

Report of:	Leader of the Council
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Portfolio Leader:	Leader of the Council
Key Decision:	No
Report Track:	Council: 02/03/22

Council
2 March 2022
Appointment of an Armed Forces Champion

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the appointment of a Member as the Armed Forces Champion for Cannock Chase Council as part of our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Council approves the appointment of Councillor Martyn Buttery as the Council's new Armed Forces Champion.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendations

Key Issues

- 3.1 Cannock Chase District Council has a long standing and historic connection with the armed forces.
- 3.2 In 2012/13, the Council signed up to the Armed Forces Community Covenant for Staffordshire.
- 3.3 The purpose of the Community Covenant is to encourage support for the armed forces community (past and present, families and widow(er)s) working and residing in Staffordshire and to recognise and remember sacrifices made by the members of this community.
- 3.4 For local authorities and partner organisations the Covenant presents an opportunity to bring knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on the provision of help and advice to members of the armed forces community.
- 3.5 The Council's contribution to the Community Covenant has been largely officer led to date; but it is considered that the appointment of a Member as Armed Forces

Champion would support greater engagement with residents, local businesses, community groups, partner organisations and the armed forces.

- 3.6 Councillor Buttery is being nominated as the first Armed Forces Champion as he has previously served in the armed forces. He has also informally established a positive working relationship with the Rugeley based charity, Help A Squaddie, which exists to support ex-military personnel living in Staffordshire and South Derbyshire who have housing, employment, or welfare needs.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.7 The appointment of an Armed Forces Champion will help the Council drive forward its commitments and help strengthen relationships between the Council, the armed forces community and the District.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This report supports the Council's Corporate Priorities as follows:

(i) Supporting Health and Wellbeing.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 Cannock Chase District Council has a long standing and historic connection with the armed forces, with both the Mercian Regiment and Staffordshire Regimental Association. granted the Freedom of Entry to the District.
- 5.2 In 2012/13, the Council signed up to the Armed Forces Community Covenant for Staffordshire. The aims of the Covenant are:
- To encourage local communities to support the armed forces community in their areas and to nurture public understanding and awareness among the public of issues affecting the armed forces community;
 - To recognise and remember the sacrifices faced by the armed forces community;
 - To encourage activities which help to integrate the armed forces community into local life; and
 - To encourage the armed forces community to help and support the wider community, whether through participation in events and joint projects, or other forms of engagement.
- 5.3 The Council is also part of the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme which encourages employers to support defence and inspire others to do the same. The Council has been awarded, for the second time, a Silver Award for its commitment to the armed forces community.

5.4 As part of our commitment to the armed forces the Council provides the following:

- Support for our employees in their Reserve Forces commitment granting two weeks' additional leave for Reserve Forces training and supporting mobilisations.
- Supporting the Armed Forces Day (scheduled for 25 June this year, with an event at Hednesford Park being planned), Reserves Day, the Poppy Appeal Day and Remembrance activities.
- Supporting serving members of the armed forces community by offering discounted Leisure Membership to members living within the District, and
- Supporting the employment of veterans, offering work experience to those transitioning into civilian life through the Ministry of Defence's Recovery Career service. In addition, we support the Veterans Interview Programme, offering an interview to any veteran that demonstrates they meet the minimum essential criteria for a role in the Council.

5.5 There are two key elements to the work relating to supporting the armed forces:

- a practical role which facilitates support to individuals connected to the armed forces residing in the District, by helping to unblock any issues they may have around housing or employment or signposting them to any support that is required; and
- an advocate role for the armed forces which supports engagement with residents, local businesses, community groups, partner organisations and the armed forces.

5.6 To date, work in support of the armed forces has been largely led by senior officers. However, it is considered that appointing a Member as an advocate to act as the Armed Forces Champion would raise the profile of the Council's work and encourage greater community engagement.

5.7 The Head of Housing and Partnerships will continue to lead on the practical side and will support the Armed Forces Champion with the advocate role as appropriate.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

None

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 **Risk Management**

None

6.5 **Equality & Diversity**

None

6.6 **Climate Change**

None

7 Appendices to the Report

None

Previous Consideration

None

Background Papers

Report to Cabinet - 20 December 2012 - Armed Forces Community Covenant