



Community Development Group

20 November 2018

Armed Forces Community Covenant

Report of the Executive Manager – Communities.

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. This report provides members with a summary of delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant, adopted by Rushcliffe Borough Council in 2013 and subsequently re-signed in November 2018.
- 1.2. A presentation will be given by Victoria Coomber (Armed Forces Covenant Officer for Rushcliffe, Charnwood and Melton Borough Councils) which will focus on recent achievements, the findings of a mapping/survey exercise and future work programme priorities. Members are requested to comment on delivery to date and the proposed focus of future work.
- 1.3. This meeting represents the first formal scrutiny of actions undertaken to honour the Armed Forces Covenant since it was signed at Full Council in June 2013.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that The Group notes the delivery to date of the Armed Forces Covenant within Rushcliffe and comment on future planned activities.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. This is the first scrutiny by members on delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant within Rushcliffe. It therefore provides an opportunity to strengthen future work by identifying potential new stakeholders/communities or questioning proposed actions.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the nation to ensure that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly. The covenant encourages local communities to support the armed forces community in their area and promote public understanding and awareness.

- 4.2. The Council formally signed an Armed Forces Covenant in 2013. This resulted in production of an action plan which contained the following four objectives;
- Promote access to services for the armed forces community living in Rushcliffe and provide support as appropriate
 - Promote awareness and understanding of issues affecting the Armed forces Community within the wider community
 - Support military personnel and their families re-settling or re-locating in Rushcliffe
 - Encourage the local community to support the armed forces and personnel, providing opportunities for the public to show their support
- 4.3. Activities delivered against these initial objectives include;
- Creation of a dedicated armed forces page on the Council web-site, with signposting to key partner organisations
 - The Council's housing allocations policy was amended to give an additional 9 months waiting time for armed forces personnel – since 2014 this has rehoused 10 applicants/families with a further 3 currently in the system
 - Establishment of an Armed Forces Member Champion and Officer lead
 - Regular features in the Rushcliffe Reports residents magazine
 - Promoting armed forces funding opportunities to Town and Parish Councils
 - Organising an annual Armed Forces Proms in the Park event, Armed Forces Day Flag Raising, Armistice commemorative service and promotion of the RBL poppy appeal
 - During 2018 there have been further commemorative displays to mark the 100 year centenary of the end of WW1
- 4.4. Similar to many local authorities an information gap regarding the local armed forced population was identified. In 2016, in order to address this challenge and in anticipation of the development of Stanford Hall rehabilitation centre, a partnership was formed with Charnwood and Melton Borough Councils.
- 4.5. A successful partnership bid was submitted to the Ministry of Defence Armed Forces Covenant Fund. This resulted in an award of £97k enabling the appointment of a development worker for a 2-year period from mid-2017. Subsequently, in early 2018 the partnership was successful in securing further funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund to establish veterans hubs and support across the area.
- 4.6. The governance structure covers both project 1 and project 2. There are quarterly project team meetings with officers from the three councils to review delivery and shape future priorities. Above this operational group, there is a Project Board which meets six-monthly and is attended by Armed Forces member champions and Executive Manager/Directors to scrutinise progress against milestones prior to formal reporting to funding bodies.

- 4.7. In November 2018, all Nottinghamshire districts, Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council re-signed an Armed Forces Covenant to re-enforce the commitment within the County to supporting our armed forces community. This forms the basis of an update of recent and planned actions within Rushcliffe which will be presented to members by Victoria Coomber.

5. Risks and Uncertainties

- 5.1. The main risk associated with this report relates to future sustainability of work following the end of external funding. In mitigation, the project aims to create a network of trained agencies and community champions capable of continuing the support as appropriate.

6. Implications

6.1. Financial Implications

The Armed Forces Covenant Officer and Outreach Officer are both fully funded by external grant funding. The Council provides a resource in-kind in the form of management support and office accommodation.

6.2. Legal Implications

A partnership agreement between Rushcliffe, Charnwood and Melton Borough Councils establishes the principles of collaboration to deliver the Project and sets out the governance structures in place to deliver the Project. The 2018 Armed forces Covenant requires the Council to offer support and guidance to the local Armed Forces community and make it easier for them to access help and support from statutory providers.

6.3. Equalities Implications

The Armed Forces Covenant is based upon two key principles:

- No member of the Armed forces Community should face disadvantage in the provision of public and commercial services compared to other citizens
- In some circumstances, special treatment may be appropriate for the injured or bereaved.

6.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

There are no Section 17 implications in this report.

7. Link to Corporate Priorities

- 7.1 The Armed Forces Covenant contributes to maintaining and enhancing our residents' quality of life.

8. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that the Group notes the delivery to date of the Armed Forces Covenant within Rushcliffe and comment on future planned activities.

For more information contact:	Dave Mitchell Executive Manager – Communities 0115 9148267 dmitchell@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	None.
List of appendices:	None.