

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

PROGRESS REPORT ON ARMED FORCES COVENANT

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Cabinet on progress on the Armed Forces Covenant and associated Armed Forces and Veterans Work in North Lincolnshire.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 The North Lincolnshire Armed Forces Community Covenant is an agreement of a voluntary pledge of mutual support between a civilian community and its local armed forces. Its aim is to strengthen links between the community and local armed forces personnel, their families and service veterans. The covenant aims to:

- Encourage local communities to support the armed forces community in their areas.
- Nurture public understanding and awareness about the issues affecting the armed forces community.
- Recognise and remember sacrifices made by the armed forces.
- Promote activities which help integrate the armed forces community into local life.
- Encourage the armed forces to help and support the wider community through participation in joint projects and other forms of engagement.

2.2 North Lincolnshire Council has undertaken a considerable amount of work in 2019 to implement the work of the Covenant and provide support to local organisations and charities who work with young people, veterans and their families. Examples of the work undertaken are:

Training

- The Armed Forces E-learning package is live on the council's Learning Pool system. An initial trial has seen 35 NLC employees complete the training since it was launched in February 2019. It will now be rolled out across the

Council. There are plans to look at lifting this off the internal system to be able to share this with other North Lincolnshire organisations.

- Six Military Human training sessions have been delivered with a total of 85 participants. Feedback has been excellent and we have had a range of delegates from across the local authority as well as Ongo, Humberside Fire and Rescue and RDaSH.
- An in-depth Armed Forces Mental Health First Aid session was delivered in May with a total of 14 participants, all participants were from North Lincolnshire Council and feedback was again, excellent.

Communications

- The website www.northlincs.gov.uk/armedforces has been fully updated and it details local and national support available to the Armed Forces community.
- Social Media has been used to promote the Covenant work locally and has had excellent engagement with wider partners regionally and nationally.
- Engagement with social media for Armed Forces Day 2019 doubled from last year and resulted in record attendance.

Regional Conference

- The second regional conference is planned for Thursday November 21st and will focus on the Health and Wellbeing theme of the Veterans' strategy, it will be held in North Lincolnshire. This is being organised in partnership with our local authority partners from Hull City council, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough council, North East Lincolnshire council and East Riding of Yorkshire council.

North Lincolnshire Armed Forces Forum

- There have been two meetings of the North Lincolnshire Armed Forces Forum, in March and June 2019. Partners have been very supportive and the local Covenant agenda is gathering pace as a result.
- There are currently 20 Members of the forum including reps from 146 Div Sp Coy, North Lincolnshire Council, DWP, Ongo, Humberside Police, Humberside Fire and Rescue, Project Nova, North Lincolnshire Veterans Community Hub, SSAFA, Royal British Legion, NHS Veterans TILS mental health service, Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Trust and North Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group.
- An action plan has been drafted and partners will attend a workshop in July to confirm what their organisations can contribute to the action plan and agree priorities. The forum will then look at Covenant Fund Trust, funding streams to ascertain which of these fit with our local priorities.

North Lincolnshire Veterans' Community Hub

- NLC continues to support the Hub with the use of the building on Frances Street.
- An Awards for All bid was successful – this will be used for improvements to the building.

- The Hub currently has ten volunteers who operate the drop in and is extending its opening hours to Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings in July on a trial basis.
- The Hub Volunteers are currently negotiating a space in the new St Johns market to provide information once a month.

Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award

- The council's application for the ERS Silver Award was submitted and we can expect to have an announcement by August 2019 ready for the regional ceremony in October 2019.

Armed Forces Week

- Armed Forces Flag raising took place on Monday June 17th at Church Square House for the first time. There was an excellent turnout for the annual event and feedback on the move to CSH was positive.
- The 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings was commemorated at flag raising using this years 'There But Not There' campaign which saw pairs of footprints in the sand on Church Square itself, a speech by the President of the Scunthorpe Branch of the Royal British Legion was also made.
- North Lincolnshire Armed Forces Day took place on Saturday June 22nd. This year's event had record attendance of 4000 people.
- It was organised by the Armed Forces Events Team, which is made up of predominantly volunteers, with support and led by North Lincolnshire Council.
- This year's highlights was the Spitfire flypast, with the parade led by the Nottinghamshire Band of Corps of the Royal Engineers, who also performed in the arena. Military representation was higher than previous years, in addition to the Cadet Village, arena and stage entertainment, armed forces charities and food and drink stalls.
- Feedback has been very positive both in person and on social media and the team are keen to build on this for 2020 with an even bigger event.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 This report is to provide Cabinet with an update on the progress made in relation to the Implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant, work will continue in 2019/20 including:

- **Armed Forces Covenant Forum and Pathways**
A North Lincolnshire Armed Forces forum will continue to meet and develop the Covenant Action Plan in line with the National Veterans Strategy.
- **Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award**
When we receive notification about the ERS Silver Award we will seek approval for relevant publicity and commence the process of applying for Gold Status in 2020.
- **Training package delivery**
The Online Training Package will continue to be rolled out to staff and partners with a view to having all staff complete the basic training by the end of 2020.

- **Remembrance Parade 2019**

After discussions with the Royal British Legion, North Lincolnshire Council has been requested to provide additional assistance with the planning and management of future Remembrance Parades. The Armed Forces Covenant lead will be working with the RBL and Local Partners to ensure that future parades are organised and managed well.

- **Armed Forces Day 2020**

North Lincolnshire Armed Forces Day 2020, will take place on June 20th 2020. The committee has already met and agreed the date and will have further meetings from September onwards to begin the planning process.

- **VE Day Celebrations 2020**

The Government has decided to designate the 75th Anniversary of VE Day as a Bank Holiday on Friday 8th May 2020. It is hoped that a commemoration and celebration event will take place. The Armed Forces Day Events Team will be assisting with the planning of this event.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 Cabinet are asked to support the continued work and continue to raise the profile of the Armed Forces Covenant through the planned work in 2019/20

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

- 5.1 The Council received a share of the Regional MOD Grant which was a total of £35,000 in 2019 for North Lincolnshire, to Implement Covenant Activities. All additional Covenant activities are undertaken from within existing budgets

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

- 6.1 Individual elements of work are subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment as required. There are no IIA implications relating to this report.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

- 7.1 None

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet notes the progress, which has been made in implementing the Armed Forces Covenant and continues to support the work to be undertaken in 2019/20
- 8.2 It is further recommended that the Cabinet raises the profile of the Covenant work and promotes the Armed Forces Covenant at all relevant opportunities.

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Church Square House

SCUNTHORPE

North Lincolnshire

DN15 6LN

Author: Stuart Minto – Principal Officer Safer Neighbourhoods/Rob Murray - Head of Service Safeguarding Organisation

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: None