

## ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing Board</b>
2.	<b>Date:</b>	<b>26<sup>th</sup> October 2011</b>
3.	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Armed Forces Community Covenant. (AFCC)</b>
4.	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Chief Executive.</b>

### 5. Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide a briefing to Members of the Board on the progress made in the preparation of an Armed Forces Community Covenant.

### 6. Recommendations

Members of the Board are asked to consider the report & contribute any ideas/ suggestions with regard to health related services provided for the ex service personnel and their families.

## **7. Proposals and Details**

### **Background**

The first duty of the Government is the defence of the realm which is carried out by our Armed Forces on their behalf. Members of our Armed Forces sacrifice some freedoms that as civilians we take for granted and as part of their duties they sometimes face danger, suffer serious injury or even pay the ultimate sacrifice. Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. In return society has a moral obligation to support the Armed Forces, both Regular and Reservists, past and present along with their families.

With this in mind, the Government has agreed to adopt an Armed Forces Covenant, published in June 2011, which states the Armed Forces Community should not be disadvantaged compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. The Government will consider positive actions to allow equality with other citizens as well as considering special treatment for the injured and bereaved, as proper return for their sacrifice.

As part of the Armed Forces Covenant, the Government is asking local authorities to establish their own Armed Forces Community Covenant.

### **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.
- to encourage support for members of the Armed Forces Community living and working in the area, including ex-service personnel, their families and widow(ers)
- To provide an opportunity for the local authority and partner organisations to work together to make the transition easier for military personnel integrating into civilian life.
- Is a two way arrangement and the Armed Forces community are encouraged to do as much as they can to support their local community.

### **The AFCC and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council**

- RMBC will lead on the AFCC, in particular Cllr Hussain, the Cabinet Member for Community Development, Equalities and Young People's Issues. Many of the partner agencies who have a role to play in this initiative have already been contacted. The aim is that agencies agree to be part of the AFCC and start to look at existing protocols and policies to see if they meet the needs of the clients. The second stage will be to develop an Action Plan to resolve any identified issues.
- Priority services provided by RMBC for people leaving the armed forces are housing and education. Human Resources will be contacted to see how job vacancies can be advertised by other agencies involved in the covenant.

## **8. Finance**

At the moment, there is no budget allocation for this work, other than the staff time to develop the initiative. It is hoped that existing systems within organisations can be amended to meet the needs of the client group.

At national level, the Government has set aside £30m over 4 years, profiled at £5m for the first two years and £10m per year for the following two years.

Through an application process, community projects will be assessed against eligible criteria, with local authorities being asked to match any grant awarded on a pound for pound basis. This process will start in September 2011. An AFCC needs to be in place before the grants can be applied for.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

There is no data available to show the size of the client base in Rotherham. The advice given by the M.O.D is that 1 in 6 of the local population will be ex military personnel. For Rotherham, based on the 2010 mid year estimated population of 254,605, the local figure for ex military personnel is 15,276, however clarification of this is needed – does this figure relate to new leavers or those who have served in the forces in the past.

Through the various systems in place within the partner organisations it is hoped that an accurate figure for the client base can be identified.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The Armed Forces Community Covenant is relevant to the One Town One Community Initiative, which has a focus of equality and fair treatment for all Rotherham citizens.

## **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

Report to Improving Places Select Commission 7<sup>th</sup> September 2011 – Housing issues.  
Report to Cabinet Member for Community Development, Equalities and Young People's Issues 12<sup>th</sup> September 2011

M.O.D The Armed Forces Covenant  
M.O.D The Armed Forces Covenant: Today and Tomorrow.  
Report of the Task Force on the Military Covenant  
The Government's Response to the Report of the Task Force on the Military Covenant  
M.O.D Community Engagement Officer, Major John Mayo

RMBC Housing and Education.  
Ministry of Defence.  
Rotherham Partnership  
PCT/NHS  
VAR  
Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber of Commerce

Royal British Legion  
Soldiers, Sailors and Families Association (SSAFA)  
Department of Works & Pensions  
Regular Forces Employment Association. (RFEA)  
Yorkshire & Humber Veterans Advisory & Pensions Committee. (YHVA&PC)

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