

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, PLACE AND COMMUNITIES

SUPPORTING OUR ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval for the 'Supporting Our Armed Forces Community Strategy'.
2. To seek approval to establish 1.0 FTE Band B Programme Officer post to drive work to support the strategy.
3. To seek approval to establish a £20k p.a. Armed Forces Community fund to support the delivery of the strategy.

Information

4. The Council has done much to support the Armed Forces community over many years. This work recognises that not only those serving, but also their partners, children, and families, those who have previously served, and all reservists are all important members of the Armed Forces Community.

The Armed Forces Approach

5. The new administration is keen to expand the support to the Armed Forces Community by developing and growing the work undertaken on this agenda over the next four years.
6. The approach proposed to achieve this is to:
 - Nominate two Elected Member Leads to help develop approaches and champion the needs of the Community.
 - Develop a strategy and work programme to identify key areas of work to support or Armed Forces that align with the Authority's Covenant Duty.
 - Create additional officer resource dedicated to drive forward key actions.
 - Create an Armed Forces Community budget ringfenced to support the work.
7. **Elected Member Leads** - As a signal of its intent, the administration has already appointed Councillor Girling as the Armed Forces Champion, and Councillor Lee in a new Armed Forces Advocate role, to help develop and drive the agenda forward.
8. Both Members have both previously served in the Armed Forces, and bring that insight, understanding and passion to the roles. The Lead Members have already been working hard with officers to deliver on the aspirations of the Administration.

9. **Strategy and Work Programme** - As part of this work, a strategy and high-level work programme has been developed to take this expanded commitment forward through a clear set of actions. The 'Supporting Our Armed Forces Community Strategy' is attached as Appendix 1.
10. The document uses five cross-cutting factors as a backdrop to co-ordination of service provision and three identified themes. It is proposed that these form the basis of an action plan to be taken forward into the years ahead.
11. The strategy takes into account the new Armed Forces Covenant Duty. This places an obligation on relevant bodies such as the Council when exercising certain public functions.
12. It requires the Council to consciously consider the Armed Forces Community and the Covenant's three principles, when developing policy and making decisions regarding housing, healthcare, and education.
13. The key principles of the Covenant to be considered are:
 - The unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the British Armed Forces.
 - That it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for service people from membership, or former membership, of the armed forces.
 - That special provision for service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the armed forces.
14. **Dedicated Officer Resource** – A review of the Communities Team capacity has been undertaken considering the increased level Armed Forces support work, the wider Council aspirations on increased support to the Voluntary and Community Sector, and ongoing work on tackling Crime and Disorder.
15. The current permanent staffing establishment for the Communities Team is:

Team Manager	1.0FTE Band D
Programme Manager Safer Nottinghamshire Board	1.0FTE Band C
Programme Manager Local Improvement Scheme	1.0FTE Band B
Programme Officer	5.0FTE Band B
Project Officer Local Improvement Scheme	1.0FTE Scale 5
16. To meet the increased demands, it is proposed that an additional 1.0FTE Programme Officer role be created and added to the establishment, increasing the permanent establishment to 6.0FTE Programme Officers.
17. It is further proposed that 1.0FTE post in the Team would be dedicated to Armed Forces work on a full-time basis. There is currently an existing employee already supporting this work, and it is planned that this is extended to a full-time post.
18. **Armed Forces Community Budget** - It is further proposed that to effectively support the work that an Armed Forces Community Budget is created to assist in delivering the work programme.
19. It is initially proposed that a revenue budget of £20k p.a. is established. This would be used for example to:

- Support veteran's breakfast/food clubs
- Promote key information and links
- Support key events e.g. commemorations and anniversaries

Other Options Considered

20. Keeping the resource commitment at the same level, or to reduce it. This work is a priority for the Council's new administration and as such requires an appropriately resourced programme of work.

Reason for Recommendations

21. There is a commitment to developing this area of work over the next four years.

Statutory and Policy Implications

22. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment 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

23. The cost of creating an additional Band B 1.0FTE Programme Officer post is £49.2k including on-costs. The total Communities Team staffing budget is £485,023.

24. The cost of the additional post can be met from the current Communities Team budget, through a combination of budget efficiencies, a part-filled existing post, and other savings.

25. The cost of £20k p.a. to create the Armed Forces Budget would need to be met through a permanent allocation from the revenue budget Contingency and a request for such an allocation will be submitted to Finance Committee.

Human Resources Implications

26. To support the new commitment to developing this work, an additional post is to be added to an establishment. Further 1.0FTE Band B Programme Officer is to be dedicated to this work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee approves:

- 1) The 'Supporting Our Armed Forces Strategy' attached as Appendix 1.
- 2) The establishment of a new 1.0 FTE Band B Programme Officer post in the Communities Team of the Trading Standards and Communities Service.

- 3) The establishment of a £20k Armed Forces Community Budget to support the delivery of the work programme and a request for an annual allocation of £20,000 be submitted to Finance Committee.

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Constitutional Comments (KK 05/08/2021)

27. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Communities Committee.

Financial Comments (RWK 10/08/2021)

28. The report proposes the establishment of an additional Band B post within the Communities team. The estimated maximum additional cost of establishing such a post is estimated to be £49,200. This additional cost can be met from within the existing budget allocation for the Communities team.
29. The report also proposes the establishment of an annual Armed Forces Community Budget in the sum of £20,000 to be funded from the revenue budget contingency. A request will need to be submitted to Finance Committee for this additional budget allocation.

HR Comments (JP 16/08/2021)

30. Details in respect of establishing a Band B Programme Officer post are contained in the body of the 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.

- None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All.