



## **Briefing Note for Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee**

**Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

### **Report of the Assistant Director Partnerships**

#### **Updated Armed Forces Covenant Plan**

#### **Exempt Information:**

None

#### **Purpose of the Briefing note:**

Update on the Armed Forces Covenant plan discussed at the Committee on 16 July 2024

#### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Consider the information in the briefing note in relation to the queries at the meeting on 16 July 2024
2. Endorse proposals for a named Council Lead Member and the updated Armed Forces Covenant plan and

#### **Executive Summary**

The updated Armed Forces Covenant plan was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2024. The Committee agreed that it could not endorse the action plan (recommendation one) until the action plan has been updated.

The Committee made the following comments/observations and asked the following questions:

In section 7.2 of the action plan, it states that Cllr Smith is to be the Armed Forces Champion and how this sits within the Constitution, also whether a recommendation had gone to last year Cabinet that an appropriate Champion be selected and where possible this should be a member of the veteran's community?

Following advice from Nikkie Hesketh, Monitoring Officer around the questions raised by Cllr Turner about Armed Forces Champion, the update is as follows:

- Cabinet Members cannot be Champions
- No formal recommendation to Cabinet has been agreed that the Champion must be an armed forces veteran and not the Portfolio holder.
- The Armed Forces Covenant Duty suggests that there is no mandatory requirement to appoint or name an elected member champion. It does offer actions that we might wish to consider adopting.

- Cabinet Delegated authority to the then Portfolio Holder for Entertainment and Leisure and Assistant Director Partnerships to have responsibility for and oversee the associated work plan and report on an annual basis to the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee (Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 20th July, 2023, 6.00 pm )
- The Armed Forces Covenant has now been placed in the renewed responsibilities of the Portfolio Holder for People Services, Leisure and Engagement, Councillor Lewis Smith for 2024/2025 onwards as Lead Member

The Monitoring Officer is of the view that it is a reasonable approach to changing the terminology to Lead Member (a Champion by another name). In effect the argument is that the Lead Member should be a senior/executive member in order that they have the authority to make sure the covenant is being properly implemented and upheld.

The updated the plan (attached) now refers to Lead member.

In Section 1.3 of the action plan in connection with the prominent anniversary of VE Day, the wording 'consider events' is used.

The discussion point around changing the wording of the plan from 'consider events' to 'plan events' for VE Day 80 has also been updated and the commemoration is now on the events planner

Is it possible to get a breakdown of the budget allocation and how this was used for the Royal British Legions?

A further question was asked about understanding the detailed expenditure on a £1000 grant to Royal British Legion to ensure Armed Forces Day events. The following information has been obtained:

- A proposed policy change to grant the RBL £1000 for hire of the Castle Lower Lawn to promote Armed Forces Day was unintentionally omitted from budget policy changes for 2024/25. As such the hire charges for Armed Forces Day 2024 have been waived on this occasion.
- A budget policy change will be submitted for 2024/25 to Cabinet this year as part of the budget setting process for consideration moving forward.

**Background:**

Meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> July 2024

**Key issues/Risks (If applicable):**

As per original report

**Resource Implications (If applicable):**

As per original report

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**Appendices (If appropriate):**

Updated Armed Forces Covenant plan 2024

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