

PERTH & KINROSS COUNCIL

Strategic Policy & Resources Committee

28 November 2018

ARMED FORCES COVENANT – ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Report by Depute Chief Executive (Report No. 18/392)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide members with an Annual Progress Report in relation to the Council's commitment under the Armed Forces Covenant.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Perth & Kinross Council has a long and proud tradition of supporting the Armed Forces. The Armed Forces Covenant was brought in under the Armed Forces Act 2011 to recognise sacrifices made by the armed forces and to work with businesses, local authorities, charities and community organisations to support the forces through services, policy and projects.
- 1.2 The Covenant is a promise from the nation to those who serve or who have served, and their families, which says the Council will do all it can to ensure they are treated fairly and not disadvantaged in their day to day lives.
- 1.3 At a local level, the Covenant is a declaration of mutual support between a civilian community and its local armed forces and is a public commitment by Perth & Kinross Council to support defence personnel; provide a supportive environment for reservists and to being a strong advocate of the Armed Forces.
- 1.4 The Covenant must be signed by a senior person in the authority who can ensure that commitments are implemented and maintained. Members will recall agreeing that the Council would reaffirm its commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant and this was done by the Provost at a Ceremony in September 2017.
- 1.5 Many local authorities have an 'Armed Forces Champion'. The role of a 'champion' is often to make sure that the local authority achieves its commitments to the armed forces community and any blockages are resolved. The Council has identified Councillor Chris Ahern as its champion for Veterans and the Armed Forces and he jointly chairs a Covenant Partnership Group with the Commanding Officer, 7 Scots. The Group consists of representatives from Council service, Veterans groups and partner agencies in the statutory and third sectors.
- 1.6 Members also agreed that an annual report be submitted to this Committee on progress of the support provided to the Armed Forces. This report provides

such a progress update on actions taken by the Council since the Covenant reaffirmation in September 2017.

2 PROGRESS ACTIONS

2.1 Consultation with Council Services has identified a range of examples of the Council's commitment to supporting Veterans and their families in the delivery of Services, in carrying out our civic responsibilities and as an employer. Examples include: -

- A 'Veterans First' guide to ensure those leaving the Armed Forces and choosing to settle in Perth and Kinross know what help and support is available to them when they are making their transition from military life in terms of housing options, employment, welfare advice etc was first published in 2012. This was updated in 2018 and relaunched by the Provost and Armed Forces and Veterans Champion on 30 August 2018. The guide has been widely issued across Perth and Kinross including GP surgeries; Council offices; libraries; to all Elected Members and a range of Veterans Support groups.
- An online version of the guide was also made available on the Council website simultaneously updating the range of information available to Veterans on the website in a dedicated area
<http://www.pkc.gov.uk/adviceforveterans>
- In addition, to having a named Armed Forces and Veterans Champion, the Council nominated the Corporate Equalities Team Leader as a named Armed Forces and Veterans Council Officer to co-ordinate any responses to Veterans issues. This officer attended an Unforgotten Forces Veterans project training course in September 2018. Both the Armed Forces and Veterans Champion and the named Council officer also represented the Council at the Armed Forces and Veterans Champions Gathering in Edinburgh in October 2018.
 - Hosted a number of Civic Events and represented the Council at a number of events for the military during the year including:
 - 5.11.17 Polish War Graves, wreath laying ceremony at Wellshill Cemetery – Provost attended as a guest.
 - 13.11.17 Poppy Scotland wreath laying event –Provost in attendance, facilitated by Council but it is Poppy Scotland's event.
 - 15.11.17 Remembrance Sunday, church service at St John's Kirk; Civic and Military parades, followed by Civic Reception in Civic Hall, 2 High Street.
 - 27.04.18 – Armed Forces & Veterans Champions Gathering in Angus
 - 25.06.18 Armed Forces Day – Flag Raising event, followed by Civic Reception at Balhousie Castle.
 - 26.06.18 – Armed Forces & Veterans meeting in Scottish Parliament
 - 30.06.18 – Stirling Military Show
 - 16.09.18 3 Scots Homecoming – parade followed by Civic Reception at Perth Concert Hall. 23.06.18 – Armed Forces Day Parade in Dundee

- 01.10.18 – Armed Forces & Veterans Champions Gathering in Edinburgh
- 2 x Perth & Kinross Armed Forces Covenant Meetings were also held during the year jointly chaired by the Council's Armed Forces and Veterans Champion and the local Military representative
- On 2 November 2017 the Provost accepted the Silver Award in the Armed Forces Employer Recognition Scheme on behalf of the Council in recognition of the support the Council gives to the Armed Forces, veterans and to the Cadet Forces.
- On 5 June 2018 during Volunteering Week, Regional Employer Engagement Director and Employer Engagement Admin Officer delivered an Awareness Raising Learning Lunch in Pullar House in relation to the role of the Reservists and Cadet Forces.
- Special leave with pay of up to 15 days per annum for reservists to attend annual training camps remains in place.
- Special leave with pay of up to 15 days per annum for Cadet Force Adult Volunteers to attend local detachments and annual camps remains in place.
- The 'Armed Forces Covenant for Frontline Workers' eLearning module is now available for all frontline employees with 15 staff completing it and 107 staff having the module 'in progress' since September 2017.
- Seven staff have attended Executive Leadership events in April and October 2018. Organised by the Reserve Forces and Cadets' Association in conjunction with the military, these action packed weekend events have given our staff access to the Armed Forces' much accredited leadership development opportunities.

2.2 Work will continue with Council services and Veterans Support organisations to respond to issues relating to Veterans in the year ahead.

3 PROPOSALS

The following proposals are being made:

3.1 The Council continues to commit to its responsibilities under the Armed Forces Covenant,

4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 It is recommended that the members approve the content of this report.

Authors

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Approved

Name	Designation	Date
Jim Valentine	Depute Chief Executive	15 November 2018

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	None
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	None
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	None
Strategic Environmental Assessment	None
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	None
Legal and Governance	None
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	None
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

a) Strategic Implications

This report supports the delivery of the Strategic Objectives within the Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2023 and Corporate Plan 2013-2023.

b) Consultation

Internal

All Council Services have been consulted in preparation of this report

c) Communication

Internal and external communication will be arranged to raise awareness and actively promote the Council's commitment in the Armed Forces Covenant will be arranged to Council employees and the wider community.