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## NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

27 April 2020

### Cabinet

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<b>Title:</b>	<b>Armed Forces Community Covenant</b>
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<b>Purpose:</b>	The purpose of report this report is to invite Cabinet to renew its commitment to the Armed Forces Community Covenant and to provide a summary of key activities that the Council promotes in support of the Armed Forces Community.
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<b>Recommendation:</b>	It is recommended that Cabinet:  (a) renews its commitment to the Armed Forces Community Covenant; and (b) agree to a joint launch of the Armed Forces Community Covenant with South and East Ayrshire Councils in May 2020.
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### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council, along with East and South Ayrshire Councils, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, and other stakeholders, has been a signatory to the Armed Forces Community Covenant since it was first introduced in 2012.
- 1.2 The Council has been asked to renew its commitment to the Armed Forces Community Covenant. A revised Covenant is set out at Appendix 1

### 2. Background

- 2.1 The Council, along with East and South Ayrshire Councils, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, and other stakeholders, has been a signatory to the Armed Forces Community Covenant since it was first introduced in 2012. The Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between civilian communities and the local Armed Forces Community, including veterans.
- 2.2 Ayrshire has proportionately one of the highest numbers of people with armed forces experience of any part of Scotland and the purpose of the Covenant is to encourage support for the Armed Forces community working and residing in our area and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by so many.

- 2.3 The Community Covenant was developed to complement the national “Armed Forces Covenant: Today and Tomorrow” between the Nation, the UK Government and the Armed Forces Community. This sets out the actions being taken by central government to support the Armed Forces community as well as future measures, many of which have been set at a national level and are being applied by public service providers across the country.
- 2.4 The necessities of Armed Service life mean that an individual may be away from their home area for several years, living or serving abroad or in the rest of the UK, but they will often wish to return to the area of their birth and upbringing. In doing so, they may face challenges in re-establishing themselves in the community from the perspectives of family, friendships, employment, housing and social welfare. This requires recognition and support and it is around these areas that the Council and partners can influence and achieve positive outcomes.
- 2.5 The following provides a summary of the key activities that are currently supported and promoted by the Council and its partners:

### **North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership**

- 2.6 Veterans First Point (Ayrshire & Arran) has been delivering welfare and specialist mental health services to veterans and their family members since March 2017, helping them with the move from military to civilian life. Since that time, they have supported almost 500 veterans to seek help with housing, support with gaining employment and accessing psychological treatment for mental health difficulties.
- 2.7 Veterans First Point acts as a single point of entry for veterans to access other services both in the third sector and statutory services. Veterans can access the one stop shop, where their needs are reviewed, and the specific services required are identified and accessed with the support of the veteran peer support worker / clinical staff. This service model is unique within Ayrshire. The location of the service was carefully chosen and is in a shop front in the centre of Irvine, providing easy access.
- 2.8 Veterans First Point was developed in 2017, demonstrating the commitment of North Ayrshire IJB to the Armed Forces Covenant, through ensuring that veterans are able to access priority care and treatment from mainstream and specialist services. It is reaching those it needs to, demonstrated by high self-referral rates and the demographics of those using the service in the short time it has been opened.

### **Place- Housing Services**

- 2.9 In North Ayrshire, Armed Forces personnel and veterans are given additional support and consideration to ensure they are not disadvantaged when applying for housing. When their date of discharge is confirmed, applicants are entitled to an additional 150 points up to 12 months before or after discharge. The aim of this enhanced priority is to ensure that applicants receive an offer of housing and prevent the possibility of them becoming homeless.

- 2.10 If a member of the Armed Forces, a service leaver or veteran has a health condition or disability, including a mental health condition, the accessible housing assessment process can apply. This assessment considers activities of daily living, progressive conditions, if an applicant's home can be reasonably adapted and if a move of home will significantly improve mental health symptoms. All assessments are carried out by a qualified Occupational Therapist. Those who have been previously assessed have experienced a wide range of health conditions including PTSD, other mental health conditions and physical disabilities. This assessment process can result in offers of housing and where relevant, a smooth transition to civilian life despite often complex needs.
- 2.11 The North Ayrshire Housing Register (NAHR) website has a link to the leaflet "A Scottish Housing Guide for people leaving the Armed Forces". The advice signposts applicants to the Veterans First Point in Irvine. Housing Services work closely with Veterans First Point and hold a surgery each month in their local facility to allow applicants who are currently serving or veterans/service leavers to discuss their housing options and housing prospects in more detail.
- 2.12 Following the launch of the Veterans First Point, staff employed by NAHR landlords were trained on housing options advice for service personnel. This approach was recommended in the Scottish Veterans Commissioner report. North Ayrshire Council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant was included in the training programme to help frontline housing staff understand the principles of the Covenant and the Council's policy on housing support for the armed forces community.
- 2.13 The Common Housing Register Manager is the main point of contact for all enquiries relating to housing register applications, accessible housing assessments, housing options and general advice for Armed Forces veterans and service leavers. This ensures consistency of service delivery across all landlords and that all housing staff are supported and have appropriate training to meet the housing and support needs of the Armed Forces community and their families.
- 2.14 Housing Services are fully committed to working with key partners and stakeholders to ensure the effective delivery of housing advice and support for Armed Forces personnel, service leavers and the veteran community.

### **Communities – Connected Communities**

- 2.15 Connected Communities help and support local community organisations including many branches of the Royal British Legion. Support varies depending on their different needs.
- 2.16 Connected Communities partnership with the local branches of the Royal British Legions has developed over the last few years, in the period 2014 - 18 as start and end of WW1 was commemorated. A Legacy Fund was set up and groups accessed small pots of money to help support local, commemorative events. Some of this was used to help Veterans attend National commemorative events. A WW1 Heritage Trail was developed, highlighting the significant people and local places of significance to WW1. Pieces of interpretation were also created to mark the part that Largs played in the D-Day Landings - a legacy to the local community. Again, the veterans were at the heart of these developments.

- 2.17 Connected Communities continues to be respectful of significant dates and commemorative events and how the activities on these days help the Armed Forces community. Many generic services are accessed frequently by veterans - the Mens Shed initiative being the most relevant to date.
- 2.18 Given the different factors that impact on the health and well-being of veterans, those in active service or those recently left, the services delivered and supported by Connected Communities help alleviate some of the daily challenges faced by these men and women.

### **Democratic Services – Committee and Member Services**

- 2.19 Committee and Member Services provide support to Armed Forces Day events and Remembrance Services and Parades. Administrative support is also given to the Provost in his role as the Council's Veteran Champion.

### **KA Leisure**

- 2.20 KA Leisure currently afford members of the Armed Forces and Veterans the access plus rate, their concessionary rate, for both memberships and casual use.

## **3. Proposals**

- 3.1 The Cabinet is invited to:
- (a) renew its commitment to the Armed Forces Community Covenant;
  - (d) agree to a joint launch of the Armed Forces Community Covenant with South and East Ayrshire Councils in May 2020.

## **4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty**

### **Financial**

- 4.1 Support for veterans is met from existing budgets.

### **Human Resources**

- 4.2 Support for veterans is provided from existing resources.

### **Legal**

- 4.3 None arising from this report.

### **Equality/Socio-economic**

- 4.4 Many veterans suffer from disabilities, often linked to their service. The aim of this Charter is to ensure that targeted support is provided to them, both in relation to disabilities and the socio-economic disadvantage that they may suffer. Therefore, the Charter has a positive role in supporting those with disabilities and addressing issues of economic disadvantage. For example, there are positive impacts on veterans with a disability through the accessible housing assessment process, and by supporting veterans with housing opportunities we are also reducing their material deprivation.

## **Environmental and Sustainability**

4.5 None arising from this report.

## **Key Priorities**

4.6 Aspiring Communities - Active and Strong Communities

## **Community Wealth Building**

4.7 None arising from this report.

## **5. Consultation**

5.1 Consultation has taken place with East and South Ayrshire Councils.

Craig Hatton  
Chief Executive

For further information please contact **Garry Hamilton, Provost's and Member Services Office Co-ordinator**, on **01294 324123**.

## **Background Papers**

Correspondence with partners



## **AN ARMED FORCES COVENANT**

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHARITABLE  
AND VOLUNTARY SECTORS,  
THE CIVILIAN COMMUNITY OF NORTH AYRSHIRE

AND

THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY IN NORTH AYRSHIRE

**We, the undersigned, agree to work and act together to  
honour the Armed Forces Covenant.**

## Signatories

*(This page gives examples of the parties who may sign the Armed Forces Covenant. This is an example only and is not limited to the examples given)*

Signed:

Name:

Position Held:

**Signed on behalf of the Armed Forces Community**

Date:

Signed:

Name:

Position Held:

**Signed on behalf of Armed Forces Charities**

Date:

Signed:

Name:

Position Held:

**Signed on behalf of the Business and Commercial Sector**

Date:

Signed:

Name: Craig Hatton

Position Held: Chief Executive

**Signed on behalf of North Ayrshire Council**

Date:

Signed:

Name:

Position Held:

**Signed on behalf of the Voluntary Sector**

Date:

Signed:

Name:

Position Held:

**Signed on behalf of the Primary Care Trust/NHS Body**

Date:

## **SECTION 1: PARTICIPANTS**

1.1 This Armed Forces Covenant is made between:

The serving and former members of the Armed Forces and their families working and residing in North Ayrshire

And

North Ayrshire Council

And

The Charitable and Voluntary Sector

And

Other members of the civilian community

## **SECTION 2: PRINCIPLES OF THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT**

2.1 The Armed Forces Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. This Covenant encompasses the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces, at the local level.

2.2 The Armed Forces Covenant is based upon two key principles:

- The Armed Forces community should not face 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.

2.3 The purpose of this Covenant is to encourage support for the Armed Forces Community working and residing in North Ayrshire and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by members of this Armed Forces Community, particularly those who have given the most. This includes in-Service and ex-Service personnel their families and widow(er)s in North Ayrshire.

2.4 For North Ayrshire Council and partner organisations, the Community Covenant presents an opportunity to bring their knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on the provision of help and advice to members of the Armed Forces Community. It also presents an opportunity to build upon existing good work on other initiatives such as the Welfare Pathway.

2.5 For the Armed Forces community, the Covenant encourages the integration of Service life into civilian life and encourages members of the Armed Forces community to help their local community.



## **SECTION 3: OBJECTIVES AND GENERAL INTENTIONS**

### **Aims of the Covenant**

3.1 The Armed Forces Covenant defines the enduring, general principles that should govern the relationship between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces community.

3.2 It aims to encourage all parties within a community to offer support to the local Armed Forces community and make it easier for Service personnel, families and veterans to access the help and support available from the MOD, from statutory providers and from the Charitable and Voluntary Sector. These organisations already work together in partnership at local level.

3.3 The scheme is intended to be a two-way arrangement and the Armed Forces community are encouraged to do as much as they can to support their community and promote activity which integrates the Service community into civilian life.

## **SECTION 4: Measures**

### **4.1 North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership**

Ensure that Veterans are able to access priority care and treatment from mainstream and specialist services via Veteran First Point (Ayrshire & Arran)

### **4.2 Place – Housing Services**

Housing Services are fully committed to working with key partners and stakeholders to ensure the effective delivery of housing advice and support for Armed Forces personnel, service leavers and the veteran community.

Armed Forces personnel and veterans are given additional support and consideration to ensure they are not disadvantaged when applying for housing. When their date of discharge is confirmed, applicants are entitled to an additional 150 points up to 12 months before or after discharge. The aim of this enhanced priority is to ensure that applicants receive an offer of housing and prevent the possibility of them becoming homeless.

### **4.3 Communities – Connected Communities**

Connected Communities help and support local community organisations including many branches of the Royal British Legion. Support varies depending on their different needs.

Connected Communities continues to be respectful of significant dates and commemorative events and how the activities on these days helps the Armed Forces community. Many generic services are accessed frequently by veterans - the Mens Shed initiative being the most relevant to date.

### **4.4 Democratic Service – Committee and Member Services**

Committee and Member Services provide support to Armed Forces Day events and Remembrance Services and Parades. Administrative support is also given to the Provost in his role as the Council's Veteran Champion.

#### 4.5 KA Leisure

KA Leisure currently afford members of the Armed Forces and Veterans the access plus rate, their concessionary rate, for both memberships and casual use.

### **CONTACT PERSONNEL AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

#### MOD Armed Forces Covenant Team

Email address: [covenant-mailbox@mod.gov.uk](mailto:covenant-mailbox@mod.gov.uk)  
Address: Armed Forces Covenant Team  
Zone A, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Ministry of Defence  
Main Building  
Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2HB

#### In-Service representative(s)

Contact Name:  
Title:  
Telephone:  
Address:

#### North Ayrshire Council

Contact Name:  
Title:  
Telephone:  
Fax:  
Address:

#### Charities

Contact Name:  
Title:  
Telephone:  
Address:

# **THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT**

An Enduring Covenant Between

The People of the United Kingdom  
Her Majesty's Government

– and –

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.