

REPORT TO	DATE OF MEETING
Cabinet	5th September 2012

Report template revised June 2008



SUBJECT	PORTFOLIO	AUTHOR	ITEM
Community Covenant - Armed Forces	Leader	Denise Johnson	4

SUMMARY AND LINK TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This report outlines the work undertaken ahead of the signing of a Community Covenant by the Member Champion for the Armed Forces and makes recommendations that the Community Covenant is signed at the King Royal Hussars Homecoming Parade on the 10th November 2012.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet :-

1. Note the work undertaken by the Member Champion for the Armed Forces since her appointment in May 2012.
2. Agree the recommendations for the 4 priorities within the Community Covenant.
3. Subject to Recommendation 2 above, agree for the South Ribble Community Covenant to be signed.

DETAILS AND REASONING

The Government are encouraging local authorities to make links with the Armed Forces Community and lead on the development of a Community Covenant. A Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces community. It aims to encourage local communities to support the Armed Forces in their area and promote understanding and awareness amongst the public of matters affecting the Armed Forces community.

In May 2012 the Council appointed Councillor Rebecca Noblet as Member Champion for the Armed Forces. The Terms of Reference for the Armed Forces Champion approved by Council are set out below.

1. To champion the needs of Service Families and Veterans within South Ribble.
2. To represent the Council on relevant external bodies.
3. To work with partners on the development of a Community Covenant.

Since the appointment a number of meetings with partners have taken place to establish links and gain understanding of the needs of the Armed Forces Community in South Ribble. South Ribble Borough Council does not have a barracks within its area. However a number of South Ribble families have members within the Armed Forces.

Preston City Council has a barracks and the veteran community will straddle across both Preston City and South Ribble Borough boundaries. There have been meetings across the two authorities and the Armed Forces to understand similarities of need. Meetings have also taken place with other partners such as the British Legion; Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) Forces Help and Lancashire County Council.

As a result of the discussions, it is proposed that a Central Lancashire approach be taken to support the veterans in this region. Identified needs include Housing, Health and Employment and the Council already works across Central Lancashire to address these issues. With the knowledge gained to date, it is recommended that the South Ribble Community Covenant concentrates on four priority areas –

- Housing
- Health
- Family Life
- Skills and Employment.

Given the priority proposals, early discussions have taken place with South Ribble Partnership to gain support from the member organisations. These include Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust, Lancashire Police, Lancashire Fire and Rescue, New Progress Housing, Citizens Advice Bureau, BAE systems and Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector representation. Representation has also been made to the Lancashire Association of Local Councils which has representation of the Town and most of the Parish Councils across South Ribble. To date, support for signing a Community Covenant has been excellent.

Of course the signing of the Covenant is the start. The work will continue to understand the needs of the Armed Forces Veteran Community and appropriate actions taken. To assist this, the Government has made available nationally a £30 million Community Covenant Fund accessible once a Community Covenant is signed. The Council will work with partners to help access the fund to deliver financial support to projects at the local level which strengthen the ties across the two communities.

WIDER IMPLICATIONS

In the preparation of this report, consideration has been given to the impact of its proposals in all the areas listed below, and the table shows any implications in respect of each of these. The risk assessment which has been carried out forms part of the background papers to the report.

FINANCIAL	There are no financial implications for the Council. The signing of the Community Covenant will allow the South Ribble communities to access/bid into the Community Covenant Fund.		
LEGAL	There are no legal implications for the Council		
RISK	<p>The full risk assessment forms part of the background papers to this report. The main points for consideration are summarised here:-</p> <p>The main risk is if South Ribble does not sign a Community Covenant and develop appropriate actions with the Armed Forces, then the needs of veterans and their families will not be understood or addressed.</p>		
THE IMPACT ON EQUALITY	Veterans and their families come from all sectors of the community. An equality impact assessment will be undertaken on the action plan resulting from the Community Covenant .		
OTHER (see below)			
<i>Asset Management</i>	<i>Corporate Plans and Policies</i>	<i>Crime and Disorder</i>	<i>Efficiency Savings/Value for Money</i>
<i>Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion</i>	<i>Freedom of Information/ Data Protection</i>	<i>Health and Safety</i>	<i>Health Inequalities</i>

<i>Human Rights Act 1998</i>	<i>Implementing Electronic Government</i>	<i>Staffing, Training and Development</i>	<i>Sustainability</i>
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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Risk Assessment
Ministry of Defence - The Armed Forces Covenant