

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

ARMED FORCES COVENANT NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To report on progress of the North Lincolnshire Armed Forces Covenant in respect of the Government's Armed Forces Covenant Legislation 2022

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Armed Forces Covenant was introduced nationally in 2011 and is an agreement between the Armed Forces community, the nation and the Government. Forthcoming legislation will be laid before Parliament by September 2022 to place a duty on Local Authorities, and other public bodies, to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant in the areas of Health, Housing and Education.
- 2.2 The Covenant's twin underlying principles are that members of the Armed Forces community should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial service; and that special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given the most, such as the injured and bereaved.
- 2.3 The North Lincolnshire Council Armed Forces Covenant currently has a dual approach, strategy and partnerships and community delivery. Within strategy and partnerships there is infrastructure that upholds the Covenant principles through the North Lincolnshire Armed Forces Partnership (NLAFP) and internal council processes such as staff training, the Armed Forces staff network and participation in the wider agendas of Health, Housing and Education. This work enables the council to be a place leader for the Covenant, supporting other public organisations to provide a local, consistent approach.
- 2.4 Work has been undertaken on legislation readiness, working with partners on the legislation, progress against national standards and local delivery. The North Lincolnshire Armed Forces 'Big Conversation' consultation took place in January 2022. In the absence of a national assurance framework a local standards assessment has been developed, using statutory guidance and

consultation results to measure the local response and detect areas of improvement. The assessment is a standing agenda item at every partnership meeting to continually provide assurance and challenge. It has been noted as an example of good practice by the Ministry of Defence whereby the Local Authority were asked to present at the national Armed Forces Covenant conference in May 2022.

- 2.5 Delivery of the legislation standards will be met by our community offer providing 1:1 support to serving personnel, veterans and their families as well as managing the development of the Armed Forces Hub in Scunthorpe Town Centre and wider public events such as Armed Forces Day and Remembrance.
- 2.6 The community offer is integral to the Armed Forces Covenant agenda as it not only provides a single point of contact for the Armed Forces community at the early intervention stage, but also raises awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant agenda through our lead on Armed Forces events.
- 2.7 The North Lincolnshire Armed Forces Hub will be open to the public in Autumn 2022. Partnerships are in place to provide a one-stop shop of services and activities at point of need.
- 2.8 Both Flag Raising and Armed Forces Day 2022 were hugely successful events, with great support from our local Serving and Veteran population as well as Cadet Forces and their families. The largest ever turnout was recorded for Armed Forces Day 2022 (5500) and has forged even stronger links with our local military population going forward.
- 2.9 The current framework and ongoing staffing commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant means that North Lincolnshire Council is well placed to meet the statutory duty in 2022 through the arrangements in place.
- 2.10 North Lincolnshire Council wishes to show support to the Armed Forces Community through the following actions:
 - The Promotion and further development of the Armed Forces Covenant in North Lincolnshire.
 - The development and delivery of the “Armed Forces Hub”.
 - The continued delivery of and support for key military events including Armed Forces Day and Remembrance Sunday.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 To note the progress of the Armed Forces Covenant delivery and readiness for the new duty.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 The option outlined publicly highlights the Councils response and delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant through:

- Showing support for the Armed Forces Community.
- Promotion, coordination, and support to practical actions in the delivery of the Covenant and the Duty.

4.2 Implementation of the legislative requirements of the Armed Forces Covenant is in line with the Council values and ambitions as set out in the Council Plan.

5. FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (e.g. LEGAL, HR, PROPERTY, IT, COMMUNICATIONS etc.)

5.1 There are no financial or resource implications relating to this report.

6. OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)

6.1 The delivery of the Armed Forces covenant shows support to the Armed Forces Community and is in line with our ongoing commitment to the ambition and priorities articulated in the Council Plan.

6.2 The provision of support can be provided from within existing resources and there are no specific risks or capacity issues identified.

7. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

7.1 A Stage one Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been undertaken and there are no material potential negative impacts identified in relation to the proposal.

8. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

8.1 A full report on the outcome of the North Lincolnshire Armed Forces 'Big Conversation' has been considered as part of the agreed actions.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet notes the progress of the Armed Forces Covenant in North Lincolnshire through:

- Showing support for the Armed Forces Community
- Promotion, coordination, and support to practical actions in the delivery of the Covenant and the Duty.

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: None