



Subject:	Update on The Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026
Date:	9 June 2026
Reporting Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Director of City Services
Contact Officer:	David Cuthbert, City Protection Manager Diane Herron, Senior Environmental Health Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.	
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Information relating to any individual2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To update the Committee on the enactment of the Tobacco and Vapes Act (T&V Act) which received Royal Assent on 29 April 2026, and to outline the key provisions of the legislation and its implementation arrangements in Northern Ireland.
1.2	The T&V Act represents a significant public health intervention and introduces wide-ranging measures aimed at reducing tobacco and nicotine-related harm, particularly among children and young people.
1.3	Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable illness and premature death in Northern Ireland, accounting for over 2,000 deaths annually. It is also a major driver of health inequalities, with lung cancer rates in the most deprived areas two and a half times higher than in the least deprived communities. The rise in vaping among young people has also been identified as a significant concern. In Northern Ireland, 15% of all 11–18 year olds vape, with evidence suggesting a gateway effect between vaping and subsequent cigarette use.
1.4	The T&V Act supports the long-term vision of the Ten-Year Tobacco Control Strategy for Northern Ireland, which aims to create a tobacco-free society. Following enactment of the legislation, the Department of Health will develop a successor strategy, with an expanded scope to include vapes and other nicotine products.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	It is recommended that Members note the update provided on the Tobacco and Vapes Act and the key provisions and implementation arrangements outlined in this report.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	The T&V Act represents a significant step forward in protecting public health, reducing health inequalities and preventing nicotine addiction among future generations.
3.2	The T&V Act introduces a smoke-free generation by making it illegal to sell tobacco products, herbal smoking products or cigarette papers to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009, with this provision taking effect from 1 January 2027. Adults who smoke can still legally purchase tobacco and smoking cessation services will be available to those who wish to quit.
3.3	From 29 October 2026, it will also be illegal to sell non-nicotine vapes and other nicotine containing products to under 18s. There will also be a ban on proxy purchasing of vaping and nicotine products on behalf of under 18s.
3.4	The tobacco vending machine ban will also be extended to include cigarette papers, vapes and other nicotine products, along with the introduction of a ban on the free distribution and discounting of vapes and nicotine products.
3.5	On 29 th October 2026, the Northern Ireland Tobacco Register will also be extended to include businesses selling vapes and other nicotine containing products.
3.6	By way of background information for Members, since 2016 under The Tobacco Retailers Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, anyone running a tobacco business in Northern Ireland is required to register with the NI Tobacco Register. The Register is accessible to the public and anyone can easily find registered premises in their area. It is an offence not to register with a potential

<p>3.7</p> <p>3.8</p> <p>3.9</p> <p>3.10</p> <p>3.11</p> <p>3.12</p>	<p>penalty of a £500 Fixed Penalty Notice. The Minister of Health has indicated that the start date for enforcement of these extended requirements covering retailers selling vapes and nicotine containing products is 1st March 2027.</p> <p>Belfast City Council are the current Registration Authority for the Tobacco Register of Northern Ireland and are funded to maintain and manage the Register on behalf of the Department for Health. The Council will also be responsible for the set-up and implementation of the new extended Register from 29 October 2026, and additional funding is being provided by the Department of Health for this work. In the longer term, additional retail licensing provisions may be introduced by the Department to further strengthen regulation in this area.</p> <p>The Public Health Agency continues to commission stop smoking services across Northern Ireland through community pharmacies, GP practices and local Health and Social Care Trusts. In 2024/25, a total of 9,587 people were reported to have set a quit date through PHA-funded stop smoking services. Further information and local support are available at: https://www.stopsmokingni.info</p> <p>Further information on the Tobacco and Vapes Act including the implementation arrangements for each phase can be accessed using the link below: https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/tobacco-and-vapes-bill-documents</p> <p>Representatives from Councils, including Belfast City Council, are currently working with the Department of Health and Public Health Agency through a Tobacco and Vapes Joint Implementation Group to prepare for the implementation of the phases of the Act and associated Regulations.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The Council receives funding from the Public Health Agency to cover the cost of maintaining and managing the Tobacco Register NI and funding for two full-time Tobacco Control Officers. For 2025/26 this funding amounted to £149,056. The Tobacco Control Officers currently enforce legislation with regards to underage sales and carry out advisory and compliance visits to tobacco retailers. Any additional work regarding the Council’s regulatory functions in this field are currently covered within existing service budgets.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>Equality and rural need screenings have been undertaken by the Department of Health in advance of introducing the legislation. The legislation is expected to have a positive impact on equality and health outcomes, particularly for children and young people and those living in areas of greater deprivation.</p>
	<p><u>Appendices</u></p> <p>None</p>