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By e-mail: ian_Robertson@bat.com

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Dear Mr Robertson

Tobacco: Consultation on standardised packaging of tobacco products

I am writing to thank you for your response to the recent consultation on tobacco packaging. I would like to invite you to meet Department of Health analysts to discuss aspects of your response relating to the draft Impact Assessment (IA) for standardised tobacco packaging.

First, I should confirm that no Ministerial decisions on tobacco packaging have yet been made. You will appreciate that the Department received many thousands of consultation responses, including postcard and e-mail campaigns and petitions from a range of interested parties. We are carefully collating and analysing all the responses. Any decisions to take further policy action on tobacco packaging will be made only after full consideration of the responses, evidence and relevant further information. An important factor to be considered will be an IA, updated to take account of information received through the consultation exercise.

During this period it would not be appropriate to have any further discussion of tobacco packaging policy but BAT is likely to hold information that would be of help to us in developing the IA. DH analysts would like to meet to discuss certain aspects of how the business costs are handles in the IA. In particular, we would like to discuss your responses to the questions on the consultation-stage IA and whether there is any additional information you may be able to provide. The other major tobacco manufacturers will receive similar invitations

We are keen to explore how we might resolve any remaining obstacles to allow you to share further information with us and recognise that you have concerns about the confidentiality of commercially sensitive information. We would like to explain the legal position under the exemption for commercial interests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. We would also like to provide

reassurances about how we would intend to use any information that you provide, for example, by aggregating data from all the major tobacco manufacturers.

I hope that you will feel able to help in the development of the IA to ensure that it provides as accurate an assessment of the costs to business as is possible. if you would like to take up this offer to meet, please contact Lucia Mahoney on tel 020 7972 3385 to arrange a suitable time.

Yours sincerely

[by e-mail]

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