

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 18 NOVEMBER 2014

NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES EXPERT REVIEW GROUP

1. CURRENT POSITION

Angus Council has been at the forefront of lobbying Ministers and COSLA to take action against the increasing use of New Psychoactive Substances (also known as Legal Highs) in Scotland. The use of these substances is affecting some of the most vulnerable communities in Angus and in recent times at least three shops in Angus have been selling these substances and associated paraphernalia. The Council was concerned that it found itself with limited powers to act against these premises, given the current restraints in Planning and Licensing legislation.

Following correspondence with the Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs and a seminar hosted by the Scottish Government in Atlantic Quay, Glasgow, Roseanna Cunningham established a working group to review the current powers available to Scottish Public Authorities to tackle the sale and supply of New Psychoactive Substances.

The expert group has been tasked with:-

- mapping out the range of enforcement powers available in devolved and reserved legislation;
- considering the extent to which these powers are currently being used; and
- considering the practical implications and challenges facing public authorities in using these powers, as well as making recommendations for improvement.

One of the Solicitors from Angus Council has been invited to serve on the Expert Group and the Group has now met on two occasions. The second meeting of the Group took place in Forfar on 13 October 2014 and various presentations were made to the Group by Police Scotland, the Council's Regulatory and Protective Services Section and Councillor Morrison.

The Expert Review Group will continue to meet over the coming weeks and it is intended to finalise and prepare a report for the Minister before the end of the current calendar year.

Officers will ensure that elected members are kept informed of the work of the group as matters progress.

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