

County Council

20 July 2018

Agenda item 6(e) - Notice of Motion from Lt Cdr Atkins

Military Covenant - Briefing Note

West Sussex County Council signed a Military Community Covenant 26 July 2012, as a sign of its commitment to supporting Armed Forces personnel and former personnel and their families. It later established a Military Community Covenant Board, comprising Armed Forces champions from the County Council and borough and district councils in West Sussex, together with representatives from the Armed Forces and Services Charities.

The County Council achieved 'Silver Award' status in 2017 in recognition of its achievements in supporting armed forces personnel and ex-personnel. These achievements included:

- promoting the fact that the County Council is an armed forces-friendly organisation;
- seeking to support the employment of veterans young and old and working with the Career Transition Partnership in order to establish a tailored employment pathway for Service Leavers by continuing to send through details of all vacancies and Career Tasters that are available and through our Guaranteed Interview Scheme for Veterans;
- striving to support the employment of Service spouses and partners;
- endeavouring to offer a degree of flexibility in granting leave for Service spouses and partners before, during and after a partner's deployment through a flexible working policy;
- seeking to support County Council employees who choose to be members of the Reserve forces, including by accommodating their training and deployment where possible through our Reservists Policy;
- offering support to local cadet units, either in our local community or in local schools, where possible; and
- participating actively in Armed Forces Day by flying the flag from County Hall during the preceding week and publicising it to staff and partners.

In order to achieve 'Gold Award' status, the County Council in addition to the above needs to:

- Contribute proactively at a national level to events that promote Reservists and partnering with Defence.
- Host workplace recruitment events and invite other employers to participate.
- Have targeted interactions with other large companies to promote support at a national level.
- Encourage the supply chain (where applicable) and appropriate, to sign the Armed Forces Covenant.
- Use internal military networks to share stories and activities through internal communications.
- Encourage employees to use the Armed Forces Covenant and Employer Recognition Scheme logos on their email signatures.

- Contribute and publish a number of newsletters and articles to highlight the importance and benefits of utilising military skills.
- Nominate an Armed Forces Lead within the organisation, to promote the values of employing Reservists, Veterans, WIS and military spouses.

Ms Kennard, as Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities, chairs the Board as the Armed Forces lead within the County Council. Some of the activities and initiatives listed for the 'Gold Award' status are already in place, but the motion highlights the main additional areas of work that would need to be undertaken to fully meet the 'Gold Award' status for supporting Armed Forces personnel and former personnel and their families.

Tony Kershaw

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