

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 10 MARCH 2003

REPORT ON: LEVY ON MANUFACTURERS OF CHEWING GUM

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE PLANNING

REPORT NO: 179-2003

1. PURPOSE

To recommend support for a levy on the manufacturers of chewing gum, to meet the cost of removing this from streets and pavements

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee:

- a) notes the problems caused by chewing gum on streets and pavements, the efforts made by the Council to deal with this and the costs involved; and
- b) agrees to support a proposal by Aberdeen City Council that the Government should consider introducing a levy on chewing gum manufacturers, the proceeds of which should be redistributed in full to local authorities to help them deal with the problem of removing gum from streets and pavements
- c) remits the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and to COSLA confirming this Council's support for Aberdeen's proposal

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications of this report. However, adoption of the proposals by the Government would help meet the significant costs involved in dealing with this problem.

4. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

None

5. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

This report has an impact on the Local Agenda 21 theme which relates to creating safe, clean, pleasant environments.

6. BACKGROUND

- 6.1 The removal of discarded chewing gum from streets and pavements is a problem faced by every local authority. Dundee City Council has attempted to tackle this problem through the purchase of specialised cleaning equipment, appeals to the public and the provision of bins in areas where problems have been identified. Having experimented with various systems in the past few years, the Environmental and Consumer Protection Department has found the use of a steam pressure washer to be the most effective way to remove gum. However, this is a time-consuming process, which costs an estimated £31,000 per year.

- 6.2 In May 2002, Aberdeen City Council adopted a motion calling on the Government to consider introducing a levy on chewing gum manufacturers, the proceeds of which should be redistributed in full to local authorities in order to help them deal with the massive and costly problem of removing gum from streets and pavements. Representations on this were made to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and a reply stated that the motion had been read with interest and would be taken into account in the preparation of the budget to be set in 2003. In December 2002, Aberdeen City Council agreed to make further representations to the Chancellor, in particular to request an indication of whether this will be included in the 2003 budget. The Council also agreed to write to COSLA and to all local authorities in Scotland to gain their support.
- 6.3 In view of the problems which have been caused by chewing gum in Dundee, it is recommended that the Committee supports the proposal by Aberdeen City Council, and remits the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and to COSLA confirming this Council's support for the representations made by Aberdeen.

7. **CONSULTATION**

The Chief Executive, the Directors of Support Services and Finance and the Acting Director of Environmental and Consumer Protection have been consulted on this report.

8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

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27 February 2003