

Community Covenant with the Armed Forces

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a briefing to Members on Armed Forces Community Covenant's which support local authorities in providing services to the local Armed Forces community.

2. Background

- 2.1 The first duty of the Government is the defence of the realm which is carried out by our Armed Forces on their behalf. Members of our Armed Forces sacrifice some freedoms that as civilians we take for granted and as part of their duties they sometimes face danger, suffer serious injury or even pay the ultimate sacrifice. Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. In return society has a moral obligation to support the Armed Forces, both Regular and Reservists, past and present along with their families.
- 2.2 With this in mind, the Government has agreed to adopt an Armed Forces Covenant, published in June 2011, which states the Armed Forces Community should not be disadvantaged compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. The Government will consider positive actions to allow equality with other citizens as well as considering special treatment for the injured and bereaved, as proper return for their sacrifice.
- 2.3 As part of the Armed Forces Covenant, the Government is asking local authorities to establish their own Armed Forces Community Covenant.

3. Armed Forces Covenant

- 3.1 The Armed Forces Community Covenant is
- A voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. It is intended to complement the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces at the local level.
 - to encourage support for members of the Armed Forces Community living and working in the area, including ex-service personnel, their families and widow(ers)

- To provide an opportunity for the local authority and partner organisations to work together to make the transition easier for military personnel integrating into civilian life
- Is a two way arrangement and the Armed Forces community are encouraged to do as much as they can to support their local community.

3.2 At national level, the Government has set aside £30m over 4 years, profiled at £5m for the first two years and £10m per year for the following two years. Through an application process, community projects will be assessed against eligible criteria, with local authorities being asked to match any grant awarded on a pound for pound basis. This process will start in September 2011. A Community Covenant needs to be in place before the grants can be applied for.

3.3 Through the various systems in place within the partner organisations it is hoped that an accurate figure for the client base can be identified.

4. Regional Veterans Review Action Plan

4.1 As a region we have led the way in raising the awareness of the needs of ex-servicemen and their families through the joint scrutiny work presented to Cabinet earlier in the year.

4.2 A Community Covenant complements the recommendations contained within the scrutiny review to ensure we are giving the service community, both serving and ex serving, all the support they need and deserve. The action plan is being delivered through a partnership working arrangement.

4.3 The aim is that agencies agree to be part of the Community Covenant and start to look at existing protocols and policies to see if they meet the needs of the clients. The second stage will be to develop an Action Plan to resolve any identified issues.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Members are asked to consider the report and contribute any ideas/suggestions with regard to health related services provided for the ex service personnel and their families.

6. Background Papers

MOD The Armed Forces Covenant

MOD The Armed Forces Covenant: Today and Tomorrow.