

PEOPLE COMMITTEE

12 SEPTEMBER 2018

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

ARMED FORCES COVENANT

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members with the background of the Armed Forces Covenant Project and Melton Borough Councils obligations having signed the covenant.
- 1.2 To provide an update on the Project so far and outline the next phase of the project.
- 1.3 To update Members on the recent Employer Recognition Awards received by Melton Borough Council.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That members' note the progress of the project and reaffirm commitment moving forward.**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Armed Forces Covenant project started in April 2017 as a partnership between Melton, Charnwood & Rushcliffe Borough Councils with a Development Officer commencing work in August 2017. The project received a grant of £97,000 over two years from the Armed Forces Covenant Grant (MOD) to deliver key objectives across the three Boroughs. The main themes of stage 1 have been to raise awareness with key staff and partners that members of the armed forces past and present make a significant contribution to this country and many risk their lives for it. Returning from service and transition to civilian life can be difficult, but life is made easier if service personnel receive support, information and understanding of the challenges they can face.
- 3.2 Project objectives include: Understanding Armed Forces Communities within each Borough; liaison and integration with Stanford Hall Rehabilitation Centre; develop the Armed Forces Covenant Action plan; co-ordination and sharing of best practise across all three Boroughs.
- 3.3 Key achievements: -
 - Action plans- developed and signed off (Melton Action Plan to be updated – Community Policy Officer & Project Development Officer currently working on this).
 - Engagement of key partners in the wider community.
 - Websites reviewed.
 - Awareness training to front line staff at Charnwood and Rushcliffe (Melton to be completed).
 - E-learning package Charnwood & Rushcliffe (Melton to be implemented).
 - Met with numerous other covenant leads across the midlands to exchange ideas.
 - The Project development officer is part of the LGA National Covenant Officer network which helps to find and share good practice in order to help councils.
 - Presentations to key partner groups through board meetings, including 'Me and My Learning' in Melton.

3.4 Mapping Report (Appendix A) provides insight into actions carried out so far and future delivery items in phase two of the project.

3.5 **Phase two** of the Project is briefly outlined below: -

- The project has successfully won another grant bid for £150,000 to further develop the covenant through mobile hubs across the region. Two Outreach Officers have been employed who spend time working across Melton reaching out to isolated Veterans. Work is underway and we have seen good engagement in the early stages of the project
- Outreach workers will also be looking to engage with front line staff and key partners to identify areas/individuals that they may be able to assist with services (e.g. service leavers who are residents in the Borough who are reluctant to engage with staff but may be more inclined to deal with these workers). Both outreach workers have link to Armed Forces with one being a veteran and the other the Wife of serving Armed Forces Personnel.

3.6 Melton Borough Council (in partnership with Charnwood & Rushcliffe) has received a Silver award for its commitment to supporting serving and former armed forces personnel and their families. The Armed Forces Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) is a national scheme encouraging employers to support our armed forces personnel and inspire others to do the same. This follows the Bronze Award received by Melton Borough Council earlier this year.

3.7 Discussions are underway within the Project team regarding working towards the principles required for Gold ERS award. The requirements for Gold are wider reaching and significant work is involved to secure this.

3.8 Following the recent structural realignment I am due to attend my first Project Board meeting on 12th September 2018. Other requirements for the Council include: -

- Provide training to staff on the Armed Forces Community in particular front line staff, including housing, customer services and Senior Management.
- Work with HR Staff to identify ways to support employees who have connections to the Armed Forces.
- Work with CCG's to look at ways to encourage service leavers to inform GPs they are a veteran.
- Take positive action to make the workplace more 'reservist friendly' and supportive to the wider Armed Forces Community.
- Introduce E-Learning Package for all staff.
- Promote 'Asking the Question' about connections to Armed Forces of our Customers across the Council.

4.0 **POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 This work is likely to have a positive impact upon all of our key people priorities.

5.0 **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no additional financial implications to note.

5.2 There may need to be some additional officer time spent in order to get the best value from the project and its resources.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

6.1 No specific legal issues

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 As mental health issues are linked to community safety issues and people returning from armed forces service the project could have positive implications for Community Safety

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 There are no particular equalities issues identified although the project could have really positive impacts on any ex-service people with protected characteristics.

9.0 RISKS

9.1 .

L I K E L I H O O D	A	Very High				
	B	High				
	C	Significant				
	D	Low				
	E	Very Low	1			
	F	Almost Impossible				
			Negligible 1	Marginal 2	Critical 3	Catastrophic 4

IMPACT

Risk No	Risk Description
1	Not maximising the value of the work in Melton

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 No specific issues identified

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 None

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 All

Contact Officer Ryan Ebdale

Date: 23/08/2018

Appendices : *Appendix A – Amred Forces Covenant Project mapping Report*

Background Papers: N/A

Reference : X : Committees\