

Subject:	Brighton & Hove Armed Forces Community Covenant Progress Update		
Date of Meeting:	1 June 2015		
Report of:	Assistant Chief Executive		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Richard Tuset	Tel: 285514
	Email:	Richard Tuset@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

Members Progress Report

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 Community covenants are voluntary statements of mutual support between civilian and armed forces communities. They complement, at a local level, the armed forces covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the nation, the government and the armed forces. The aim of the community covenant is to encourage local communities to support the service community in their area and promote understanding and awareness among the public of issues affecting the armed forces community.
- 1.2 Brighton & Hove Armed Forces Community Covenant was officially signed on 31st January 2013 by the Chief Executive and Mayor, Brighton & Hove City Council, the Regional Brigade Commander 2 (South East) Brigade and Royal British Legion South East County Chairman.
- 1.3 Following the recommendations agreed in the Policy & Resources Committee report of 11th October 2012, a Civil Military Partnership Board (CMPB) was established in November 2012 in order to focus on the overall aims and objectives of the community covenant and help facilitate the provision of support to the local armed forces community. This includes identifying projects, facilitating implementation, measuring success and reporting annually.
- 1.4 The CMPB meets quarterly and comprises members from the Ministry of Defence (MoD); Armed Forces organisations and charities; NHS; community and voluntary sector, and council representatives from Housing, HR and Adult Social Care.
- 1.5 This report provides a summary update on progress since the last update in January 2014.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Leaders Group note the progress being made under the Brighton & Hove Armed Forces Community Covenant; and

2.2 That the Leaders Group continue to support the ex and serving armed forces community in Brighton & Hove, including cadets and reservists, through the community covenant.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 Funded Projects:

3.1.1 The Armed Forces Community Covenant has provided an opportunity to bid for grants under the MoD's Community Covenant Grant Scheme to support local projects which aim to improve ties between the armed forces and the wider community. Under the scheme, any organisation within Brighton & Hove can bid through the CMPB for funding, providing they meet the criteria, with the council having final sign off on applications before being sent on to the MoD for agreement. Following this process, Brighton & Hove have successfully bid for funds towards the following projects:

- i) *Sussex Military Veterans Pathways to Independence £40K:*
This project was initiated by Brighton & Hove City Council, Homelessness Team and commissioned out to an organisation called Joining Forces. The aim was to map out services available for military veterans in 13 local authorities across Sussex that can offer different levels of service and support. By mapping the services offered from both organisations that provide dedicated support to military veterans such as the Royal British Legion and SAFFA, and the local community and voluntary sector, a range of information in the form of visual pathways, available in both hard copy and via the Sussex Armed Forces Network website, will shortly be available. This accessible information includes information on pathways to services including rough sleeping, housing, employment, education and training and physical health. The project completes in June 2015.
- ii) *Chattri Memorial £750:*
The Chattri Memorial Trust bid for funds to purchase a new PA system for the Chattri Memorial Service held annually in June. Project now closed.
- iii) *Sussex Armed Forces Network £18.5K:*
Sussex NHS Armed Forces Lead for Mental Health applied for funding to provide Armed Forces Champion Training, a 2 day training course aimed at front line staff to help raise awareness and increase knowledge in order to support members of the ex-armed forces community and their immediate families. Participants have included staff from police, probation, prisons, local authority and voluntary sectors. The bid also included funding for the design and implementation of an e-learning package to develop the skills of mental health staff to work with veterans and reservists, and 2 conferences - one on generic work with veterans and another on mental health with veterans. Project now closed.
- iv) *Brighton & Hove Carers Centre – Integrating the military community £6,855:*

The Carers Centre applied for funding to focus on identifying and supporting anyone caring for someone who has served in the military or anyone who is being cared for by someone who has served in the military. The project completes in July 2015.

- v) *Brighton & Hove VE Day £1,600:*
Brighton & Hove City Council applied for funding to organise a Joint 70th Anniversary of VE Day and VJ Day Service of Commemoration at the Ware Memorial, Old Steine, on Sunday 10th May 2015.
- vi) *VJ Day Commemoration £600*
The Java Far East Prisoner of War Club based in Portslade applied for funding towards the costs of their VJ Service on 16th August 2015.

3.1.2 The MoD Community Grant Scheme has now changed - moving from a locally administered scheme to a more centralised one. Funding in support of the Armed Forces has been made permanent through a £10m per annum in perpetuity fund from 2015-16. Funding priorities will be managed by a new standalone MoD grant team which should be in place by mid-June with the scheme being open to bids later in the summer. It remains to be seen whether smaller more locally based projects will be as successful under the new scheme, as they have previously.

3.2 Update on 4 areas of focus identified from the NHS Veterans Needs Assessment 2012

3.2.1 Housing/Homelessness

Access to housing and vulnerability around homelessness are key issues faced by ex service men and women.

The CMPB has been working with the council's Housing Team to ensure that under the council's current Allocation Policy this provides for priority to be given to applicants with a local connection. In accordance with the Housing Act 1996 (Additional Preference for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012 the scheme provides that an applicant who is a serving member of the armed forces and is posted in Brighton & Hove City will be deemed to have a local connection, and that the provision will also be considered for those who are serving in the armed forces and returning to Brighton & Hove as a main place of residence after leaving service,

3.2.2 Heroes Welcome Scheme

'Heroes Welcome' is a national campaign aiming to raise awareness and encourage businesses to give a warm welcome and acknowledgement to serving members of the armed forces, veterans and cadets. When displayed, the Heroes Welcome logo may indicate a discount or upgrade offer or, at the very least, a warm welcome. The CMPB continues to support the Heroes Welcome Scheme by encouraging local businesses to get involved and promoting the scheme on the council's website.

3.2.3 Awareness Raising

The council, on behalf of the CMPB, continues to organise events to raise awareness of the armed forces community in Brighton & Hove including Armed Forces Day and key events including those connected to the Centenary of WW1 (in partnership with the WW1 Centenary sub planning group).

In 2014 the following events were organised and supported:

- 70th anniversary of D-Day wreath laying service
- Flag Raising Ceremony (to mark the start of Armed Forces Week)
- Armed Forces Day with Freedom of City Parade by 1PWRR Princess of Wales Royal Regiment, Veterans and Cadets
- Marking the anniversary of WW1 Interfaith service
- Marking the anniversary of WW1 wreath laying service
- Indian Gate service
- VC Holder Laying of Memorial Paving Slab

In 2015 to date the following were organised and supported:

- Joint 70th Anniversary of VE Day and VJ Day Service of Commemoration
- 70th Anniversary VE Beacon Lighting Ceremony at Blind Veterans UK

Events for Armed Forces Day in June 2015 are also being planned.

3.2.4 Improving data collection and support to reservists through employer policies

The government plans to reduce the number of regulars in the British Army to 82,000 by 2018 and increase the role played by reservists, bringing their numbers up to 30,000. The MoD reports that the majority of service personnel in Brighton & Hove are likely to be reservists.

The council's Human Resources and Communities Equality & Third Sector teams have updated their equality monitoring systems used across all departments for service provision and staff to ensure that information on ex and serving personnel is captured and will continue to influence and support partners across the city to improve data collection and reviewing employer policies to ensure support for reservists.

The Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) (members of the CMPB) are also leading on best practice by having information on their Intranet for colleagues to find out about volunteering as reservists and providing armed forces community factsheets for staff across all Job Centre sites.

3.2.5 Sussex Armed Forces Network website

The website, (hosted and maintained by the NHS Armed Forces Network who are also members of the CMPB) is now live and provides the link for on line information on the Brighton & Hove Armed Forces Community Covenant. This includes access to eLearning modules: i) The Military Covenant; ii) Military Mental Health; iii) Military culture and iv) Accessing Military Health Records, and a directory of services and factsheets.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Civil Military Partnership Board has both statutory and community and voluntary sectors partners who disseminate information to their organisations.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Financial Implications:

The resources to support the Covenant and associated activities to date have been met from within current budgets. Additional activities will be funded as planned through 2015/16 budgets and external funding through the grant scheme.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Anne Silley
20/05/15*

Date:

5.2 Legal Implications:

There are no legal implications arising from this report. The Civil Military Partnership Board is an advisory body, reporting annually to Policy & Resources Committee and Full Council.

Lawyer Consulted:

Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 15/05/15

5.3 Equalities Implications

Actions to promote equalities issues are prioritised in the vision and criteria for the Brighton & Hove Community Covenant, NHS Needs Assessment, service redesign and new activities will be subject to Equality Impact Assessments.

5.4 Sustainability Implications:

There are no direct implications arising from this report and reducing inequality is part of One Planet Living.

5.5 Crime & Disorder Implications:

Actions to address crime and disorder issues will be considered as the Brighton & Hove Community Covenant is developed.

5.6 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

Promotion of opportunity is prioritised in the vision and criteria for the Brighton & Hove Community Covenant.

5.7 Public Health Implications:

Actions to address public health issues will be considered as the Brighton & Hove Community Covenant is developed. Key areas being prioritised include homelessness and mental health.

5.8 Corporate / Citywide Implications:

The Community Covenant supports a number of council priorities within the Corporate Plan 2015-19 including Increasing Equality, Health and Wellbeing and Citizen Focused.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 No other options have been considered as this is a voluntary covenant signed by public bodies and voluntary organisations in conjunction with the Armed Forces.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Reasons for recommendations are documented throughout the process in signing up to support the Brighton & Hove Community Covenant.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. None

Background Documents

1. Brighton & Hove Community Covenant Update January 2013