

Khat review needs local input

Khat, a drug which is chewed amongst some of Milton Keynes' residents has been the subject of much debate recently. Now, MP Mark Lancaster is calling for people in Milton Keynes to submit their evidence of the harm and social problems caused by the drug to him.

The leafy plant is chewed to achieve hallucinatory effects, and is popular amongst Somali and Yemeni communities. Health problems include psychosis and liver failure, and the illegal export of the drug has recently been linked to funding of the terror cell al-Shabaab.

Last week, Mark spoke in parliament to draw attention to the fact that, very soon, the UK will be the only legal port of entry for the drug into Western Europe.

The Minister's response stated that the government are monitoring the situation carefully, and will rely on evidence provided by both the Serious Organised Crime Agency and the Advisory Council for the Misuse of Drugs.

Home Secretary Theresa May recently wrote to Mark stating that evidence from constituents of harm caused by the drug will also be taken into consideration.

Mark said, 'I started the campaign to ban khat after many residents approached me with a variety of problems stemming from the drug, including health concerns and neighbourhood disturbances.'

He added, 'The Home Secretary has given residents a fantastic chance to voice their concerns and provide evidence of harm, which will be considered by the ACMD in their assessment of khat.'

Mark also wishes to stress that all submissions to his office will be confidential and used only for the purpose of the review. The deadline is 1st July, and the address to send submission is:

Mark Lancaster MP's Office Suite 102 Milton Keynes Business Centre Foxhunter Drive Milton Keynes MK14 6GD

For more information please contact Mark's office on 01908 686830.