

Appendix 'A' - Champion for Armed Forces Veterans

Report on Expenditure from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014

"To assist the Leader and appropriate Cabinet Members to work with the organisations that support ex-servicemen and women to work even more closely together and to ensure that veterans and their families get the support they deserve."

Overview:

Having spent 14 years in the Armed Forces and having been deployed to a range of environments such as the Falklands, Northern Ireland and Iraq it was an immense privilege to be appointed to the position of Armed Forces and Veterans Champion for Lancashire by the Leader of the Council.

Though I come from an armed forces background I had much to learn about the work being done by the communities of Lancashire and the council so my first meeting was a handover/takeover meeting with my predecessor, former County Councillor Mike France, which was incredibly helpful. I would like to place on record my thanks to him and pay tribute to his hard work in the role.

It was clear to me that my first tasks were to increase my own operational awareness of the support available to the military community and to ensure that Lancashire County Council moved to a position that enabled us to sign the Armed Forces Community Covenant.

Operational Awareness:

It was important to get to know the service providers across the county as well as officers at the council and military commanders in order to establish good links, learn about the services and understand the facilities and capabilities on the ground.

To achieve this it was necessary to visit the headquarters of 42 brigade and the range of facilities at Fulwood and Kimberley Barracks. This included an orientation visit to the Personnel Recovery Unit which helps wounded, injured and sick service leavers.

Further to this I was able to make contact with or meet all of the borough champions who enabled me to gain a better understanding of local issues.

Local providers of services including those in the statutory and third sectors were also engaged with in order to gain a more county wide perspective of those services available as well as regimental associations and national charities that play a vital role in the support of the veterans' community.

This has been a good start in gaining greater operational awareness but there is much more to do in an ever changing landscape. The work of the Veterans Council in establishing an Armed Forces Community Directory which aims to provide a single

point of contact for services which meet eligibility criteria will go a long way to addressing that gap in knowledge.

The Armed Forces Community Covenant:

It was a commitment made by the leader that we as a council would sign the Armed Forces Community Covenant. It was therefore an important piece of work to be able to tie together the good work already being done within the council and existing policies to a commitment to meet the promise that service personnel and their families should experience "no impediment" from service.

This process through the policies of the council to enable me to present the proposals to sign the covenant to cabinet would not have been possible without the hard work and support of the corporate policy and performance team, but most especially Mr Kieran Curran.

In order to sign the covenant and share best practice at the same time I made the decision to set up an Armed Forces Community Covenant Conference which took place on 29th November 2013. There were over 60 stakeholders in attendance as well as guest speakers and exhibitors which demonstrated Lancashire County Council's commitment to honouring our commitment to the service and veterans community. This was an incredible effort which took an enormous amount of collaboration between the brigade and council including the Lieutenancy service, catering, facilities management team, corporate communications and many others. It would however, be remiss not to pay tribute to Sumaya Patel, of the Lieutenancy team, for all she did to bring about the conference and show the council and indeed Lancashire as a whole in such a positive light.

Activities Supported from 2013/14 Budget:

Morecambe Brass Band £850

The funding of £850 would be spent on the hire of the platform, publicity and programmes for the Remembrance service and concert on 10 November 2013 in Morecambe.

The event will give the people of Morecambe a place to gather and take part in an act of Remembrance for those who have lost their lives in various conflicts over the years, also for them to enjoy a first class concert in the second half of the evening.

Veterans for Fylde £1,500

Veterans for Fylde established the Armed Forces Community Covenant in June 2012. In 12 months they have made significant progress and are attracting a slow but steady stream of needy cases through proactive communication and word of mouth. They now need to take this further to find more of these veterans, many of whom have significant needs and issues but are reluctant to come forward.

The project aims to build on the start made by:

- Proactively seeking out veterans throughout the Borough

- Improving their hub and its communications and facilities, especially for employment as more redundees and service leaders appear
- Mobilising elected members, parish councils, emergency services, employers, churches and charities to help in this task
- Establishing part time outreach facilities in Lytham and Kirkham

The funding of £1,500 will enable their current operation to continue and expand. It will finance Road Shows, mail shots, local advertising, database development, display equipment, posters, articles and expenses for the myriad of visits needed.

The benefits of this project expected are:-

- Increased throughput of individuals referred by them to Veterans agencies and charities
- More jobs identified and local transition workshops run
- Overcoming loneliness in single isolated veterans, particularly in the villages
- Improved support to families, serving and retired

Day of Sunshine Project £500

The Day of Sunshine project is to help relieve the needs of children or adults with severe or life limiting illnesses and their carers and children of men and women serving in the Armed Forces who are wounded whilst active on duty by the provision of holidays in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving their conditions of life.

The holidays they provide help to make stronger, healthier, happier families which in turn contribute to a healthier, happier, caring society that benefits everyone.

In today's society holidays are viewed as increasingly important to people's sense of well-being. Yet for many people in varying situations, a holiday is simply beyond reach.

Armed Forces Group Reprographics Project plan £812.41

To lease a wireless Rioc MP171 desk top photocopier for twelve months.

To purchase replacement ink cartridges for existing HP Officejet premium colour printer.

Many Guild Work Club clients do not have access to IT and printer facilities at home, therefore hard copies are required.

The lease of the printers will enable them to be self-sufficient in printing documents for the Armed Forces Group and the Guild Work Club

Dig In North West Marketing Material - £2,000

Dig In North West CIC is an organisation based in Ashton Park, Preston. They provide horticultural therapy sessions for military veterans and their families.

They would really like to reach many more families and in order to assist them they require some marketing materials. They are looking to purchase some roll up banners, leaflets, posters and produce a short promotional video. They would also like to update their rather primitive website, and produce regular newsletters. All of these materials will involve their veterans in the design and production, ensuring it not only appeals to their peers, but also encourages ownership of the project as a whole.

As a result of distributing the materials to local outlets such as GP Surgeries, community centres, libraries and other veteran and military organisations they will be able to engage the local veteran community, particularly those experiencing PTSD and other service related mental ill health issues. Horticultural therapy is a proven and effective intervention, resulting in significant improvements in mood, motivation, skills, confidence and physical health, as well providing a distraction from negative, violent and destructive feelings.

They are a young organisation within their first year of operation, and are already seeing significant results for those veterans that attend their project. One of their veterans now works almost full time, including part time self-employed. He has been able to offer some work to one of his colleagues from the project at times. In addition, they have a successful relationship with other local organisations such as the NHS mental health team, the Armed Forces Group and Combat Stress. They actively refer veterans within to these services and others in order to ensure as many needs are met as possible. By reaching more veterans within their Lancashire Community they will be able to provide not only the therapeutic and social benefits of their own service delivery, but be able to ensure they are aware of all the support available to them in the area.

The constant involvement of their veterans in every aspect of the project also helps to generate confidence and a genuine feeling of belonging to a real team.

West Lancashire Veterans Project Marketing Material £300

The funding of £300 would be for mobile office equipment (Laptop and Mobile Phone) to assist in the development of The West Lancashire Veterans Project.

The equipment will assist veterans/service leavers in the 3 key areas of housing, jobs, training and medical.

Pendle Armed Forces Community Group £2000

The Pendle Armed Forces Community Group (PAFCG) is the delivery arm of the Pendle Borough Councils Armed Forces Community Covenant and was brought together to coordinate and implement the approaches of the various organisation/services for in-service, ex-service personnel and their families and build strong working relationships in Pendle.

The PAFCG as a group of not for profit organisations and charities would be in the process of creating an information and support centre serving Pendle borough which will be manned and supported by all signees and members of the Pendle Armed Forces Community Group. Premises have been identified and Pendle Borough Council have agreed to sign the lease for the group. The PAFCG members have

identified resources to enable the centre to be open 9 – 5 Monday to Friday with telephone answer machine will be available outside office hours. The Group aim to offer advice, support with debt, grants, housing, education, all aspects of welfare, volunteering opportunities, leisure, bereavement support and signposting from the office which is centrally located within the town of Nelson within a public building with direct access from the street.

The annual cost for the office have been estimated to be £8000 and I am asking the champion for a contribution of £2000 this will pay for Public liability insurance, rent and service costs for the first quarter and enable us to pump prime the Pendle Armed Forces Community Group accommodation.

THE PAFCG request for the champions funding will facilitate start-up of the planned project and contribute to the overall outcomes.

Currently there is no central base within Pendle for any type of Veteran or Armed Forces outreach. Veterans find it difficult to find and engage with services and by offering this venue as a Veteran centre, it will:-

- Improve access to a range of veterans support services and offer an easily identified and accessible centre for all aspects of support and information
- Raises public awareness of the aims and objectives of the armed forces community covenant
- Raise the profile of the Armed Services,
- Show the level of local support for serving personnel and Veterans, a collaborative working environment for the agencies providing support and connecting with an even wider tranche of service users.
- Will increase volunteering opportunities for members of the armed forces and the general public

Armed Forces Community Covenant £2,214.55

The Armed Forces Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. It is intended to complement the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces, at the local level.

The purpose of the Community Covenant is to encourage support for the Armed Forces Community working and residing in Lancashire and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by members of this Armed Forces Community. This includes in-Service and ex-Service personnel their families and widow(er)s in Lancashire. For Lancashire County 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.

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

Lancashire County Council also wishes to acknowledge the work accomplishes by our partner councils in the county's cities and boroughs to establish these principles in their specific communities.

On Friday 29 November 2013 an Inaugural Lancashire Armed Forces Community Covenant Conference was hosted at County Hall, where the Armed Forces Community Covenant was signed. The event was organised by County Councillor Darren Clifford with a number of guest speakers, official photographs and refreshments were provided for all attendees.

The total cost of the conference was £2,215:

- £176 for the flowers
- £180 for the photographer and photographs
- £1,859 for the refreshments.

Schedule of Expenditure for 2013/14

County Councillor Darren Clifford - Champion for Armed Forces Veterans

Applicant	Amount of Grant
Morecambe Brass Band – Hire of Platform and Publicity of Programmes	£850
Veterans for Fylde Community Covenant	£1,500
Day of Sunshine – Holidays to deserving children and their families	£500
Armed Forces Group – Reprographics Project	£812
Dig In North West CIC – Marketing material	£2,000
West Lancashire Veterans Project – Mobile Office equipment	£300
Pendle Armed Forces Group – Support Centre	£2,000
Armed Forces Community Covenant Conference	£2,215
TOTAL SPENT	£10,177