

CABINET

Smokefree Play Areas – Introduction of a Voluntary Code 2 December 2014

Report of Chief Officer (Health and Housing)

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
To seek approval to introduce a voluntary code of no smoking within children's play areas and young people's play facilities located in parks and open spaces owned by the council.				
Key Decision	X	Non-Key Decision		Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision	3 November 2014			
This report is public.				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLORS LEYTHAM AND SMITH

- (1) That Cabinet approve the introduction of a voluntary code of no smoking within council owned play areas, skate parks and multi-use play areas.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Research data illustrates that young people continue to take up smoking, thereby replacing those who quit or die from the habit. Nationally 11% of 15 year olds are current smokers. However, the rate amongst young people in Lancashire is higher with 16% of 14 – 17 year olds smoking.
- 1.2 The vast majority of individuals start smoking before the age of 19, as young people are exposed to a mix of personal, social and environmental influences which normalise the habit and encourage the onset of smoking despite its addictiveness, expense and adverse consequences.
- 1.3 Children become aware of cigarettes at an early age, with 3 out of 4 children being aware of cigarettes before the age of five, irrespective of whether their parents smoke or not. If young people see smoking as part of everyday life they are more likely to become smokers themselves. National statistics reveal that children who live with smokers are twice as likely to smoke regularly compared to those living in non-smoking households.

Research in social psychology and behavioural economics highlights that influencing the adult world in which children grow up is pivotal to reducing their rates of smoking uptake. The proposed implementation of smoke free playgrounds reduces child exposure to smoking and de-normalises tobacco

use within the community.

In addition it should help in reducing the amount of litter from cigarette papers, wrapping and used butts being deposited in our parks and open spaces.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 Within Lancashire, Pendle Council introduced a voluntary smokefree code to all outdoor play areas and skate parks in 2010, and subsequently the remaining four District Councils in the East locality (Burnley, Hyndburn, Ribble Valley and Rossendale) implemented a scheme in 2012-13.
- 2.2 Lancashire County Council would like to work in partnership with the remaining seven District Councils across North and Central Lancashire to implement a voluntary smokefree code of practice within council owned playground areas.
- 2.3 The decision to implement a voluntary smokefree code has been taken as any extension or amendment to the smokefree legislation for public places and worksites under the Health Act 2006 can only be legally undertaken at national level. Moreover, a voluntary code of practice empowers communities themselves to change their smoking behaviour and supports self-regulation.
- 2.4 Implementation of the programme will be on the basis of a partnership approach and to assist in implementation, county council Public Health have secured funding for the production of signage and the development and delivery of any necessary training.
- 2.5 The city council's contribution would be in erecting the signs and any future maintenance. It is anticipated that the costs of installing the signs could be met from within existing maintenance budgets and would be installed over a period of months with our largest, most prominent parks targeted first. There are no direct enforcement costs as the code is voluntary and evidence elsewhere shows that most people voluntarily adhere to the no smoking rule and that "peer pressure" is sufficient. Park staff will however be briefed to be able to offer guidance and advice if needed.
- 2.6 The council owns 79 play areas that would be included in the voluntary smokefree code.

3.0 Details of Consultation

Consultation has been carried out by various means across various media channels. A press release has been issued which appeared in the Lancaster Guardian. An email was sent to individual friends groups and the Lancaster Green Spaces group and information has been posted on the council and park Facebook pages and via twitter.

Various children and young people contacts have been directly contacted. Notices have been displayed on available play area/park noticeboards.

An online survey has been carried out and the feedback from this will be presented verbally to Cabinet at the meeting.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: Approve the introduction of a voluntary code of no smoking in council owned play areas.	Option 2: Do not approve the introduction of a voluntary code of no smoking in council owned play areas.
Advantages	Reduce child exposure to smoking and help to decrease the number of young people starting to smoke. Decrease cigarette litter such as cigarette butts, empty packets and wrappers to make play areas more pleasant and to protect wildlife. Encourage play area users to discourage smokers in play areas. Project contributes to health and wellbeing targets.	None
Disadvantages	Cost of installing the signs. There may be opposition from smokers who feel we shouldn't go beyond the statutory controls.	Missed opportunity to work in partnership with county public health to help address a health and wellbeing issue.
Risks	Future maintenance costs could be high. However, this is unlikely as the signs will be of robust quality and require little maintenance.	Reputational risk – not implementing this would be at odds with our health and wellbeing priority.

5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

- 5.1 Option 1 – The introduction of a voluntary no smoking code is entirely consistent with the council's health and wellbeing corporate priority and can be achieved with minimum impact on council resources.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 Reducing child exposure to smoking and de-normalising tobacco use within the community is desirable to try to reduce smoking uptake rates amongst young people. Smoking is still a major public health problem and implementing a voluntary code of no smoking in play areas is one way of the council contributing to addressing the health, social and financial impacts of smoking. In addition, smoking related litter should reduce in play areas and this also addresses another important priority of the council.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

This reports relates to the health and wellbeing corporate plan priority specifically the outcome - Health and wellbeing of our citizens is improved. There is a secondary link to the priority of clean, green and safe places specifically the outcome – Local neighbourhoods are clean and safe and residents have a sense of pride in the district.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

The recommendation in this report has only positive impacts on health, wellbeing, health & safety and ASB.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal issues which would prevent the introduction of a voluntary code of no smoking in children's play areas.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As indicated in paragraph 2.4 and 2.5. The Smoke Free play areas is based on a partnership with the Public Health Team within Lancashire County Council paying for all the signs and Lancaster City Council incurring costs for installation and maintenance. These costs are expected to be minimal and can be contained within existence playground maintenance budget.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

None.

Information Services:

None.

Property:

None.

Open Spaces:

The implications are covered in the report.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

none

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