

CABINET

13 March 2013

ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT FOR WINCHESTER DISTRICT

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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RECENT REFERENCES:

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

A Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. The Coalition Government is encouraging local authorities and the 'armed forces community' to work together to establish a Community Covenant in their area.

A Community Covenant provides an opportunity to consolidate the Council's relationships with the Freedom Regiments and to further a range of other links with the Armed Forces community in Winchester District.

If the principle is acceptable, the report contains in Appendix 1 the terms of a proposed Armed Forces Community Covenant for Winchester.

RECOMMENDATIONS (TO COUNCIL):

That Winchester City Council enters into a Community Covenant with the Armed Forces community in Winchester District based upon the form set out in Appendix 1 to this report, with the Chief Executive authorised to agree any minor adjustments to the final text.

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DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Traditionally, the mutual obligations between the nation and its Armed Forces have been referred to as the “Military Covenant”. The coalition Government has sought to formalise such obligations in an “Armed Forces Covenant” and is encouraging local authorities and the ‘armed forces community’ to work together to establish a *Community Covenant* in their area.
- 1.2 A Community Covenant is defined as a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. The aims of a Community Covenant are to:
- a) Encourage local communities to support the Armed Forces community in their areas;
 - b) Nurture public understanding and awareness amongst the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces community;
 - c) Recognise and remember the sacrifices faced by the Armed Forces Community;
 - d) Encourage activities which help to integrate the Armed Forces Community into local life; and
 - e) Encourage the Armed Forces Community to help and support the wider community, whether through participation in events and joint projects, or other forms of engagement.
- 1.3 The Government has produced a template for such covenants, which is widely used, but the nature of the content is not prescribed. Indeed, it is accepted that Community Covenants may look quite different from one location to another to reflect the nature of the relationship in each area.

2 Background

- 2.1 Winchester City Council has always enjoyed a close and cordial association with the Armed Forces and the following Regiments have been awarded Freedom of Entry to the City status over the years:-

- (a) The Adjutant General's Corps (Worthy Down)
- (b) The Rifles (Museum and HQ at Peninsula Barracks)
- (c) Princess of Wales Royal Regiment (Museum at Peninsula Barracks)
- (d) The King's Royal Hussars (Museum at Peninsula Barracks)
- (e) The Army Technical Foundation College (formerly the Army Training Regiment - Sir John Moore Barracks)

- 2.2 In addition, we have the Defence College of Policing and Guarding based at Southwick Park.
- 2.3 The Community Covenant provides an ideal opportunity to continue and consolidate all these relationships, and indeed to restate the District's support for all branches of the Armed Forces.
- 2.4 Hampshire County Council has entered into a 'high level' covenant in support of its tri-service Civilian Military Partnership Board. This will be complemented by the City Council targeting its efforts at practical measures aimed at supporting service (and ex-service) people within the District in addition to contributing to ceremonial and community events.
- 2.5 The contents of the Covenant have been the subject of discussion with representatives of the Armed Forces based in the District. Their final endorsement of the text is awaited at the time of writing this report, and members will be updated on this point at the meeting.

3 Formalising the Covenant

- 3.1 The Council is under no obligation to enter into the Covenant. However, the reasons for doing so are a desire to support the Armed Forces community in the District and to further the aims set out in paragraph 1.2 above.
- 3.2 If this desire is accepted in principle, then consideration must be given to those measures identified as relevant and appropriate for Winchester District in Section 4 of the agreement (which is set out in Appendix 1 to this report).
- 3.3 The Annex to the Covenant document provides more detail in respect of the actions that are expected. At the time of submitting the report, the actions expected of the Armed Forces were suggestions that were still subject to further consideration and discussion with their representatives.
- 3.4 There will be future opportunities for co-operation between the Armed Forces and the District over time, and these will need to be explored as they arise. The Covenant itself is not the place to attempt to encompass all possible forms of co-operation, but it does set out our shared willingness to maintain that dialogue. Equally, it provides a starting point for broadening that

discussion to include other organisations across the District, widening the notion of a covenant between the Armed Forces and the whole community.

- 3.5 Similarly, the Covenant does not attempt to capture the detail of specific arrangements. That is a matter for discussion between relevant council Officers and the appropriate part of the Forces. Rather, it offers a framework within which specific initiatives can be discussed.
- 3.6 Members will note in particular the provision for periodic review of the proposed initiatives and activities. It is suggested that a small liaison group is established with representation from all signatories to the Covenant, which would meet periodically to review progress.
- 3.7 The intention is for the Covenant to be signed at the Annual Council Meeting on 15 May 2013. Provisional arrangements are being considered at the time of writing this report for an informal celebration of the Winchester District Covenant during Armed Forces Week in June 2013.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

4 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND CHANGE PLANS (RELEVANCE TO):

- 4.1 The Covenant supports the Winchester District Community Strategy outcome of Active Communities, by strengthening relations between the civilian and military communities.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 There are no resourcing implications arising directly from this report.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 6.1 None as a direct result of this report. Any risks or implications that arise as a result of communication following the adoption of the Covenant will be considered at that time.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Armed Forces Covenant - <https://www.gov.uk/the-armed-forces-covenant>

Armed Forces Community Covenant for Hampshire - <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/adult-services/welfarepathway.htm>

APPENDICES:

Draft Winchester Armed Forces Community Covenant



Community Covenant

AN ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

BETWEEN

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

AND

THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY IN WINCHESTER DISTRICT

We, the undersigned, agree to work and act together to honour the Armed Forces Community Covenant.

Signatories

Councillor Keith Wood
Leader
**Signed on behalf of Winchester City
Council**

Councillor Frank Pearson
Mayor of Winchester
**Signed on behalf of Winchester City
Council**

Brigadier A McLeod
Commandant
DCLPA Winchester Garrison
**Signed on behalf of the Army
Commander**

To be confirmed
Signed on behalf of The Royal Navy

To be confirmed
Signed on behalf of The RAF

SECTION 1: PARTICIPANTS

1.1 This Armed Forces Community Covenant is made between:

The serving and former members of the Armed Forces and their families working and residing in Winchester District; and

Winchester City Council

SECTION 2: PRINCIPLES OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

2.1 The Armed Forces Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces community. It is intended to complement the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces, at the local level.

2.2 The purpose of this Community Covenant is to encourage support for the Armed Forces community working and residing in Winchester District and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by members of this Armed Forces community, particularly those who have given the most. This includes in-Service and ex-Service personnel, their families and widow(er)s in Winchester District.

2.3 The Council welcomes the role played by the Armed Forces in the community of Winchester District and supports the ongoing operation of Worthy Down, Sir John Moore Barracks and Southwick Park.

2.4 For Winchester City Council and partner organisations, the Community Covenant presents an opportunity to bring their knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on the provision of help and advice to members of the Armed Forces Community and an opportunity to build upon existing good work such as the Welfare Pathway.

2.5 For the Armed Forces community, the Community Covenant encourages the integration of Service life into civilian life and encourages members of the Armed Forces community to help their local community.

2.6 The Council recognises the important role played by armed forces charities in ensuring that practical care, advice and support is available to serving members of the Armed Forces, veterans of all ages and their families.

SECTION 3: OBJECTIVES AND GENERAL INTENTIONS

Aims of the Community Covenant

3.1 The Armed Forces Community Covenant complements the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant which defines the enduring, general principles that should govern the relationship between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces community.

3.2 It also complements the Hampshire Armed Forces Community Covenant and aims to add weight to bids to the Hampshire Armed Forces Community Covenant Panel relating to activity within Winchester District.

3.3 It aims to encourage all parties within a community to offer support to the local Armed Forces community and make it easier for Service personnel, families and veterans to access the help and support available from the MOD, from statutory providers¹ and from the Charitable and Voluntary Sector.

3.4 The scheme is intended to be a two-way arrangement and the Armed Forces community are encouraged to do as much as they can to support their community and promote activity which integrates the Service community into civilian life.

SECTION 4: MEASURES

4.1 Winchester City Council and The Armed Forces, represented by Worthy Down, Sir John Moore Barracks and Southwick Park, will work together on things such as:

4.1.1 Celebration of civic and ceremonial events:

- Anniversary or homecoming parades.
- Support regiments in relation to their Freedom of Entry to the City.

4.1.2 Community events, activities and campaigns:

- Annual and one-off community events and celebrations.
- Business events and seminars.
- Community safety campaigns.

4.1.3 Access to appropriate housing and employment:

- Housing allocations and homelessness.
- Housing and Council Tax Benefit / Reduction.
- Disablement adaptations.
- Business start-up.

4.1.4 Leisure, recreation and retail:

- Sports facilities.
- Museums.
- Retail offers and campaigns.

4.1.5 Transport and parking

- Park and ride.
- Cycle routes.

4.1.6 Voice, influence and representation

- Strategic partnerships.
- Voluntary and community sector.
- Support for injured or disabled personnel.

4.2 Support staff who volunteer to serve as reservists in the Armed Forces.

4.3 The initiatives and activities which are intended to bring about these things are set out in more detail in the Annex to this Covenant and the parties to this agreement will from time to time review that Annex with a view to furthering the principles and intent of this Covenant.

CONTACT PERSONNEL AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

MOD DCDS (Pers&Trg) Covenant Team

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In-Service representative(s) and Service Charities

Contact Name: To be confirmed
Title:
Telephone:
Address:

Contact Name: To be confirmed
Title:
Telephone:
Address:

Winchester City Council and Partners

Contact Name: Steve Lincoln
Title: Community Planning Manager
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Address: City Offices
Colebrook Street
Winchester
Hampshire SO23 9LJ

Annex

The Council will:

1. Arrange anniversary or home coming parades and host associated receptions.
2. Support the annual Armed Forces Day.
3. Support and attend Home Front meetings, collaborating where possible on awareness raising campaigns.
4. Give additional preference to current servicemen and their families leaving the Armed Forces when applying to Hampshire Home Choice.
5. Provide a bespoke personalised service recognising the support needs of ex-military personnel, particularly through supported accommodation for single homeless people.
6. Disregard War Widows Pension, War Disablement Pension and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments in assessing Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit / Reduction claims.
7. Liaise with the Armed Forces regarding specific needs for disablement adaptations through Disabled Facilities Grants.
8. Provide curatorial and marketing support for Winchester's military museums.
9. In partnership with DC Leisure, provide 20% discount to serving personnel for use of sports facilities at River Park Leisure Centre and Meadowside Leisure Centre.
10. Represent the interests of, and include where appropriate, the Armed Forces community in Winchester District at strategic partnerships such as the Hampshire Health and Well Being Board.
11. Advocate to the voluntary and community sector, other partner agencies, contractors and service providers to encourage consideration of the needs of Armed Forces personnel.

The Armed Forces will:

1. Support community events and celebrations and encourage Armed Forces families to participate.
2. Make their facilities available at appropriate times to host business events and seminars.
3. Support the work of the Community Safety Partnership, collaborating where possible on awareness raising campaigns.
4. Encourage referral of injured armed services personnel to the Winchester Exercise Referral and River Park Buddy Schemes.
5. Provide representation at the District Disability Sports Forum.
6. Encourage and allow appropriate use of sports and other facilities for civilians at Worthy Down.

THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

An Enduring Covenant Between

The People of the United Kingdom
Her Majesty's Government

– and –

All those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of
the Crown

And their Families

The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm. Our Armed Forces fulfil that responsibility on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and, sometimes, suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty. Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. In return, the whole nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families. They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment.

Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

This obligation involves the whole of society: it includes voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and the actions of individuals in supporting the Armed Forces. Recognising those who have performed military duty unites the country and demonstrates the value of their contribution. This has no greater expression than in upholding this Covenant.