

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****LOCAL COMMITTEE (SURREY HEATH)****DATE: 4 OCTOBER 2018****SURREY**

**LEAD OFFICER:** **CLLR COLIN DOUGAN, ARMED FORCES CHAMPION (SHBC), JAYNE BOITOULT, COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP OFFICER (SHBC), CANON PETER BRUINVELS, CIVILIAN-MILITARY LIAISON ADVISOR (SCC)**

**SUBJECT: ARMED FORCES COVENANT UPDATE**

**DIVISION: ALL**

<b><u>SUMMARY OF ISSUE:</u></b>
<p>The Surrey Heath Armed Forces Community Covenant was signed in January 2012 (the first in Surrey) with the aim of promoting integration between the civilian and military communities in the Borough, with Surrey County Council signing their Community Covenant with the military on 13 March 2012. Following the signings a countywide Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board was established to implement actions under the Covenant across Surrey, with a Surrey Heath Community Covenant Working Group established to coordinate work across the Borough.</p> <p>This report provides an update of recent activities taken under the Covenant.</p>
<b><u>RECOMMENDATIONS:</u></b>
<p>The Local Committee (Surrey Heath) is asked to note the report.</p>
<b><u>REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:</u></b>
<p>This report is for information only.</p>

<b><u>1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:</u></b>
<p>1.1 Surrey Heath Borough Council was the first Surrey authority to sign the Armed Forces Community Covenant in January 2012. The Surrey Heath Community Covenant Working Group was established with the aim of promoting integration between civilian and military communities in the Borough. Much has been achieved to date and this report sets out success over the past year. Annex 1 contains a full summary of achievements dating back to 2012.</p> <p>1.2 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). Mr Peter Martin, Chairman of Surrey County is the current Chairman of Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board. The Chief Executive of Surrey Heath Borough Council was nominated by the Surrey Chief Executives Group to be their representative on the Board.</p> <p>1.3 The Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report 2017-18 (Annex 2) sets out the key successes that have been achieved in Surrey under the Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board.</p>

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1.4 Set out below is an update on key achievements which may be of particular interest to the Committee.

## **2. ANALYSIS:**

- 2.1 The military in Surrey is fully engaged with the work of both the countywide Board and the Surrey Heath Working Group. At a countywide level this support is provided by 11 Infantry Brigade, and at a Surrey Heath level it is provided through close working relationships with officers at RLC Deepcut, the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and the Cadet Training Centre in Frimley Park, all of which are represented on the Working Group. Surrey Heath Borough also has a link with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Welsh Guards, who are based at Alexander Barracks, Pirbright.
- 2.2 In order to enable best practice to be shared and to facilitate networking across the county, the County Council and 11 Infantry Brigade have hosted a number of events during the year for Councillor Armed Forces Champions and Covenant Leads across the County. In addition, the Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board hosted its annual conference on 1 February 2018 at RLC Deepcut, which considered a number of local and national priorities including Women 100 and the centenary of the First World War. Surrey Heath representatives always play an active part in these events.
- 2.3 **Key Surrey Heath Achievements during 2017/18:**
- a) Employer Recognition Bronze Award – Surrey Heath Borough Council adopted a Reservist's Policy back in February 2016 as a pledge of support to all of its employees who are, or will become Reservists in the Armed Forces. Building on this, in April 2018 the Borough Council applied for and achieved Bronze status in the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme. This award recognises that the council has signed the Armed Forces Covenant and is armed forces-friendly and open to employing reservists, armed forces veterans, cadet instructors and military spouses/partners. The Council is proud of this award and is now promoting this scheme to businesses throughout the Borough.
  - b) Remembrance Events – Surrey Heath fully supported and promoted Remembrance Sunday events in Camberley as well as in the villages during 2017. Poppies were also proudly displayed on lamp posts across the borough from October to November 2017.
  - c) Heroes Welcome – Where displayed, the Heroes Welcome logo shows support for British Armed Forces Personnel and indicates that they will receive a warm welcome, service upgrade, special acknowledgement or even a little discount as appropriate. This scheme was rolled out to Surrey Heath town centres in March 2017.
  - d) Armed Forces Week – Surrey Heath fully participated in Armed Forces Week by raising the Armed Forces Day flag at the Civic Offices. The Mayor of Surrey Heath had a very successful visit to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst on Armed Forces Day.
  - e) Young People – Work has been ongoing through the Covenant Working Group to promote the Deepcut Youth Club to help integrate young people living in Deepcut from the various communities. The Working Group has also facilitated a £30,000 grant to enable a new play area to be provided in Deepcut from the Council's Sand and Gravel Fund.

- f) Housing Information on the Council Website – There is full information on the Council website for the Armed Forces community wishing to live in the borough.
- g) Veteran Support – [The Surrey Heath Veterans & Families – Listening Project](#) continues to support local veterans. The group, which was founded four years ago, meets monthly and helps ex-servicemen and women with any problem, big or small.

#### **Key Surrey-wide Achievements:**

- h) Covenant Funding - Surrey has had great success with securing Ministry of Defence funding through the Armed Forces Covenant Fund. Since 2012, an additional £1.1 million has been brought into the county through the Covenant Fund. A range of projects have benefitted, including a play park in Deepcut, equipment for Blackdown Pre-School and support for Armed Forces carers.
- i) 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 City and Medway Councils, the Sussex, Kent and Medway CCGs, The 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 MoD Covenant Fund grant to help continue to support members of the armed forces, their families and ex-servicemen and women by providing training opportunities for staff and partners and to then roll it out nationally. The project, known as [Forces Connect South East](#), has six key elements:
- To strengthen the role of Elected Councillor Armed Forces Champions
  - To increase the number of Armed Forces Service Champions within public authorities
  - To develop and deliver bespoke Covenant training to frontline customer-facing staff.
  - To promote the Covenant and educate staff within public authorities.
  - To support newly-recruited Service Leavers and Reservists to succeed in employment
  - To develop an electronic platform ('App') to share information

The project, which started in summer 2017, is going from strength to strength. An [e-learning module](#) for frontline staff has been launched, along with courses aimed at Armed Forces Champions, Service Champions and Frontline Staff. Uptake across the county is very positive. In addition, a number of [referral pathways](#) (Annex 3) covering housing, mental health, physical health, alcohol & substance misuse, carers and families, social care, employment and criminal justice are in the process of being developed. These will then be digitally converted into a mobile app.

- j) 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 been successful in a further bid for £148,000 to the Covenant Fund to carry out a needs assessment for veteran drop-in centres and hubs 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.
- k) National Exemplar - Surrey is seen as a national exemplar in the way that the armed forces community are supported. Two Surrey case studies have been published in the 2017 National Armed Forces Covenant Report. The first sets

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 out the positive 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 2 was presented to the Surrey Covenant Conference on 1 February 2018 at RLC Deepcut and comments and additions were invited. The document was agreed by the Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board in March 2018.

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

5.1 There are no financial implications as the 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 are linked with a particular borough or district council area to work closely together on issues of mutual concern. Surrey Heath has been linked with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Welsh Guards, who recognise the close existing relationship the RLC Deepcut and RMA Sandhurst. The Brigade Commander has also appointed Peter Bruinvels (SCC) as his and the Brigade's Armed Forces Champion to link in locally.

**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

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

**10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

10.1 Officers supporting the Surrey Board and the Surrey Heath Working Group will continue to further promote the work of the Armed Forces Covenant in Surrey Heath.

10.2 Surrey Heath's key aims for the coming year include:

- a) Support the centenary commemoration events leading up to the Remembrance Sunday events in Camberley and the villages, on 11 November 2018, with the introduction of Silent Soldiers outside the entrance to the Royal Military Academy, and others to be installed either side of the church entrance at St Michaels Church and then moved to be located inside the church next to the St Georges Stones. The poppies on the lamp posts will also be displayed through October and November.
- b) Host the annual Poppy Day launch.
- c) Support the progress on the new play area at Deepcut.
- d) Promote Forces Connect South East training to services.
- e) Promote the Ministry of Defence's Covenant Fund widely in the community
- f) Keep advised of the move from Princess Royal Barracks to Worthy Down, and provide local support as appropriate.

10.3 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.

**Contact Officer:**

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**Consulted:**

This report is for information

**Annexes:**

Annex 1 – Surrey Heath Armed Forces Covenant – Successes to Date

Annex 2 – SCMPB Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report 2017/18

Annex 3 – Armed Forces Referral Pathways

**Sources/background papers:**

None

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