

# **Report of the Strategic Director, Environment and Sport, to the meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2016.**

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**Subject:**

An update on the Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant and the action taken by the Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Partnership to meet the needs of the local Armed Forces Community.

**Summary statement:**

The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the implementation of the Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant and report on the progress made by the Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Partnership in identifying and addressing need within the Armed Forces Community. Previous progress was reported to this committee on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

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## **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the implementation of the Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant and report on the progress made by the Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Partnership (Partnership) in identifying and addressing need within the Armed Forces Community. Previous progress was reported to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 In early 2016, the Ministry of Defence rebranded the family of Armed Forces Covenants so that all three elements are now known as 'The Armed Forces Covenant'. This replaced the 'Covenant', 'Community Covenant', and 'Corporate Covenant'. The local partnership is now the 'Armed Forces Covenant Partnership.'
- 2.2 The local Partnership sits under the national Armed Forces Covenant, led by central Government, and enables the nation to support and demonstrate its commitment and gratitude to the armed forces community for the sacrifices made in discharging its duties.
- 2.3 The armed forces community includes serving personnel, reservists, their families and ex-service personnel
- 2.4 A main objective of the Covenant is to ensure that the armed forces community face no disadvantage when accessing local public services.
- 2.5 The Council and its partners signed the Community Covenant Pledge in January 2012.
- 2.6 Cllr Alex Ross-Shaw is the Armed Forces Champion on Cllr John Ruding's retirement from Council in May 2015. The Partnership's Military Liaison Officer is Lieutenant Colonel Paul Davies, who is also the joint chair of the Partnership.

## **3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

### **3.1 Expanding the partnership**

- 3.1.1 An approach for representation on the Partnership was positively received by the Parish and Town Councils at the September meeting of the Council and Local Councils' Liaison Group. The Partnership will be notified of representation following the Group's next meeting in December.
- 3.1.2 A further approach will be made to the Clinical Commissioning Groups with the aim of securing at least one representative to the Partnership.



- 3.1.3 Further to the conversations that took place with the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, the MOD are now considering a national initiative to get emergency services signed up the Covenant.
- 3.1.4 Please refer to Appendix A attached for the list of the Partnership's members.

### **3.2 Armed Forces Study Day – Understanding diverse communities**

- 3.2.1 As part of our Covenant commitment to develop and support understating between the military and civilian communities, in conjunction with the Ministry of Defence, the Partnership organised a study day in Bradford for the Armed Forces.
- 3.2.2 Those attending heard about our diverse communities from a range of local speakers - both Council and voluntary and community sector colleagues.
- 3.2.3 The study day took place in November 2015 and the Military contingent used what they had learnt during the day to inform their engagement plan for Bradford district.

### **3.3 Royal British Legion Outreach sessions**

- 3.3.1 Through the Partnership, the Royal British Legion (RBL) has been able to host regular monthly outreach sessions at Airedale Hospital and City Hall, Bradford.
- 3.3.2 This has enabled more veterans to access the support they need and to which they are entitled
- 3.3.3 RBL have also been asked to run outreaches at Bradford Royal Infirmary and at the newly running Keighley Armed Forces Association Breakfast Clubs.
- 3.3.4 Through the partnership, a request from SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Families Association) to join RBL at Airedale Hospital has been received.

### **3.4 Best practice research and report**

- 3.4.1 In summer 2016, the partnership contributed to best practice research that was undertaken on behalf of the Local Government Association and Forces in Mind.
- 3.4.2 Bradford Armed Forces Covenant Partnership's proportionate approach to implementing the Covenant was considered best practice for local authority areas that do not have a large resident armed forces presence.
- 3.4.3 The Partnership is now using the toolkit developed through this research to review its practices and check that it is using identified best practice, for instance, the Partnership move to meet three times yearly in future.



### **3.5 Ministry of Defence Covenant Grant Scheme**

- 3.5.1 The Ministry of Defence (MOD) Covenant Grant Scheme comprises two schemes – small grants of up to £20,000 for community-based projects and large grants of £20,001 to £500,000 that support wide scale services provision.
- 3.5.2 An annual grant sum of £10 million is available to support implementation of the Covenant. There are four priorities for 2016-17 which are:
1. Veterans' Gateway
  2. Families in Stress
  3. Strengthening Local Government Delivery of the Covenant
  4. Community Integration / Local Service Delivery
- 3.5.3 Each priority grant strand has different eligibility criteria, submission process, and submission deadlines.
- 3.5.4 The Partnership does not have a role in the new schemes except to provide some endorsement for local applications.
- 3.5.5 Changes to criteria for eligibility, along with other changes to the grant scheme, have seen a marked decrease in the number of applications being forwarded to the MOD from organisations across Bradford district.
- 3.5.6 Grant rounds continue to be promoted through various networks across the District.
- 3.5.7 Bradford and Wakefield Councils are currently collaborating on a joint application to the scheme aimed at strengthening local government delivery of the Covenant. The application deadline is the 16 December 2016 with a decision to be made by the MOD on the 1 March 2017.

### **3.6 World War 1 Commemoration**

#### **3.6.1 Bradford Libraries WW1 Commemoration Reading Rug**

Designed by Bradford schoolchildren via the Libraries Poppies Competition, the rug is being made using traditional craft skills that were around in during the time of the First World War.

Over 1300 pupils, parents and volunteers have 'prodded' the rug so far. Older people and celebrities who have been 'passing' by have also been offered the opportunity to 'prod'.

The rug will be a commemoration to the young lives lost in WW1. It will be used to enjoy the freedom to read and listen to stories in a peaceful environment. All those who have taken part will have their names recorded on a document to accompany the rug, which is expected to be completed by 2018. An ambition is that 1918



people will have taken part in making it.

The rug, even in its incomplete state, is breath taking and anyone who has an opportunity to view it is encouraged to do so. A link to a web page about this project is available in Section 12 background documents.

### **3.7 Armed Forces Day Events**

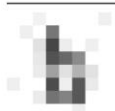
- 3.7.1 The Covenant was promoted at both the Keighley Armed Forces Day and the Bradford Armed Forces Day events on 19 and 25 June 2016 respectively.
- 3.7.2 Along with promoting the Covenant, at these events the Partnership also provided a bound book in which local people could write their own pledges to support the Armed Forces Community. Poppies made at the Peace Museum UK stall were used to decorate the promises made.
- 3.7.3 The book will be taken to further events where people will be given the opportunity to record their own promises.
- 3.7.4 The Partnership intends to use the book of pledges to promote the Covenant further. Eventually the completed book will be available to view in the Lord Mayor's Reception Rooms at City Hall.

### **3.8 Keighley Armed Forces Association**

- 3.8.1 The Partnership is forging closer links with Keighley Armed Forces Association (KAFA). KAFA organises the Keighley Armed Forces Day events and has now launched a veterans' breakfast club from Keighley Library. The club will run fortnightly and is a place where veterans can come together and also get the help and support they need.
- 3.8.2 The Armed Forces Champion, Cllr Alex Ross-Shaw addressed the first breakfast club on the 12 November. This was very well attended with 25 veterans present.
- 3.8.3 The partnership intends to work with KAFA to help develop and implement some of their ideas such as a discount cards for the Bradford District Armed Forces Community members.

## **4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL**

- 4.1 There are no financial issues arising at this time. However, issues may arise depending on proposals that may be made in the future. Proposals would be subject to the normal service approval mechanisms within the Council.



## **5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

5.1 There are no significant risks arising out the recommendations.

## **6. LEGAL APPRAISAL**

6.1 There are no legal issues arising at this time.

## **7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

7.1.1 The armed forces community are present across all the protected characteristics but are not a protected characteristic in their own right.

7.1.2 A main objective of the Covenant pledge is to ensure that the armed forces community have equitable access to local public services. The partnership is concentrating its efforts on this objective.

7.1.3 Work is underway to ensure partner organisations collect and report relevant data that evidence the Armed Forces Community experiences of accessing public services across the district.

7.1.4 Some progress has been made with Bradford Council's arrangements to collect data via its recruitment process and through its adult social care assessments. This is in addition to data it already collects via its Housing Options service.

### **7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

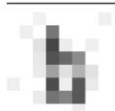
7.2.1 There are no sustainability issues arising from the report

### **7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS**

7.3.1 There are no greenhouse gas emissions impacts arising from the report.

### **7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

7.4.1 There are no community safety implications apparent.



## **7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

7.5.1 No Human Rights Act impacts have been identified.

## **7.6 TRADE UNION**

7.6.1 There are no Trade Union implications apparent.

## **7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS**

7.7.1 We are aware of how many full-time serving personnel reside within each ward across the District. Numbers are low with a total of 409 currently serving personnel across the District.

## **8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

None

## **9. OPTIONS**

9.1 This report is presented as an update.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommended –

That the Strategic Director Environment and Sport continues work to progress the development of the Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant and implementation of its action plan and reports progress to Council committees at regular intervals

## **11. APPENDICES**

Appendix A – List of partners

Appendix B – Action Plan 2015 -17

## **12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

12.1 Update report via this link: [Report to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee 8 September 2015](#)

12.2 Ministry of Defence, Armed Forces Covenant:  
<https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/>

12.3 Bradford Libraries WW1 Commemoration Reading Rug via this link:  
<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/your-community/bradford-remembers/bradford-remembers/>

