

URN: 21-134

Subject: Armed Forces Covenant

Report to: Council – 9 December 2021

Report by: Civic & Events Manager

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper outlines the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant and the commitments Great Yarmouth Borough Council would undertake in supporting it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy and Resources Committee recommend that Council :

- Support the principles of this paper and the Armed Forces Covenant
- Agree to allow officer time to support the Armed Forces Covenant
- Agree to implement the Guaranteed interview Scheme for service leavers
- Sign the Armed Forces Covenant Declaration
- Agree that a Council Member be nominated to champion the council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Ministry of Defence (MOD) launched the National Armed Forces Military Covenant in June 2011 in recognition of the contribution and sacrifice service personnel make for their country.
- 1.2 The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the nation that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly and are not disadvantaged in their day-to-day lives. This social contract exists to ensure that the sacrifices, made by the Armed Forces Community in the national interest, should not come at significant cost.
- 1.3 The Armed Forces Covenant sees organisations from both the public and private sectors, make pledges of support to the Armed Forces Community, when carrying out their work, specifically, that:
- no member of the Armed Forces Community should face disadvantage in the provision of public and commercial services compared to any other citizen; and
 - in some circumstances special treatment may be appropriate especially for the injured or bereaved

2.0 New Legislation

The Government's expectations of local authorities were summarised in its policy paper published in 2015. This is to be strengthened through the new duty legislation, currently making its way through Parliament.

This means that those subject to the Covenant Duty must have due regard to:

1. the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the armed forces,
2. the principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for service people from membership, or former membership, of the armed forces, and
3. the principle that special provision for service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the armed forces.

The focus of the new Covenant Duty is on local, and regional as appropriate, service provision, covering those aspects of public housing, education and healthcare that are among the most likely to affect serving and former members of the Armed Forces and their families.

3.0 Housing

To support our covenant pledge, our Housing Allocations Scheme has special consideration for the armed forces community reflecting both legislation and statutory guidance.

The Housing Allocations Scheme (2018) includes the following provisions:

- Additional preference (backdating of application date by 12 months) for applicants who meet one or more of the reasonable preference criteria and who are:
 - a member of the Armed Forces, or former Service personnel where their application is made within five years of discharge.
 - Are a bereaved spouse or civil partner of a member of the Armed Forces leaving Service Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner
 - Are a serving member or former member of the Reserve Forces who needs to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service.
- Exemption from local connection criteria where:
 - The applicant is a member of the Armed Forces and former Service personnel, where their application is made within five years of discharge
 - The applicant is a bereaved spouse or civil partner of a member of the Armed Forces leaving Service Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner
 - The applicant is a serving member or former member of the Reserve Forces who needs to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service.

In addition, in considering qualification to join the Allocation Pool, the Council will disregard any lump sum paid as a result of injury or disability to a current or former member of the regular or reserve services.

4.0 Employment

In making our commitment to giving fair support to members of the armed forces, service leavers and their families it is proposed to introduce a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for service leavers, this will mirror the Guaranteed Interview Scheme for disabled candidates which the council already has in place.

The aims of the scheme are to:

- assist service leavers overcome barriers to finding employment
- reduce the risk of service leavers having health and welfare problems due to long-term unemployment
- complement the re-employment support provided by the Ministry of Defense
- benefit from the transferable skills and qualities of service leavers

We recognise the value serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families bring to our business and to our country.

To support the employment of Service spouse and partners we will partner with the [Forces Families Jobs Forum](#) and providing flexibility in granting leave for Service spouses and partners, during and after partners deployment.

We support our employees who are members of Reserve Forces, granting two weeks per year leave for the purposes of attending summer camps and training, subject to the exigencies of the service.

5.0 Supporting Local Events

Great Yarmouth has a long civic tradition with supporting the armed services and marking commemorations such as D Day, Armed Forces Day, VE Day, VJ Day and Remembrance Day. In 20012 Great Yarmouth became affiliated with HMS Dauntless.

6.0 Commitment

6.1 In supporting the Armed Forces Covenant we recognise the value serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families bring to our organisation and to our country. We will seek to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, by:

- **Promoting the Armed Forces:** promoting the fact that we are an Armed Forces-friendly organisation, to our staff, customers, suppliers, contractors and wider public.
- **Veterans:** supporting the employment of veterans, recognising military skills and qualifications in our recruitment and selection process; working with the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) to support the employment of Service leavers;
- **Service Spouses & Partners:** supporting the employment of Service spouses and partners; partnering with the [Forces Families Jobs Forum](#); and providing flexibility in granting leave for Service spouses and partners before, during and after a partner's deployment.

- **Reserves:** supporting our employees who are members of the Reserve Forces; granting additional paid/unpaid leave for annual Reserve Forces training; supporting any mobilisations and deployment; actively encouraging members of staff to become Reservists;
- **Cadet Organisations:** supporting our employees who are volunteer leaders in military cadet organisations, granting additional leave to attend annual training camps and courses; actively encouraging members of staff to become volunteer leaders in cadet organisations; supporting local military cadet units; recognising the benefits of employing cadets/ex-cadets within the workforce.
- **National Events:** supporting Armed Forces Day, Reserves Day, the Poppy Appeal Day and Remembrance activities;
- **Armed Forces Charities:** supporting Armed Forces charities with fundraising and supporting staff who volunteer to assist;
- **Commercial Support:** We would encourage local businesses to offer a discount to members of the Armed Forces community.

6.2 We will publicise these commitments through our literature and on our website, setting out how we will seek to honour them and inviting feedback from the Service community and our customers on how we are doing.



GREAT YARMOUTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

**We, the undersigned, commit to honour the Armed
Forces Covenant and support the Armed Forces
Community. We recognise the value Serving Personnel,
both Regular and Reservists, Veterans and military
families contribute to our business and our country.**

Signed on behalf of:

Great Yarmouth Borough Council

Signed:

Name:

Position:

Date:



The Armed Forces Covenant

An Enduring Covenant Between

The People of the United Kingdom

Her Majesty's Government

- All those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of the Crown

And their Families

The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm. Our Armed Forces fulfil that responsibility on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and, sometimes, suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty. Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. In return, the whole nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families. They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment.

Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

This obligation involves the whole of society: it includes voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and the actions of individuals in supporting the Armed Forces. Recognising those who have performed military duty unites the country and demonstrates the value of their contribution. This has no greater expression than in upholding this Covenant.

Section 1: Principles of The Armed Forces Covenant

1.1 We Great Yarmouth Borough Council will endeavour in our business dealings to uphold the key principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, which are:

- *no member of the Armed Forces Community should face disadvantage in the provision of public and commercial services compared to any other citizen*
- *in some circumstances special treatment may be appropriate especially for the injured or bereaved.*

Section 2: Demonstrating our Commitment

The following are suggested draft pledges covering the range of Defence personnel for whom support may be given. Delete, add or change any of the pledges to show how you can pledge support for Defence personnel in ways best suited to you. Pledges may be changed at any time in the future to reflect your changing circumstances.

2.1 We recognise the value serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families bring to our business and to our country. We will seek to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, by:

- **Promoting the Armed Forces:** promoting the fact that we are an Armed Forces-friendly organisation, to our staff, customers, suppliers, contractors and wider public.
- **Veterans:** supporting the employment of veterans, recognising military skills and qualifications in our recruitment and selection process; working with the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) to support the employment of Service leavers;
- **Service Spouses & Partners:** supporting the employment of Service spouses and partners; partnering with the Forces Families Jobs Forum; and providing flexibility in granting leave for Service spouses and partners before, during and after a partner's deployment.
- **Reserves:** supporting our employees who are members of the Reserve Forces; granting additional paid/unpaid leave for annual Reserve Forces training; supporting any mobilisations and deployment; actively encouraging members of staff to become Reservists;
- **Cadet Organisations:** supporting our employees who are volunteer leaders in military cadet organisations, granting additional leave to attend annual training camps and courses; actively encouraging members of staff to become volunteer leaders in cadet organisations; supporting local military cadet units; recognising the benefits of employing cadets/ex-cadets within the workforce.
- **National Events:** supporting Armed Forces Day, Reserves Day, the Poppy Appeal Day and Remembrance activities;

- **Armed Forces Charities:** supporting Armed Forces charities with fundraising and supporting staff who volunteer to assist;
- **Commercial Support:** offering a discount to members of the Armed Forces community;
- **Membership of the local Armed Forces Covenant Working Party:** The Council will appoint a Member and Officer to sit on the working party.

2.2 We will publicise these commitments through our literature and/or on our website, setting out how we will seek to honour them and inviting feedback from the Service community and our customers on how we are doing.