

Report of the Assistant Director of Office of the Chief Executive to the meeting of Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on 11 January 2024

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Subject:

Progress report on work to implement the Armed Forces Covenant locally and to meet the Council's Covenant duties.

Summary statement:

The report provides an update on work undertaken and ongoing to implement the Armed Forces Covenant locally and to meet the Council's duties under the Armed Forces Covenant Duty contained within the Armed Forces Act 2021.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY:

The Armed Forces Community is present across all the protected characteristics but is not a protected characteristic in its own right. However, the Council, and all other local authorities, voluntarily signed promises to support the community in having equal access to council services, that their contribution, sacrifice, and service is recognised and celebrated, that mutual respect is engendered between the military and civilian communities, and that if appropriate special consideration is given to those who have given the most as a result of their service.

Under the Armed Forces Covenant Duty, all local authorities now have legal obligations to have due regard to the community related to housing and education.

Work to implement the Covenant contributes to our equality objectives 2,3 and 4.

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Assistant Director Neighbourhood

Portfolio:

Leader and Corporate

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Corporate

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report provides an update on work undertaken and ongoing to implement the Armed Forces Covenant locally and to meet the Council's duties under the Armed Forces Covenant Duty contained within the Armed Forces Act 2021.
- 1.2 In response to members requests when the update report was last presented to this Committee on 11 November 2021:
 - An update on Op COURAGE
 - Access to support by other nationals who have become 'Bradford Citizens'

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Armed Forces Covenant is led by national Government. It is a promise from the nation that no one who serves or has served in the forces or their families should face disadvantage when accessing public and commercial services. That the service and sacrifice of those who have served should be recognised and celebrated, and that mutual respect should be engendered between the military and civilian communities. The Covenant further outlines that in some cases special consideration may be appropriate for those who have given the most, such as the injured or the bereaved.
- 2.2 In November 2022, legal duties were also placed on local authorities through the Armed Forces Act 2021: Armed Forces Covenant Duty to have due regard to the needs of the Armed Forces community in housing and education services.
- 2.3 The Armed Forces Covenant applies to serving personnel, reservists, their families, and ex-service personnel (also known as Veterans).
- 2.4 The Council signed its Armed Forces Covenant, along with local partners, on 30 January 2012 and formed and has subsequently led the Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Partnership. The Council re-committed to its pledges in 2022, when our Armed Forces Elected Member Champion re-signed our Covenant Pledge at the annual West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce dinner.

The following appendices provide information about membership of the local partnership, the Covenant Pledge and the partnership's terms of reference:

Appendix 1 - Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Partner Membership

Appendix 2 - Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Pledge

Appendix 3 - Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Partnership Terms of Reference

- 2.5 Our new Council strategic lead, Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods and Community Services, will commence 'Covenant' duties in the new year, joining Cllr Joanne Dodds, the Elected Member Armed Forces Champion and officers from the Office of the Chief Executive's Policy Team.

- 2.6 Our previous military liaison officer retired and was replaced by the Ministry of Defence's Mick Lynch who has a wider area to cover.
- 2.7 Local response to the Covid-19 pandemic impacted the ability of the Council and its partners to further implement the Covenant locally. It also negatively impacted the ability of the Armed Forces community to maintain their local Armed Forces and veterans Breakfast Clubs – with the Keighley Club currently not meeting. Post pandemic, a vibrant club has set up in Ilkley.
- 2.8 Activity undertaken to implement the Covenant and Covenant duty locally during 2023:

- **Armed Forces Week 2023 events**

In addition to the raising of the Flag at City Park, the Veterans' lunch in City Hall, the Drum Head Service and Armed Forces Day event at Norfolk Gardens, Keighley Town Council also hosted the **Keighley Veterans Awareness event at the Drill Hall, Keighley**. Driven by Keighley Town Council' Armed Forces Champion and Airedale NHS Foundation Trust's Veterans' Advocate, with support from the Bradford Armed Forces Champion, Council's Area Office and Office of the Chief Executive, the event saw up to 15 district services and forces charitable organisations offering advice and support to local veterans. Attended by the local MP, Robbie Moore, the event generated positive press coverage and raised awareness of what support is available locally for the community.

BRI announced their accreditation as Veteran Aware during Armed Forces week and started recruitment of veteran volunteers to meet and greet those from the Armed Forces Community entering the hospital.

Bradford Bulls Armed Forces Day Event took place on Sunday 18 June. Several Armed Forces associations, cadets and forces Charities attended along with Airedale NHS Trust, and a Partnership Stall joined the Submariners Association stall. Cllr Dodds, Martin Flint-Johnson and Helen Johnston attended.

A NAAFI Break took place on Reservists Day 21 June at Airedale NHS Trust Foundation. All were welcomed. The Trust also encouraged reservists to wear uniform on the day and declare their involvement as reservists.

- **Armed Forces and Veterans' Breakfast Clubs**

Support provided to Shipley Armed Forces and Veterans' Breakfast Club, by Bradford Armed Forces Elected Member Champion, Council officers, Shipley Library and staff and Councillors from Shipley Town Council, to re-align their offer to local members of the Armed Forces community. Attendance at the local Breakfast Club had waned post-pandemic and the club's active members sought support from the respective councils to widen their appeal. This resulted in the club reducing their pub breakfast club to once a month and offering a drop-in session at Shipley Library once a month.

Members have been joined by Shipley Town Councillor Mike Connors and Cllr Joanne Dodds at events to promote the new offer. They have also received advice from the Voluntary and Community Infrastructure Advice worker about how to become a constituted body capable of applying for grant funding.

In addition, active members are exploring with the Councillors how they might develop their offer to sessions with activities. This is ongoing.

Shipley, Ilkley, and Bradford Breakfast Clubs regularly attended, through invitation, by our Armed Forces Champion and Council officers to provide a means for those attending to raise issues directly with the Council. The Shipley Club is also attended by Town Councillor Mike Connors.

- **Remembrance Services**

Offered throughout the district, with the city centre service well attended by participants from diverse backgrounds.

- **Commonwealth Memorial – Special service in planning**

The community-led project that is supported by the Council is now nearing completion. The memorial commemorates the contribution, sacrifice and loss experienced by those from other nations who have supported British Forces. Thought to be the first such memorial outside of London, a special service is planned for its unveiling at its site in the Cenotaph Memorial Garden.

Initial work with Wakefield Council officers to consider how the West Yorkshire Best Practice Forum could be supported. This work is ongoing.

- **Assessment of nationally available Covenant training materials** for use by the Council. This is ongoing.
- **Work with Housing Strategy** to ensure the Covenant Duty is implemented. This work has been completed.
- **Supporting Children’s Services** to comply with our education Covenant Duty is now being supported by our internal Legal Assurance Group.

2.9 The Council has retained its Silver Armed Forces Employer Recognition (ERS) Award and is working towards attaining Gold.

New processes are in now place through the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (RFCA) and regional and national award panels to support the ERS Awards and the signing of the Covenant Pledge.

2.10 Our Armed Forces Champion, Cllr Joanne Dodds, during this financial year has supported 15 members of the Armed Forces Community with a range of issues, often complex - from accessing Council services to appealing against decisions about their benefit entitlements. Cllr Dodds has worked alongside charitable partners and others, such as The Royal British Legion, SSAFA, Airedale NHS Teaching Hospitals Foundation Trust.

- 2.11 We are considering how learnings from her work can be captured to inform improvements in service delivery to the community from the Council and across the District Partnership.

Work with AgeUK

- 2.12 Our Armed Forces Champion also had the privilege of working for Age UK from January 2022 until May 2023 on a project called Reconnecting Veteran, funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust. It reached out to veterans and assessed their needs, and sign posting to existing provision, and developed new engagement.
- 2.13 The project uncovered that many veterans were struggling with loneliness and isolation, some with multiple complex needs. Covid exacerbated this.
- 2.14 Working on this project enabled Cllr Dodds to deepening her understanding of the needs of veterans, what support is out there, identify gaps, and raise awareness of needs to ensure veterans are at the forefront of services and people's minds.
- 2.15 Cllr Dodds said: 'I found that veterans like to meet with other veterans. There is the mutual respect, camaraderie that they will never have with civilians. It was good to support the existing breakfast clubs and help them to develop and also setting up new clubs, for example Ilkley now have a good breakfast club. Not every veteran wants to meet in a pub though, so the groups established were a mixture, venues such as Wibsey and Shipley Libraries, the Alhambra. Although I have left working for Age UK I still support the veterans groups and work.

'Working across the district enabled me to develop partnerships and work in communities I wouldn't normally get to work in, such as Keighley. I developed a good partnership with the Armed Forces Champion at Keighley Town Council, Keighley Area Co-ordinators Office, the Veterans Advocate at Airedale Hospital Trust and our own Covenant Officer to organise a veteran's information and advice drop in event. I also worked with Bradford College and Bradford Bulls on a weekly veterans drop in.

'It was sad that the project didn't receive funding to continue, as there is certainly much more to be done to support our veterans. Top of the list would be to have somewhere for veterans to drop in like the Royal British Legion used to have in Leeds prior to Covid. I did find it hard to reach those veterans that are not already accessing services or groups and those that do reach out are normally out of desperation because of pride or all things mentioned in the 2018 report.

'It was beneficial working for AgeUK because some referrals came through their advice workers, and the care navigators, all of these had complex needs and had struggled for many years, it was only through my knowledge and my Armed Forces Champion Role that these were resolved.

My role definitely complimented my work with AgeUK and this in turn has enriched my understanding of veterans' needs.'

- 2.16 The West Yorkshire Implementation Project came to an abrupt end in August 2023. We are working with other West Yorkshire local authorities with the aim of mainstreaming responsibilities for activities formerly provided through the project, such as sharing best practice, across all five local councils.

Appendix 4 provides the Council's Covenant action plan.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 **Post pandemic issues** – Re-invigorating our District Partnership will be a key activity for 2024-25, with both interest and capacity to engage impacted by the pandemic response.
- 3.2 **Bradford's Local Housing Allocation Policy** has been amended to reflect that bereaved spouses and civil partners having to leave Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner will be allocated to Band 1 – Urgent Need, as will any other relevant family members as prescribed by the Armed Forces Covenant Regulations 2022.
- 3.3 **Data on our local armed forces community** – Appendix 5 provides the data we hold about our local community. Changes to the Census questions has resulted in us gaining information about the numbers of veterans in our District but has also seen the removal of the question relating to those who are currently serving.

Service Pupil Premium is no longer reported separately to Pupil Premium.

Adult Social Care client data - A system update and change of staff has resulted in data about clients' Armed Forces service not being recorded. This has an implication on our ability to accurately assess the potential cost implications of the Council adopting the Royal British Legion's Credit their Service campaign where local authorities and others are asked to disregard Forces compensation and pensions when undertaking social care financial assessments. It also has an implication in regards to other sources of funding being sought where a client is unable to currently access public funds to support their care.

Urgent work will be undertaken in the new year to start to address this issue.

Appendix 5 provides the data we have about our local Armed Forces Community.

- 3.4 **Airedale Hospital Veterans Advocate role**
The Armed Forces Advocate role within Airedale NHS Foundation Trust ensures the Trust complies with the Armed Forces Covenant and Armed Forces Act 2021 statutory duty.

There are 17k Veterans within the Airedale reach area. If a veteran's medical record notes they have served, on arrival at Airedale Hospital for an appointment or admission the Veterans' Advocate is alerted and makes contact with them. The Advocate ensures that the veteran is aware of services available to support them and speaks to them about their needs – to ensure arrangements are in place to support them.

The Veterans' Advocate, Martin Flint-Johnson recently won a Bronze Award from English Veterans Award, for Inspiration of the Year in recognition of his work supporting veterans at the hospital. Martin was also nominated for Celebrate as One: Bradford District and Craven Health and Care Partnership Awards Tackling inequalities - meeting the needs of our communities.

Based on its success, Airedale NHS Foundation Trust will seek Bradford Partnership's support in seeking continuation funding to maintain the role. In addition, the spring meeting of the Partnership will be considering how the advocates role could operate in the district's other hospitals.

To support the role and veterans accessing medical services, an information pack has been produced to support veterans aimed at helping them to access services and support. With NHS Veteran Specific support for both physician and mental health, Government housing support, support for prison release and LGBT+ veteran community (following Independent Review by Lord Etherton containing recommendations supported by Government) and over 2000+ Armed Forces characters available. The Advocate role has :

Over the past 12 months

- 600+ Trust staff have received Veteran Aware and Armed Forces Covenant/Act Training
- 190+ Veterans visited within Airedale
- Over 130+ Veteran Information packs have been given
- Identified and made 7 Safeguarding referrals
- Advocated for 6 Complaints from Veterans referred to PALS
- Supported 8 Veterans to refer to OpRestore (NHS Veteran specific Physical Health)
- Supported 9 Veterans to refer to OpCourage (NHS Veteran specific Mental Health)
- Supported 3 Veterans to refer to OpFortitude (Veteran housing support)
- Signposted 2 Veterans to OpSterling (LGBT+ Veteran support)
- Supported 1 Serving Soldier to refer to OpCommunity (NHS Armed Forces SPA)
- Successfully applied for £8.5k charity funding for Housing, furniture, adaptations and specialist bed (at no cost to NHS or Local Authority)

The role has also supported:

- the health and wellbeing of staff members providing specialist advice, signposting and referrals
- successfully reaccredited Employment Recognition Scheme (ERS Silver) and Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA) Veteran Aware

Since the role started, there has been:

- A 400 percent increase in patients declaring as veterans (as we are now asking and recording their answers)
- 90 veterans have been supported by Veterans' advocate
- 260 staff trained in veterans' awareness and this is now included as part of induction training.

The Advocate, who is also veteran, is working closely with primary care and social prescribers on veterans awareness. Veterans awareness training will be offered at the next Partnership development session.

3.5 Employer Recognition Scheme Awards

Bradford Council retained its Silver Award in 2023 and will be starting work early in the new year to prepare for its Gold submission. Airedale NHS Foundation Trust, Bradford Bulls, Bradford District Care NHS Foundation Trust, Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust are also Silver Award holders.

For Gold we will need to provide evidence of: ten extra paid days leave for reservists, supportive HR policies in place for reservists, veterans, Cadet Force adult volunteers and the spouses and partners of those serving in the Armed Forces. In addition, we will also need to evidence that we advocate the benefits of supporting those within the Armed Forces community by encouraging other organisations to sign the Armed Forces Covenant and engage with the Employer Recognition Scheme.

There is a commitment across the Partnership that Award holders will support other partners in their endeavours to attain these awards.

An event at Bradford Bulls Stadium in October 2023 was supported by the Council and others where the RFCA invited companies to re-sign, sign or consider signing a Covenant Pledge. At the event the Council presented the benefits it had enjoyed by employing members of the Armed Forces community.

3.6 Self-Directed Staff Networks – Armed Forces Community

Initial discussions have taken place with some Armed Forces staff with a view to creating a safe space where they can meet to discuss issues and seek support for issues that affect them. This is in its very early stages.

3.7 Resigning the covenant pledge

RFCA are meeting with the Council at the end of January 2024 to look at our re-signing event. Interest has been shown within the Partnership to also resign a joint Pledge. The original Pledge can be viewed in the Civic Reception Rooms in City Hall. The Council and partners will also have to sign their own individual Covenant Pledges. New arrangements that organisations will need to renew their Pledges at least once every five years.

Regardless of what is in the Pledge, the Council and others with functions covered by the Covenant Duty will need to evidence their compliance with the Duty.

3.8 An update on Op COURAGE

A national NHS service that provides mental health information and support for veterans, service leavers, families, and carers.

Support includes help to: transition to civilian life, recognise and treat early signs of mental health issues and more advanced conditions and psychological trauma, deal with and treat substance misuse and addictions, access other NHS mental health services, access charities and local organisations to support wider mental health and other needs such as with housing, relationships, and finance, enable families affected by mental health issues to access local services.

Split into regions, those in Bradford and West Yorkshire access via the North of England contacts. Access is via self or other referral. Support can be accessed regardless of how long ago someone left the forces. With eligibility based on being a UK resident, in the forces for at least one day, being registered with a GP service, and willingness to provide their military service number.

- 3.9 Access to support by other nationals who have become ‘Bradford Citizens’**
Bradford Council’s Armed Forces Champion and officers will support those who have served alongside British Armed Forces such as the Ghurkas as part of our Covenant offer and in line with our legal duty.

Others who have supported the British Armed Forces in civilian roles are not covered by the Covenant (excepting where the civilian is a spouse, civil partner, child, financially dependent or a bereaved family member).

Other services in the Council do offer direct support to civilians who have supported our Armed Forces who relocate to the UK, such as through Stronger Communities Team and Revenues and Benefits Service.

If the Council wish to make local arrangements to ensure support is available through the ‘Covenant’ to these civilians, this could be worked through in the same way that the Council decided to make ‘low income’ and ‘care leavers’ locally agreed protected characteristics in regard to equality impact assessments.

- 3.10 Armed Forces Day Event 2024**

Recent years saw this event dislodged from its venue outside the main entrance to City Hall, more recently locating to Norfolk Garden. Not seen as an ideal venue, and with some complaints from our main partner, The Royal British Legion, discussions are underway aimed at securing a more prominent location – such as the square outside the new Darley Street Market, alongside the Mirror Pool or on a concourse in the city centre.

A meeting has been arranged for late January to discuss options for the Mirror Pool with Bradford Literature Festival. At this point we should know if the square at Darley Street Market will be available – this being the preferred venue.

Contact has been made with the military by Cllr Dodds to seek vehicles and personnel to support the event. Our own climbing wall has been secured, as this has proved popular at past events.

Once we have the venue secured, an application for funding will be developed with partners and submitted through the MOD Armed Forces Day Event funding process. However, whilst this will cover up to £10k of eligible spend, any grant awarded needs to be matched.

- 3.11 Training for staff and front line staff**

Nationally available free e-learning courses are currently being assessed for use by all staff and front line staff in Bradford.

- 3.12 Education – Covenant Duty**

Legal Assurance Group are working with Children’s Services to ensure compliance with the Covenant Duty regarding education.

3.13 Website and intranet content

We have benefitted from an undergraduate placement from Bradford University which has enabled us to have our web pages and intranet content about our Armed Forces Community offer reviewed with recommendations for change.

Early indications are that we provide more information and sign posting via our web pages than other local authorities. However, a gap has been identified that we do not promote our excellent Armed Forces Champion.

The project is due to conclude at the end of January when we receive a written report about the review findings along with recommendations on how we might amend our content.

3.14 Reservist call-up – protocol for managers in development

Through the Reserve Forces and Cadet Association supporting the Covenant and Employer Recognition Scheme, we have been informed, for the first time, that we currently employ six reserves.

We have also been alerted through one of our managers of a call to deploy one of those reserves in January 2024.

Office of the Chief Executive officers along with colleagues in our Human Resources Service are now working to provide a protocol for managers to use in the event they are informed of a call to deploy. Once the protocol is drafted, we will ensure it is consulted on and then adopted through the appropriate Council decision-making channels. At the outset, the default on receiving a call to deploy will be to comply with the request.

We are proud that we have Reserves and Veterans within our staff body and are working to identify and provide the support they need to succeed in the Council.

3.15 Bradford District Partnership Development session

A session is in planning for Spring 2024 where the Council's new Strategic Lead, Noreen Akhtar, will be introduced to partners and where the Partnership will revisit its role and activities. The outcome from the event will be reviewed terms of reference and action plan.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

- 4.1 Work to implement the Armed Forces Covenant and duty by the Council is undertaken within existing resources.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

- 5.1 None directly arising from this report.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

6.1 This is a progress report on the Bradford Armed Forces Covenant.

6.2 The Armed Forces Act 2021 – Armed Forces Duty came into force in November 2022. It places legal obligations on the Council to have due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant relating to the:

- a) Unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the Armed Forces
- b) Principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for service people from membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces.
- c) Principle that special provision for service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces.

The new duty applies to specified persons or bodies, including councils, when exercising certain housing, education, or healthcare functions.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None directly arising from this report.

7.2 Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

None directly arising from this report.

7.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None directly arising from this report.

7.4 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

None directly arising from this report.

7.5 TRADE UNION

None directly arising from this report.

7.6 WARD IMPLICATIONS

None directly arising from this report. The Armed Forces community is dispersed across the district.

7.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

None directly arising from this report. However, take-up of Pupil Premium related to service children could positively impact support in schools for service children.

7.8 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

There are no issues arising from the privacy impact assessment.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

9. OPTIONS

This is a progress report on the Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant and for the contents to be noted.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

To note and comment on the contents of the progress report on work to implement the Armed Forces Covenant locally and to meet the Council's Covenant duties.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Partner Membership

Appendix 2 Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Pledge

Appendix 3 Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Partnership Terms of Reference

Appendix 4 Bradford Council's Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan

Appendix 5 – Data about our Armed Forces Community

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

[COSC report 11 November 2021 - Annual progress report on the local implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant](#)

<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/housing/policies-and-reports/bradford-housing-allocations-policy/>

[Armed Forces Covenant Duty Statutory Guidance November 2022](#)

[MOD Armed Forces Covenant information](#)

Appendix 1 Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Partner Membership

The Partnership will be jointly chaired by the Council's Armed Forces Champion and the Armed Forces representative. Membership will include:

- Armed Forces representative
- Elected Member Armed Forces Champion
- The Royal British Legion
- Yorkshire and Humber Veterans Pensions and Advisory Committee
- West Yorkshire SSAFA
- Bradford District Care Trust
- Airedale NHS Foundation Trust
- Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Airedale, Bradford and Leeds NHS Cluster
- Job Centre Plus • Incommunities
- Bradford District Credit Union
- Community Action Bradford & District (X3)
- West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service
- West Yorkshire Police Service
- Local Councils representatives – Town and Parish Councils (x2)
- Assistant Director of Neighbourhood and Community Services
- Yorkshire Housing
- Representative for the Lord-Lieutenants

Other representative organisations that sign the Covenant Pledge will be invited to join the Partnership and provide representatives as appropriate.

Appendix 2 Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Pledge

THE BRADFORD DISTRICT COMMUNITY COVENANT 30th JANUARY 2012

The People of the United Kingdom Her Majesty's Government

And

All those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of the Crown And their Families

The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm. Our Armed Forces fulfil that responsibility on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and, sometimes, suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty. Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. In return, the whole nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families. They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment.

Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

This obligation involves the whole of the City of Bradford Metropolitan District: it includes NHS organisations, voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and the actions of individuals in supporting the Armed Forces. Recognising those who have performed military duty unites the District and demonstrates the value of their contribution. This has no greater expression than in upholding this Covenant.

Appendix 3 Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Partnership Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

The Armed Forces 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.

The purpose of this Covenant is to encourage support for the Armed Forces Community working and residing in Bradford District and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by members of this Armed Forces Community, particularly those who have given the most. This includes in-Service and ex-Service personnel their families and widow(er)s in Bradford District.

For the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council and partner organisations, the Covenant presents an opportunity to bring their knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on the provision of help and advice to members of the Armed Forces Community. It also presents an opportunity to build upon existing good work.

For the Armed Forces Community, the Covenant encourages the integration from Service life into civilian life and encourages members of the Armed Forces Community to help their local community.

2. Purpose and responsibility of the Partnership

The Armed Forces Covenant Partnership will:

- i. Seek to promote the signing of the Covenant by partner organisations and members of the charitable and voluntary sectors and ensure that the commitments made are adhered to.
- ii. Establish a joint action plan and identify resources to support projects and work which strengthen the ties between members of the Armed Forces Community and the wider community in Bradford District.
- iii. Monitor the impact of the Covenant locally and ensure that its aims are met.
- iv. Work to ensure that members of the Armed Forces Community have equal access to services and are treated with respect and in an equitable manner throughout the District.
- v. Create sub-groups as appropriate to support implementation of the Covenant and assign decision-making responsibility to those sub-groups in line with delegated tasks. Sub-groups will be supported with specific terms of reference to support their role. Appendix 1 – The Council's Armed Forces Covenant Working Group ToRs are provided as an example of such a sub-group.
- vi. Use Armed Forces celebratory events across the District to promote the Covenant.
- vii. Produce an annual progress report for submission to the Council's Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee as requested.

3. Responsibility of all partner organisations

The commitment of any specific organisation's resources can only be made by that organisation's representative.

- i. Ensure their own organisation and staff are aware of the Covenant and take action as appropriate to meet decisions made through the Partnership.
- ii. Provide awareness and training sessions for their own staff.
- iii. Provide resources as they have agreed to support the operation of the Partnership.
- iv. Be advocates for the Armed Forces Covenant both within their own organisations and externally - raising awareness and context of the Covenant.
- v. Draft their own Covenant action plan aimed at supporting them to meet their own Covenant pledge, any statutory requirements attached to the Covenant and their contribution to the overall partnership action plan
- vi. Monitor their action plan and report progress back through the partnership and contribute to partnership reports, for instance, the Council's Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4. Frequency of Meetings

To meet at least three times per year and ranged to support preparations for Armed Forces Day and also Remembrance Day.

5. Membership

The Partnership will be jointly chaired by the Council's Armed Forces Champion and the Armed Forces representative. Membership will include:

- Armed Forces Liaison
- Armed Forces representatives:
 - Local units – Belle Vue Barracks
 - Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club
- Elected Member Armed Forces Champion
- The Royal British Legion
- Yorkshire and Humber Veterans Pensions and Advisory Committee
- West Yorkshire SSAFA
- Bradford District Care Trust
- Airedale NHS Foundation Trust
- Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Job Centre Plus
- Incommunities
- Bradford District Credit Union
- Community Action Bradford & District (X3)
- West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service

- West Yorkshire Police Service
- Local Councils representatives – Town and Parish Councils (x2)
- Council - Assistant Director of Neighbourhood and Customer Services
- Council – Corporate Policy Officer
- Yorkshire Housing
- The monarch’s representative – Deputy Lord-Lieutenant

As appropriate, other organisations that sign the Covenant Pledge may be invited to join the Partnership and provide representatives.

6. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee will support the Partnership by:

- Setting the agendas for Partnership meetings
- Dealing with ad hoc issues as they arise within parameters agreed by the Partnership
- Reporting back on activities to Partnership meetings
- Tasking the Bradford Council Working Group as required between Partnership meetings
- Seeking progress reports from any sub-groups as necessary between Partnership meetings
- Providing advice as requested to the Bradford Council Working Group and any other sub-groups that the Partnership creates
- Determining and calling extraordinary meetings of the Partnership as deemed necessary

Membership of the Executive Committee

- Armed Forces representative
- Council Armed Forces Champion
- Council - Assistant Director of Neighbourhood and Community Services
- Council – Corporate Policy Officer

The Executive may seek advice and support from any other representatives from the Partnership as and when required.

7. Reporting arrangements

The Partnership and its members will report to:

- District Partnerships
- The Council Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and other Council committees for information and to inform them about current Armed Forces Community issues
- To the local Armed Forces Community
- Within their own organisation and structures.

8. Armed Forces Covenant Duty

Partners subject to the Duty must ensure they discharge their duty in relation to the

Covenant regardless of the Partnership and its Terms of Reference. In particular they must have due regard to the:

- a) Unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the armed forces
- b) Principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for Service people from membership, or former membership, of the armed forces
- c) Principle that special provision for Service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the armed forces.

Partners who are subject to the Duty (specified bodies):

Organisation	Department/Service
Bradford Council	Education
	Housing
	Healthcare services (such as healthcare for children with SEND, through the Health Care Act 2006, through Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014)
NHS	NHS Foundation Trusts
	NHS Trust

Full Statutory Guidance available via: [Armed Forces Covenant Duty Statutory Guidance.pdf](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/611106/Armed_Forces_Covenant_Duty_Statutory_Guidance.pdf) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

end

Appendix 4 Bradford Council's Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan

Bradford Council Armed Forces Covenant Implementation – Action Plan tracker October 2023

This plan describes the specific actions that the Council will undertake to support the Armed Forces Community.

	Area/Theme	Lead	Required actions	Progress/Comments	Date completed
1	RFCA event 18 October		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notes for address including case studies – benefits of employing AFC staff 	Note out to new AFC recruits via Karen Hoyle asking for their input 5 October 2023 RFCA Poster doesn't need further distribution	16/10/23
2	Prepare new Council strategic lead		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up new meeting with Neighbourhood Services AD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After 12 October 231102 - Meeting rearranged for 14 November 	Ongoing
3	Council re-signing of the Covenant		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up meeting with RFCA in City Hall Civic Reception meeting room 2 after the 18 to float idea of joint Partnership resigning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with RFCA booked for 22 January 2024 to discuss individual and partnership re-sign 	
	ERS Silver and Gold		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> if retained Silver, plan to go for Gold, if not retained Silver, work to regain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete RFCA workshop in January 2024 Meeting with RFCA in January 2024 to discuss Council requirements 	6/11/23
	Education Duty		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New note to Sue Lowndes – with guidance Update Legal Assurance template via Jan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal Assurance Group supporting 	
	AFD Event/s 2024		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey Meeting Report with recommendations Joint application for grant funding to support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Dodds in touch with BID and Markets (re opening of new Market in City Centre) Meeting with Bradford Literature Festival in January 2024 (alternative venues) 	
	Action Planning Day for the Partnership		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check membership of Partnership Check ToRs Create inputs Output needed – Partnership Plan of Action (things we need to work on together) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set date for early Spring 2024 	

	Area/Theme	Lead	Required actions	Progress/Comments	Date completed
	Disregard of pensions/compensation for social care costs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up meeting with adult services to explore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up on data requirements with Adults 	
	Sport and Leisure concession		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to show how administering, get data re: take up and definitive rationale for not extending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awaiting data 	
	Armed Forces Remembrance		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply names to Lord Mayor's Officer re additional invitees to City Centre service Note out to partnership when arrangements set 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> additional names forwarded from partnership 	02/10/23
	Check web content on Council Pages		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bradford University student supporting via a 100 hour project over 11 weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefed 2/10/23 – expected completion January 2024 231102 - On track to deliver end of January 2024 	
	Progress report for COSC 11 Jan 2024		Follow-up with Airedale NHS Trust re Advocacy work and success (link to sign-posting into BMDC and other partners)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thursday, 11th January 2024 at City Hall, Bradford. Chair's briefing 21/12/23. Report deadline 28/12/23. 2) Armed Forces Covenant 	
	Training for staff and Elected Members		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact HR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessing e-learning available – due to complete in December 2023 	
	Meet with new CX		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Dodds/AD Lead/OCX policy leads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To arrange 	

Appendix 5 – data about our Armed Forces

Metric	Number	Date	Data point Source
Pensions and Compensations			
Bradford District recipients of UK Armed Forces pensions and compensation	1,552	To 31 March 2023	Location of armed forces pension and compensation recipients: 2023 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Bradford District recipients of Widows War Pensions	44	To 31 March 2023	Location of armed forces pension and compensation recipients: 2023 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Families and Children			
Pupils eligible for service child pupil premium in Bradford LA	209	To December 2023	Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2023-24 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Service child pupil premium allocation (across Bradford LA)	£70,015	To December 2023	Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2023-24 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Population			
People in the district who have served in the regular UK Armed Forces	9,412	Census 2021 Released 10 November 2022	UK armed forces veterans, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)
People in the district who have served in the Reserve UK Armed Forces	2,461	Census 2021 Released 10 November 2022	UK armed forces veterans, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)
Housing Options			
Homeless cases - where their reason for loss of last settled home was that they were a member of the armed services	7	Since October 2019	In-house data collection
	1	During 2023 to date	In-house data collection
Accessing the housing register who state they have served (all placed in Priority Band 1).	21	Since 2021	In-house data collection
Council recruitment			

Applicants for roles from the Armed Forces – serving or veterans	75	31 January to 31 July 2023	In-house data collection
Shortlisted – Armed Forces – Serving or veterans	39		
Contracts in progress – Armed Forces applicants	4		
Contracts sent – Armed Forces applicants	8		