

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****LOCAL COMMITTEE (WAVERLEY)****DATE: 16 SEPTEMBER 2016**

**LEAD OFFICER: PETER BRUINVELS**  
**CIVILIAN MILITARY LIAISON ADVISER (SCC)**  
**LOUISE NORIE, CORPORATE POLICY MANAGER (WBC)**

**SUBJECT: ARMED FORCES COVENANT****DIVISION: ALL DIVISIONS IN WAVERLEY****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

Surrey County Council (SCC) signed the Armed Forces Community Covenant with the military on 13 March 2012, with Waverley Borough Council (WBC) signing on 31 October 2012. Following the signings, a countywide Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board (SCMPB) was established to implement actions under the Covenant across Surrey.

This report provides an update of activities undertaken.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**The Local Committee (Waverley) is asked to:**

Note the content of this report.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

This report is for information only.

**1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:**

1.1 SCC signed a Community Covenant with the military on 13 March 2012, and following this set up the SCMPB. WBC and local partners signed its Community Covenant on 31 October 2012.

1.2 The Armed Forces Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local armed forces community (serving personnel and their families, reservists, cadets and veterans). The aim of the Covenant is to ensure that no member of the armed forces community should face disadvantage in the provision of public services compared to any other citizen. However, in some circumstances special treatment may be appropriate, especially for those injured or bereaved as a result of their service.

1.3 The SCMPB has a high-level remit to ensure that the military community are given appropriate recognition and status within the county, and to maintain good relationships with the Ministry of Defence (MoD), and the military

command structure within the county so that potential problems and frictions can be averted in good time and at the right level

1.4 Before his retirement Councillor Richard Gates was one of three Borough Council representatives on the SCMPB and helped develop a job description for Armed Forces Champions in Surrey (annex 1), which has been promoted nationally as best practice. In May 2015 Councillor Maurice Byham was appointed as Armed Forces Champion for Waverley Borough Council and has represented the authority at the Surrey wide meetings of Armed Forces Champions as well as the Surrey wide Covenant Conference and the National Conference held in London in 2015.

**2. ANALYSIS:**

2.1 The Military in Surrey is fully engaged with the work of the Countywide Board. At a Countywide level this support is provided by 11 Infantry Brigade, and at a Waverley level it is provided by 27 Regt RLC based in Aldershot as well as 3PWRR in Farnham.

2.2 11 Infantry Brigade covers the South East area and they have appointed Task Force Commanders to be the local links. These Task Force Commanders (Commanding Officer of 27 Regt RLC covers Waverley) provide a two way local link between the Military and the local authority. The key priorities for the Military in relation to engagement with the local authorities currently are youth engagement, community engagement and employer engagement.

**Key Waverley Achievements:**

2.3 Waverley Borough Council has undertaken a number of actions/initiatives in support of the Covenant. Some of these are highlighted below.

Service Area	Details
Council Tax and Housing Benefits	Waverley disregards all war pensions and armed forces pensions for ex-service personnel in the calculation of council tax and housing benefits which is over and above the Government requirement. Applications for Discretionary Housing Payment from ex-service personnel are also treated favourably where circumstances allow.
Housing Allocation Policy	Amendments were made to the Housing Allocations Scheme to include, as one of the priority groups, former members of the Armed Forces who have left the forces through no fault of their own in the last 5 years with an urgent need for housing. An exception was also made under the local connection criteria for those serving in the Armed Forces or who have served in the Armed Forces within 5 years of the date of their application. Exceptions may also be made for bereaved spouses/partners of Armed Forces personnel who are required to leave accommodation provided by the Armed Forces. Eligible MOD personnel are also given high priority in shared ownership applications.

Disabled Adaptations to Council property.	Waverley will undertake necessary disabled adaptations to a Council property for any disabled armed forces applicant whose service to the Country has resulted in disability.
Leisure	Members of the Armed Forces are eligible for an Access to Leisure card which gives discounts on many leisure centre activities throughout the Borough.

- Waverley granted the honorary Freedom of Entry to the Borough to the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2011. The grant was made in recognition of the long and close association between the Regiment and the Borough and expressed the Council's gratitude for the bravery and dedication of the Regiment in recent conflicts, including Iraq and Afghanistan. A Freedom of Borough parade took place in Farnham on June 15<sup>th</sup> 2011.
- Remembrance Day services are held in all the main towns and villages in Waverley and these services are supported by members of the cadet corps.
- Two large grants from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund were awarded to projects in Waverley in February 2015:
  - a. Farnham Maltings was awarded £23,900 Covenant Grant funding to commemorate the centenary of the first ever two minutes silence held in Farnham on 10 May 1916. The funding was used to commission and perform a piece of music at the event held on 1 May 2016, as well as hosting the May Day fair on Gostrey Meadow. The event was hugely successful.



- b. Surrey County Archaeology Service was awarded £29,710 to examine Witley Military Camp which was used in both the First and Second World War. The project involved a survey, excavation, research and exhibition and was carried out by groups of volunteers and veterans working together with professional archaeologists. Four weeks of excavations took place, four finds processing sessions at Combat Stress were held, and 6 days of survey work were carried out. In total 106 people volunteered on the project totalling 1,677 hours volunteered.



Volunteers working on the WW2 pathway and pipeline.



A small selection of finds from the excavations. We had material dating from both WW1 and 2. The artefacts were carefully cleaned by Combat Stress.





The Canadian Defence Rugby Team visit the site on a day off from training. They were given a tour of the site by SCAU Community Archaeologist and shown finds from the dig.

### **Key Surrey Wide Achievements:**

2.4 Annex 2 sets out the initiatives and successes that the Armed Forces Covenant at the countywide level has achieved which complements the work carried out in Waverley.

2.5 A recent major success for Surrey County Council is the award of the national Gold Employer Recognition Scheme by the MoD for advocating support to Defence and the Armed Forces Community. Annex 3 sets out the national press release as well as the letter from the Minister to the Chief Executive of Surrey County Council informing them of the award.

### **Next Steps:**

- To continue to support the SCMPB and the Community Integration Task Group and the Recognise and Remember Task Group.
- To hold the third Armed Forces Covenant Conference at RLC Deepcut on 15 November 2016.
- To build on Cross Border Regional work with Kent, Hampshire, East and West Sussex and Brighton and Hove sharing best practice and developing areas of specialism.
- To continue to support the link between Armed Forces Champions and Task Force Commanders.
- To promote training for frontline staff around the Covenant and issues facing the Armed Forces Community.
- To encourage companies to sign up to the Armed Forces Covenant across Surrey.
- Officers working on the University Technical College in Guildford will continue to liaise with the Military to ensure appropriate links are made at an early stage. This includes consideration of a Combined Cadet Force at the college.
- Officers will continue to maximise MoD funds brought into Surrey through successful Armed Forces Covenant Grant bids.

**3. OPTIONS:**

3.1 This report is for information

**4. CONSULTATIONS:**

4.1 There have been no consultations undertaken.

**5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:**

5.1 There are no financial implications as this report is for information.

**6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:**

6.1 The aim of the Armed Forces Covenant is to ensure that the armed forces community are not disadvantaged by their service.

**7. LOCALISM:**

7.1 11 Infantry Brigade have implemented the concept of Task Force Commanders, where a Commanding Officer of a Surrey Regiment is linked with a particular borough council area to work closely together on issues of mutual concern. Waverley Borough Council is linked to 27 Regt RLC and also has excellent links locally with 3PWRR in Farnham.

7.2 The Headquarters of Surrey Army Cadet Force is based in Farncombe.

7.3 ABF The Soldiers' Charity Farnham Hub is based at 3PWRR Reserve Centre in Farnham.

**8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications arising from this report
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	No significant implications arising from this report
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report
Human Resource/Training and Development	No significant implications arising from this report

**9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

9.1 Members of the Committee are asked to note the contents of this report.

**10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

10.1 Members are asked to act as ambassadors locally to help promote links to the armed forces community, including local bases, and to promote the Armed Forces Covenant with local businesses.

10.2 Officers supporting the Surrey Board will continue to further promote the work of the Covenant within Waverley.

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**Contact Officer:**

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**Consulted:**

Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board

**Annexes:**

Annex 1 – Armed Forces Champion Job Profile  
Annex 2 - Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board - Successes 2015/16  
Annex 3 – SCC Gold Employer Recognition Award

**Sources/background papers:**

None

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