

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: TUESDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2012
title: ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: COUNCILLOR JIM WHITE / OLWEN HEAP

1 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is to form the basis of an annual report and to supplement Section 4 of the Ribble Valley Borough Council Armed Forces Community Covenant, as a working document.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – to treat everyone equally and ensure that access to services is available to all. To engage with all our communities to ensure we deliver services to meet customer needs and expectations.
- Corporate Priorities – to seek to continually improve, ensuring that council services are fit for purpose and customer focused.
- Other Considerations – not identified.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Borough Council was approached in December 2011 by 42 (North West Brigade) regarding the new Armed Forces Community Covenant currently being taken up by Councils throughout the country. A request was made by 42 (NW Bde) for the Borough Council to consider setting up their own Community Covenant.

2.2 The Leader and Chief Executive asked Cllr J White to act on the Council's behalf to investigate and report back, and in April 2012 Cllr White was appointed as the Armed Forces Community Champion for the Ribble Valley.

2.3 A series of meetings have taken place between officers of the council, representation from 42 (NW Bde), The Royal British Legion, the Veterans Agency and Cllr White.

2.4 Cllr White advised the Chief Executive and the Leader of the council about the Community Covenant, and Lt Col Lighten, Commanding Officer 4th Battalion Duke of Lancaster's Regiment was subsequently invited to attend Council on 9 October 2012.

2.5 A draft Armed Forces Community Covenant for the Ribble Valley has been prepared to be presented to Council for ratification in December 2012. (Appendix 1).

3 ISSUES

SECTION 4 - COMMUNITY COVENANT DRAFT

- 3.1 Section 4 of the draft Community Covenant requests that the Armed Forces Champion co-ordinates and keeps the Council informed of ongoing issues relating to the Covenant.
- 3.2 It is intended that Section 4 of the Community Covenant remains as a workable document, and all members and officers are requested to have input into it to make it meaningful, and fully representative for the Armed Forces Community in the Ribble Valley.
- 3.3 Section 4 includes what the Council is doing already, what is ongoing and ideas for what else can be done to contribute towards the Community Covenant (Appendix 2). This document will become an appendix to the Community Covenant so that it can be constantly assessed and altered as time progresses.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:
- Resources – the suggestions made in this report may impact on an element of officer time.
 - Technical, Environmental and Legal – none identified.
 - Political – none identified.
 - Reputation – the Council has a reputation for supporting the Armed Forces.
 - Equality & Diversity – the Council should be consistent in its considerations of all groups.

5 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 5.1 Approve the Draft Community Covenant as outlined in Appendix 1 for ratification by Council in December 2012.
- 5.2 Approve the Section 4 measures as outlined in Appendix 2, subject to any additions or alterations, to be appended to the Community Covenant and keep the Council informed of future developments.

NAME
AUTHOR

NAME
DIRECTOR OF / CHIEF EXECUTIVE

For further information please ask for Olwen Heap, extension 4408

SECTION 4 OF THE RIBBLE VALLEY ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

Where are we now / What are we doing already?

- a. In 2009 RVBC awarded the Duke of Lancaster Regiment the Freedom of the Borough.
- b. Appointed an Armed Forces Champion 2012.
- c. When considering claims for benefits, a military pension is discounted.
- d. Being an ex-service person is taken into account when considering a Disabled Facility Grant.

What is ongoing?

- a. The Drafted Community Covenant 2012 to be considered by Council in December '12.
- b. Arrangements for a signing day once ratified and signees have been confirmed.
- c. RVBC takes part in Armed Forces week with the annual Flag raising ceremony.
- d. Cllr White to continue to attend and arrange meetings with members and representatives of the Covenant.
- e. Individual Councillors and Council continue to Support Armed Forces events, charities and acts of Remembrance.
- f. Cllr White coordinating veterans attendance at LCC Evening Reception in November.
- g. Mayor attends Annual Service of Remembrance and Regimental Reunion at Warrington.
- h. Ribble Valley Homes are currently reviewing their allocations policy to include reference to the Armed Forces.

What else can we do?

- a. Set up webpage on RVBC website dedicated to Armed Forces Covenant.
- b. Train Contact Centre staff in respect of sign posting and advice with service charities and agencies.
- c. Invite members of the Covenant to Civic events.
- d. Post tourist advice and information to the main Units at Fulwood Barracks, Kimberley Barracks and Weeton Camp - sell Ribble Valley to the local Military Community.
- e. Investigate with Officers reductions for serving and past personnel/Ribble Valley Cadet groups at Council owned facilities.
- f. Encourage local businesses to advertise (for free) employment vacancies in the Ribble Valley through the RFEA (Regular Forces Employment Agency).
- g. Encourage local businesses and tourist attractions to offer reductions in their services/facilities.
- h. Encourage local event organisers to consider military involvement in their community events eg field days/steam fairs.
- i. Consider amendments to other council application forms in respect of adding an Armed forces section if applicable.
- j. Consider applications for grants and advise on possible grant applications from military organisations.
- k. Inform Parish and Town Councils of the Covenant and encourage their involvement.
- l. Armed Forces Champion to forge closer links with Ribble Valley Cadet forces.
- m. To consider if we as a Council need to bid for any of grant monies available from the service personnel veterans agency (£30 Million plus available).

- n. Engage with the Armed Forces Community living in Ribble Valley and with their representative organisations and other stakeholders to work towards maintaining the health of veterans and their families.
- o. Support the process of GP / Dental Registration for the Armed forces Community following military discharge.
- p. Raise awareness and encourage training within primary care staff of the needs of the Armed forces Community, identification, coding and the principle of clinical prioritisation.
- q. Consider the implications at a locality level of the Murrison report on veterans Mental Health and work with commissioned service providers to meet the needs of the Armed Forces Community.
- r. Ensure armed forces issues are raised at the Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Board.

On behalf of the Council Cllr White has attended the following meetings/events:

Feb 2012 Meeting re Covenant 42 NW Bde Lt Col Lighten

Apr 2012 RVBC Meeting re Covenant 42 NW Bde Lt Col Lighten/Olwen Heap

Apr 2012 Altcar Training Camp Meeting re AGM of the Regular- Territorial-and Cadets Forces of the Northwest. Lord Shuttleworth Presiding

(A worthwhile AGM for networking and being kept informed on national Military Policies that will affect the armed forces community in the coming years- particular emphasis on redundancies and increase in Territorial army numbers, and introduction to NW Armed Forces Councils Community Champions. Briefed on cadet activity.)

May 2012 Kimberley Barracks Preston re Meeting for Armed Forces Lancashire champions and representatives from the Military Community in Lancashire – Cllr Mike France LCC Armed Forces Community Champion.

(A good event for networking and ascertaining what other Councils are doing re Covenant.)

May 2012 RVBC Meeting re Covenant Lt Col Lighten/Marshall Scott/Des White, Veterans Agency, Bill Burn, RBL area coordinator.

Aug 2012 Fulwood Barracks Preston Military Tattoo

(Invited by 42 Bde to attend, unfortunately the weather spoiled the occasion, but it was a good networking event.)

Sep 2012 Altcar Training Camp Armed Forces Week

(A week long event for year 10 and 11 pupils who may be considering a career with the Armed Forces, 2,500 young people each day, a really good informative event to attend, schools from the Ribble Valley sent pupils to the event.)

Oct 2012 Fulwood Barracks Preston - Presentation by the Regular Army Personnel Recovery Unit based at the Barracks

(This was a very informative and interesting presentation, amongst other things the Personnel Recovery Unit is responsible for looking after the injured from all three services- they coordinate medical, housing, financial, employment, and educational facilities for those unfortunate enough to be deemed unfit for duty. The Unit was currently looking after 127 personnel from the Northwest, as well as the families needs.

Another part of the presentation was the regular release system for personnel either retiring or being made redundant, and explanations of what the MOD offers.)

Oct 2012 Longridge meeting with Cadet Officers from Longridge Army Cadets
Nov 2012 Great Harwood Meeting with Eastern Division Army Cadet Coordinator
Nov 2012 LCC veterans event County Hall, Preston



Community Covenant

AN ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

BETWEEN

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
CHARITABLE AND VOLUNTARY SECTORS,
THE CIVILIAN COMMUNITY OF THE RIBBLE VALLEY

AND

THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY IN THE RIBBLE VALLEY

**We, the undersigned, agree to work and act together to honour the
Armed Forces Community Covenant.**



BOROUGH COUNCIL

Signatories

Signed:

Name: **TBC**

Position Held: **Brig 42 Bde?/DOL/Rep**

**Signed on behalf of the Armed Forces
Community**

Date:

Signed:

Name: **TBC**

Position Held
Royal British Legion

**Signed on behalf of the Armed Forces
Charities**

Date:

Signed:

Name: **TBC**

Position Held: President
Commissioning
Clitheroe Chamber of Trade

**Signed on behalf of the Business
and Commercial Sector**

Date:

Signed:

Name: **TBC**

Position Held: Manager
Clitheroe Citizens Advice Bureau

**Signed on behalf of the
Voluntary Sector**

Date:

Signed:

Name: Marshal Scott

Position Held: Chief Executive
Ribble Valley Borough Council

**Signed on behalf of the
Ribble Valley Borough Council**

Date:

Signed:

Name: Michael Ranson

Position Held: Leader Ribble Valley
Borough Council

**Signed by the Leader of the of the
Ribble Valley Borough Council**

Date:

Signed:

Name: **TBC**

Position Held: Locality
Manager - East Lancashire PCT

**Signed on behalf of the East
Lancashire Primary Care Trust**

Date:

Signed:

Name: **TBC**

Position Held: Managing Director

**Signed on behalf of local
Housing Association**

Date:

SECTION 1: PARTICIPANTS

1.1 This Armed Forces Community Covenant is made between:

The serving and former members of the Armed Forces and their families working and residing in the Ribble Valley Council Area

And

Ribble Valley Borough Council

And

The Charitable and Voluntary Sector

And

Other members of the civilian community

SECTION 2: PRINCIPLES OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

2.1 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.

2.2 The purpose of this Community Covenant is to encourage support for the Armed Forces Community working and residing in the Ribble Valley 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 the Ribble Valley

2.3 For Ribble Valley Borough Council and partner organisations, the Community 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 on other initiatives such as the Welfare Pathway.

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

SECTION 3: OBJECTIVES AND GENERAL INTENTIONS

Aims of the Community Covenant

3.1 The Armed Forces Community Covenant complements the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant that defines the enduring, general principles that should govern the relationship between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces community

3.2 It aims to encourage all parties within a community to offer support to the local Armed Forces community and make it easier for Service personnel, families and veterans to access the help and support available from the MOD, from statutory providers and from the Charitable and Voluntary Sector. These organisations already work together in partnership at local level.

3.3 The scheme is intended to be a two-way arrangement and the Armed Forces community are encouraged to do as much as they can to support their community and promote activity that integrates the Service community into civilian life.

SECTION 4: Measures

4.1 Ribble Valley Borough Council will appoint a Councillor as the Armed Forces Community Champion to coordinate and report annually on the Covenant.

CONTACT PERSONNEL AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

MOD DCDS (Pers&Trg) Covenant Team

DCDS (Pers) Covenant Team
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Email address: covenant-mailbox@mod.uk

In-Service representative(s)

Contact Name: 42 Bde/DOL/REP TBC
Title:
Telephone:
Address:
Email

Chief Executive Ribble Valley Borough Council

Contact Name: Marshal Scott
Title: Chief Executive Ribble Valley Borough Council
Telephone: 01200 414400
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Lead Officer Ribble Valley Borough Council

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Armed Forces Community Champion Ribble Valley Borough Council

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East Lancashire Primary Care Trust

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Voluntary Organisations

Contact Name: TBC
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Citizens Advice Bureau

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Housing Association

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Charities (TBC)

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Email:

THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

An Enduring Covenant Between

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 society: it includes 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 country and demonstrates the value of their contribution. This has no greater expression than in upholding this Covenant.