

# CABINET



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| Report subject             | <b>Armed Forces Covenant</b>   |
| Meeting date               | 12 July 2019   |
| Status                     | Public Report  |
| Executive summary          | <p>The Armed Forces Covenant commits the Council to ensuring that people who are currently serving and who have served in the Armed Forces and their Families receive respect, support and fair treatment and face no disadvantage compared with other citizens.</p> <p>By virtue of its predecessor Councils being signatories to the Covenant, BCP Council is committed to the principles of the Covenant and delivery of relevant Council and multi-agency plans to implement the Covenant. Cabinet is asked to agree to the appointment of a Member Champion for the Covenant.</p> |
| Recommendations            | <p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b></p> <p><b>Cabinet appoints a Member Champion for the Armed Forces Covenant as part of its Council-wide Commitment to the Covenant.</b></p>   |
| Reason for recommendations | <p>Signing up to the Armed Forces Covenant demonstrates the Council's commitment to treating serving members of the Armed Forces, veterans and their families with fairness and equity and to understanding and meeting their needs.</p> <p>A member champion for the Armed Forces will be Councillor representative on the Dorset Armed Forces Covenant Partnership Board and a champion for the Council's delivery of the Covenant.</p>  |

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| Portfolio Holder(s): | Councillor Vikki Slade, Leader of the Council           |
| Corporate Director   | Jan Thurgood (Corporate Director for Adult Social Care) |
| Contributors         | Graeme Smith, Policy and Performance Officer            |
| Wards                | All   |
| Classification       | For Decision  |

## Background

1. The predecessor Councils to BCP were signatories to the Armed Forces Covenant, which is attached as Appendix 1. BCP Council, therefore, takes on the commitments made by its predecessor Councils in relation to the Covenant. Partners are working together across Dorset and BCP areas to deliver a Dorset Armed Forces Community Covenant Action Plan and have secured £234,000 funding from Ministry of Defence, which is to be spent in two years up to May 2020 to support the delivery of the Action Plan which is attached as Appendix 2.
2. The multi-agency work is governed by a Dorset Armed Forces Partnership Board which is comprised of lead Councillor and officers from the two Councils; Senior officers from the 3 major bases in the area (Hamworthy, Bovington and Blandford Forum) and representatives of Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group; Dorset Healthcare Trust; Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner; Royal British Legion; SAAFA and Wessex Armed Forces Reservists and Cadets.
3. The Member Champion will be invited to represent BCP Council on the Board and to champion its actions and initiatives. The Council's Corporate Director for Adult Social Care and a Policy and Performance Officer will also participate in the Board.
4. On 11 July, the Programme Board's Annual Review event will be held at the Tank Museum, Bovington. This will be an opportunity for the BCP Council to mark formally its commitment to the Covenant.
5. Work has been undertaken to assess the make-up and needs of the Armed Forces Community in the BCP area. This has estimated that;
  - There are 890 serving personnel in BCP
  - That these personnel are accompanied by 586 partners and 317 children.
  - There are 15,500 veterans in the BCP area, with 9,690 partners
  - There are 178 dwellings claiming an exemption to Council Tax as an Armed Forces Building
  - In June 2019, there were 13 families on the housing register across the BCP area with an Armed Forces designation. Since 2015 50 families with such a designation have been housed across BCP.

### **Summary of financial implications**

6. There are no immediate financial implications of committing to the Covenant as the Council meet its obligations under the Covenant through its agreed budget for 2019/20.

### **Summary of legal implications**

7. None

### **Summary of human resources implications**

8. As a signatory of the Armed Forces Covenant, the authority qualifies for the Bronze Standard level of the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme. The Council will need to consider if it wishes to commit to achieving the Silver or indeed Gold Standard level in due course. Further information relating to the criteria for the Defence Employer Recognition Standard can be found at Appendix 3. It will be essential to ensure that all relevant front-line staff receive appropriate training and development in order that there have awareness of the Covenant and can respond appropriately to members of the Armed Forces, veterans and their families.

### **Summary of environmental impact**

9. None

### **Summary of public health implications**

10. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for BCP Council will be further developed to ensure the needs of those who are covered by the Covenant are fully assessed and understood. Proactive implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant will improve wellbeing for members of the Armed Forces Community. A key feature of the local partnership provision is Dorset Healthcare Trust's specialised Armed Forces Community Health and Wellbeing Team, which represents Best Practice across the country.

### **Summary of equality implications**

11. Implementing the Armed Forces Covenant will recognise the full range of characteristics protected by the Public Sector Equality Duty.

### **Summary of risk assessment**

12. Not fulfilling the Covenant could lead to members of the Armed Forces Community in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole experiencing disadvantage.

### **Background papers**

Please see appendices

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Armed Forces Covenant

Appendix 2: Dorset Armed Forces Covenant Programme Action Plan V1.6

Appendix 3: Defence Employer Recognition Scheme