

# WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

## Staffing Policy Committee

8<sup>th</sup> January 2020

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### Smoke free sites – update

#### **Purpose**

1. To provide an update to Staffing Policy Committee regarding the implementation of the Wiltshire Council smokefree sites initiative that was presented and approved by the committee in November 2018.

#### **Background**

2. Smoking is bad for health, and the harm caused by tobacco smoke is evident as a contributor to poor health outcomes. As an organisation Wiltshire Council should not be seen to support smoking as a behaviour through policy. Smoking contributes to approximately 600 premature deaths in Wiltshire per year as well as increasing disability caused by smoking related conditions for smokers in later life compared with non-smokers and those who have stopped. This in turn causes a burden on adult social care by smokers needing support earlier than non-smokers and the need for more intensive care in later life.
3. In November 2018 the Staffing Policy Committee agreed the following recommendations for Wiltshire Council sites to become smokefree which included:
  - The removal of the council smoking policy (including supporting the removal of smoking breaks for staff during work time);
  - The revision of the council vaping policy to allow vaping on site away from public view;
  - Support for all council sites to go smokefree starting as a rolling programme in March 2019:
    - Phase1 included Monkton Park (Chippenham), County Hall (Trowbridge) and Bourne Hill (Salisbury) including carparks.
    - Phase 2 included all campus sites, leisure centres and libraries to go smokefree if not already done so.
4. The aspirational time line was to have the majority of council sites smokefree by the end of March 2020.

## **Implementation Update**

### **Phase 1**

5. The main council hub sites went smokefree from 13 March 2019 (National No Smoking Day). A working group to implement the policy included officers from Human Resources, Occupational Health & Safety, Public Health, Facilities Management and Communications teams.
6. A robust communications plan was developed to raise awareness with staff, contractors and the public that the hub sites were going smokefree and to provide information about the support that is available to smokers should they want to stop.
7. Awareness events took place in each of the hubs in January 2019 in advance of the launch in March. Smokefree signage was purchased and installed across the hubs from the Public Health budget.
8. The previous smoking areas at the hub sites were designated vaping areas. The council has followed the guidance by Public Health England (PHE) that vaping is 95% safer than smoking. Despite recent incidents being reported about deaths and harms caused by vaping, particularly in the US, PHE guidance remains unchanged. The incidents being reported have been where substances such as vitamins and THC (from cannabis) have been added to e-cigarettes. UK products follow EU standards with better regulation and incidents have been very rare.
9. There has been high compliance on hub sites amongst staff, with some smokers choosing to switch to vaping during working hours or going off site during their designated breaks to smoke.
10. There have been a few incidents of members of the public smoking on site. Wiltshire Council officers have been able to advise people that the site is now smokefree and most have then moved off site or stubbed out their cigarette.
11. There has been an increase in the number of smokers accessing stop smoking support via the health trainer service.
12. Initial concerns that partners, such as the police teams at Monkton Park, would not comply have not been realised and smoking is not occurring on site (during office hours).

### **Phase 1 Challenges**

13. There were several challenges anticipated during the first phase and mitigating steps were put in place to manage these challenges. Challenges included:
  - Managers and staff not being clear that staff are no longer permitted to take smoking breaks and can only smoke off site during designated breaks
  - An increase in cigarette butt litter at the perimeter to County Hall – particularly in Mortimer Street. Monkton Park and Bourne Hill have not had this problem.

- Smokers gathering in groups and identifiable as council members of staff. The policy requires them to not be identifiable when smoking off site. Lanyards and council branded clothing should be removed and when staff smoke in any location not just the perimeters of hub sites.
- 14 complaints were picked up by the public health team; 9 from staff and 5 from the public. These were mostly about members of the public smoking on site, staff smoking in the car parks or about the increase of litter in Mortimer Street by County Hall.

14. On-going messaging in the Electric Wire after the launch with links to the policy and FAQ sheets were created to reinforce the policy and reminders to staff who smoke to remove lanyards and dispose of cigarette butts appropriately.

15. As part of the council's campaign to reduce litter a 'Bin the Butts' campaign was run in July/August 2019 which is part of the overall Keep Brittan Tidy messaging. Portable cigarette butt pouches were available to staff and members of the public from hub reception areas. These were very popular with smokers.

## **Phase 2 - Leisure Centres, Libraries, Depots and Enterprise Centres Sites**

16. Leisure centres, libraries, depots and some Enterprise Centres sites went smokefree from 1 October 2019 to coincide with the start of Stoptober. The working group was extended to include officers from waste, leisure, places for people and libraries. A further communications plan was developed to advise staff, contractors and members of the public about the extended implementation with amendments to some of the resources from phase 1. Pre-launch events took place in 4 of the depots with health trainers offering blood pressures checks as well as giving stop smoking advice. There was a better uptake by council staff as well as contracted staff at the depots (Hills, Idverde and Ringway) where there are higher levels of smoking than at the main hubs.

17. A further 55 council sites became smokefree from 1 October 2019. These include 21 leisure centres, 15 libraries, 13 depots and 6 other sites including the Enterprise Centres, Salisbury City Hall, Porton Science Park. For information all the Household Recycling Centres are already smokefree sites and display signage and so were not included in phase 2.

18. Since the introduction of Phase 2, the public health team have been made aware of three further complaints. These have been about staff standing outside depot sites and either concerns about staff safety or issues about litter and the public having to walk through groups of smokers. These are being addressed by the appropriate managers and where related to contractors the head of service responsible for commissioning the service has been involved.

## **Next Steps**

19. There are some council sites that were not included in phase 2 for various reasons including; an imminent relocation, in the process of a funding review, or there was

not enough time to work with service users and staff before the launch on 1 October to make the implementation practicable. These sites include, Learning Resources Centres, Children and Family Resources Centres, Special Education Centres and adults social care centres not included in the hubs, leisure centres or campuses. Residential adult social care settings owned by Wiltshire Council have not been included in the current implementation.

20. Next steps would be to work with these sites and service providers with clear direction from the senior leadership team, heads of services and commissioners to implement smokefree sites and support staff and service users to stop smoking. The lead time for implementation for phase 1 and 2 has been approximately 6 months. This allows time to advise those who will be affected, raise awareness about the dangers of smoking and offer stop smoking advice and support to staff and service users prior to the sites going smokefree.
21. Messaging to all staff about the stop smoking support that is available and the latest information and evidence about e-cigarettes will continue to be provided by the public health team via the Electric Wire.
22. The implementation of smokefree sites follows the growing support from the public for smokefree environments and changes in attitudes to smoking being allowed in open public spaces as well as enclosed places. Most NHS sites are now smokefree and other organisations are also introducing smokefree site policies. It is therefore important that Wiltshire Council is doing all it can to create further smokefree environments which will encourage people to make healthy choices by making smoking less convenient.

### **Environmental impact of the proposal**

23. The potential for displaced cigarette litter is being mitigated for. A Keep Britain Tidy Bin the Butt litter campaign was run in August 2019 and portable cigarette pouches have been made available to staff at the three main hubs.

### **Equalities impact of the proposal**

24. Where any move to make sites smoke free may have an impact on service users an equalities impact assessment will be carried out in conjunction with the relevant head of service or service manager to determine any adverse impacts.

### **Risk Assessment**

25. Not Applicable

### **Financial Implications of the proposal**

26. None

## **Conclusions**

27. The implementation of smokefree sites follows the growing support from the public for smokefree environments and changes in attitudes to smoking being allowed in open public spaces as well as enclosed places.
28. Most NHS sites are now smokefree and other organisations are also introducing smokefree site policies. It is therefore important that Wiltshire Council is doing all it can to create further smokefree environments which will encourage people to make healthy choices by making smoking less convenient.

## **Recommendations**

29. It is recommended that Staffing Policy Committee note the contents of this report and confirm their support of the final phase of implementation of smoke free sites.

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