

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

Report of: Executive Member for Public Protection

To: Strategy Board-16th November 2015, Cabinet- 1st December 2015

(Author: Craig Fowler, Food, Health & Safety Manager)

Subject: Smoke Free Play Areas and Zones

Purpose: To consider the adoption of Smoke Free Play Areas and Zones

Recommendation(s):

- 1) That Cabinet approves the introduction of a voluntary smoke free code at all public play areas/parks, entrances to schools and children's nurseries throughout the district of Breckland.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Public Protection Team's Business Plan proposes to introduce smoke-free zones and play areas across the district of Breckland. This is not about preventing people from smoking, but asking them to smoke more responsibly away from where children may be affected and exposed to harmful tobacco smoke.
- 1.2 A similar and very successful scheme has been implemented by Smoke free South West and this appears to have had a number of benefits and has been well received.
- 1.3 It is proposed to start a project in 2 distinct phases:
 - Phase 1- Introduce a voluntary code for smoke-free play areas across the district of Breckland (this will require consultation and co-operation with the owners of the play areas, such as Town & Parish Councils)
 - Phase 2- Introduce a voluntary code for smoke free areas outside school entrances and Children's Nurseries.
- 1.4 It is anticipated that phase 1 will be launched in March 2016 with Phase 2 commencing in April 2016
- 1.5 The project would include engagement of local children, by running a competition to design a smoke free sign. There would be three categories (pre-school, primary school and secondary School). Winners of each category would see their sign being produced and displayed in the appropriate areas for their age group. We also aim to give a prize for the winner in each category.
- 1.6 Publicity campaigns will also be run throughout the period to try and achieve maximum impact and engagement. The aim will be to positively promote the health and environmental benefits of such a scheme. This will be a request by children not to smoke near them.

2.0 **OPTIONS**

- 2.1 A) Do nothing. This will result in no further action being taken
- 2.2 B) To approve the proposed project.
- 2.3 C) To approve the proposed action in principle but make minor amendments

3.0 **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 3.1 Smoking in the presence of children 'normalises' smoking behaviour. It is widely accepted that children are more likely to smoke, if they see adults around them smoking. By introducing voluntary smoke free areas it will help reduce the prevalence of smoking in young persons and adults.
- 3.2 Medical and Scientific Opinion is that there is no safe level of second hand tobacco smoke. Successful implementation of this proposal will enable children to play in a healthy place without exposure to harmful second hand tobacco smoke. This will lead to a particular improvement in play areas which are walled, solidly fenced or poorly ventilated
- 3.3 Introducing a voluntary smoke free code in these areas will reduce the amount of tobacco related litter. Therefore improving the local environment and generally making the area more attractive and pleasant.
- 3.4 Encouraging local children to design signs to be displayed, will encourage Pride in Breckland and the environment generally.

4.0 **EXPECTED BENEFITS**

- 4.1 This will make play areas in Breckland a much more pleasant and healthy place, reducing children's exposure to harmful tobacco smoke. Hopefully this will increase local usage and assist with making towns and villages vibrant, thriving and healthy places.
- 4.2 That Children will be less likely to start smoking. This will enable them to live healthier lives and reduce the chance of premature death. This should have a future impact on NHS budgets, by a reduction in the number of persons presenting themselves with smoking related illnesses. It is widely estimated that smoking related illnesses cost the NHS in excess of £5bn per year.
- 4.3 A reduction in smoking related litter and greater pride in Breckland and the Environment generally.

5.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 **Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues**

- 5.1.1 The implementation of the project will improve the Environment in a number of ways, as outlined in the main body of this report.

5.2 **Constitution & Legal**

- 5.2.1 This is an executive function pursuant to the Local Government Act 2000 and associated regulations. The Council has a general power of competence to deal with this matter (s.1 Localism Act 2011.)

5.3 **Contracts**

5.3.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

5.4 **Corporate Priorities**

5.4.1 The proposals support 2 of the Councils priorities. These being:

- 'Supporting Breckland to develop and thrive'
- 'To enable stronger, more independent communities'.

5.5 **Crime and Disorder**

5.5.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no direct implications, but the reduction of littering may reduce, which is of course a criminal offence.

5.6 **Equality and Diversity / Human Rights**

5.6.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications)

5.7 **Financial**

5.7.1 There will be a cost associated with delivering the project, purchase of signs and officer time. The Food, Health & Safety Team is currently exploring the possibility of external grant funding in order to deliver the project. It is therefore hoped that the project will be paid for via grant funding or within existing Council budgets overall and therefore will be no further financial implications to the Council.

5.8 **Health & Wellbeing**

5.8.1 This will improve the health & well-being within our community and in particular protect the Health & well-being of children and young persons.

5.9 **Risk Management**

5.9.1 Consultations with residents in areas where similar initiatives have been undertaken show wide scale public support for the introduction of such a scheme, therefore the level of risk to the Council is deemed to be low.

5.9.2 We also propose to liaise with Town & Parish Councils, schools and nurseries. We will be reliant upon the co-operation of the land owners to achieve this. However as this will be positively promoted regarding the health benefits, the likely reduction in smoking related litter and that signage will be provided free of charge, then the report author believes this will not pose any risk management issues.

5.9.3 It is unlikely that there will be any adverse publicity as there appears to be clear public support. This is about protecting children and improving the local environment.

5.10 **Safeguarding**

5.10.1 This will protect children, young persons and other vulnerable people (e.g. expectant mothers, people with breathing difficulties, etc.)

5.11 **Staffing**

5.11.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications. No additional staffing

will be required. Existing staff will be used to deliver the project.

5.12 Stakeholders / Consultation / Timescales

5.12.1 Consultation and engagement will take place across the district with all relevant stakeholders.

6.0 WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED

6.1 All Wards affected.

7.0 ACRONYMS

7.1 None

Background papers: - None

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Key Decision: Yes

Exempt Decision: No

This report refers to a Discretionary Service

Appendices attached to this report: None