

## HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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### REPORT OF THE PROTECTION COMMITTEE 14 JULY 2000

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NOTE: Full copies of the report mentioned below have been sent to all members of the Protection Committee and other members who have requested it. Any queries on this report to Joan Blake, Room 222, County Secretary's Department, County Hall, Hertford. (Tel: 01992 555560).

#### PROOF OF AGE CARDS

Approximately 11,000 young people in Hertfordshire reach the age of 16 in any one year. Sixteen is also the age restriction for a number of products, including tobacco, lottery tickets and offensive weapons. Fireworks and solvents should not be sold to those under eighteen. In March, the committee were told of the interest expressed by other agencies, such as health authorities, a Primary Care Group, and the Drug Action Team, in the introduction of a proof of age card as one means of curbing the sale of age restricted products within Hertfordshire.

Many authorities, including Essex, Buckinghamshire and Cambridgeshire operate their own schemes, in partnership with police, health authorities and district councils, using schools as a method of distribution but, whilst these are among the best run, the cost of card production, promotion and distribution can be significant. There are a number of national schemes in operation, including Validate, which is operated by over 30 local authorities, and Portman, but these rely on the applicant purchasing a card from the operator and/or using photo booths to provide the necessary identification photograph.

The most comprehensive of the national schemes is CitizenCard. The scheme is supported by a national trade association for newsagents, a leading supermarket, a betting shop chain and the National Lottery Operator, Camelot. In June CitizenCard announced it would provide cards and promotional material free to local authorities providing access points for young people to obtain application forms, thereby minimising costs to staff time only. Participating schools and colleges have the added incentive of being able to "earn" items of IT equipment if they achieve particular numbers of applications.

The committee approved the development of a pilot scheme\*, in partnership with CitizenCard and other community agencies, which it was hoped, if successful, could be extended countywide.

**Bernard Lloyd**  
**Chairman**  
**County Hall**  
**Hertford**

**14 July 2000**

*[\*Since this item was reported to Committee in July, a decision was taken to use the St Albans area as a pilot, especially as the local Primary Care Group had a particular interest in anti-smoking initiatives.*

*Discussions with Citizen Card are now well advanced for the distribution of information packs to retailers in the St Albans area, as well as the design of a card with a Hertfordshire logo. Contact has been made with secondary schools in the area, including independents, and with other agencies such as the police. It is hoped that the pilot scheme will be launched early in 2001.]*