

## **REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

### **ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To note the progress made on the Armed Forces Community Covenant and to consider the appointment of an Armed Forces Champion to promote and drive further progress.

#### **Information and Advice**

2. The County Council signed the Armed Forces Covenant on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2013. The Armed Forces Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community and is intended to complement the Armed Forces Covenant which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces.
3. Nottinghamshire has many current and historical connections to both regular and reserve forces. Within the County are Chetwynd Barracks, RAF Syerston and several former RAF bases along with Reserve units from all three services. These are supported by cadet organisations from all three services and organisations such as the Royal British Legion, the Royal Naval Association, the Army Benevolent Fund, the Royal Air Force Association and the Parachute Regiment Association, all of which represent the interests of military veterans within Nottinghamshire. Most recently Stanford Hall has been given to the Armed Forces to be used as a rehabilitation centre for serving personnel wounded in service.
4. The commitment made in the Covenant by the council is fivefold:
  - Encourage the local community to support the Armed Forces and its personnel in Nottinghamshire and provide opportunities for them to show support
  - Promote awareness and understanding of issues affecting the Armed Forces Community in the wider Community
  - Enable military personnel and their families to access services and facilities within the wider community
  - Support military personnel and their families resettling or relocating to Nottinghamshire, including ensuring that children from Armed Forces families are not disadvantaged
  - Promote access to suitable employment and training opportunities for those in transition or preparing to leave active service.
5. The officer champion and contact for questions arising under the covenant is Tim Gregory, Corporate Director for Place and he has successfully resolved a number of issues since the signing of the covenant.

6. The Royal British Legion has recently launched a campaign for what they describe as tangible policy changes for local authorities to implement to add further support to the community covenant and they highlight five key areas to consider. Whilst a number of these areas are not relevant to Council services, i.e. those regarding housing, there are others which do, including: considering the needs of the Armed Forces community in the Joint Strategic Needs assessment, ensuring armed forces children who apply mid-term are guaranteed a place at their school of choice and disregarding military compensation payments when means testing for council services.
7. The Royal British Legion acknowledges that local authorities are under considerable financial strain but they suggest that the policy changes they advocate can be undertaken without undue cost or time.
8. It is recommended that Council appoints a Member Champion to work with the officer champion, Tim Gregory, to consider which of the Royal British Legions requests can be supported and to continue to support the actions already taken by the Council to honour the pledges made in the covenant
9. One of those actions which members will wish to be aware of is an event on 12<sup>th</sup> November "Civilian Life". The event will provide an opportunity for local authorities, armed forces champions, health sector colleagues, housing sector colleagues and key stakeholders to gain an insight into Nottinghamshire's vision for the armed forces community and how local forces charities and organisations are leading the way to support the resettlement and transition of all veterans and their families. The event will allow delegates to share community covenant best practice and examine how local understanding amongst the public of issues affecting personnel and veterans and their families can be enhanced.
10. It is recommended that the Armed Forces Champion should be someone who has served in the armed forces and has a clear understanding of the issues facing military personnel. There are a number of current elected members who are ex-military but one elected member is an active reservist, Councillor Ian Campbell, and it is recommended that in light of his very recent and ongoing involvement in the armed forces he would be best suited to fulfil the role of champion.

### **Other Options Considered**

11. That no further consideration is given to the Royal British legion campaign and no champion is appointed. This action would not be within the spirit of the Community covenant which the Council has signed up to.

### **Reason for Recommendations**

12. To support the commitment made to the Armed Forces via the Community covenant

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

13. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications

are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report but if a decision is made at a later date to implement some of the policy changes requested by the Royal British Legion there may be financial implications at that time.

### **Public Sector Equality Duty implications**

One of the requests of the Royal British Legion is that consideration is given to the Armed Forces Community as part of Equality Impact Assessments.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1) That Council notes the Royal British Legion campaign for further support for the Armed Forces Community Covenant.
- 2) That Council agrees to the appointment of Councillor Ian Campbell as the Member Champion for Armed Forces.
- 3) That Council agrees to the member and officer champion for the Armed Forces Community covenant undertaking further work in relation to the possibilities for implementation of the policy changes requested by the Royal British Legion and for a further report to be brought to the relevant committee on recommendations arising from this work
- 4) That Council notes the work to date on the covenant and in particular the event on 12<sup>th</sup> November "Civilian Ilfe"

**Alan Rhodes**  
**Leader of the Council**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

Jayne Francis Ward  
Corporate Director, Resources

### **Constitutional Comments (SLB 08/09/2015)**

14. Full Council is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

### **Financial Comments (SES 07/09/15)**

15. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

## **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- Royal British Legion “I love Community Covenants”
- Nottinghamshire County Council signed Community Covenant 28<sup>th</sup> January 2013
- Royal British Legion “Community Covenants Whats Next”
- 

## **Electoral Divisions and Members Affected**

- All