

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

meeting date: TUESDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2022
title: ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: OLWEN HEAP DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND CIVIC OFFICER

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To seek Committee's endorsement of the updated Ribble Valley Borough Council Armed Forces Covenant and its referral to Council for approval.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – to treat everyone equally and ensure that access to services is available to all. To engage with all our communities to ensure we deliver services to meet customer needs and expectations.
- Corporate Priorities – to seek to continually improve, ensuring that council services are fit for purpose and customer focused.
- Other Considerations – none identified.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 In December 2012, the Council approved the Armed Forces Community Covenant, and a formal signing ceremony took place in 2013 in the Council Chamber, followed by raising the Armed Forces flag for Armed Forces week.

2.2 The Council has now received a request from the Regional Engagement Director from the Ministry of Defence seeking the Council's agreement to sign the updated version of the Armed Forces Covenant. A copy of this is enclosed as Appendix 1 to this report.

3 ISSUES

3.1 This updated version of the covenant has a simpler format than the original. It does still however require a commitment from the Council to support the Armed Forces community, both past and present wherever possible.

3.2 It is intended that Section 2.1 of the Covenant be updated as and when the Council adds further measures to support the Armed Forces Community in the Ribble Valley.

3.3 Separate to this is the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) that encourages employers to support defence and inspire others to do the same. The scheme encompasses bronze, silver and gold awards for employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the armed forces community, and align their values with the Armed Forces Covenant. This is designed primarily to recognise private sector support although public sector organisations such as the emergency services, local authorities, NHS trusts and executive agencies are also eligible to be recognised. A copy of this scheme is enclosed as Appendix 2 to this report.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

Resources – officer time will be required to implement the recommendations..

Technical, Environmental and Legal – none identified.

Political – none identified.

Reputation – the Council's support of the Armed Forces, though the covenant will enhance its reputation.

Equality & Diversity – the Council's ensures that its services are accessible to all and that it is a diverse and inclusive employer.

5 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

5.1 Endorse the Armed Forces Community Covenant at Appendix 1 and refer it to Council for approval;

5.2 Authorise the Head of Legal Services to update section 2.1 of the Covenant to include any amendments to the measures which the Council takes to support the Armed Forces in the future; and

5.3 Authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to explore recognition for the Council under the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme and to report back to Committee upon this.

OLWEN HEAP
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER

MARSHAL SCOTT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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