

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Council
<b>DATE</b>	9 December 2019
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Progress Update on Armed Forces Covenant accreditation process
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CUS/19/461
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Andy MacDonald
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Derek McGowan
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Derek McGowan
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	Council Decision

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide Council with an update on progress made to date on the Armed Forces Covenant accreditation process.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Council:-

- 2.1 Notes progress made to date on the Armed Forces Covenant and Defence and Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS).
- 2.2 Notes the intention to submit an application for gold award accreditation by 31 March 2020.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In September 2018 Council considered a report on the Armed Forces Covenant, adopting the Armed Forces Covenant and establishing an Advisory Working Group to oversee the implementation of the covenant.
- 3.2 The Advisory Working Group chaired by the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment and comprising Elected Members and Officers has been meeting, with an Officer Sub-Group established.
- 3.3 The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) 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.
- 3.4 Aberdeen City Council was awarded the silver award in 2017. Since then, an action plan has been identified and officers are working towards completing the identified actions with the intention of applying for gold award accreditation in 2020.
- 3.5 A Service Update was provided to Council in August 2019, setting out progress towards implementing the requirements of the Covenant, and advising that it was the intention of the Advisory Group that Gold award accreditation be applied for.
- 3.4 At a meeting in November 2019, the Council's new allocated Regional Employer Engagement Director (REED) from the Highland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (HRFCA) encouraged a future application for gold award accreditation.
- 3.5 The table provided at Appendix 1 demonstrates progress that has been made towards achieving gold award accreditation, and that a workshop has been arranged with the REED in January to assist the application.
- 3.6 Application submissions for gold award accreditation must be submitted by 31 March 2020 and outcomes will be advised in August 2020 and notified to Council via Service Update.

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report

### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report

## 6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	N/A		
Legal	N/A		
Employee	N/A		
Customer	N/A		
Environment	N/A		
Technology	N/A		
Reputational	Not fulfilling the actions as outlined in the Covenant	L	An action plan is in place to track progress and to ensure on track  Regular meetings of the Advisory Working Group and  Meetings established with a representative from the Highland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (HRFCA) to support the accreditation process.

## 7. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
Prosperous Economy	No direct link.
Prosperous People	No direct link.
Prosperous Place	No direct link.

Design Principles of Target Operating Model	
	Impact of Report
Workforce	The promotion of employment opportunities with Armed Forces personnel and veterans will ensure that

	the Council has the benefit of a wide range of skills and fits with our commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion.
<b>Partnerships and Alliances</b>	The Covenant will strengthen the work and partnership we have with the Armed Forces.

## 8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Equality &amp; Human Rights Impact Assessment</b>	not required
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	not required
<b>Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty</b>	not applicable

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Council report September 2018 on Community Covenant](#)

## 10. APPENDICES (if applicable)

Appendix 1 – action plan for Gold Award accreditation

## 11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Appendix 1

Action	Lead	Progress / Complete
must have signed the <a href="#">Armed Forces Covenant</a>		Complete and ongoing: – signed by Full Council
employers must have an existing relationship with their National Account Manager/REED/appropriate defence representative	Lesley Strachan	Complete and ongoing. ‘Gold’ Workshop arranged in January as support for ACC.
the employer must have already stated their intent to be supportive by using the ERS website to register at the Bronze level		Complete and ongoing.
the employer must proactively demonstrate their forces-friendly credentials as part of their recruiting and selection processes. Where possible, they should be engaged with <a href="#">Career Transition Partnership</a> (CTP) in the recruitment of service leavers	Lesley Strachan	Complete and ongoing. All recruitment activities reference that the Council is a Forces friendly employer. We are working with Career Transition Partnership to promote our vacancies to service leavers.
employers must employ at least one individual from the armed forces	Lesley Strachan	Complete and ongoing:

<p>community category that the nomination emphasises. For example, an employer nominated for support to the Reserves must employ at least one Reservist</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmation of two employees who are active Reservists and one who is a veteran and CFAV</li> <li>• Refreshed Communication to workforce November 2019 to encourage employees are Reservists, Veterans, Military Spouses / Partners or Cadet Forces Adult Volunteers to come forward and to become part of a network group</li> <li>• Information Page set up on People Anytime with content, videos</li> <li>• Email address: <a href="mailto:armedforces@aberdeencity.gov.uk">armedforces@aberdeencity.gov.uk</a> established for questions.</li> </ul>
<p>the employer must actively ensure that their workforce is aware of their positive policies towards defence people issues. For example, an employer nominated for support to the Reserves must have an internally publicised and positive HR policy on Reserves</p>	<p>Lesley Strachan</p>	<p>Complete and ongoing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance on Employing Reservists is available for managers and employees on the People Anytime pages on the zone.</li> <li>• The Guidance is under review in line with benchmarking with other organisations and Armed Forces Covenant best practice.</li> </ul>
<p>the employer must be an exemplar within their market sector, advocating support to Defence People issues to partner organisations, suppliers and customers with tangible positive results</p>	<p>Lesley Strachan</p>	<p>Complete and ongoing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working in partnership with other organisations locally on joint events to promote defence people issues e.g. already linking with Wood and Aberdeenshire Council.</li> <li>• Social media coverage of events / workshops etc.</li> <li>• Advocacy and information pages to be developed on the council website evidencing the Council's commitment to the Covenant and to employing forces personnel.</li> <li>• Plan with other partners and local employers to participate in events to promote our support to defence people issues.</li> </ul>

within the context of Reserves the employer must have demonstrated support to mobilisations or have a framework in place. They must provide at least 10 days' additional leave for training, fully paid, to the Reservist employee	Lesley Strachan	Complete and ongoing
the employer must not have been the subject of any negative PR or media activity		Complete and ongoing
We will offer up to 1% of our 2,000 new Council houses to those leaving the armed forces and adapt up to a further 0.5% for those injured in service.	Derek McGowan	Complete and ongoing – this is reflected in our Allocations policy.
We will support the employment of veterans and work with the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) to establish a tailored employment pathway for Service leavers.	Lesley Strachan	Complete and ongoing  - Link with REED and work with other local employers to arrange local recruitment events and workshops for army leavers / reservists etc showing vacancies, how to apply and other support.
We will support the employment of Service spouses and partners and provide advice services to support cadet forces to	Lesley Strachan	Complete – as an employer ACC promotes flexibility of work patterns; and support to spouses of those deployed e.g counselling service.

prepare for future employment.		
We will support our employees who are members of the Reserve forces, including by accommodating their training and deployment where possible.	Lesley Strachan	Complete and ongoing – Guidance for managers and employees in place and is under review.
We will offer support to our local cadet units, either in our local community or in local schools and we will engage with local schools and communities to promote the role and benefits of cadet forces and Reserve Armed Forces.	Lesley Stopani	Complete and ongoing - refreshed communications to Head Teachers circulated, encouraging support and awareness of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enrolment of children of Armed Forces personnel</li> <li>• transition to / from schools</li> <li>• learning support</li> <li>• cadets</li> <li>• general support for the Armed Forces within the school setting</li> </ul>
We will work with other organisations across the city to promote sporting opportunities for the armed forces.	Derek McGowan	Complete and ongoing – Sport Aberdeen recently awarded Silver Armed Forces Accreditation and opportunities available through SA for veterans.
We will arrange for colleagues from SAAFA, the Armed Forces Charity, to use a council office one day a week to improve access to support for veterans.	Derek McGowan	Complete and ongoing – this offer has been made to SAAFA for space at either Marischal College or Local offices and buildings. SAAFA have indicated it is unlikely that they will seek to do so however due to the nature of their work.

<p>We will ensure that Armed Forces Personnel are not disadvantaged when it comes to gaining a place at a school for their children.</p>		<p>Complete and ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– there is an existing policy for school allocations</li></ul>
<p>We will take part in Armed Forces Day.</p>		<p>Complete and ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– we are participants in this each year.</li></ul>