

Name of meeting: Council
Date: Tuesday 11 July 2017
Title of report: Armed Forces Covenant

Purpose of report

To present to Council the revised Armed Forces Covenant and to provide an update on the benefits the Armed Forces Covenant has realised since its inception in 2012.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	No
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	No
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	No
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services? Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Governance and Commissioning Support?	Julie Muscroft – 27 June 2017
Cabinet member portfolio	Councillor Masood Ahmed

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: Not Applicable

Public or private: Public

1. **Summary**

The Council signed its first Armed Forces Community Covenant in June 2012 and the document is now due for review.

The purpose of this paper is to present the revised Armed Forces Covenant, which is due to be signed immediately before Council meeting on 11 July 2017, and to provide an update on the benefits the Armed Forces Covenant has realised since its inception in 2012.

2. **Information required to take a decision**

The Kirklees Armed Forces Community Covenant was jointly drafted and approved by the Council and MOD Covenant Team in June 2012. It was signed by the Leader of the Council, the Armed Forces Community (Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force) and partners. The document has recently been updated and is due to be signed on 11 July 2017 by:-

- Kirklees Council Group Leaders including Councillors David Sheard, David Hall, Nicola Turner, Andrew Cooper and Charles Greaves.
- Deputy Commander Colonel Andy Hadfield and Major Lisa Marr on behalf of the Armed Forces Community
- Chief Superintendent Steven Cotter on behalf of West Yorkshire Police
- Mrs Hilary Livingstone, Divisional Secretary for West Yorkshire SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association)
- Zoe Freedman on behalf of the Royal British Legion
- Val Johnson on behalf of Third Sector Leaders

The Kirklees Armed Forces Covenant is voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. It is intended to compliment the Armed Forces Covenant, which is a national template that outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces, at a local level.

The Covenant encourages local communities to support the armed forces community in their area and promote public understanding and awareness. It is a public pledge from organisations who wish to demonstrate their support for the armed forces community.

The Covenant does not intend to replace current work by public service providers, charities and individuals, but rather formalise a commitment and build on existing sources of support.

3. **Implications for the Council**

3.1 **Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP)**

There will be no impact

3.2 **Economic Resilience (ER)**

There will be no impact

3.3 **Improving Outcomes for Children**

There will be no impact

3.4 **Reducing demand of services**

There will be no impact

4. **Consultees and their opinions**

Group Leaders have been consulted and support the proposal to re-sign the Armed Forces Covenant and receive an update on the benefits it has realised.

5. **Next steps**

Once signed the revised Covenant will be published on the Council website and communicated amongst the Armed Forces Champions and with stakeholders.

6. **Officer recommendations and reasons**

That Council welcomes the revised Armed Forces Covenant and notes the benefits the Armed Forces Covenant has realised since its inception in 2012 as outlined in Appendix 1.

7. **Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations**

Not applicable

8. **Contact officer**

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9. **Background Papers and History of Decisions**

N/A

10. **Service Director responsible**

Julie Muscroft, Service Director - Legal, Governance and Commissioning

Summary of the benefits the Armed Forces Covenant has realised since its inception in 2012

The Armed Forces Covenant signed in June 2012 contained a number of pledges from the Council and its partners to do as much as they could to support their community and promote activity which integrates the Service community into civilian life. Achievements include:-

- ✓ Introduction of a Cabinet Member to act as the Champion for the Armed Forces whose role will be to lead on the issues relating to the Covenant.
- ✓ Development of a Community Covenant Board comprising of all relevant Council Services and its key partners. To be Chaired by the Armed Forces Champion.
- ✓ Identified a senior manager to support the Armed Forces Champion, service the Community Covenant Board and to be the lead contact within the Authority for liaison with the Armed Forces.
- ✓ Produced an action plan based on the key issues of Health, Housing, Education, Community and Employment.
- ✓ Taken part in wider regional initiatives designed to improve the support provided to residents who have served in the Armed Forces.
- ✓ Supported employees who volunteer for Reserve duties.
- ✓ Worked to identify Armed Forces personnel / Veterans within the Borough.
- ✓ Developed a dedicated section of the Council's website, and ensure that appropriate links are made with other web-based support, and networks.

Council's Website

The Armed Forces page on the Council's website has recently been re-designed and is a useful online resource that provides a wealth of information for former and serving Armed Forces personnel. You can view the page here:

<http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/employment-information/armed-forces.aspx>

SABRE Award

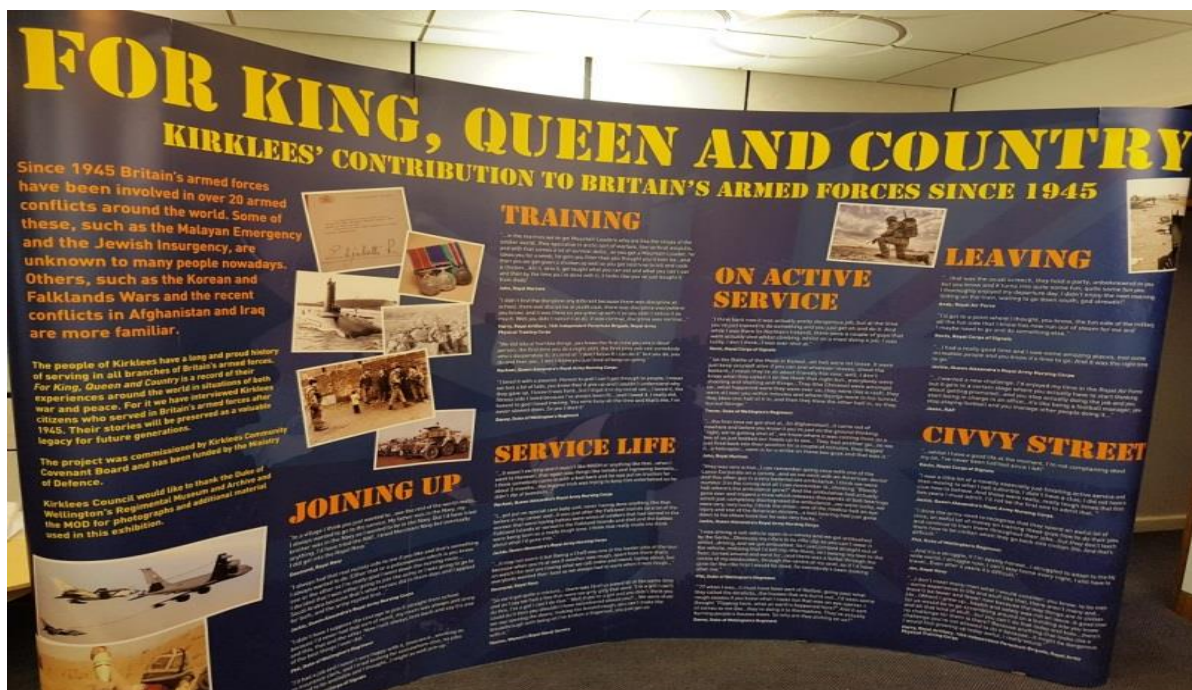
The Council was recognised for its commitment and dedication to the region's Reserve Forces and presented with a special certificate of support. The certificate, one of only 80 presented, was presented by the Yorkshire and Humber Regional SaBRE Campaign Director Richard Lenton on 9th June 2014

Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS).

Kirklees Council has received the Bronze Award from the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS). The ERS recognises commitment and support from UK employers for defence personnel and comprises bronze, silver and gold awards for employers who support those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families. The Council is listed as a bronze award holder on the ERS website via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-employer-recognition-scheme/defence-employer-recognition-scheme#bronze-award>

Armed Forces Heritage Display

A heritage display has been developed with the support of students which covers Kirklees' contribution to Britain's Armed Forces since 1945. This was launched at a **Past, Present and Future** event in March 2014 at Huddersfield Town Hall alongside a booklet containing interviews with veterans, quotes and a map of the world where conflicts have taken place. The exhibition, which was opened by the Deputy Mayor, coincided with the launch of the **Life Forces Booklet** and also included guest speakers, short interviews, military music, medal presentations and information stalls.



Kirklees Active Leisure Offer

Following discussion with a representative from the Armed Forces Covenant Board and Kirklees Active Leisure an offer has been agreed for veterans that include a 20% discount for ex-military who have left within the last 2 years. This also includes their dependents and they can use a variety of sports facilities in Kirklees

Life Forces Booklet

The Life Forces Booklet produced for Kirklees is a resource for community based support agencies including the voluntary sector, services provided by the NHS, local authorities, GPs and charities who will often work with armed forces veterans.

The booklet contains a number of case studies and includes information on health, housing, education and benefits and gives a snapshot of support available to veterans.

The booklet was launched at the **Past, Present and Future** event in March 2014 and has been promoted on the council internal systems and via a message to managers. An electronic version of the booklet available on the council Armed Forces web page <http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/employment-information/pdf/life-force-kirklees.pdf>



NHS Healthcare for the Armed Forces

NHS Healthcare has developed a free e-learning programme for the Armed Forces. The e-learning programme is designed to highlight both the similarities and the differences to allow healthcare personnel to understand both the context of military life and also how to appropriately respond to patient need. The programme is broken into three broad areas – NHS care of current serving personnel, care of families of military personnel and care of veterans. Further information is available at: <http://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/nhs-healthcare-for-the-armed-forces/>

100th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme and Mobile Heritage Display

On the 1st July 2016 it was the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. This is also the date that Robert Tolson died. To mark the occasion Council officers worked with the Friends of Tolson Museum and partners to organise a showing of the 1916 Battle of the Somme film on the evening of 1st July 2016. This was followed on Sunday 3rd July by a family friendly event which included local history, a costume display and medal experts. Churches around the area also held candle lit vigils and there was a commemorative service officiated by the Bishop of Huddersfield.



Heroes Welcome

The Council endorsed the Heroes Welcome initiative at its meeting in December 2015 to show support to armed forces personnel and to encourage businesses and organisations within Kirklees to consider if and how they could offer support in their local area.

Funds have been secured in some areas via District Committees to pay for shops and businesses in the area to display stickers on their windows showing their support for Heroes Welcome.



Promotion and awareness raising

Information about the Armed Forces Covenant and support available for the armed forces community has been shared at events through information stalls and /or presentations such as Freedom Parade /Waterloo 200 Duke of Wellington's Regimental Association Reunion, Practice Protected Time GP's event, Clinical Commissioning Group presentation, District Committees (which included PTSD)

Kirklees Local TV (KLTV)

KLTV is in the process of developing *Reveille TV* – an armed forces website and weekly TV show which will be made and presented by ex-service personnel. This work is in development and subject to securing funding.

Covenant Priority 3 Funding Bid

West Yorkshire Local Authorities have successfully bid for covenant priority 3 funding to recruit a dedicated officer to cover Kirklees, Calderdale, Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield. The key role will be to support the Armed Forces Covenant Boards in each area to develop their action plans and programme of activity.