New licensing system for vapes needed

There are calls for The Scottish Government to introduce a robust licensing system for vapes as part of its plans to regulate the damaging industry.

At present there is no licensing scheme for retailers to sell tobacco and vaping products, with retailers only needing to join a register.

Unlike when acquiring a license to sell alcohol there is currently no fee to register and little incentive to follow the rules, particularly when it comes to vapes. This is part of the reason why we have seen vape sales in random locations such as barbers and phone shops.

Scottish Green health spokesperson Gillian Mackay is calling for a scheme more similar to that of alcohol sales, which would give councils the ability to refuse licenses and would have stronger repercussions for those that break rules.

At present the fines are only fixed penalty notices which have a much smaller limit. There is a mechanism for a ban from selling nicotine based products but that ban can only last a maximum of 12 months.

Ms Mackay said: "The tobacco and vaping industries are doing a huge amount of damage to the health of people in Scotland and beyond, yet they remain very poorly regulated.

"A robust licensing scheme can tip the balance and ensure that

we are taking action to put health before the profits of an industry which all too often targets young people and encourages addictive and harmful behaviours.

"Local authorities should have the power to refuse licences and introduce proper repercussions including the removal of a licence for retailers who flout the rules.

"The forthcoming ban on disposable vapes will be a really important milestone for public health and for our communities. But we also need retailers to play their part by making their licence conditional on providing recycling points and services.

"If the registration fee was set at a rate that would more than cover the costs of administering the scheme it could also raise vital revenues for councils to support the services that we all rely on."