

NFNPA RAPC 265/15

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

RESOURCES, AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING – 1 JUNE 2015

SMOKING, ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY - UPDATE

Report by: Heleana Aylett, HR Manager

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 The NPA's current Smoking, Alcohol and Substance Abuse Policy has been in place since November 2009. This paper asks the Committee to consider and if thought fit adopt proposed changes to the policy to the effect that electronic cigarettes will be treated in the same way as ordinary cigarettes. Including e-cigarettes within the policy would be considered to be best practice and would avoid any doubt should a potential breach of policy be found.

2. Background and considerations:

- 2.1 Electronic cigarettes are battery powered products that release a visible vapour that contains liquid nicotine that is inhaled by the user. They will be licensed as a medicine in the UK from 2016, under new regulations.
- 2.2 The British Medical Association (BMA) has published a briefing on e-cigarettes. It states that the BMA believes that existing smoke free legislation should be extended to e-cigarettes. While admitting that e-cigarettes may help some smokers to give up, the BMA points to the lack of evidence on the health risks that they pose to the individual using them and to those in close proximity. The BMA encourages people to use a regulated and licensed nicotine replacement therapy such as patches or gum to assist them in giving up smoking.
- 2.3 Some models of e-cigarettes can, particularly from a distance, look like real cigarettes, making a smoking ban difficult to police, and creating the impression for the public or other employees that it is acceptable to smoke.
- 2.4 For those who are using e-cigarettes in an attempt to stop smoking it may not be acceptable to ask them to share the current smoking facilities.
- 2.5 In other countries there are strict regulations in place around the sale and marketing of e-cigarettes. Complete bans are in place in Brazil, Norway and Singapore.

3. Employee Side Comments:

- 3.1 Unison has adopted a position that e-cigarettes should be treated, and restricted, in the workplace exactly the same as normal cigarettes. Although they are likely to be safer than normal cigarettes their overall safety is still under scrutiny.

4. Summary:

- 4.1 In view of the foregoing it is proposed that the current no smoking policy is extended to include e-cigarettes. If the proposed changes are adopted, the revised policy will need to be communicated to all employees.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Committee adopt the changes to the Smoking, Alcohol and Substance Abuse Policy, attached as Annex 1, with effect from 1 June 2015.

Papers:

NFNPA/RAPC 265/15	Cover Paper
NFNPA/RAPC 265/15 – Annex 1	Policy

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Equality and Diversity Implications:

The policy would apply equally to all employees.