

**RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
OUTSIDE BODY REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Agenda Item No. 23a

meeting date: TUESDAY 25 OCTOBER 2016  
title: ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT REPORT 2016  
submitted by: COUNCILLOR JIM WHITE

**1 PURPOSE**

1.1 The purpose of this annual report is to inform and update Committee of any changes to Section 4 of the Ribble Valley Borough Council Armed Forces Community Covenant as at 20 SEPTEMBER 2016, and to update the Committee on other changes in relation to the Armed Forces Community Covenant

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 – to meet our ongoing Commitment to the Armed Forces Community in the Ribble Valley.

**2 BACKGROUND**

2.1 On the 24<sup>th</sup> July 2013 The Borough Council with partners from the Military, Private and Charitable Sectors signed an Armed Forces Community Covenant.

**3 COMMUNITY COVENANT SECTION 4**

3.1 Section 4 of the Community Covenant requests that the Armed Forces Champion –Cllr White co-ordinates and keeps the Council informed of ongoing issues and Initiatives relating to the Covenant.

3.2 Section 4 of the Community Covenant remains as a workable document, and all members, partners 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. Additions since the last report in OCT 2015 are:

- A. On 01 July next to the statue of the Unknown Soldier in Clitheroe Castle a 12 hr Vigil took place. Arranged by LCC and supported by RVBC, individuals from the Borough led by the Mayor stood in silence for 2 minutes in the same stance as the Unknown Soldier. The artist Andy Farr has also worked with schools on this and an exhibition of the art work produced will be launched on 11 November in the Stewards Gallery at the Castle.

- B. RVBC has taken up an offer for free training supplied via LCC and the Covenant partnership to train contact staff in all matters relating to the Armed Forces. At the time of compiling this report details and dates are not yet available.
- C. At the Policy and Finance meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> Sept 2016, it was agreed that RVBC would lay a plaque at the National Memorial Arboretum in May 2017, details will be released closer to the date.
- D. In January 2016 Parish Council Liaison Committee received a brief by the War Memorial Trust.

#### **4 ARMED FORCES COVENANT FUNDING CHANGES**

- 4.1 The fund has one small change, after a pilot the Small Grant projects had required potential applicants to approach their Local Partnership/Local Authority in order to obtain their endorsement. Although the process remains virtually the same, the major difference for Round Two is that whilst applicants are encouraged to make contact it is no longer mandated. However, Local Authorities will have an opportunity to comment on any applications at Step 4 of the process.

#### **5 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 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.

#### **6 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 6.1 Note the Contents of this report and changes to the Armed Forces Covenant small grants.

NAME: Cllr J White  
AUTHOR

For further information please ask for Olwen Heap, extension 4408

## **Little Green Bus- Community Transport in Lancashire**

As predicted at the Policy & Finance meeting on the 14 th March,2015, Lancashire County Council granted the Lancashire Community Transport Consortium (LCT) a 3 year supply contract to cover the whole of Lancashire. The contract commenced on the 1 st April, 2015. Depending upon overall performance an extension for a further 2 years will be seriously considered.

The Consortium consists of 5 member charities covering the whole of Lancashire: at the outset Little Green Bus (LGB) was elected to be the lead body, due principally to the efforts of its Manager in setting up the Consortium in the first place. The lead body has the necessary direct linkage to the transport officers at LCC.

The LCT Consortium offers a variety of services. Dial a Ride transport is provided for the elderly, and sometimes vulnerable, residents, who are unable to access public transport. In this context it is pleasing to note that LGB has recently won innovation funding from the local Clinical Commissioning group for access to services. The volunteer car scheme, partly funded by RVBC, does sterling work in providing access to medical services, which demonstrably results in a reduction in missed appointments, thereby aiding efficiency gains within NHS services. Group Transport is another item which has grown over the last few years through the development of good working arrangements with local community groups. In similar vein, regular, or ad hoc, services are available to educational establishments which are endeavouring to meet national policy requirements. MiDAS ( Minibus Drivers Awareness Scheme ) training continues to be provided by LGB and one other LCT Consortium member. This provides training for teachers who drive school minibuses, and for other charities. Further specific marketing is underway to alert all schools in the region of the availability of this training scheme.

The progress of the LCC contract is continuously monitored and discussed at Consortium meetings. One of the main stipulations was that at the end of the first year's trading – March31st ,2016 – the number of single passenger trips (SPTs) should have increased by 10% over the base figure of 1<sup>st</sup> April,2015. It is pleasing to report that the Consortium delivered 8% over the target figure during the 2015-2016 year. Another requirement is that by the end of the third

year of trading the growth of SPTs shall be 20% over the 1/04/2015 base figure. So far the Consortium is already 2% ahead of this year's target.

The contract also decrees that there should be an increase in the number of volunteer drivers, with an increase from the base figure of 117 to 140 after 3 years. At the end of the first year's trading the goal had already been surpassed with 143 volunteers on the Consortium's register. A word of caution is applicable here, because volunteer numbers do fluctuate, and some of our colleagues in urban areas do find recruitment difficult. Locally, an article explaining the various facets of LGB's operation and asking for volunteers will appear shortly in the RVBC Newsletter, which reaches all households in the Valley. An impressive website has been established for the Consortium as a whole as a part of a publicity drive within Lancashire. The LGB website component can be viewed at [www.littlegreenbus.org.uk](http://www.littlegreenbus.org.uk).

Until recently concern was in evidence about the age of some of our buses. Fortunately, the problem vanished as a consequence of the Government, last year, providing 2 FOC , hard won, buses to LGB. The Preston and West Lancs Consortium members also received a free issue bus. A third new bus was added to the LGB fleet of five 16 seater buses via grants from Reaching Communities and the Department of Transport, enabling LGB to offer affordable transport to over 900 residents and around 50 community groups.