

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: LEISURE COMMITTEE - 21 SEPTEMBER 1999

SUBJECT: ROYAL PUMP ROOMS - NO SMOKING POLICY

FROM: HEADS OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND LEISURE AND

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To review the Council's No Smoking Policy in relation to the Royal Pump Rooms.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The £7 million project to create new cultural and tourism facilities in the Royal Pump Rooms has now been completed.

2.2 The new facilities opened to the public in three stages between 22 June and 28 August 1999.

3. WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL NO SMOKING POLICY 1988 - 1996

3.1 The Council introduced a No Smoking Policy for council offices which applied to all staff appointed after November 1988. The Policy was extended to include all remaining staff in April 1996. It is now a condition of service for all staff.

3.2 Council reception areas, rooms and facilities hired by the public (including the Town Hall) are covered by the Policy.

3.3 The Policy specifically excluded the Royal Pump Rooms, the Royal Spa Centre, residential homes and sheltered housing. In the case of the Royal Pump Rooms the exclusion was largely to avoid an adverse impact on the future development of the building, particularly on any potential commercial sector developer.

4. THE PRESENT POSITION REGARDING SMOKING AT THE ROYAL PUMP ROOMS

4.1 The Art Gallery and Museum, Library and Tourist Information Centre in their previous buildings had prohibited smoking in both public and staff areas, and continue to do so in their new facilities at the Royal Pump Rooms.

4.2 This informal No Smoking Policy also includes the Café but excludes the exterior café terrace where customers are allowed to smoke.

- 4.3 The reason for the service operators informally prohibiting smoking in their areas is not only for the health and comfort of staff and visitors but also to avoid damage to the new and high quality decor and fittings in their areas, eg smoke staining, burns to carpets or beech floors. In the case of the Art Gallery and Museum the prohibition is also to avoid damage to the surfaces of valuable and delicate paintings caused by long-term exhibition in a smoky environment.
- 4.4 At the time of writing this report the informal ban had been observed by all the users of the building, and had not provoked any incidents or complaints by members of the public or staff.
- 4.5 Technically, however, under the Council's existing Policy people would be able to smoke in these areas, even though it is against the policies adopted in their former premises by their respective managing bodies (ie the Warwick District Council in the case of the Art Gallery and Museum, the Warwickshire County Council in the case of the Library, and South Warwickshire Tourism in the case of the TIC).

5. **FUTURE POLICY TOWARDS SMOKING IN THE PUMP ROOMS**

Art Gallery, Museum, Library, TIC, Entrance Concourse and Café

- 5.1 For the reasons given above, particularly in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.3, it would seem appropriate for any future Policy to confirm the Art Gallery, Museum, Library, TIC and Entrance Concourse as No Smoking areas for staff and public. The Café would also like the Policy to apply to the Café within the building but exempt the exterior terrace. The Policy would also prohibit smoking in the staff offices, rest room, toilets, etc.

Assembly Rooms

- 5.2 The appropriate policy for the Assembly Rooms is less clear cut, and will need to balance public health considerations against likely loss of income resulting from the prohibition of smoking.
- 5.3 The case for extending the smoking ban to the whole of the Royal Pump Rooms has been set out by the Head of Environmental Health:

The overriding reason for banning smoking is that smoking is the greatest preventable cause of premature death and ill-health. Large numbers of people die from smoking related illnesses. Large numbers of people are incapacitated by smoking through such diseases as bronchitis, emphysema, hardening of the arteries.

The Council has a major role in the health of the local population and banning smoking makes an important statement with regard to the Council's stance on smoking as a major cause of ill-health. Banning smoking also reduces the exposure of non-smokers to the effects of passive smoking, as well as making the use of the building a pleasant experience for people who do not smoke.

The Council has implemented and maintained the ban on smoking in its buildings other than the Pump Rooms. The main reason for leaving the Pump Rooms out of the original smoking ban was that the redevelopment of the Pump Rooms was still being progressed and it was thought it inappropriate to introduce a ban until the future of the building had been secured.

These are the overwhelming reasons why the Council should extend its ban on smoking to the Pump Rooms.

- 5.4 The case for permitting smoking in some or all of the Assembly Rooms has been made by the Head of Leisure, who is concerned that a ban on smoking in both the main room and the annexe (which includes a bar) would deter bookings, particularly for private parties, eg wedding receptions. He states:

Whilst the Head of Leisure acknowledges and supports the smoking policy operated by the Council, he equally strongly advises the Committee that the time is not right to ban smoking at either the Royal Spa Centre or in the Assembly Rooms. Quite apart from the 'freedom of choice' issue there is no doubt in his mind that a ban will seriously jeopardise the Council's ability to hit projected financial targets at both venues.

- 5.5 The Bookings and Publicity Officer based in the Royal Pump Rooms feels that there is some evidence that this view is proving correct: at the time of writing at least five potential hirers have withdrawn on being advised of the informal prohibition on smoking. In an E-mail to the Head of Leisure she states:

I am becoming very concerned about the reaction to the no smoking policy in the assembly room and annexe. Just this last two days I have had a very unfriendly reaction when advising prospective hirers (two weddings and a birthday party) of the policy. They appeared to have thought it unreasonable that the annexe is a no smoking area. I feel this will seriously jeopardise the revenue I can generate and also create a mood of disquiet.

6. **OPTIONS REGARDING NO SMOKING POLICY FOR THE ROYAL PUMP ROOMS**

- 6.1 Members are asked to consider the views outlined above and to adopt an appropriate No Smoking Policy for the Royal Pump Rooms.
- 6.2 In view of the wishes of the operators and the benefits to public health it is suggested that the Council's No Smoking Policy is extended to include the Art Gallery, Museum, Library, TIC, Entrance Concourse and Café (interior).
- 6.3 In view of the wishes of the Café operators it is suggested that the external café terrace is confirmed as a smoking area.

6.4 It is suggested that members select one of the three main options regarding smoking in the Assembly Rooms. These are:

a) Prohibit smoking in both the main assembly room and the annexe, so making the entire interior of the Royal Pump Rooms No Smoking.

b) Permit smoking in the assembly rooms annexe (which includes the bar) but prohibit smoking in the main assembly room.

c) Permit smoking in both the main assembly room and the annexe.

7. **ACTIONS REQUIRED**

7.1 The Committee are requested to decide if they wish to:

a) Extend the No Smoking Policy to cover the Art Gallery, Museum, Library, TIC, Entrance Concourse and Café (interior).

b) Exclude the Café terrace from the No Smoking Policy.

c) Select one of the three options regarding the Assembly Rooms.

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Areas in District Affected: All