

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE

4th NOVEMBER 2015

Planned revisions to the smoking policy

Purpose of Report

1. To update Staffing Policy Committee on the planned revisions to the current smoking policy.

Background

2. The current smoking policy and procedure was implemented in 2011 as a result of harmonising the county council and ex-district policies following the move to one council.
3. The current policy provides smoking areas along with cigarette bins at each of the main hubs and depots. It also allows managers to use their discretion when permitting smoking breaks outside of the lunch hour, as long as the time is made up.
4. The public health team have expressed concerns for some time about allowing our staff to smoke on site considering the council's priority to promote healthy living both across Wiltshire and within the workforce.
5. The public health team are keen that Wiltshire Council is committed to maintaining a healthy workforce. In order to support this, they maintain that work sites need to be developed with health in mind and that continuing to provide smoking areas contradicts the public health agenda and that as Wiltshire Council is one of the county's leading employers staff should be positive role models.
6. As a consequence of this a report by Public Health to CLT outlined a proposal to implement smoke free sites across Wiltshire Council and this was agreed on 24th August 2015. This means that all designated smoking areas at our hubs, other sites, depots and campuses will be removed and HR have been asked to develop a new smoke-free policy which will also include the removal of smoking breaks.

Main Considerations for the Council

7. The main points of the new smoke-free policy include:
 - Details of the support available to employees should they wish to stop smoking by accessing the Wiltshire stop smoking service or the occupational health service.
 - All Wiltshire Council sites will be smoke-free and any smoking on the grounds and in the car parks will be prohibited.
 - The designated smoking areas at all Wiltshire Council workplaces will be removed.
 - Smoke-free signage will be placed at entrances to Wiltshire Council buildings and grounds, and at staff and visitor car parks.
 - Cigarette bins at all sites will be removed.
 - Arrangements for smoking breaks in addition to the normal authorised rest breaks (lunchtime or shift breaks) will be removed from the policy and smoking breaks prohibited.

- The policy will apply to both tobacco cigarettes and e-cigarettes as the public health view is that there is still no regulation for e-cigarettes, and that encouraging use of e-cigarettes does not promote giving up smoking.
8. As with any policy change there are some challenges to implement this new policy. These include:
- Prior to the implementation of the current smoking policy, Wiltshire Council grounds were smoke-free. However, staff (at county hall in particular) adopted the habit of standing off-site to smoke during breaks in public spaces. This created a negative image of the council and resulted in complaints from local residents. This was therefore a factor in introducing designated smoking areas the use of which are defined in the current policy and there is a risk that these issues may re-surface as a result of this policy change.
 - Enforcement of the new smoke-free arrangements may prove difficult, especially as customers will also be expected to take note of the signage and refrain from smoking on site. There are public rights of way across some sites and it will therefore be difficult to stop customers smoking whilst crossing our sites.
 - Removal of the cigarette bins may increase litter. There are no plans for the council's facilities management team to remove cigarette litter from pavements around the sites and it is also not expected that the council's enforcement team will patrol the pavements and issue fixed penalty notices should littering occur.
 - The removal of the designated smoking areas and of smoking breaks is likely to have a negative impact on morale and motivation of those employees affected. This could be particularly difficult in our depots where a higher percentage of staff smoke.
 - Our partners will be expected to comply with the new policy and refrain from smoking on site. This includes the Wiltshire Police teams who are based at Monkton Park and Bourne Hill, and who operate 24 hour shift working. There are also organisations who lease our buildings and work with the property team needs to be undertaken to establish if it is possible to enforce a smoke free policy under the terms of their leases.

Consultation

9. The changes to the policy were discussed at manager's stakeholder panel and at JCC on 13th October 2015. The policy will be presented to Staffing Policy Committee for formal approval in January 2016, and the changes outlined will not be implemented until then.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

10. There should be reduced smoking debris (cigarette butts) onsite due to the removal of designated smoking areas and cigarette bins. However, moving smoking off Wiltshire Council grounds may increase smoking debris at the entrances and public areas.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

11. No negative impacts have been identified. Staff will still be able to smoke but will need to do so off site.

Risk Assessment

12. There is a risk that complaints from the public will escalate if staff smoke visibly on the pavements outside of their work base. There is also the risk that our partners and / or

organisations who lease our buildings do not comply with the policy.

13. There is also the risk of a decrease in staff morale and motivation by those employees affected by this policy.
14. Enforcement of the policy will be challenging as there will be no dedicated resource from the enforcement team and facilities management available to police the council sites or public spaces where staff may now choose to smoke.

Financial Implications

15. The facilities management team are currently investigating the cost for the removal of all cigarette bins and the placing of signage at entrances to all Wiltshire Council buildings and sites. It is expected that these changes will be funded from the public health budget.
17. The promotion of a smoke-free environment may increase the number of employees wishing to stop smoking, therefore increasing the demand on the stop smoking service and the funding available for stop smoking treatment.

Recommendation

18. It is recommended that Staffing Policy Committee;
 - a. Note the contents of this report, and
 - b. Support the development of a new smoking policy that incorporates the changes outlined in this report.

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The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report: None