

10th October 2024**Report of the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee****Matters referred to Cabinet in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules**

Scrutiny Committee	Title of Matter referred	Date of Scrutiny meeting
Health and Wellbeing Committee	Updated Armed Forces Covenant Plan	17 th September 2024

Exempt Information

None.

Purpose

To notify Cabinet of the report and recommendations from the Updated Armed Forces Covenant Plan item that was discussed at the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on the 17th September 2024

Recommendations

Following consideration of the item the Committee agree to the following recommendations being made to Cabinet:

1. Consider the appointment of a nonpolitical role for an Armed Forces Champion whilst there are serving Members who are veterans.

(Moved by Councillor S Doyle and seconded by Councillor C Bain)

Back Ground Information

On the 11th July 2023 the Committee received a report from the Assistant Director Partnerships to reaffirm the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant following the Armed Forces act in 2021 before it was present to Cabinet.

The Committee expressed their support for the delegation of Councillor Cooper as the Champion. It was highlighted that under Section 2.7.9 of the Constitution that a Member of the Executive could not be appointed a Member Champion and was suggested that instead it could be requested that this be written into his Portfolio.

Following the discussion of Scrutiny the matter was considered by Cabinet on the 20th July 2023 and the following recommendation was carried as part of the report.

- Delegated authority to the Portfolio Holder for Entertainment and Leisure and Assistant Director Partnerships to oversee the associated work plan and report on an annual basis to the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

Executive Summary

Armed Forces Covenant Update 2024

On the 16th July 2024 as part of an annual update the Committee received an updated report on work done to ensure the Council meets its commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant and associated plan.

The Committee made the observation that in section 7.2 of the action plan, it stated that Cllr L Smith was to be the Armed Forces Champion and asked how that sat within the Constitution and also whether a recommendation had gone to last years Cabinet that an appropriate Champion be selected and where possible this should be a member of the veteran's community?

The Chair confirmed that the Constitution states that a Member of the Cabinet cannot be a Champion.

The Officer confirmed that the Armed Forces Covenant is named within the Cabinet Members portfolio but the use of the word champion within the action plan could be reviewed.

The Committee agree that it could not endorse the action plan until the action plan has been updated.

The Committee received a briefing note on the 17th September 2024, as part of the briefing note the following information was provided –

- 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 Committee were concerned that the current Portfolio Holder was not a veteran unlike the previous Portfolio Holder and discussed the possibility of having a Member Champion in addition to the Member lead and agreed to recommend that whilst there are serving veterans on the Council, that there is a Member Champion appointed who is a veteran.

It was noted that the Constitution currently only allows for Member as Champions.

Options Considered

The Committee could endorse the decision to appoint a Council Lead Member (Portfolio Holder) who would not necessarily represent the Armed Forces Community.

Key considerations

1. Scrutiny committees have statutory powers to make recommendations to the Executive, and the Executive (Cabinet) has a statutory duty to respond. They may also make reports and recommendations to external decision making bodies.
2. The agenda for Executive meetings shall include a standing item entitled 'Matters Referred to the Cabinet In Accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules'. The reports of overview and scrutiny committees and sub-committees referred to the Executive shall be included at this point in the agenda (unless they have been considered in the context of the Executive's deliberations on a substantive item on the agenda) within one calendar month of the overview and scrutiny committee or sub-committee completing its report/recommendations.
3. Scrutiny recommendations are addressed to the Cabinet, as the main Executive decision making body of the council (or, where appropriate, an external agency).
4. Cabinet is being asked to note the scrutiny report / recommendations and that an Executive Response to the scrutiny recommendations be prepared for consideration by the Cabinet within two months from receiving the report or recommendations.
5. The minutes of the meeting of the scrutiny committee provide the record of the scrutiny committee's consideration of the issue and the scrutiny recommendations made during the meeting.
6. The scrutiny committee will be notified of the Executive Response made in respect to the scrutiny recommendations and may track the implementation of the Cabinet decisions and any actions agreed. This enables the scrutiny committee to track whether their recommendations have been agreed, what actually was agreed (if different) and review any outcomes arising

Report Author

Chris Bain

Chair of Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny

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