

**SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL AND  
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**



**SPELTHORNE JOINT COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 30 SEPTEMBER 2019**

**LEAD OFFICER: CLLR ROBIN SIDER - ARMED FORCES CHAMPION (SBC),  
MICHAEL GRAHAM - HEAD OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE  
(SBC) AND CANON PETER BRUINVELS – SURREY CIVILIAN  
MILITARY LIAISON ADVISOR (SCC)**

**SUBJECT: ARMED FORCES COVENANT UPDATE**

**AREA(S) AFFECTED: ALL**

**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

Surrey County Council signed the Armed Forces Community Covenant with the military in March 2012 and established a countywide Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board to implement actions under the Covenant across Surrey. Spelthorne Borough Council signed the Covenant in April 2014.

This report provides an update of activities locally.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**The Spelthorne Joint Committee is asked to note:**

- (i) And comment on the contents of this report

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

This report is for information only.

**1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:**

- 1.1 The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the nation ensuring that those who serve or who have served, and their families, are treated fairly. Following the signing of the Covenant back in 2012, Surrey County Council set up the Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board (SCMPB), which is currently chaired by Peter Martin, who is the Armed Forces Champion for Surrey County Council. At a local level, Spelthorne Borough Council signed the Covenant on 24 April 2014. Cllr Robin Sider BEM is the Armed Forces Champion for Spelthorne Borough Council and is supported in this role by the Head of Corporate Governance, Michael Graham.

[www.surreycc.gov.uk/spelthorne](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/spelthorne)

## **2. ANALYSIS:**

2.1. The Military in Surrey is fully engaged with the work of the countywide SCMPB and in supporting work led locally by Spelthorne Borough Council. At a countywide level this support is provided by 11 Infantry Brigade, and at a Spelthorne level it is provided through working relationships with 135 Geo Reserve Centre based in Ewell and a new relationship with the Irish Guards, who are currently based in Hounslow but will be moving to Surrey in 2020.

### **Key Spelthorne Achievements**

2.1. Armed Forces Week - Along with authorities across the country, Spelthorne Borough Council showed its appreciation to the contribution made by all those who serve or have served in Her Majesty's Armed Forces by holding a Flag Raising Ceremony on Monday 24 June 2019. During the whole of Armed Forces Week, there was a display on Armed Forces in the Elmsleigh Centre.

2.2. Spelthorne Remembers 100 - The Council commemorated Armistice 100 –100 years since the Armistice was signed in a spectacular way.

2.2.1. Spelthorne Borough Council, set up 'Spelthorne Remembers' which involved 500 school children attending a special event at the council offices. The aim was to heighten their awareness of the sacrifices made by so many Spelthorne residents in the years gone by. Wreaths were laid by the children, who all received a silhouette of a 'Tommy' for their school, 135 Geo Royal Engineers were in attendance representing the Military with the local Padre leading a special Service of Remembrance. More than 1,000 people attended for what was a very memorable occasion.

2.2.2. Working with Spelthorne Museum, a leaflet was produced highlighting the locations of First World War memorial across the borough. An exhibition was also held showing how the First World War affected various aspects in Spelthorne, such as the way local factories were turned over to war work, the absence of men at the front meaning many new jobs were filled by women for the first time, and the way Kempton Park racecourse became a gigantic depot for army vehicles.

2.2.3. Spelthorne Council planted 100 trees in Thameside, Laleham Park, to commemorate the centenary of the end of the First World War. The wood forms part of a programme of initiatives and events aimed to give thanks for peace and to remember the sacrifice of the 731 soldiers lost from the local area and named on the war memorials in the Borough. An information board setting out the significance of the 100 year wood will be placed near the site. In addition to the 100 trees, a further 631 trees will be planted around the Borough over the coming months to commemorate those who sacrificed their lives during WW1.

2.2.4. Five of the Royal British Legion's 'Silent Soldiers' were placed around the Borough as a reminder of the sacrifices made during the First World War and to support the valuable work of the Royal British Legion

- 2.3. Veteran's Support - The Council supports its local veterans, one example of this is through distributing posters on the Veterans Hearing Support service in the Council's foyer.
- 2.4. Staff training - As part of the wider Forces Connect South East project (see para 2.6) the Council have arranged training of staff within their Contact Centre so they are aware of issues that the Armed Forces community face, as well as appropriate sources of help and support.

**Key Surrey-wide Achievements:**

- 2.5. Surrey Armed Forces Covenant Conference 2019 – this year's conference was held at the Army Training Centre in Pirbright on 6 February 2019. As well as looking back at achievements over the past year, the afternoon had a specific focus on the needs of our service children which included a video of two Surrey service children explaining from their perspective what it is like being a service child in a school where the majority of their peers are not.
- 2.6. Cross Border Working – Forces Connect South East (FCSE) - Surrey County Council has led two successful cross border partnership bids 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. The first was a bid to provide training opportunities and signposting information to support our armed forces community. The second was to look at supporting veterans and ex-service personnel through local hubs and drop-in centres. These two bids brought in £469,000 of Ministry of Defence funding into the county. The success of FCSE has been highlighted nationally and a presentation on the outcomes was made at the National Armed Forces Covenant Conference held in Newcastle in April 2019 and was further highlighted at this years' LGA Conference in Bournemouth. Key achievements of the projects include:
  - 2.6.1. Over 3,000 people trained from local authorities, Police, Fire and Rescue, health and the voluntary sector on the issues facing the wider armed forces community. This includes frontline staff, managers and councillors.
  - 2.6.2. Signposting pathways for the armed forces community covering issues such as housing, mental health, education, welfare and employment have been created and made available digitally through a new 'Forces Connect' mobile app that is available for free download for both apple and android.
  - 2.6.3. A series of 12 regional workshops across the UK have been held providing the FCSE training to other local authorities whilst making editable resources available freely via the Knowledge Hub website.

**3. OPTIONS:**

- 3.1 This report is for information.

#### **4. CONSULTATIONS:**

- 4.1 Annex 1 was presented to the Surrey Covenant Conference on 6 February 2019 at ATC Pirbright and comments and additions were invited.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications of the forward programme.

#### **6. WIDER IMPLICATIONS:**

- 6.1

<b>Area assessed:</b>	<b>Direct Implications:</b>
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications
Equality and Diversity	No significant implications
Localism (including community involvement and impact)	No significant implications
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	No significant implications
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications
Public Health	No significant implications

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

#### **7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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

#### **8. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

- 8.1 Officers supporting the Surrey Board and the Covenant work locally will continue to further promote the work of the Armed Forces Covenant in Spelthorne.
- 8.2 Spelthorne Council is currently discussing the council's involvement in celebrations for next year.
- 8.3 Members are asked to help promote the presence of the Veteran Hubs in Surrey as well as the opportunity for local groups to apply for funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust for projects which help to integrate the civilian and armed forces communities.

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**Consulted:**

Covenant Lead Officer, Armed Forces Champion

**Annexes:**

SCMPB – Armed Forces Covenant Successes 2018/19

**Background papers:**

None

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