

Communities Committee

Item No.....

Report title:	Norfolk Armed Forces Community Covenant Annual Report 2015 -16
Date of meeting:	16 March 2016
Responsible Chief Officer:	Tom McCabe, Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services
Strategic impact The report details the action undertaken to support the Norfolk Armed Forces Community Covenant (NAFCC) in the past 12 months. This voluntary agreement was signed by all Norfolk local authorities on 7 th March 2012.	

Executive summary

The NAFCC Board continues to oversee progress on the Action Plan under the headings of Building Communities; Health and Welfare; Education, Employment and Skills.

The aims of the Community Covenant are to:

- encourage local communities to support the Armed Forces community in their areas;
- nurture public understanding and awareness amongst the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces community;
- recognise and remember the sacrifices and challenges faced by the Armed Forces Community;
- encourage activities which help to integrate the Armed Forces Community into local life; and
- to encourage the Armed Forces Community to help and support the wider community, whether through participation in events and joint projects, or other forms of engagement.

Recommendation:

The Communities Committee is asked to note the progress of the Norfolk Armed Forces Community Covenant.

1. Progress Update

- 1.1 At the County Council meeting on 16 February 2015, County Councillors agreed to allocate £20,000 to continue to support work under the Armed Forces Community Covenant.
- 1.2 Norfolk's Armed Forces Community Covenant Board (NAFCC) agreed the action plan at its first meeting in June 2012 and continues to monitor progress regularly across three key work streams and, where necessary, form sub

groups to complete tasks in each action area. At its meeting in March 2015, NAFCC Board agreed an outcome focussed action plan for 2015-16. Membership of the Board is set out in Appendix 1.

- 1.3 Some of the key achievements made in the last year against the three key work streams listed in the action plan are outlined below.

1.4 **Building Communities**

- Supported the organisation and running of a community farewell event for The Light Dragoons, April 2015, with Breckland Council.
- Planned and delivered a civic welcome event for 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards, hosted by Chairmen of Norfolk County Council and Breckland Council, September 2015.
- Supported 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards to integrate into their local community e.g. Job Centre Plus sessions on the base, activities for children during summer holidays, and close liaison with the regiment's Welfare Officer and Community Development team.
- County Council's Museum Service gave museum vouchers to 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards, to enable families to visit one of Norfolk's Museums.
- County Council's Library Service undertook 3 mobile library visits to each base (RAF Marham and Robertson Barracks) in August 2015, taking the summer reading challenge to serving personnel and their families; 32 new library members signed up.
- Awarded £11,600 to 41 community projects since 2014, to commemorate WW1, and completed monitoring reports for all events.
- County Council and partners marked Armed Forces Week, Remembrance Sunday and 70th anniversary of VE and VJ day, with events around the county, including VC commemorative display at County Hall.
- The Defence Recognition Scheme encompasses bronze, silver and gold awards for employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the armed forces community, and align their values with the armed forces covenant. See full list in Appendix 2.

1.5 **Health and Welfare**

- Worked with Public Health to support the first Health Day event for 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards. Over 20 local providers attended, representing a range of health and welfare services including: smoking cessation, safer neighbourhoods, Job Centre Plus and libraries.
- Worked with Public Health to support 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards to implement a no smoking policy and smoking cessation support to families, in advance of the MOD's No Smoking Policy for military premises, due later this year.
- A policy to disregard war pension payments in social care assessments was agreed by the County Council at the full council meeting in July 2015
- Supported Healthwatch Norfolk's research into veterans' experiences of the NHS. Report due March 2016.

- Norfolk & Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust held a 'Treating Military related PTSD' workshop for over 20 of its Cognitive behavioural therapists, with another course planned by March 2016
- Norfolk & Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust started a Veterans' Stabilisation Programme, with The Walnut Tree project. This supports veterans to engage with mental health service providers, by supporting them with coping skills, using mindfulness based and other recognised strategies.
- Supported Project Nova, a local project which aims to reduce re-offending and supports veterans in the criminal justice system. In 14 months, they have seen 159 veterans in the Police Investigation Centres in Norfolk and Suffolk. 94 veterans were arrested for domestic violence, violence and/or harassment offences. 78 veterans stated that alcohol was a contributory factor in the arrest. The average age of veteran arrested was 34.9. Of the 159 veterans arrested, only 3 veterans have re-offended. The success of the project, piloted in Norfolk and Suffolk has led to the establishment of two new projects setting up covering North East England and North West England.
- Worked with charities running armed forces projects in Norfolk, to encourage an integrated approach to supporting veterans.
- Support to frontline staff at housing associations, Job Centre Plus and GP practices to raise the profile of the Armed Forces Community Covenant and the needs of veterans.
- Funded the Bridge for Heroes to develop support to veterans in the Norwich area, based on their successful King's Lynn contact centre model, November 2015.

1.6 Employment, Education and Skills

- Supported Swanton Morley Primary School to prepare for the additional classroom space for the arrival of new children from service families in summer 2015, as part of the rebasing of 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards.
- Supported an application to the MOD Education Support Fund from Cherry Tree Academy - Marham Infant and Junior Schools - and liaised with the NCC Education Adviser for Service Children.
- The annual school census results shared with the NCC Education Adviser for Service Children. This census is a key source of data used to calculate schools' funding. In this case the Service Children Premium, which helps schools to support the unique challenges children with parents in the armed forces can often face. Further work is needed to understand the population in academies, as they are not part of this census.
- Co-operated with the Barclays VETS (Veteran Employment and Training Service) programme and supported the New Anglia LEP initiative to co-ordinate employment support to veterans in Norfolk and Suffolk. Launched November 2015

2. Evidence

The NAFCC Board's Action Plan has been developed with agencies and organisations that work with serving personnel, veterans and their families. This is alongside information gathered from visits to RAF Marham and Robertson Barracks, liaison with Welfare Officers, Armed Forces Charities and Service Family Federations. This is to ensure that the Board's priorities meet the needs identified.

3. Financial Implications

Local Funding

- 3.1 The County Council's Budget 2016/17 includes £20,000 to support the work of the Armed Forces Community Covenant in 2016/17.
- 3.2 The County Council has allocated £115,000 in the past four years to support the work of Norfolk's Armed Forces Community Covenant;

Financial year	Income	Expenditure
2012/13	£50,000	£34,950
2013/14	£25,000	£28,490
2014/15	£20,000	£16,750
2015/16	£20,000	£34,207
total	£115,000	£114,397

- 3.3 This has been invaluable, as it has provided match funding in support of applications submitted to the MOD Covenant Grant as well as funding to those which have been rejected but felt to be of value locally. Since 2012, the local Covenant Board has levered in an additional £511,713 external funding to support the Norfolk armed forces community.
- 3.4 At the end of 2014/15, £14,810 remained in the budget, of which £11,000 was committed to The Bridge for Heroes Norwich Contact Centre. This was carried forward to 2015/16, making a budget total of £34,810.
- 3.5 The total spend in 2015/16 was £34,207. The table below outlines the allocation to projects during the past 12 months, in support of the Norfolk Armed Forces Community Covenant:

NCC Allocation; Committed Expenditure to Project	Amount	Agreed
Contribution to Light Dragoons Farewell Parade	2,000	Covenant Board March 2015 meeting
Outside the Wire project	2,000	Covenant Board May 2015 via email
Queens Dragoon Guards arrival and community integration	3,000	Covenant Board May 2015 via email
Norwich Bridge for Heroes Contact Service	11,000	Funding agreed 2014/15 and confirmed by Covenant Board

		October 2015 meeting
Veterans Recall	400	Covenant Board December 2015 via email
Allocation to WW1 Fund	£5,000	Covenant Board via email January 2016
Summer Reading Mobile Library visits to all bases	£807	Covenant Board via email January 2016
Joint Veterans Service (subject to £40k match funding identified)	£10,000	Covenant Board via email January 2016
Total	£34,207	

3.6 At the end of 2015/16, £603 remained in the budget.

National Funding

3.7 National funding is available through the MOD Covenant Fund. This is a £10 million per year grant scheme which has taken over from the Community Covenant Grant Scheme and LIBOR Fund in July 2015.

3.8 There are 2 application routes:

- small grants for funding applications up to £20,000
- large grants for applications between £20,001 and £500,000

3.9 The following three priorities for applications were set by the MOD for the financial year 2015-16 and will be reviewed for 2016-17:

- Community integration
- The coordination and delivery of support to the Armed Forces community; and
- Former service personnel in the criminal justice system.

3.10 Outcome of applications to external funding in 2015/16:

MOD Covenant Fund Nov 15

- MEDEC outreach project, King's Lynn, £16,000

MoD Education Support Fund Jan 16

- Cherry Tree Academy, Marham £35,500

Unsuccessful applications

- Stand Easy (£90,150), Norfolk Joint Veterans Service (£50,000), Project Compass (£63,900) and Childcare for serving RAF personnel (£500,000). Note; these were all applying for the large grants within the MOD Covenant Fund. None of the large grants put forward within our 7 Brigade area were successful.

4. Background

4.1 In November 2011, the County Council's Cabinet agreed that it would lead the development of a Norfolk Armed Forces Community Covenant.

4.2 There are currently in excess of 8000 serving personnel and their families, living and working in Norfolk. An additional 80,000 serving personnel use the

Stanford Training Area (STANTA) over the year, as part of routine and 'mission specific' training. It is estimated that there are 40,000 veterans living and working in the county, although the exact number is not recorded.

- 4.3 Norfolk County Council, with District Councils in Norfolk, signed the Norfolk Armed Forces Community Covenant on 7 March 2012. This was in the presence of the Lord-Lieutenant of Norfolk Richard Jewson; Brigadier Harry Nickerson, Commander 49 (East) Brigade; Commander Gerry Northwood, Chief of Staff, Naval Regional Command, Eastern England; Group Captain David Cooper, Station Commander at RAF Marham; General The Lord Dannatt; representatives of our armed forces community and partner organisations.
- 4.4 At the 2 April 2012 Cabinet meeting, it was agreed to set up a Norfolk Community Covenant Board. This partnership board has met six times, meeting biannually since 2012. The Board's purpose is to oversee the development of the Covenant in Norfolk, by:
- continuing to build on the established strong links;
 - working with partners on the issues that may affect all Service Personnel, veterans and their families in Norfolk e.g. housing, health, employment and education; and
 - developing and monitoring the action plan
- 4.5 The County Council appointed an Armed Forces Member Champion; Cllr David Collis, who represents Norfolk County Council on the Norfolk Armed Forces Community Covenant Board.
- 4.6 The Government initially allocated £30million in funding, over four years from 2011, to support Community Covenants. In July 2015 the MOD announced a new Fund; the MOD Covenant Fund, this is a £10 million per year grant scheme.

Officer Contact

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Norfolk Armed Forces Community Covenant Board

The membership of the Board is:

- Norfolk County Council; Councillor David Collis
- District Council representatives (x2); Councillor Lynda Turner (Breckland Council), Councillor Elizabeth Nockolds (Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk)
- Health service representative; Derek Holesworth, Commissioning Manager
- Representative for skills & employment; Jan Feeney, Norfolk County Council
- Job Centre Plus armed forces lead; Heidi King
- Housing representative; Jane Warnes, Cotman Housing
- Representatives from the Armed Forces (x3); Keith Spiers (Army) Ady Portlock (RAF), Martin Atherton (Navy)
- Representatives from the Armed Forces charities (x2); Bill Kerr, Royal British Legion, Stuart Fidler, SSAFA
- Representative for Regular Forces and Cadets; Jamie Athill

The Board is chaired by the Armed Forces Commissioner for Norfolk; Mr. Tony Tomkinson, appointed in 2012 by the Leader of the Council. The key role for the Commissioner is communication and co-ordination, acting as an instrumental link between the Armed Forces community and partner agencies. The role also includes raising the profile of the Norfolk Armed Forces Community Covenant and related work, as well as highlighting the support available to the Armed Forces Community.

Defence Recognition Scheme

This awards companies that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the armed forces community, and align their values with the armed forces covenant.

Norfolk companies who have achieved Gold, Silver and Bronze awards, as at March 2016;

Gold Award

- Carillion (construction sector), 2014

Silver Award

- Aviva (financial and insurance sector), 2014
- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk (public sector), 2014
- Breckland Council (public sector), 2014
- College of West Anglia (education sector), 2014
- DAP UK Ltd (transportation and storage sector) 2014
- East of England Ambulance NHS Trust (public sector) 2014
- Edwards and Blake Ltd (food sector) 2014
- Great Yarmouth College (education) 2014
- Holden Honda (retail sector) 2014
- James Paget University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (public sector) 2014
- Lion Engineering Services Ltd (construction sector) 2014
- Lotus Cars Ltd (manufacturing sector) 2014
- M&A Partners Ltd (North Norfolk) (professional, scientific and technical activities) 2014
- Mills and Reeve (professional, scientific and technical activities) 2014
- Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (public sector) 2014
- Norwich City Council, (public sector) 2014
- P4 Ltd (wholesale and retail sector) 2014
- Reepham High School and College (education sector), 2014
- Seetec (administration and support services sector) 2014
- University of East Anglia (education) 2014

Bronze Award

- Battle Stations Activities Ltd (arts, entertainment and recreation sector), 2015
- Blue Arrow (administration and support services sector) 2015
- Elite Academy of Security Training Ltd (education sector) 2015
- Elite Bodyguard Ltd (other service activities) 2015
- MT Aves & Sons (agriculture sector) 2015