

London Borough of Bexley

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Should Bexleyheath Town Centre become a Smokefree zone?

The Council is asking local people whether they think Bexleyheath town centre should have a ban on smoking and using e-cigarettes.

The consultation that starts today (5 February) is on a proposed voluntary Smokefree zone that would initially run as a pilot for six months and cover the main pedestrianised areas in the town centre, including around Bexleyheath Clock Tower.

Local residents and anyone who works within the proposed zone are invited to share their views in an online survey from today until Friday 16 March. There will also be a stall in the Bexleyheath Mall on No Smoking Day (14 March) for people to have their say. If a zone is introduced, Bexley would also become the first London Borough to have a smokefree pedestrian zone.

Children's playgrounds managed by the Council are already smokefree zones, indicated by clear 'No Smoking' symbols on signage throughout the playgrounds.

Councillor Peter Craske, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Environment and Leisure, said: "We want to hear from people who shop, work or visit Bexleyheath on their views on whether we should have a smokefree zone in the town centre."

Dr Anjan Ghosh, Bexley's Director of Public Health, said: "Research has shown that even pre-school children who live with a smoker perceive that smoking is "the norm". By urging people not to smoke in a busy public area that is frequented by school children, Bexley will support the government's Tobacco Control Plan for a future smokefree generation."

Free Stop Smoking Services were made available in Bexley for the first time in 2002. At the time, 28% of all Bexley residents were smokers. Today this figure has shrunk to just 12.5% - the lowest rate of smokers in one area, in the whole of south east London. Around 2,000 people a year sign up to the free six-week quit programme, with over half managing to successfully quit for good.

Bexley's Stop Smoking Service is available to anyone registered with a Bexley GP. It offers free, friendly and effective practical support as well as advice on medications to support you while you stop smoking.

To find out more visit www.smokefreebexley.co.uk or search 'Smokefree'.

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