

HUMAN RESOURCES & COUNCIL TAX COMMITTEE

20 FEBRUARY 2019

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A.4 DEFENCE EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME UPDATE

(Report prepared by Anastasia Simpson and Katie Wilkins)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To update Human Resources Committee on the work that has been undertaken to date, and future activities planned, to support the armed forces/veteran community, including Tendring District Council's participation in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 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](#) (*the Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation ensuring that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, are treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy and society they serve with their lives*).

The covenant focusses on helping members of the armed forces community have the same access to government and commercial services and products as any other citizen. This support is provided in a number of areas including:-

- Education and family well-being;
- Having a home;
- Starting a new career;
- Access to healthcare;
- Financial assistance;
- Discounted services.

The Council currently holds ERS bronze award status, in achieving this, the Council has demonstrated its commitment to being 'armed forces-friendly' and that it is open to employing reservists, armed forces veterans (*including the wounded, injured and sick*), cadet instructors and military spouses/partners.

Officers are keen to develop this work, not only to support the priorities outlined in the Armed Forces Covenant; but also to support the Council's recruitment priorities. Colchester Barracks discharges around 400 military personnel each year, a number of which decide to remain in the Colchester and Tendring area. These personnel are highly trained and skilled and as such the Council is keen to tap into this talent pipeline

Officers are now working in partnership with Samantha Goodman (*Armed Forces Development Officer, at Colchester Borough Council (CBC)*), towards the attainment of silver accreditation. Samantha led CBC's submission and achievement of silver status in 2018. Tendring District Council also has an Elected member lead for work relating to support for the Armed Forces(Cllr Christopher Amos).

Employers can self-nominate for the ERS. Once the nomination has been validated it will be considered by a selection board at national level for gold awards and regional level for silver awards. The selection boards will be a panel chaired by a senior military officer and they will consider each nomination against the award criteria. Organisations selected for gold and silver awards will be formally notified in writing and invited to the relevant award event.

Appendix 1 details both the activity undertaken to date, and the proposed future activity to support the armed forces/veteran community and the achievement of silver award status.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended:

That the content of this report be noted.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

This work programme demonstrates our intention to '*recognise the diversity and equality of individuals*' and '*work collaboratively*' as detailed in our '*Values*' within the Corporate Plan.

FINANCE, OTHER RESOURCES AND RISK

There are no financial or other risks associated with the attainment of the ERS silver award. Any costs associated with the ongoing training of staff will be met from a designated budget for staff development.

LEGAL

Equalities Act 2010.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

Considerable work has been undertaken to date to '*demonstrate or advocate*' support to defence and the armed forces community. On this basis, the Council has already achieved Defence ERS bronze award status. The criteria for achieving bronze status is as follows:-

- Pledge to support the armed forces, including existing or prospective employees, who are members of the community;
- Must have signed the Armed Forces Covenant;
- Promote being armed forces-friendly and are open to employing reservists, armed forces veterans (*including the wounded, injured and sick*), cadet instructors and military spouses/partners.

To achieve silver award status, the Council must:-

- Already have stated their intent to be supportive by using the ERS website to register at the Bronze level;
- Proactively demonstrated that service personnel/armed forces community are not unfairly disadvantaged as part of their recruiting and selection processes;
- Employ at least one individual from the armed forces community category that the nomination emphasises. For example, an employer nominated for support to the Reserves must employ at least one Reservist;

- Actively ensure that their workforce is aware of their positive policies towards defense people issues (*for example, an employer nominated for support to the Reserves must have an internally publicised and positive HR policy on Reserves*);
- Within the context of Reserves, must have demonstrated support to mobilisations or have a framework in place. They must demonstrate support to training by providing at least 5 days' additional unpaid/paid leave (*wherever possible not to financially disadvantage Reservist employees*);
- Must not have been the subject of any negative PR or media activity.

Expressions of interest in the silver award must be submitted to the Ministry of Defence via the gov.uk website by 12 April 2019; submissions after this date will not be accepted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR THE DECISION

N/A

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Activity undertaken to date to support silver accreditation process.

Appendix 1

Activity undertaken to date to support silver accreditation process.

Description	Department	Status
<p>Regular Annual Civic Events including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remembrance Sunday – joint activity with Clacton Royal British Legion. Approx. 4000 local residents attend the War Memorial. Supported by local youth groups / cadets. • Armed Forces Day - (ceremony with flag raising at Town Hall attended by Chairman) • Annual Veterans Tea Dance (provided by TDC) • Other Remembrance Services / Flag Raising include Battle of Britain, Merchant Navy Day, Holocaust Memorial Day. • Ad hoc anniversaries such as Passhandale, Falklands Anniversary. • Tommy figure displayed at the Air Show, when the Battle of Britain flying and the Council “toured” Tommy around the District over the past year. • Ad hoc displays in Town Hall foyer. 	<p>Leadership Support & Community</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Annual Tending Jobs Fair is well supported and attended by Army, Royal Navy and Marines.</p> <p>Links to Career Transition Partnership (to include Service Leavers) established.</p>	<p>Regeneration</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Ex-armed forces personnel who are accepted for social housing are given priority status above all others within their housing band level,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has been successfully written into the allocations policy <p>Support/signposting for applicants for disabled facilities grants.</p>	<p>Housing</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>HR policies to support Armed Forces.</p> <p>Currently have a Reserves Policy in place since 2013.</p> <p>No current Reservist or Cadet Volunteers stated; staff survey to establish numbers of staff with links to Armed Forces carried out in 2018.</p> <p>Hold a Bronze Award, Employer Recognition Scheme (previously SaBRE). Currently making application for Silver Award. Links established with RFCA to support this.</p> <p>Mentor scheme implemented – 3 staff members (<i>who are themselves veterans</i>) trained as mentors to support any new starters to TDC who are transitioning from the military.</p> <p>Link to Career Transition Partnership, to advertise external job vacancies, in order to capture Service Leavers.</p> <p>Information on the Army’s Industry Placement Scheme cascaded to Managers.</p> <p>Benefit from attendance on Army Leadership Courses for TDC staff.</p>	<p>HR</p>	<p>Other options for future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for Veterans • Consider Work Placement Scheme

<p>Raise awareness internally of the Armed Forces Covenant and the needs of the armed forces community via:</p> <p>Armed Forces Covenant E-learning module available to TDC staff members.</p> <p>Delivery of half day workshops for front line staff.</p>	HR	Ongoing
<p>Dedicated Armed Forces Webpages.</p>	IT	<p>Updated as appropriate by Online Team</p> <p>Consider: Implement a 'Register with Us' option on the webpages, for veterans to provide their information</p>
<p>Promotion of Armed Forces Covenant and Funding to local organisations in Tendring.</p> <p>Employer Event on being 'Forces Friendly Employers' to be held March 2019.</p> <p>In process of joining 'Defence Discount Service' to offer discounts to Armed Forces community on leisure services in Tendring.</p>	Regeneration	<p>Consider: Promoting new funding streams through Armed Forces Covenant Fund to relevant organisations</p>
<p>Civil Military Partnership Board – Essex Meetings held quarterly,</p> <p>CLlr Amos was appointed as Armed Forces Member Champion in 2017.</p>	Armed Forces Member Champion / Armed Forces Officer Champion	<p>Ongoing:</p> <p>Attendance ensures TDC kept updated on how other LA's are supporting their local armed forces community, and any strategic plans/funding etc</p>
<p>Strategy for our Veterans, Strategy has been launched, consultation period until March 2019 on how this will be delivered.</p>		<p>Local Authorities will be expected to take forward this new strategy; level of activity unknown until consultation outcomes available.</p>