Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Jim McMahon OBE MP
Minister for Local Government, Devolution and Regional Growth
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Our reference: MC2026/23426

John Dunne
Director General
UK Vaping Industry Association

24th November 2026

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter of 19 August to the Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP, regarding the proposed planning controls for vape shops. I am responding as the Minister responsible for this policy area. Please accept my apologies on behalf of the Department for the delay in responding to you.

Vape shops are an example of the type of premises that has proliferated in recent years, but communities want to see a more diverse high street. The Tobacco and Vapes Bill will provide powers for Ministers in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland to introduce a licensing scheme for the retail sale of tobacco, vaping, and nicotine products. Introducing a licensing scheme will strengthen enforcement, acting as a deterrent to rogue retailers who breach the law, while supporting legitimate businesses. The scheme will be subject to consultation before regulations are introduced. The Bill will also provide powers to introduce future regulations on where and how vapes and other nicotine products can be displayed within shops.

To give communities and councils greater control over the future of their high streets, the Government will consult on new planning rules so that most shops changing use to a vape shop will need to submit a planning application before opening. While the licensing of vaping retailers through the Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026 will strengthen enforcement, these changes will give councils greater powers to prevent clustering or new shops opening in inappropriate locations, such as near schools.

A clearer definition of a vape shop, combined with planning controls, will help local planning authorities identify and monitor premises whose primary purpose is the sale of vapes. Evidence on likely impacts, will be gathered through consultation and considered before final policy decisions are made. The Government is conscious of the important role that vapes can play in smoking cessation, and as such we are balancing our action carefully between protecting children and helping adult smokers quit. The upcoming consultation, to be published in due course, will include an opportunity to comment on the proposed definition of a vape shop for the purpose of the Use Classes Order.

Thank you again for writing on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,



JIM MCMAHON OBE MP
Minister for Local Government, Devolution and Regional Growth