

Agenda Item No: 6 **Report No:** 188/07
Report Title: Smoking Progress Report
Report To: Employment Committee **Date:** 15 October 2007
Ward(s) Affected: All
Report By: Head of Business Services
Contact Officer(s): John Clark, Head of Business Services

Purpose of Report:

To report progress against the actions identified at the last meeting.

Officers Recommendation(s):

- 1 That the Committee indicates what further action, if any, it requires at this time.

Information

- 1 At your last meeting it was agreed that you wanted further information on the extent and frequency of smoking breaks by staff, whether management could support staff refusing to work with clients on premises where smoking was taking place and what other authorities were doing.
- 2 The number of staff taking smoking breaks and their frequency is set out below. (Please note there is no formal monitoring of this and these are estimates from various managers and will vary from day to day).

Department/Location	Number of Staff	Daily Frequency	Total Breaks
Legal Services	0	0	0
Recycling - North St	0	0	0
Corporate Support	0	0	0
IT	0	0	0
Personnel	0	0	0
Housing Services	0	0	0
Planning Policy	0	0	0
Democratic Servs	0	0	0
Audit	1	2	2
Property Servs	1	2	2
Housing Strategy	1	2	2
Building Control	1	1	1
Waste – Robinson Rd	7	3	21
Revenues	3	3	9
Development Control	4	4	16
EVH	1	2	2
Community Servs	6	1	6
Financial Servs	1	2	2
Total	26	25	63

- 3 A number of managers made the comment that they were happy that their staff were not losing working time because of smoking breaks and that staff were making the time up, either by working longer or reducing their lunch hours.
- 4 A number of neighbouring authorities in Sussex were asked about their policy on smoking breaks. All allow them and only one had formal time recording in place to monitor breaks. All the others used managerial discretion as we do.
- 5 From a purely operational standpoint there appears to be no problems caused by the smoking breaks as taken now, although it is recognised that the health benefits and the public leadership issues may require us to take further action. The Council has not yet finalised its position on the proposed ban on smoking on all Council owned land, but clearly most, if not all, of these staff would be caught by such a ban. The committee's views are sought on whether further action on smoking breaks is needed now ahead of the larger policy decision.
- 6 The position of staff working in premises where customers are smoking has been discussed by Corporate Management Team who have said that all notifications to the public of a potential visit by staff should include the following words: "The Council has a duty to protect its employees from the dangers of secondary smoking. We would be grateful, therefore, if you and any others in your household would refrain from smoking in the hour before our visit and while we are there."
- 7 This reflects what appears to be generally accepted good practice among authorities and Primary care Trusts who in many ways are leading on non-smoking issues. Any staff who feels there was a particular problem with smoking can raise it with their manager who will take appropriate action, but a standard policy of accepting that staff should be able to refuse to work with clients who are smoking is not thought to be practical at this time. It is hoped that the notice to customers set out above will minimise any problems, particularly as many other organisations are adopting a similar position.