

Report to: Appointments and Conditions of Service Committee (ACSC)

Subject: The Council's Smoking Policy.

Date: 17 December 2014

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1) Purpose of the Report

To present an updated smoking policy to address the areas of confusion regarding the existing smoking policy. The updated version is a more comprehensive policy that includes guidance on nicotine replacement treatment and electronic cigarettes. ACSC are asked to consider and then approve this revised policy for implementation.

2) Background

The current smoking policy was originally agreed in 2007. Since the original policy was written there have been several areas of confusion surrounding its interpretation, additionally it does not provide a policy position on nicotine replacement treatment or the use of electronic cigarettes within the workplace.

Currently there are three documents that cover guidance and instruction on smoking within the Council. They include the current smoking policy within the employee handbook, the Safety Officers' smoking safety guidance note and the smoking policy created by the Leisure and Culture Service area to address specific concerns within each leisure centre that were not addressed by the previous two documents.

The revised policy was presented to the Joint Consultative and Safety Committee (JCSC) meeting on 24th November 2014, the policy was, in principle supported.

At that meeting two particular issues were discussed in detail and ACSC are asked to consider these points and take a decision on them.

Paragraph 2.4 - Facilities and ad hoc smoking arrangements:

No facilities e.g. smoking shelters or designated communal smoking areas will be provided for smokers either inside or outside Council premises. Whilst there is no practical means of preventing those who smokes gathering in a particular place, employees are expected not to do this as it may result in a negative impression of the Council being formed when viewed by the public.

There was some concern expressed about this directive to staff in so much that it will be, in practice difficult to manage and enforce. In light of the discussion at JCSC the following sentence is offered in the alternative.

'Staff are to be encouraged not to smoke in groups when taking smoking breaks.'

The second issue arose from the below two paragraphs:

'Section 3 - Proposal – 'This revised policy has regard to the commitment made by the Council (at its meeting on 12 November 2014) to sign the Nottinghamshire Declaration of Tobacco Control and undertake a range of actions all designed to reduce the harm caused by smoking in Gedling and the county.

The policy directs that from April 2016 smoking will not be permitted by any council employee during paid hours. Up to that date the Council will provide help and support to those who wish to reduce/stop smoking'.

This recommendation for JCSC was based on feedback from SLT concerning the practical difficulties in quitting smoking and reasoned that giving a 16 month period up to April 2016 provides sufficient time for those who wished to quit smoking do this to do so.

JCSC discussed this and agreed the principle of moving to a no smoking policy during paid working hour but questioned whether doing so by April 2016 was too far off into the future. JCSC members suggested that potentially this arrangement could be introduced as early as June / July 2015 believing that this action would support the Council's commitments in signing the Nottinghamshire Tobacco Control Declaration.

ACSC are asked to consider this and take a decision on when they wish the Council to adopt the policy position that smoking will not be permitted by staff in working hours.

3) Proposal

The revised draft smoking policy document amalgamates the three documents into a single policy and includes guidance on nicotine replacement treatment and the use of electronic cigarettes within the workplace.

This revised policy also includes instructions for Transport, Waste, and Parks and Street Care service areas that were not previously covered in the 2007 smoking policy.

It provides clearer guidance for management and employees and addresses confusion regarding smoking arrangements when on Council business, such as when employees have paid and unpaid breaks, prohibited areas and instructions for smoking in GBC uniform.

The revised Policy intends to support the Council's commitment to the

Nottinghamshire Declaration on Tobacco Control by introducing a no smoking during paid hours directive from a date to be determined by ACSC.

4) Resource Implications

The communication and implementation of the change in policy to be completed within existing operational budgets.

5) Recommendation

ACSC are asked (having regard to the comments from JCSC at section 2 above) to review, amend as necessary and then approve the policy for implementation with immediate effect.

Discuss and take a decision on when they wish the Council to adopt the policy position that smoking will not be permitted in working hours.

6) Appendices

- 1 Smoking Policy 2006.
- 2 Handbook Smoking Policy 2007.
- 3 Safety Officer's smoking safety guidance note.
- 4 Smoking Policy – Leisure.
- 5 Revised Smoking Policy 2014.