



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Smoking Policy
Date:	19 September 2014
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources and Deputy Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Emma Eaton, Corporate Health and Safety Manager, ext 3223

1	Relevant Background Information
	<p>The current Council Smoking procedures were last reviewed in 2007 in accordance with the national Smoke Free legislation.</p> <p>As the Committee will be aware, there has been increasing public and media interest in the use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) within enclosed public spaces in recent months.</p> <p>E-cigarettes are battery-powered products designed to replicate smoking behaviour without the use of tobacco. They consist of a cartridge containing liquid nicotine, an atomiser (heating element), a rechargeable battery and electronics. They turn nicotine, flavour and other chemicals into a vapour that is inhaled by the user. The exhaled vapour can be seen, and some products have a light emitting diode at the tip that lights up when the user inhales.</p> <p>This interest in the use of e-cigarettes and its impact on bystanders has also been noted within the Council and a number of staff have queried whether staff and the public should be permitted to use e-cigarettes within Council premises.</p> <p>In light of these concerns, the Corporate Health and Safety Manager has taken the opportunity to refresh the current Smoking procedures, including upgrading them to a Smoking Policy, in addition to proposing the extension of the existing smoking restrictions to include e-cigarettes (see Appendix 1).</p> <p>These changes have been debated with the Council's recognised trade unions within the Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee and agreement could not be reached with 2 of the four unions in favour of restricting the use of e-cigarettes and 2 against.</p>

	<p>The JNCC requested that the proposed revised Smoking Policy be forwarded to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.</p> <p>The Policy would prohibit the use of e-cigarettes within Council premises and vehicles. Should the Committee agree to extend the Smoking Policy to include e-cigarettes then a full implementation plan will be prepared with Corporate Communications to communicate these changes to both staff and the public who use / attend Council facilities and venues.</p>
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2	<p>Key Issues</p>
	<p><u>Arguments for restricting e-cigarette use within Council Premises</u></p> <p>A number of professional bodies have recently made statements in support of the extension of tobacco smoking policies and restrictions to e-cigarettes. These include the Public Health Agency, British Medical Association and the UK Faculty of Public Health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Public Health Agency (PHA) in a press release on the 2nd July 2014 urged caution on the use of electronic cigarettes saying it is too early to determine whether suggested benefits outweigh potential risk and that it is the PHA position that in general, e-cigarettes should not be used in any public space where tobacco smoking is not permitted. • The UK Faculty of Public Health in a July 2014 policy statement raised four key concerns and recommended ‘a ban on use in public places should be introduced in order to protect bystanders’. Their four concerns were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tobacco industry is using electronic cigarettes to promote traditional cigarettes and to gain access to policy makers • Electronic cigarettes may be a ‘gateway’ to smoking among young people and current non-smokers • The efficacy of electronic cigarettes as smoking cessation aids remains uncertain • The safety of electronic cigarettes has not been scientifically demonstrated • The British Medical Association (BMA) in a March 2012 (updated January 2013) briefing stated that they believe that ‘the existing smokefree legislation in place in the UK should be extended to include vapour from e-cigarettes. As an interim measure, we also encourage employers to implement organisation wide policies prohibiting the use of e-cigarettes in their workplaces. <p><u>Arguments against restricting e-cigarette use within Council Premises</u></p> <p>The following bodies have made statements against the restriction of e-cigarettes within enclosed public spaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) in their June 2014 briefing on electronic cigarettes advise that ‘in the absence of evidence of significant harm to bystanders, ASH does not support the inclusion of electronic cigarettes in smokefree laws which would completely prohibit their use in enclosed public places’.

	<p><u>Conclusion</u></p> <p>It is recommended that until such times as more evidence becomes available on the health impacts of second hand vapour from electronic cigarettes, that the Council supports the advice of the Public Health Agency and British Medical Association and extends the Council's Smoking Policy to include e-cigarettes.</p> <p>The Council offers Smoking Cessation support to all employees through its Smoking Cessation Programme funded by the Public Health Agency.</p>
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3	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> None</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> None</p> <p><u>Assets and Other Implications</u> None</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	None

5	Recommendations
	<p>The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is requested to give consideration to this matter and to approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Revised Smoking Policy including e-cigarettes (appendix 1) b) Revised Smoking Policy with no reference to e-cigarettes (appendix 2)

6	Decision Tracking
	Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources and Deputy Chief Executive

7	Key to Abbreviations

8	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1: Draft revised Smoking Policy which is extended to place restrictions on electronic cigarettes</p> <p>Appendix 2: Draft revised Smoking Policy with no reference or restrictions on electronic cigarettes</p>