



EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE – 12 MARCH 2014

SMOKE FREE WORKPLACE

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES
AND DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to outline proposals to extend the County Council's Smoke Free Policy.

Background

2. The Council's 'Smoke Free Policy and Guidance' is published on the Council's intranet site (CIS). This incorporates the Smoke Free Regulations that came into force on 1st July 2007 which banned smoking in all enclosed workplaces and public places, with the exception of 'designated smoking areas'.
3. The Policy does not allow employees to smoke during paid work time. It does however, allow employees to smoke before/after work or during unpaid breaks such as lunch time. There are two 'designated smoking areas' within County Hall; one is situated near the rear entrance towards the staff car park and the other is located at the Eastern Annex. Other County Council premises have their own arrangements which are specified at each individual site. However, in practice neither smokers nor their manager's consistently adhere to the policy.
4. A report was submitted to Employment Committee on 15th April 2010 with a proposal to extend the Council's 'Smoke Free Policy' to include a total smoking ban on all Council premises, grounds and in vehicles. The Committee decided that the existing arrangements should continue, pending the submission of further evidence that such a total smoking ban would be appropriate.
5. The People Strategy Board and the Council's Corporate Management Team both now believe it is important that the Council should become a smoke free workplace during 2014. This is on the basis that this would:-
 - Contribute towards the Council's image in helping to promote healthy lifestyles. The Council is proposing to sign the Local Authority Declaration on Tobacco Control. This gives an opportunity to support the tobacco control agenda publicly. Signing this declaration publicly is consistent with the Council's new role as the steward of public health. A comprehensive Smoke Free Policy will support this and demonstrates the Council's leadership in this area;

- Support the commitment to increasing the health and wellbeing of employees. Smoking remains the single greatest cause of preventable illness and premature death. About half of all regular cigarette smokers will eventually die as a result of their addiction;
 - Provide a clean, safe and healthy environment for customers and employees by protecting them from second-hand smoke;
 - Reduce absenteeism costs - study by Nottingham and York universities in 2012 suggests smokers are a third more likely to be absent from work than non-smokers. According to the 'ASH (Action on smoking and health) Ready Reckoner', the estimated cost of lost productivity from smoking related sick days in Leicestershire is £28.9 million;
 - Reduce costs. The estimated cost of lost productivity to Leicestershire, due to smoking breaks is £33.5 million per year. At a local level, the Council does not have a robust policy in place to manage smoking breaks. It is estimated that the cost of lost productivity to the Council could be as much as £9,564 per day and £2.2 million per year;
 - Improve the environment. A smoke-free workplace would benefit the Council from an environmental and economic point of view, particularly in terms of cleaning up smoking related litter. Cigarette filters which are discarded are made of a plastic that can take up to 12 years to decompose.
 - Encourage and help those looking to cut down or stop smoking.
 - ASH and CIEH (Chartered Institute of Environmental Health), with advice from the UKCTAS (UK Centre for Tobacco and Alcohol Studies), are launching a project to support local organisations in the development of a policy for the use of e-cigarettes at work. The Council has signed up to the pilot and will receive support from ASH and the CIEH to develop a policy for its workplaces.
6. In order to introduce a smoking ban on all Council premises and grounds, it is proposed that the following steps be undertaken:
- In conjunction with the signing of the Local Authority Declaration on Tobacco Control, the decision to become a smoke free workplace to employees be communicated during March 2014, but provide a 4-6 month lead-in time prior to implementation;
 - Via a consultative working party, including the recognised trade unions, a comprehensive 'Smoke Free Workplace' policy be drafted for employees for consideration and approval by Employment Committee at its meeting in June 2014;
 - Cessation initiatives be continued to support employees to stop smoking before and after the implementation of the new Policy.

Recommendation

7. That the proposed action outlined in this report towards achieving a Smoke Free workplace be supported.

Background Papers

8. None

Circulation under Local Issues Alert Procedures

9. None.

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Equal Opportunities Implications

10. An equality impact assessment will be undertaken on the 'Smoke Free Workplace' policy.

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