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PRESS RELEASE

No: 775/2012

Date: 22nd November 2012

Government takes steps to curb tobacco related anti-social behaviour

The Chief Minister has today signed into law a Legal Notice that prescribes the areas of Laguna and Glacis Estates as "Special Zones" under the Tobacco Act.

By designating these areas as Special Zones the Government has granted greater powers to Customs and Police Officers to challenge individuals who they believe may be acting in breach of the provisions of the Tobacco Act.

The Chief Minister said: "I have been to both Laguna and Glacis Estates since the election on a number of occasions to meet with the tenants of those areas. I have talked to them and to their representatives about the refurbishment programme we are soon to get underway in these estates. Before, during and after the General Election, I have listened to their concerns about the anti-social behaviour that has been allowed in recent years to develop by those who are purchasing tobacco in convenience stores within the estates. These convenience stores were never intended to be "tobacco supermarkets" as they have in recent years. In the circumstances, this is a measure I am taking to start to curb any activity which may be contrary to the Tobacco Act. Already we have seen the establishment of District Offices of the RGP in these areas as part of Commissioner Yome's initiative to reintroduce much needed and missed Community Policing into these estates. With these extra powers Customs and Police officers will be better able to control any activity under the Tobacco Act which concerns them, with the Police also having available to them their usual powers to specifically curb any related anti-social behaviour."

Mr Picardo added: "There is more to be done though. I am writing to the Chairperson of the Trade Licensing Authority setting out the Government's view that it is not in the public interest to grant anymore tobacco retail licences in estates other than for vending machines. Moreover, as the refurbishments progress we will also be adding CCTV in these estates in close consultation with the tenants, their association representatives and the RGP. Already Paul Balban is also working on parking restrictions, residents' parking schemes and traffic flow options also to deal with the traffic issues related to this activity. There is no doubt in my mind that in working together with the tenants and their representative associations we can deal with the anti-social behaviour issues that have been allowed to arise."

End

