

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>
Health and Wellbeing Board	- For information 30 May 2014
Open Spaces City Gardens Committee	- For decision 2 June 2014 For information
Community and Children's Services Committee	- 13 June 2014 For decision
Housing Sub Committee	- 10 July 2014
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Public</b>
Smokefree Children's Playgrounds	
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>For Decision</b>
Director of Community and Children's Services/Director of Open Spaces	
<b>Summary</b>	
<p>This report presents the proposal of implementing voluntary no smoking codes within children's playgrounds, for a trial period of six months, in four identified areas in the City:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Middlesex Street estate</li> <li>○ Tower Hill Gardens</li> <li>○ Portsoken Street</li> <li>○ West Smithfield Rotunda Garden</li> </ul> <p>The key aim of smokefree children's playgrounds is to deter children and young people from smoking. The objectives include to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reduce child exposure to smoking and help to decrease the number of young people starting to smoke</li> <li>○ Decrease cigarette litter such as cigarette ends, empty packets and wrappers to playgrounds more pleasant and to protect wildlife.</li> <li>○ Reduce the risk of children putting toxic cigarettes ends into their mouths</li> </ul> <p>A consultation exercise has been carried out with the public and Friends of City Gardens, which evidenced support for this initiative.</p>	
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	
Members are asked to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Agree the smokefree children's playgrounds' proposal in principle</li> <li>● Agree the four playgrounds where the proposal should be implemented for a trial period.</li> </ul>	

## Main Report

### Background

1. The Healthy Lives, Healthy People: A Tobacco Control Plan for England, published in 2011 described what the Government would do to reduce tobacco use over the next five years.<sup>1</sup> In the plan, support is given to local communities and organisations who want to go further than the requirements of smokefree laws in creating environments free from second hand smoke, for example, in children's playgrounds, outdoor parts of shopping centres and venues associated with sports and leisure activities.
2. An increasing number of Councils in the UK are creating smokefree playgrounds. The usual mechanism is by using voluntary codes; although some Councils are considering whether seeking local regulatory powers would be practicable.
3. The benefits of stopping smoking in playgrounds have been identified as follows<sup>2</sup>:
  - To support the denormalisation of smoking
  - To reduce the risk of exposure to second hand smoke
  - To reduce smoking-related litter and the threat of cigarette ends, which are non-biodegradable and toxic to children, wildlife and the environment
  - To reduce fire risk
  - To offer the potential for increased use of parks and recreation areas
4. Children become aware of cigarettes at an early age. Three out of four children are aware of cigarettes before they reach the age of five, irrespective of whether or not their parents' smoke. However, if young people see smoking as a normal part of everyday life, they are more likely to become smokers themselves.<sup>3</sup>
5. Denormalisation of smoking is a phrase used in tobacco control to refer to the breaking down of community acceptance and tolerance for smoking.<sup>4</sup> Children, it is argued, are greatly influenced by their sense of what is normal and attractive, which is in turn influenced by the imagery and social meaning attached to different behaviours portrayed in media and youth culture.<sup>4</sup>
6. Measures which discourage the use of tobacco in premises covered by smokefree legislation and prevent smoking activity in outdoor settings, such as play areas, by means of codes or norms also have a denormalising affect by reducing the exposure that children have to smoking.

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<sup>1</sup> HM Government (2011) The Healthy Lives, Healthy People: A Tobacco Control Plan for England.

<sup>2</sup> UK Healthy Cities Network (2012) The case for smokefree children's play areas. Available at: [www.healthycities.org.uk/uploads/files/network\\_briefing\\_smokefree\\_childrens\\_play\\_areas\\_v2.pdf](http://www.healthycities.org.uk/uploads/files/network_briefing_smokefree_childrens_play_areas_v2.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Office for National Statistics (1997), Teenage smoking attitudes in 1996.

<sup>4</sup> Hastings G and Angus K (2008), Forever cool: the influence of smoking imagery on young people. Available at: [www.management.stir.ac.uk/about-us/?a=19777](http://www.management.stir.ac.uk/about-us/?a=19777)

## Current Position

7. The City Tobacco Control Alliance meets quarterly and is responsible for overseeing a range of work streams delivering the Corporation's tobacco control priorities.
8. There are different work streams of the Alliance, two of which are to denormalise smoking and to prevent young people from starting to smoke.
9. Currently all playgrounds in the City permit smoking as they are not included within the national smokefree legislation.
10. The Alliance has identified four possible playgrounds where a voluntary code could be implemented. These playgrounds are located in:
  - a. Middlesex Street Estate
  - b. Tower Hill Gardens
  - c. Portsoken Street
  - d. West Smithfield Rotunda Garden
11. The public, residents of Middlesex Street Estate and Friends of City Gardens have been consulted on the proposals, full details in Appendix 1 and 2.
12. Implementation and communication of the proposal was discussed with the Area Manager of Middlesex Street Estate. A briefing note was posted to all residents of Middlesex Street estate detailing the proposal and asking for comments. Details were also posted on their Facebook page. No feedback has been received.
13. The Friends of City Gardens are in general favour of the proposal, however they do have some concerns; enforcement, appropriate signage and removal of litter bins. They also suggest that gardens heavily used by City workers or visitors would be better placed to implement this proposal.
14. The City Gardens Support Services Officers assisted completion of questionnaires to users in the three identified gardens. 27 questionnaires were completed. The majority of respondents are in favour of voluntary smokefree children's playgrounds, but did note issues with enforcement.
15. 89% of respondents stated it is very important/moderately important for the City of London Corporation to prevent children being exposed to second hand smoke.
16. 85% of respondents strongly agreed/agreed on a voluntary code of not smoking within the children's playgrounds. 55% strongly agreed/agreed on a voluntary code of not smoking within the entire garden.
17. 74% of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that appropriate signage would strengthen the message.
18. Half of respondents believe a voluntary code of not smoking will reduce levels of smoking in the area, however, 37% believe it will be difficult to enforce.

## Proposals

19. It is proposed that smokefree playgrounds will be implemented for a trial period of 6 months and evaluated to inform future delivery.
20. It is proposed that implementation of the smokefree playgrounds will involve:
  - a. Initial observation of smokers in the identified areas to determine a baseline for evaluation.
  - b. Development of public information resources and appropriate signage. See Appendix 3 for examples of signage.
  - c. Provision of smokefree training for gardeners and housing officers to enable them to respond to questions from the public and to signpost them to local Stop Smoking Services.
  - d. A launch of smokefree playgrounds by preparing press releases.
21. The effectiveness of the initiative is proposed to be measured by an initial observation of smokers in the identified areas before the launch of the project. This observation will be repeated after the trial period and compared.
22. The Public Health Team will work in partnership with the Area Manager for Middlesex Street Estate to ensure the initiative is communicated to all residents. Letters will be sent to all residents, as well as posters displayed in communal areas. Training of the housing officers will ensure that they are equipped to answer residents' questions.
23. This initiative will not be policed by Corporation officers. We expect it to be self policing, supported by the appropriate signage. Work elsewhere has demonstrated that smokefree outdoor areas are self-regulatory and signage acts as a simple yet powerful deterrent.

## Implications

24. Financial costs related to designing and printing the signage is estimated to total approximately £500. This funding will be allocated from the Public Health budget, managed by Community and Children's Services.

## Conclusion

26. Smokefree children's playgrounds are becoming increasingly common in the UK and have strong public support. The evidence from the local consultation mirrors this support. However, enforcement is deemed as an issue.
27. Smokefree children's playgrounds are an important component of tobacco control policy in helping to reduce the health and economic burden of smoking in our communities.
28. The Board are asked to agree the proposal of smokefree playgrounds, and agree which playgrounds should be identified.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Comments from Friends of City Gardens
- Appendix 2 – Results from public consultation
- Appendix 3 – Example of signage

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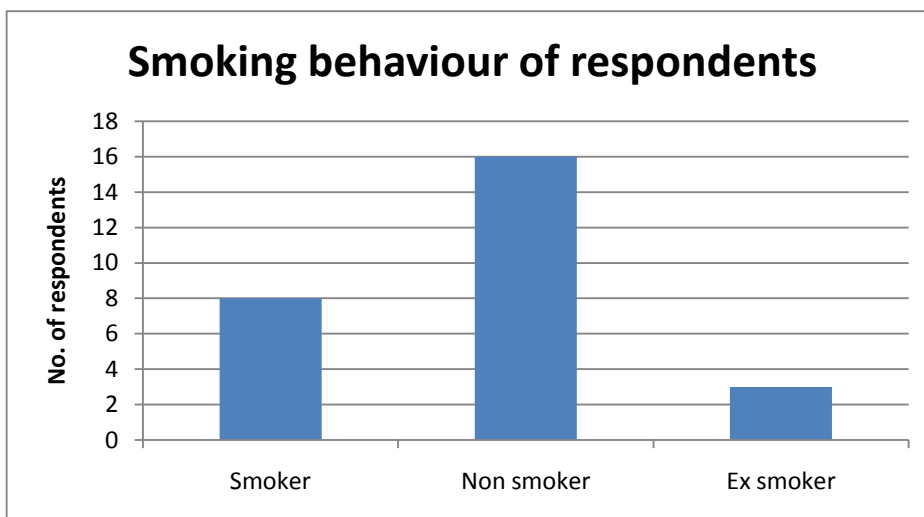
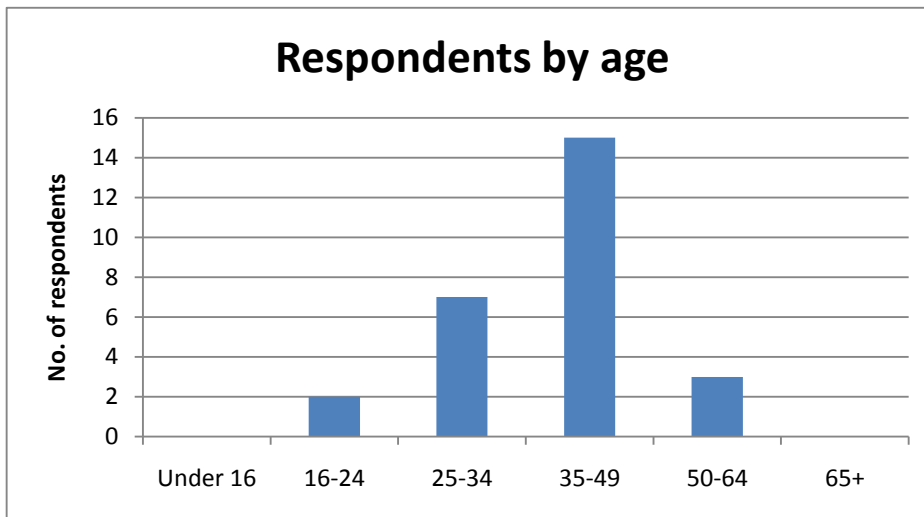
## Appendix 1

### Feedback from the Friends of City Gardens

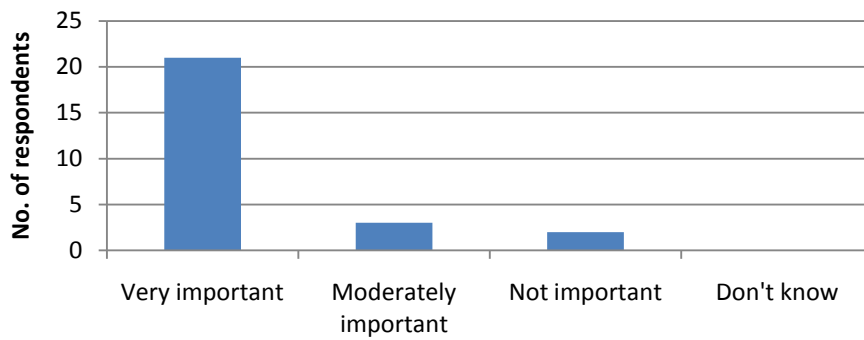
1. The three gardens selected for the trial are in socially deprived areas (Portsoken, Smithfield (close to hospital and used by rough sleepers) and Tower Hill gardens and although all 3 had children's play areas it was felt the trial would be more meaningful if it included gardens heavily used by City workers or visitors - such as Cleary or St Paul's.
2. Although banning smoking in gardens and in particular those with children's' play areas might be desirable enforcing it would be impossible.
3. More positive steps to stop smoking were generally felt to be more effective than a ban. Perhaps engagement with smokers in these gardens as part of the consultation and providing positive encouragement to stop would be more effective.
4. Using signs such as **thank you for not smoking in the children's play area** might be more effective - such as those in Fortune Park.
5. We would be concerned that if smoking was banned that smoking litter bins would be removed which would be likely to create a litter problem as people would still smoke and throw their butts on the ground and in flower beds where they are difficult to remove.
6. We would also be concerned that Smoking Ban signage could be intrusive and spoil the relaxed atmosphere of the gardens.

## Appendix 2

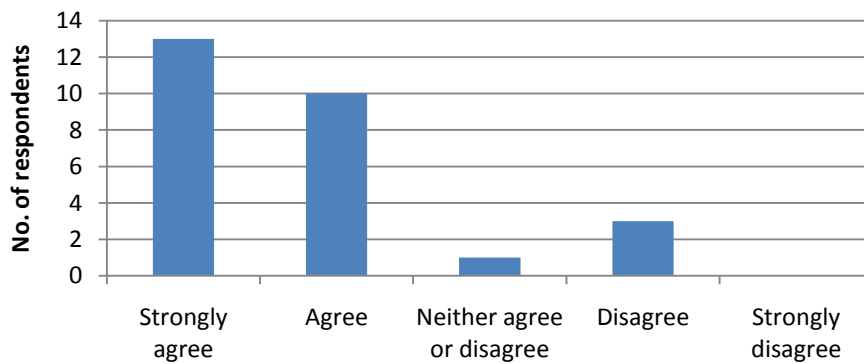
### Results from public consultation



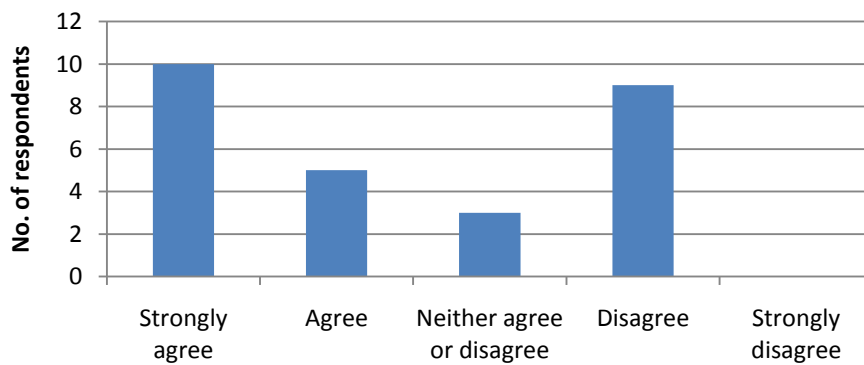
### Attitudes to protecting children from secondhand smoke



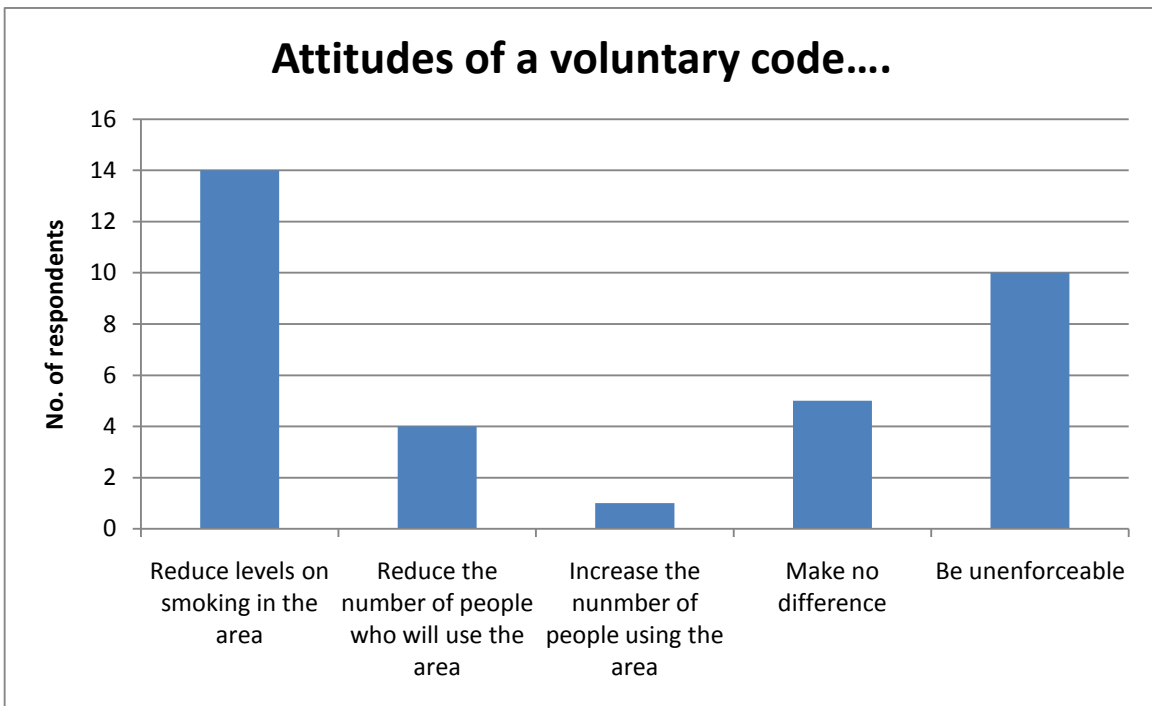
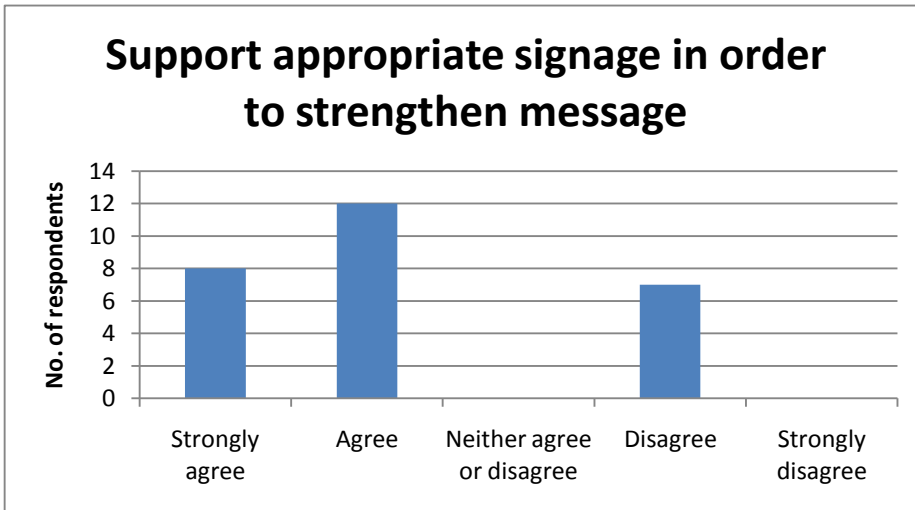
### Support a voluntary code of not smoking within the immediate playground area



### Support a voluntary code of not smoking within the entire park







**What is your view on the CoLC creating smokefree outdoor spaces where children (under 18) are present?**

- Good idea
- Good idea
- Good idea
- Good idea
- Good idea as long as there are places where people can smoke
- Agree, where there is a heavy presence of children
- Yes, good idea
- Has a duty to provide spaces that children are not subject to smoke
- There should be smokefree spaces
- Playgrounds - yes
- This park should be a no go area for smokers
- Are you addressing the core issue - air pollution

Agree but should also have places for smokers  
A good thing depending upon size of space and no. of people presently smoking there  
Important for children to be in a smokefree area  
Support scheme  
A very good project  
Very sensible, a good idea. The less children are exposed to smoking and observing those smoking the better  
Agree. I wouldn't smoke next to people who are eating or children.  
Not supportive  
Of course, good idea

#### **Other potential smokefree areas suggested**

Smoking should be banned in all outdoor parks/gardens  
Building entrances  
Rule should be introduced on a site by site basis  
Parks only  
Don't like smoking outside stations  
Focus on areas where children are present  
All public parks  
Outside tube stations

#### **Comments**

Good idea, but right location? Bigger issue - air quality  
Lots of restrictions on smokers already. Fence off play area?  
How many children really use the space ratio to smoker and other users?  
Smoking banned so much that it is difficult to say where it is a problem. Doorway smoking is unpleasant  
Smoking ban doesn't work outside Smithfield Market  
Smoking in gardens is ok if they are courteous and not sit close to others when smoking  
What would stressy bankers do?  
Depends on location. Usage can vary - nursery across the road use the site  
Second-hand smoke has less impact in outdoor areas  
No children use the park. Enough limitations on smokers already  
If it's voluntary, people may not comply  
A brilliant idea  
Should be compulsory  
What is the proposal for e-smoking? There is no secondary smoke, should it be treated differently? No, in my opinion but there is no public statement on this.

### Appendix 3

#### Examples of signage

