

Cabinet



Date of meeting:	09 March 2023
Title of Report:	Select Committee Recommendations for the Plymouth Armed Forces Covenant
Lead Member:	Councillor Penberthy (Chair of Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee)
Lead Strategic Director:	Giles Perritt (Assistant Chief Executive)
Author:	Helen Rickman (Democratic Advisor)
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Your Reference:	AFCR
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

To present the recommendations of the Select Committee review of the Armed Forces Covenant held on 07 November 2022 to Cabinet.

Recommendations and Reasons

For Cabinet to respond to the recommendations below:

The Select Committee agreed:

1. to recommend to the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee to include Armed Forces Friendly GPs and Dental Surgeries to their work programme specifically with regards to the number of surgeries that have signed up to the initiative, the impact of long waiting list timescales upon serving personnel and their families when frequently moving to a new area, and the importance of prioritising those affected by the armed forces covenant so as not to be disadvantaged;
2. to write to NHS England highlighting issues identified in Plymouth with regards to access to healthcare provision (including dental access) in the city for armed forces personnel and their families and highlighting NHS England's duty, as supporters of the covenant, to provide appropriate services for the armed forces;
3. to recommend to Cabinet that the wording of the current Armed Forces Covenant is reviewed to stress the importance of a trauma informed approach across all areas of the covenant in line with city policy, and specifically that due regard is given by the Council to the mental health of children and young people of service families, is appropriately considered in line with the Council's covenant duties;

4. to recommend to the Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee to add the Armed Forces Covenant to their work programme, specifically with regards to the Council's legal requirement under the covenant to provide education to service children, and that information on the pupil premium affecting service children, and how many service children were also young carers was also to be provided so that support could be managed;
5. to recommend to the Cabinet Member responsible for the Armed Forces Covenant, and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People that the feasibility of amending Plymouth's School Admission Code is considered so that service children applying for a school place in the city were given priority status;
6. that Councillor Penberthy, as Chair of the Select Review Committee, would write to the Royal British Legion (RBL) highlighting the panel's extreme disappointment that the RBL written submission made no reference to MKC Heroes resulting in the voice of children and young people in the covenant being absent, and that work surrounding MKC Heroes should be appropriately led by RBL as was their responsibility;
7. to recommend to the Cabinet Member responsible for the Armed Forces Covenant and the Cabinet Member responsible for housing that:
 - an Armed Forces Champion is created in the housing team as a single point of contact and support for armed forces queries;
 - a greater understanding of the veterans cohort in the complex needs assessment in terms of the impact of drug and alcohol rehabilitation upon homelessness is sought so that appropriate support is provided;
 - social landlords are encouraged to sign up to the Armed Forces Covenant and work in partnership with the Council in housing veterans and ex-services personnel;
 - the links between the Council and Alabare are strengthened in terms of support provided to ex-services personnel in their transition out of supported accommodation;
 - an approach is made to the Ministry of Defence regarding their surplus housing stock in Plymouth in order to explore the feasibility of using it specifically to support veterans and ex-forces personnel;
8. to recommend to the Cabinet Member responsible for the Armed Forces Covenant and the Cabinet Member responsible for HR to:
 - promote the Armed Forces Community Covenant to employers in the city;

- request that a data mapping exercise of the Council's staff is undertaken to establish the numbers of veterans, reservists, cadets and families of serving military personnel so appropriate support is given;
 - establish a network within the Council to specifically advise on issues affecting the Armed Forces Community and inform the work of the covenant within the Council;
9. to recommend to the Cabinet Member responsible for the Armed Forces Covenant and the Cabinet Member responsible for employment, skills and training:
- that work is undertaken by the Council specifically with regards to the skills of ex services personnel and how they could be interpreted and translated into employable skills in the city, and that performance coaching is developed and encouraged;
 - to ensure that appropriate support is provided by the Council to spouses and partners of serving personnel in accessing training and finding employment on arrival to the city;
 - that the Council feeds into the Ministry of Defence transition service in order to develop an offers and needs assessment and criteria with the intention of helping personnel move out of the forces and into employment within the city;
 - that partnership working is further considered and strengthened to the benefit of the covenant;
10. to recommend to the Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Panel to explore further opportunities to support employment and development for veterans, ex-personnel and service families in the city; for scrutiny to consider if improvements could be made as to how the armed forces covenant is communicated in the city; and that the structures of the city's covenant are reviewed in light of legislative changes.

Alternative options considered and rejected

N/A

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Delivery of the Corporate Plan and Plymouth Plan needs to take account of emerging policy and the legislative picture in relation to the Armed Forces Covenant.

The system of Scrutiny is an essential element of Local Government governance and by considering comments from the Scrutiny Management Board, Cabinet is supporting the “Democratic” value as defined in the Corporate Plan.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

None arising from this report.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

N/A

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council’s duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.

N/A

Appendices

*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Response to Select Committee review.							

Background papers:

*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

Fin	pl.22. 23.39 6	Leg	EJ/10 98/1. 3.23(3)	Mon Off	N/A	HR	N/A	Assets	N/A	Strat Proc	N/A
Approved by: Councillor Chris Penberthy (Chair of Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee)											
Date approved: 06/03/2023											

