

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL
STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

**AGENDA
ITEM NO**

10

13 JUNE 2019

Report Title	SUPPORTING THE MILITARY COVENANT IN THE STROUD DISTRICT
Purpose of Report	To raise awareness of the ongoing work supporting the commitment of Stroud District Council delivering the military covenant.
Decisions	The Committee RESOLVES to: a) Agree that a member of the Royal British Legion is based in reception on designated days to support veterans on a trial basis b) Agree to appoint a councillor to champion the military covenant c) That the Head of Housing Services is tasked with being the Council's officer champion for the Military Covenant
Consultation and Feedback	Housing Committee Tenant Representatives Senior Leadership Team
Financial Implications and Risk Assessment	There are no financial implications. Lucy Clothier - Principal Accountant Tel: 01453 754343 Email: lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk Risk assessment by the report author The risk of supporting our veterans is low considering we have a moral obligation to support the men and women of our armed forces both past and present. There will be no element of veterans having a greater entitlement to services as this is already set out in the covenant.
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications arising from this report. Mike Wallbank - Solicitor Email: Mike.Wallbank@stroud.gov.uk
Report Author	Kevin Topping - Head of Housing Services Tel: 01453 754196 Email: Kevin.topping@stroud.gov.uk
Performance Management Follow Up	Report back to a future Committee on progress regarding activities within the military covenant.

Background Papers/ Appendices	Appendix A - Gloucestershire Armed Forces Community Covenant Annual Report–2015/16 Appendix B - Alabare home for veterans Appendix C - Buchanan Trust
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1.0. Background

1.1. The Armed Forces Covenant outlines the moral obligation between the nation, the government and the armed forces. It encourages local communities to support the armed forces community in their area and promote understanding and awareness among the public of issues affecting the armed forces community.

1.2. Local authorities and the armed forces community are encouraged to work together to establish a covenant in their area in order to:

- encourage local communities to support the armed forces community in their areas and to nurture public understanding and awareness among the public of issues affecting the armed forces community
- recognise and remember the sacrifices faced by the armed forces community
- encourage activities which help to integrate the armed forces community into local life
- 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

1.3. Covenants in each community may look quite different from one location to another. This is a scheme where one size does not fit all, and the nature of the support offered will be determined by both need and capacity.

1.4. Since the launch of the 'community covenant' in June 2011, every local authority in mainland Great Britain has signed a 'community covenant partnership' with their local armed forces. The community covenant is now known simply as the Armed Forces Covenant, which covers all aspect of society. Many local authorities have an 'Armed Forces Champion'. The role of a 'champion' is often to make sure that the local authority achieves its commitments to the armed forces community and any blockages are resolved.

2.0. Introduction

2.1. Stroud District Council signed up to the Armed Forces Community Covenant in 2012, in 2016 we signed up to the new covenant advising of a number of areas where we are supporting veterans (see Appendix A).

2.2. The Head of Housing Services has met with the County Council Commissioning Officer responsible for the covenant and agreed a closer dialogue with a view to revisiting the covenant and bringing it up to date with stakeholders, ensuring Stroud is an active partner supporting its

commitments, expanding our involvement and generating opportunities for the future.

- 2.3. One of the decisions in the report is to enable a member of the Royal British Legion to be located in reception at Ebley Mill, possibly on a 2 weekly basis initially to gauge interest (ensuring we communicate effectively to raise awareness). This role would effectively identify any signposting or support that an individual or family may need so that veterans can feel comfortable talking to someone who has a better understanding of their background and in some cases particular issues such as mental health.

3.0. Summary

- 3.1. The decisions requested of Strategy and Resources Committee are designed to ensure Stroud District Council takes an active role in delivering the military covenant.
- 3.2. The Head of Housing Services seeks Committee support to make a commitment to raise awareness of the armed forces covenant and our veterans as fully as possible, but would clarify not to the detriment of others. We remain a responsible social landlord mindful of our tenants both current and future whatever their background, seeking to work with the wider community with our internal private sector colleagues, other registered providers, support services and other agencies.
- 3.3. A number of other organisations are set up to provide support such as Alabare (Appendix B) and the Buchanan Trust (Appendix C) to name but a few but hopefully this will raise some awareness of the types of support organisations locally available.

APPENDIX A

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/16243/the-armed-forces-community-covenant-in-gloucestershire-annual-report-2015-16.pdf>

APPENDIX B

<https://www.alabare.co.uk/home/gloucestershire-home-for-veterans2/veterans>

APPENDIX C

<http://www.buchanan-trust.org.uk/>