



WOKING JOINT COMMITTEE

DATE: 7 MARCH 2018
LEAD OFFICER: CLLR JOHN KINGSBURY, ARMED FORCES CHAMPION (WBC), ZAFAR IQBAL, SENIOR POLICY OFFICER (WBC), PETER BRUINVELS, CIVILIAN MILITARY LIAISON ADVISOR (SCC)
SUBJECT: ARMED FORCES COVENANT UPDATE
AREA: WOKING

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

Surrey County Council signed the Armed Forces Community Covenant with the military on 13 March 2012, with Woking Borough Council signing on 1 November 2012. Following the signings, a countywide Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board was established to implement actions under the Covenant across Surrey. At the same time Woking established a Military Covenant Advisory Panel to coordinate work across the Borough.

This report provides an update of activities undertaken since the last update was given to the committee in March 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Woking Joint Committee is asked to:

- i) note the contents of this report

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

This report is for information only.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 Surrey County Council signed a Community Covenant with the military on 13 March 2012, and following this set up the Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board (SCMPB). Woking Borough Council signed the Covenant on 1 November 2012 and established the Military Covenant Advisory Panel at the same time. Cllr Kingsbury continues to be Woking Borough Council's Armed Forces Champion and the Surrey Leaders representative on the countywide Surrey Civilian Military

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Partnership Board. Mr Peter Martin, Chairman of Surrey County Council took over chairmanship of the Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board in May 2017.

- 1.2 Annex 1 sets out the key successes that have been achieved in Surrey under the Armed Forces Covenant over the last year. Set out below is an update on Woking as well as further information on countywide achievements which may be of particular interest to the Committee.

2. ANALYSIS:

- a) The Military in Surrey is fully engaged with the work of both the Countywide Board and Woking Panel. At a Countywide level this support is provided by 11 Infantry Brigade, and at a Woking level it is provided through close working relationships with officers at ATC (Pirbright) and 27 Regiment RLC based in Aldershot, both of which are represented on the Panel.

Key Woking Achievements:

- b) Shared Outcomes - Woking Borough Council worked with 11 Infantry Brigade and Institute of Statecraft and via a Shared Outcomes programme helped to engage with three local schools, Winston Churchill, Woking High and Bishop David Brown School to run a Challenge Week. This was held at Longmoor Training Camp and twelve 14-16 year olds took part during autumn half term 2017. The pilot programme is likely to be rolled out to schools Surrey wide and if possible to the Muslim community. It is also envisioned to shorten the programme to weekend for further effective engagement.
- c) Armed Forces Muslim Association (AFMA) – Woking Borough Council has been a key member of AFMA which has been leading on Armed Forces engagement with BAME (Black Asian and Minority Ethnic) communities – especially the Muslim communities. Engagement with BAME communities is one of the key priorities of the Forces strategy.
- d) Sandhurst Leadership Challenge - Three staff from Woking attended the Sandhurst Leadership Challenge held in September. The staff were from the Independent Living Services, Green Infrastructure and work experience Graduate trainee and undertook to support Covenant work. One of the participants also showed interest to possibly joining the Reserves in the future.
- e) Freedom March – Following the granting of the Freedom of the Borough to ATC (Pirbright) in February 2017, they exercised their right to March in Woking Town Centre on 23 April 2017 (St. Georges Day) which was a spectacular event and was very well supported by members of the public.
- f) Peace Garden – a selection of engagement events were held at the Peace Garden during the year including:
- a. Woking BC, 11 Infantry Brigade, 27 Regiment RLC, Woking High School and Horsell Common Preservation Society held an inaugural commemoration service at the Muslim Burial Ground Peace Garden on 16th July 2016 attended by over 250 people. The event was also attended by Sophena Chisembele the daughter of the last soldier buried at the Muslim Burial Ground.

- b. Woking High School and the history department of Holloway College worked with Forces Welfare TV to produce a short video on the Peace Garden in April 2017.
 - c. Woking Borough Council hosted delegates from the RAF as part of their engagement programme at the Peace Garden and Shahjahan Mosque in May 2017.
 - d. In April 2017, the University of Buckingham produced a short video on the Peace Garden to be used as part of their MA programme for Muslim Chaplaincy students.
- g) Woking Means Business – This annual event was held at HG Well Suite on 18 October. Defence Relationship Management (DRM) was represented at the event and promoted the benefits of employing ex-service personnel and Reservists as well as the Employer Recognition Scheme.
 - h) Brookwood Last Post Association – Woking BC's military civilian panel members supported the reorganisation of the Association and continue to promote the monthly service to a wider audience. Cllr Kevin Davis has now become Chairman of the Association and two panel members also have key roles - Tony Branagan as the Standard Bearer and Cllr Kingsbury as the Borough Council's Armed Forces Champion.
 - i) South East Regional Employer Engagement Group, (SE REEG) – Woking BC is a member of this Group which provides advice to the military chain of command on engagement with employers in order to ensure that the interests of both Service personnel and their employers enjoy a mutually beneficial relationship that sustains the desired level of operational capability required by the Ministry of Defence.
 - j) Housing Allocation - Woking BC monitors its housing allocation on a quarterly basis for applicants with links to the Armed Forces.
 - k) Recruitment - All recruitment application forms are monitored at regular intervals and Woking has pledged at least an interview to anyone with links to the Armed Forces including spouses, subject to them meeting the minimum requirements for the post.
 - l) Armed Forces Week – Woking fully participated in Armed Forces Week by raising the Flag and holding a successful parade in the Town Centre on Armed Forces Day which was attended by over a 1000 people.
 - m) Fundraising - Woking Poppy appeal last year raised in excess of £20k. This was supported by the borough council's Armed Forces Champion Councillor John Kingsbury.

Key Surrey-wide Achievements:

- n) Covenant Funding - Surrey has had great success with securing Ministry of Defence funding through the Armed Forces Covenant Fund. Since 2012, an additional £938,621 has been brought into the county through the Covenant Fund. A range of projects have benefitted, including a play park in Deepcut, a

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new room to support service children at Pirbright School and parenting support at Brookwood and Pirbright Children's Centre.

- o) Cross Border Working - Surrey County Council has led a successful cross border partnership with Hampshire, Kent, East and West Sussex County Councils, Brighton and Hove and Medway Councils, the Sussex, Kent and Medway CCGs, Royal British Legion and SSAFA looking at sharing best practice and promoting joint opportunities. This partnership has been successful in applying for a £321,300 Covenant Fund grant to help us to continue to support members of the armed forces, their families and ex-servicemen and women by providing training opportunities for staff and partners. The project, known as Forces Connect South East, has six key elements:
- o To strengthen the role of Elected Councillor Armed Forces Champions
 - o To increase the number of Armed Forces Service Champions within public authorities
 - o To develop and deliver bespoke Covenant training to customer-facing staff.
 - o To promote the Covenant and educate staff within public authorities.
 - o To support newly-recruited Service Leavers and Reservists to succeed in employment
 - o To develop an electronic platform to share information

The project, which started in summer 2017, is going from strength to strength. Following the appointment of a Programme Officer, a training package has been agreed, delivery partners appointed and an [e-learning module](#) launched. Face to face training will begin on 28 March 2018.

- p) On the back of the successful Forces Connect South East bid, the South East Partnership, which is chaired by the Chairman of Surrey County Council, has put in a further two cross border bids to the Covenant Fund – the outcome of these bids will be known in March 2018:
- a. A bid for £161,000 to support the improved outcomes of young people from Service families by providing resources and training to build resilience and wellbeing.
 - b. A bid for £150,000 to carry out a needs assessment for veteran drop-in centres across the region, develop a best practice guide for drop ins and roll out best practice and promote locally tailored services that give consistent messages locally.
- q) National Exemplar - Surrey is seen as a national exemplar in the way that we are supporting the armed forces community. We have two case studies published in the 2017 National Armed Forces Covenant Report. The first sets out the impact of funding provided for classrooms and outdoor learning for Blackdown Pre-School at Princess Royal Barracks on the Deepcut Station which provides a much needed service to the local Service families and acts as a hub for the local community. The second sets out some of the work that Surrey County Council has carried out to support Reservists as an Employer Recognition Gold Award holder. The Head of the Covenant Team at the MoD presented at the successful Surrey Armed Forces Covenant Conference on 1 February and praised Surrey for leading the way.

3. OPTIONS:

3.1 This report is for information.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

4.1 Annex 1 was presented to the Surrey Covenant Conference on 1 February 2018 at RLC Deepcut and comments and additions were invited.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 There are no financial implications of the forward programme.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT:

6.1 There are no significant risk management implications arising from this report.

7. LOCALISM:

7.1 11 Infantry Brigade have implemented the concept of Task Force Commanders, where a Commanding Officer of a Surrey Regiment are linked with a particular borough or district council area to work closely together on issues of mutual concern. Woking has been linked with 27 Regiment RLC based in Aldershot. The Brigade Commander has also appointed Peter Bruinvels (SCC) as his and the Brigade's Armed Forces Champion to link in locally.

8. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

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

9. 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

10. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

10.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

11. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

11.1 Officers supporting the Surrey Board and the Woking Panel will continue to further promote the work of the Armed Forces Covenant in Woking.

11.2 Woking BCs Panel's key aims for the coming year include:

- a) Promote the Covenant Fund in the community
- b) Carry out a Staff Survey on their links with the Forces community
- c) Participate in and promote Front of House staff training via Forces Connect
- d) Widely promote E-Learning training programme for WBC staff to raise awareness of Covenant work
- e) End of First World War commemorations which include Party in the Park, Peace Garden Service etc. As part of these commemorations Woking BC has acquired 100 Silent Soldiers which will be displayed around the borough as we approach the centenary of the end of the First World War.

11.3 Members are asked to support communications to encourage participation in the e-learning, encourage officers to sign up to the Service Champions training, to act as ambassadors locally and spread the word and promote positive messages.

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Consulted:

Woking Military Advisory Panel

Borough Portfolio Holder

Councillor John Kingsbury

County Council Cabinet Member

Mrs Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member

Annexes:

SCMPB – Armed Forces Covenant Successes 2017/18

Sources/background papers:

None
