Face-to-Face Support:** Provides individualised counselling over a four-week period, extending to 12 weeks for priority groups like pregnant women to ensure sustained cessation.
- **Support for Mental Health Needs:** Tailored assistance recognizing the higher prevalence of smoking among individuals with mental health conditions.
- **Digital Resources:** Offers the **Quit with Bella App** for convenient access to support and resources.
- **Training for Frontline Staff:** Conducts **Very Brief Advice (VBA) training** to equip staff with skills to encourage and support quit attempts.
- **Vape Vouchers:** Includes the option of vape vouchers as an alternative cessation aid for those who may benefit.

- **Ongoing Follow-Up:** Provides weekly follow-ups via phone or face-to-face to address challenges and offer encouragement.

By integrating personalized care, digital tools, and professional support, the service aims to reduce smoking rates and improve health outcomes across the community.

## **2.6 Collaboration with Frimley Integrated Care Board on SMS Quit Smoking Pilot**

The Slough Tobacco Control Network is collaborating with the Frimley Integrated Care Board (ICB) to pilot an innovative initiative aimed at encouraging smokers to quit. This pilot program involves signposting smokers to local stop smoking services through personalized SMS text messages sent to targeted patient groups. Data from connected care suggests that there are approximately 19,000 patients who smoke in Slough, representing a significant portion of the population that could benefit from cessation support.

The pilot seeks to leverage a targeted, centralized approach to effectively reach smokers and motivate them to engage with cessation services. Using the Connected Care system, tailored text messages will be sent to agreed cohorts of patients to promote local stop smoking services. To ensure the messages are accessible and resonate with the diverse community, translations will be provided in the languages spoken within the population.

## **2.7 Community Engagement**

Community involvement is crucial for the success of tobacco control initiatives, especially among hard-to-reach groups. The network has implemented several projects to intensify smoking cessation support for high-risk groups, incorporating cultural sensitivity and addressing specific barriers to quitting.

## **2.8 Collaboration with the Pakistani Welfare Association (PWA)**

A key community engagement project is the collaboration with the Pakistani Welfare Association (PWA) to deliver educational campaigns across community spaces from October 2024 till March 2025. The goal of this project was to deliver a series of community-based health awareness campaigns around smoking cessation and to enhance the capability, skills, and knowledge of community champions within minority ethnic communities to disseminate smoking cessation advice and raise awareness through the Making Every Contact Count (MECC) program. This phase commenced in November 2024.

## **2.9 Partnership on the Swap2Stop Scheme**

In 2023, Slough Borough Council (SBC) entered into a partnership funded by the Department of Health and Social Care to deliver the Swap2Stop scheme. This initiative involves three member organisations from the network: the Community Mental Health Team, the drugs and alcohol service provider (Turning Point), and the Stop Smoking Service provider. The Department of Health and Social Care provided vaping devices for the scheme.

The Swap2Stop scheme encourages smokers to swap traditional cigarettes for less harmful alternatives. By offering smokers vape vouchers and support, this partnership aims to reduce the health risks associated with smoking and assist individuals in transitioning away from tobacco products.

## 2.10 Slough Borough Council's Role in PWA project:

- **Training Provision:** Slough Borough Council is organising a training provider to train PWA volunteers/community champions in delivering very brief advice on tobacco control and MECC methodologies.
- **Volunteer Empowerment:** The training will equip volunteers with the knowledge and skills to:
  - **Signpost Residents:** Direct residents to existing providers for wellbeing screenings and smoking cessation support.
  - **Collaborate with Providers:** Work with current service providers to monitor feedback and engagement metrics.
  - **Gather Community Insights:** Collect key insights on shisha use and report on barriers to engagement within the community.
  - **Maintain Communication Logs:** Keep records of contacts made and provide this information to Slough Borough Council during monthly meetings.

This collaboration enhances the network's reach within the Pakistani community, addressing cultural sensitivities and specific barriers to quitting smoking. By empowering community members, the project aims to create sustainable change and promote a smokefree lifestyle. So far, 38 members of the community have been MECC trained and will be attending various community events.

## 2.11 Smoke-Free Environments: Shisha Project

To enforce the Smokefree Legislation of 2023, the network initiated the Shisha Project, targeting shisha cafés and pubs offering smoking facilities. Objectives of the project included:

- **Regulatory Compliance:** Ensuring businesses comply with regulations prohibiting smoking in enclosed or substantially enclosed public spaces. Smoking areas must be at least 50% open.
- **Education:** Informing owners about health risks associated with shisha smoking, poor ventilation issues, and obligations regarding tobacco product information.
- **Addressing Related Issues:** Tackling passive smoking, underage sales, tobacco labelling, and the sale of illegal tobacco products. The project also supported the trading standards team in providing resources for the design and production of compliant swing tags for Shisha pipes to ensure that required health warnings are visible on the pipes.

Outcomes of the project:

- **Compliance Achieved:** Five shisha businesses and one pub became compliant by May 2024.

- **Business Closures:** Two shisha businesses closed operations.
- **Ongoing Regulation:** Three businesses remained non-compliant, with one liaising with the Slough Borough Council planning department for retrospective permission on a smoking shelter.

In June 2024, intelligence-led evening spot checks were conducted with trading standards and licensing colleagues to ensure sustained compliance. No issues were found during these checks. The project also updated the business database for ongoing communication. As new shisha businesses open, they are engaged early to support compliance efforts.

## 2.12 Stoptober 2024 Campaign

During October 2024, the network executed a four-week Stoptober campaign to raise awareness about local stop smoking services. The campaign featured a radio initiative broadcasted in three languages—English, Urdu, and Hindi—to cater to Slough's diverse population. With approximately 75,000 listeners per week across all platforms, the campaign successfully heightened public awareness. Positive feedback emphasized the importance of delivering health messages in community languages.

## 2.13 Research and Data Collection

Understanding the community's needs is essential for effective tobacco control. The network undertook the following research initiatives:

- **Tobacco Control Needs Assessment:** A comprehensive assessment identified specific challenges, high-risk groups, and areas requiring targeted interventions, informing future strategies and resource allocation.
- **Study on Vaping in Young People:** The network conducted an in-depth study to understand vaping prevalence, motivations, and perceptions among youths. Findings contributed valuable insights to national studies on youth vaping.
- **Insight Work on Smoking in Polish Communities:** Initiated in 2024 to understand cultural factors influencing smoking within Polish communities in Slough. The goal is to develop tailored engagement strategies to address smoking prevalence effectively.

## 2.14 Tobacco and Vapes Bill: Alignment with Slough Tobacco Control Network Initiatives

The UK government has recently proposed the Tobacco and Vapes Bill, aiming to further reduce smoking rates and address the growing concern of youth vaping. This legislation is a significant step towards creating a smoke-free generation and enhancing public health outcomes across the country.

The bill will:

- Create a smoke-free generation, gradually ending the sale of tobacco products across the country and breaking the cycle of addiction and disadvantage.
- Strengthen the existing powers to ban smoking in public places to reduce harms of passive smoking, particularly around children and vulnerable people.
- Ban vapes and nicotine products from being deliberately branded, promoted, and advertised to children to stop the next generation from becoming hooked on nicotine.
- Provide powers to introduce a licensing scheme for the retail sale of tobacco, vapes and nicotine products, extend the retail registration scheme in Scotland, and strengthen enforcement activity to support the implementation of the above measures.
- The Bill sits alongside wider support across the health service to support smokers to quit

The Slough Tobacco Control Network's activities are closely aligned with these objectives: the Youth Vaping Prevention Programme helps young people quit vaping and reduces vaping rates in schools; initiatives like the Swap2Stop Scheme and enhanced Stop Smoking Services support smokers to quit; the Shisha Project enforces compliance with smokefree legislation among local businesses; and public awareness campaigns like Stoptober 2024 and collaborations with the Pakistani Welfare Association raise awareness about the risks of smoking and vaping. By aligning its initiatives with the provisions of the Tobacco and Vapes Bill, the network is effectively positioned to implement the bill's goals at the local level.

Therefore, it is recommended that the Health and Wellbeing Board endorse the Tobacco and Vapes Bill to strengthen local efforts, demonstrate commitment to reducing smoking rates and protecting youth, and ensure local strategies align with national objectives for maximum impact, thereby reinforcing its commitment to creating a smoke-free generation and improving public health outcomes in Slough.

### **3. Implications of the Recommendation**

#### **3.1 Health and Well-being Board and Partners Implications [Mandatory]**

- 3.1.1 Endorsing these recommendations will have significant positive implications for the Health and Well-being Board and its partners. By noting the update and activities of the Slough Tobacco Control Network, the Board acknowledges and supports the ongoing collaborative efforts to reduce smoking rates and tackle tobacco-related issues within the community. This recognition strengthens partnerships among stakeholders, including health services, educational institutions, community organizations, and enforcement agencies.
- 3.1.2 Endorsing the new Tobacco and Vapes Bill aligns the Council's local strategies with national legislation, enhancing the effectiveness of tobacco control measures in Slough. It enables the Board and its partners to implement stronger provisions to address the adverse effects of tobacco on residents, particularly targeting youth vaping and illicit tobacco use. This endorsement demonstrates the Board's commitment to improving public health outcomes, reducing health inequalities, and protecting vulnerable populations.

### 3.2 Equality implications **[Mandatory]**

3.2.1 The recommendations have important equality implications as they aim to address health disparities associated with tobacco use. Smoking prevalence remains higher among certain groups, such as adults in routine and manual occupations and individuals with long-term mental health conditions. By supporting the activities of the Slough Tobacco Control Network and endorsing the Tobacco and Vapes Bill, the Council is proactively working to reduce these inequalities.

3.2.2 Key equality considerations include:

- **Targeted Support:** Providing tailored smoking cessation services to high-risk groups ensures that interventions are accessible and effective for those who need them most.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Collaborations with organizations like the Pakistani Welfare Association help address specific cultural barriers and promote inclusivity.
- **Accessible Communication:** Delivering public awareness campaigns in multiple languages and utilizing diverse communication channels make health information accessible to all community members.

These actions align with the Council's public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different groups. Implementing these recommendations is expected to have a positive impact on all protected characteristic groups by promoting health equity and reducing disparities.

### 3.3 Environmental implications **[Mandatory]**

3.3.1 Implementing the recommendations will contribute positively to environmental sustainability in Slough. The anticipated environmental implications include:

- **Reduction in Litter:** Decreased smoking rates will likely lead to fewer cigarette butts and packaging littering public spaces, improving cleanliness and reducing harm to wildlife.
- **Improved Air Quality:** Promoting smoke-free environments reduces exposure to secondhand smoke, enhancing both indoor and outdoor air quality.
- **Lower Fire Risks:** Fewer discarded cigarettes can decrease the risk of fires in public areas and residential settings.
- **Responsible Disposal:** The endorsement of the Tobacco and Vapes Bill includes measures that may regulate the disposal of vaping devices and tobacco products, encouraging environmentally responsible practices.

### Financial implications **[Discretionary]**

None



Legal implications **[Discretionary]**

None

Risk management implications **[Discretionary]**

None

Procurement implications **[Discretionary]**

None

Workforce implications **[Discretionary]**

None

Property implications **[Discretionary]**

None

#### **4. Background Papers**

None