



**KEY DECISION NOTICE**



<b>SERVICE AREA:</b>	<b>COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENT, ADULTS AND HEALTH</b> Cultural and Customer Services
<b>SUBJECT MATTER:</b>	<b>THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY PLEDGE</b>
<b>DECISION:</b>	That the Council signs the Armed Forces Community Covenant Pledge as set out in <b>Appendix 1</b> and commits to work with other community partners in developing the services and information available for Armed Service Personnel, their families, veterans and widows. The Council and a Representative of the Armed Forces will sign the pledge together on Armed Forces Day, 30 June 2012.
<b>DECISION TAKER(S):</b>	Gerald P.Cooney
<b>DESIGNATION OF DECISION TAKER(S):</b>	Executive Member - Learning and Achievement
<b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>	20 June 2012
<b>REASON FOR DECISION:</b>	The Government launched an Armed Forces Community Covenant scheme in June 2011. It is intended to encourage providers of local public services (whether voluntary sector, public sector or private sector) to volunteer targeted support for their local Armed Forces community. The Community Covenant is intended to complement the Armed Forces Covenant, which expresses the enduring general principles that should govern the relationship between the nation, the Government and the armed forces community. Tameside Council has always demonstrated a commitment to its residents within the borough who are Armed Forces personnel, veterans or war widows. The Executive Cabinet have agreed that the Council should sign an Armed Forces Community Covenant Pledge to formally demonstrate this commitment to the Armed Forces and its intention to develop and review the access arrangements which these residents have to local services.
<b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS REJECTED (if any):</b>	The Council could decide not to support the Community Pledge and not to formalise its support to the Armed Forces within the borough of Tameside.
<b>CONSULTEES:</b>	Armed Forces personnel within the Ministry of Defence.
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: (Authorised by Borough Treasurer)</b>	Not known at the moment. A future review of activities will take place and these costs will have to subsumed into current service activity.
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS: (Authorised by Borough Solicitor)</b>	This report sets out the benefits of supporting the armed forces covenant. It will be important to ensure that service provision changes which result from the covenant are the subject of individual decisions in accordance with the Council's constitution.
<b>CONFLICT OF INTEREST:</b>	None

<b>DISPENSATION GRANTED BY STANDARDS COMMITTEE ATTACHED:</b>	n/a
<b>REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:</b>	<p>The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the Report Writer, Adam Allen, Assistant Executive Director (Cultural and Customer Services) by:</p> <p> Telephone: 0161 342 3304</p> <p> E-mail: <a href="mailto:adam.allen@tameside.gov.uk">adam.allen@tameside.gov.uk</a></p>

Signed... *Gerald P Cooney* ..... Dated: 20 June 2012  
 Councillor Gerald P. Cooney, Executive Member for Learning and Achievement

## KEY DECISION REPORT

<b>SERVICE AREA:</b>	<b>COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENT, ADULTS AND HEALTH</b> Cultural and Customer Services
<b>SUBJECT MATTER:</b>	<b>THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY PLEDGE</b>
<b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>	20 June 2012
<b>DECISION TAKER</b>	Gerald P Cooney, Executive Member for Learning and Achievement.
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Adam Allen, Assistant Executive Director, Cultural and Customer Services.
<b>REPORT SUMMARY:</b>	The Government encourages central and local bodies to sign the Armed Forces Community Covenant which is a voluntary statement of mutual support between the civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. This report proposes that the Council should commit to the pledge and outlines the details of the Council's commitment within the pledge, which will be signed on Armed Forces Day, 30 June 2012.
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>	That the Council signs the Armed Forces Community Covenant Pledge as set out in <b>Appendix 1</b> and commits to work with other community partners in developing the services and information available for Armed Service Personnel, their families, veterans and widows. The Council and a Representative of the Armed Forces will sign the pledge together on Armed Forces Day, 30 June 2012.
<b>JUSTIFICATION FOR DECISION:</b>	Tameside Council has a long and historic relationship with the Armed Forces. The signing of the Armed Forces Community Covenant Pledge formalises this commitment and demonstrates that the Council will take an active approach in developing services and improving access arrangements to local services. This report sets out the current provision provided by the Council and its intention in working with community partners to extend these opportunities.
<b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS REJECTED (if any):</b>	The Council could decide not to support the Community Pledge and not to formalise its support to the Armed Forces within the borough of Tameside.
<b>CONSULTEES:</b>	Armed Forces personnel within the Ministry of Defence.
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: (Authorised by Borough Treasurer)</b>	Not known at the moment. A future review of activities will take place and these costs will have to be subsumed into current service activity.
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS: (Authorised by Borough Solicitor)</b>	This report sets out the benefits of supporting the armed forces covenant. It will be important to ensure that service provision changes which result from the covenant are the subject of individual decisions in accordance with the Council's constitution
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT:</b>	It is necessary to fully understand the impact that any changes

	<p>may have on the public and the delivery of council services. The consultation process sought to understand user and service needs in order that a full Equality Impact Assessment could be completed which will clearly identify and mitigate where possible the risks of any changes to users of the service.</p>
<b>LINKS TO COMMUNITY PLAN:</b>	<p>The Community Covenant Pledge is intended to link the Armed Forces more substantially to the aims and outcomes of the community strategy. In particular the service promotes lifelong learning, mental wellbeing, and employment skills whilst supporting communities.</p>
<b>REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:</b>	<p>The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the Report Writer Adam Allen, Assistant Executive Director (Cultural and Customer Services) by:</p> <p> Telephone: 0161 342 3304</p> <p> E-mail: <a href="mailto:adam.allen@tameside.gov.uk">adam.allen@tameside.gov.uk</a></p>

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Government launched an Armed Forces Community Covenant scheme in June 2011. It is intended to encourage providers of local public services (whether voluntary sector, public sector or private sector) to volunteer targeted support for their local Armed Forces community. The Community Covenant is intended to complement the Armed Forces Covenant, which expresses the enduring general principles that should govern the relationship between the nation, the Government and the armed forces community.
- 1.2 The commitment could take the form of, for example, additional support in accessing local service delivery such as social housing, free access to leisure facilities or discounts in shops and restaurants.
- 1.3 The Community Covenant is intended to be a two way arrangement. We will actively encourage the local Service population to provide support to their local community. The Government believes that the scheme is relevant to all parts of the UK since areas which do not have a large operating Service presence will still have a significant number of veterans within the community.
- 1.4 The Government encourages local authorities to formally commit to supporting the Armed Forces Community Covenant by signing the Community Covenant Pledge.
- 1.5 This report proposes a pledge which could be signed by the Council to demonstrate Tameside's commitment and support for the armed forces. It is recommended that further detailed proposals for extending this covenant be formulated in consultation with Partners and that the covenant pledge is reviewed annually.

## **2 THE ARMED FORCES IN TAMESIDE**

- 2.1 There is wide support for the Armed Forces within Tameside. According to the register of electors there are currently 83 armed forces personnel and families who live in the borough. However, this may well be a significant understatement of the actual numbers of armed forces personnel who live in Tameside or who have dependants living here. This is because not all members of the armed forces may choose to be on the Tameside register of electors. Other personnel may have dependents in Tameside but be on the register of electors at the base where they spend most of their time.
- 2.2 Traditionally the area which is now Tameside was a recruiting ground for what are now the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment and the Mercian Regiment. The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment has been awarded the Freedom of the Borough of Tameside and there are plans to extend this honour to the Mercian Regiment.
- 2.3 Ashton under Lyne was originally a Barrack town for the Manchester Regiment and Ashton Town Hall is host to the award winning Museum of the Manchester Regiment.
- 2.4 The Council supports many charitable activities connected with the armed forces and is actively involved in Armed Forces Day celebrating the hard work and sacrifices which our Armed Forces make.
- 2.5 Since Tameside no longer has any military bases or garrisons, we have substantially fewer Armed Forces Families living in Tameside. Areas such as Hampshire, North Yorkshire and Oxfordshire have developed processes of tracking the interactions of armed forces personnel with their councils and service providers and have developed a range of specific services for this part of their offer of services.

- 2.6 The Council does not currently specifically track the customer contact/service user pathways of Armed Forces families or veterans.

### **3 TAMESIDE'S COMMUNITY COVENANT PLEDGE**

- 3.1 The intention of the Community Pledge is to see a demonstrable level of engagement between the local community and the armed forces. It is important that the Council engages our community partners to be actively engaged in its development, including the PCT, the Sports Trust, and, New Charter Housing.
- 3.2 By signing the pledge the Council's intention would be to demonstrate a continued commitment to existing services and support provided to the Armed Forces together with additional services which the Council can quickly make available and a future statement of intent to review services to ensure that they meet the needs of Armed Forces personnel residing in the Tameside Borough.

#### **Immediate Support**

- a. The Council will continue to recognize the role of the Armed Forces both within the borough and nationally
- b. The Council and partners will support and celebrate Armed Forces Day, with a public event and celebration of the commitment which the armed forces make to our community.
- c. The Council will continue to host the Museum of the Manchester Regiment.
- d. Tameside Sports Trust will issue concessionary leisure cards for serving personnel and their dependents living in Tameside.
- e. We will establish a portal on the Council's website which publishes the Tameside Community Pledge. This will outline all current available services for all Tameside families. It will provide a one-stop shop for contact names and numbers of associated Armed Forces charities, such as the British Legion and Help for Heroes.

#### **Future Support**

- 3.4 Tameside Council pledges to work towards the following provision with help from their community partners.
- a. Reviewing education policies to ensure that schools admissions, special educational need provisions meets the needs of armed forces families
  - b. Commissioning a survey of attitudes towards a range of services/influences on the lives of Armed Forces families living in Tameside.
  - c. Help Service leavers and Service families obtain employment by drawing together local employers for recruitment fairs;
  - d. Working with local businesses to secure discounts in shops and restaurants.
  - e. Working closer with the Cadet forces established in the Borough including their participation in Borough wide events.
  - f. Encouraging Youth participation in Cadet Forces within the Borough.



- g. Assembling a working group from the HR department and the Council's reservists with the aim of bringing forward improvements in the way reservists are supported before, during and after deployment which may be used as a model by other employers.
- h. Working with the PCT to ensure that there are clear pathways for Armed Forces personnel, their families and veterans through to social care and counseling services.
- i. Publicising widely through Council communication pathways the benefits and opportunities for injured, retired or veterans and their widows.
- j. Former armed service personnel in housing need will be eligible to join the Council's allocation scheme and thereby be enabled to access social housing. Local connection criteria would not be applied in these cases.

#### **4 FUNDING**

- 4.1 The cost of the immediate support outlined will be found through existing budgets and provision for future support will be examined as the pledge takes shape and the full costs are established.
- 4.2 Once an Armed Forces Community Covenant has been established, Tameside is eligible to draw down funding through the Community Covenant Grant Scheme. The aim of the Grant will be to support projects, at the local level, which strengthen the ties or the mutual understanding between members of the Armed Forces Community and the wider community in which they live.

#### **5 RISKS**

- 5.1 The current provision to support Armed Forces Personnel has been absorbed within current budgets. As the scheme is developed then the cost of provision which is specific to Armed Forces Personnel, their families and veterans would need to be costed on a case by case basis and funding would need to be identified.
- 6.2 There are risks surrounding the number of identified forces families and veterans living in Tameside. As explained above the best available records relate to the register of electors and these may significantly understate the position. When considering any changes to services with a cost implication it will be important to plan for this risk as best we can. The resource commitment will not, at least in the short term, be quantifiable. However take up of the concessionary passes issued by the Sports Trust should give us useful information about the likely uptake of some aspects of support. However, at least in the short term, the resource commitment for any services with a cost implication will not be quantifiable.

#### **6. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 The Public sector Equality Duty places a duty on all public bodies to promote equality. Under this new legislation all public bodies, are required to:
  - Eliminate unlawful discrimination against members of different equality groups
  - Promote equal opportunities for members of equality groups
  - Eliminate harassment
  - Promote positive attitudes towards members of different equality groups.

6.2 Section 149 requires that every public authority shall, in carrying out its functions, have due regard to:

- The need to eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under this Act;
- The need to eliminate harassment of members of equality groups that is related to their membership of that group;
- The need to promote equality of opportunity between members of different equality groups and other persons;
- The need to take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons;
- The need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons; and
- The need to encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.

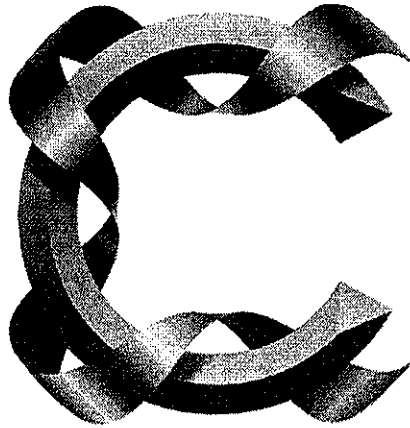
6.3 The Act therefore imposes a duty on the Council which is separate from the general duty not to discriminate. When a local authority carries out any of its functions, the local authority must have due regard to the matters within the section of the Act outlined above and, through case law, the local authority is expected to rigorously exercise that duty.

6.4 The proposals as outlined have been assessed to determine their impact on any of the recognised equalities groups. It is not proposed that any commitment made as part of the Community Covenant would have a detrimental affect on any other sections of Tameside's communities. The intention of the pledge is to reduce inequalities of access to services for Armed Service Personnel, their families and veterans. Future commitments which will be added to the pledge will be assessed in a new Equality Impact Assessment as they are developed.

## 7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 That the Council signs the Armed Forces Community Covenant Pledge as set out in **Appendix 1** and commits to work with other community partners in developing the services and information available for Armed Service Personnel, their families, veterans and widows. The Council and a Representative of the Armed Forces will sign the pledge together on Armed Forces Day, 30 June 2012.





# **Community Covenant**

## **AN ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT**

BETWEEN

TAMESIDE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL, REPRESENTATIVES  
OF THE CHARITABLE AND VOLUNTARY SECTORS,  
THE CIVILIAN COMMUNITY OF TAMESIDE

AND

THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY IN TAMESIDE

**We, the undersigned, agree to work and act together to  
honour the Armed Forces Community Covenant.**

### **Signatories**

(

Signed:

Name:

Position Held:

**Signed on behalf of the Armed Forces  
Community**

Signed:

Name:

Position Held:

**Signed on behalf of Tameside  
Metropolitan Borough Council**

## **SECTION 1: PARTICIPANTS**

1.1 This Armed Forces Community Covenant is made between:

**The serving and former members of the Armed Forces and their families working and residing in Tameside**

And

**Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council**

## **SECTION 2: PRINCIPLES OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT**

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 The purpose of this Community Covenant is to encourage support for the Armed Forces Community working and residing in Tameside and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by members of this Armed Forces Community, particularly those who have given the most. This includes in-Service and ex-Service personnel their families and widow(er)s in Tameside.
- 2.3 For Tameside Metropolitan Borough 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. It also presents an opportunity to build upon existing good work on other initiatives such as the Welfare Pathway.
- 2.4 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.

## **SECTION 3: OBJECTIVES AND GENERAL INTENTIONS**

### **Aims of the Community Covenant**

- 3.1 The Armed Forces Community Covenant complements the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant which defines the enduring, general principles that should govern the relationship between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces community
- 3.2 It aims to encourage all parties within a community to offer support to the local Armed Forces community and make it easier for Service personnel, families and veterans to access the help and support available from the MOD, from statutory providers and from the Charitable and Voluntary Sector. These organisations already work together in partnership at local level.
- 3.3 The scheme is intended to be a two-way arrangement and the Armed Forces community are encouraged to do as much as they can to support their community and promote activity which integrates the Service community into civilian life.

## **SECTION 4: Measures**

4.1 Tameside Council's will continue to recognize the role of the Armed Forces both within the borough and nationally

### **4.2 Immediate Support**

- Tameside Council's will continue to recognize the role of the Armed Forces both within the borough and nationally
- The Council and partners will support and celebrate Armed Forces Day, with a public event and celebration of the commitment which the armed forces make to our community.
- The Council will continue to host the Museum of the Manchester Regiments.
- We will issue concessionary leisure cards for serving personnel and their families living in Tameside.
- We will establish a portal on the Council's Website which publishes the Tameside Community Pledge. This will outline all current available services for all Tameside families. It could also provide a one-stop shop for contact names and numbers of associated Armed Forces charities, such as the British Legion and Help for Heroes.

### **4.3 Future Support**

Tameside Council pledges to work towards the following provision with help from their community partners.

- a. Reviewing education policies to ensure that schools admissions, special educational need provisions meets the needs of armed forces families
- b. Commissioning a survey of attitudes towards a range of services/influences on the lives of Armed Forces families living in Tameside.
- c. Help Service leavers and Service families obtain employment by drawing together local employers for recruitment fairs;
- d. Working with local businesses to secure discounts in shops and restaurants.
- e. Working closer with the Cadet forces established in the Borough including their participation in Borough wide events.
- f. Encouraging Youth participation in Cadet Forces within the borough.
- g. Assembling a working group from the HR department and the Council's reservists with the aim of bringing forward improvements in the way reservists are supported before, during and after deployment which may be used as a model by other employers.
- h. Working with the PCT to ensure that there are clear pathways for Armed Forces personnel, their families and veterans through to social care and counseling services.
- i. Publicising widely through Council communication pathways the benefits and opportunities for injured, retired or veterans and their widows.
- j. Former armed service personnel in housing need will be eligible to join the Council's allocation scheme and thereby be enabled to access social housing. Local connection criteria would not be applied in these cases.

## **CONTACT PERSONNEL AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

### **MOD DCDS (Pers&Trg) Covenant Team**

Contact Name: Lisa Harper  
Title: DCDS (Pers) Sec Covenant 1  
Telephone: 020 7218 9110  
Address: DCDS (Pers) Covenant Team  
Zone D, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Ministry of Defence  
Main Building  
Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2HB

### **In-Service representative(s)**

Contact Name:  
Title:  
Telephone:  
Address:

### **Tameside Council**

Contact Name:  
Title:  
Telephone:  
Fax:  
Address:

# THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

An Enduring Covenant Between

The People of the United Kingdom  
Her Majesty's Government

– and –

All those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of  
the Crown

And their Families

The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm. Our Armed Forces fulfill that responsibility on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and, sometimes, suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty. Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. In return, the whole nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families. They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment.

Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

This obligation involves the whole of society: it includes voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and the actions of individuals in supporting the Armed Forces. Recognising those who have performed military duty unites the country and demonstrates the value of their contribution. This has no greater expression than in upholding this Covenant.

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