

Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Board

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 17 September 2019,
Breckland District Council Offices.

Present:

Air Cdre Kevin Pellatt (KP)	Norfolk Armed Forces Commissioner
Wg Cdr Jim Walls (JW)	RAF Marham
Lisa Thipthorp (LT)	RAF Families' Federation
Col Jamie Athill (JA)	Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association
Jocelyne Newman (JN)	RAF Marham
Lt Tracey Parrott (TP)	Royal Navy
Hugh King (HK)	Royal British Legion
Capt Jason Davies (JD)	1 st The Queen's Dragoon Guards
Sarah Rhoden (SR)	Norfolk County Council
Kevin Blogg (KB)	Norfolk County Council
Craig Chalmers (CC)	Norfolk County Council
Ivor Bartrum (IB)	East Anglia Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association
Mark Goldsmith (MG)	DWP
Cllr Keith Kiddie (KK)	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Mark Robinson (MR)	Breckland District Council
Steve James (SJ)	Breckland District Council
Merry Halliday (MH)	Norfolk County Council
Bev Herron (BH)	Norfolk County Council

Guest Speakers:

Gavin O'Kelly	Defence Transition Services
Andy Mansfield	Defence Transition Services
Laura Carey	Jon Egging Trust

Apologies:

Maj Gavin Rushmere (GR)	3 rd Battalion, Royal Anglian
Chris Haystead (CH)	Norwich City Council
Ann Berry (AB)	NHS
Maj Jerome Tyson (JT)	1 st The Queen's Dragoon Guards
Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen (SCA)	Breckland District Council
Cllr Elizabeth Nockolds (EN)	King's Lynn and West Norfolk Council
Dr Andrew Hayward (AH)	NHS

1.0	Welcome introductions and apologies	
1.1	Introductions and apologies are reflected above.	
1.2	Minutes from March 2019	
1.3	The Chair expressed concern at the number of actions in the previous minutes and their ownership. It was agreed that in future, actions would have a single named Board member as lead.	
1.4	The following points were noted from the March minutes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The WW1 Fund was closed and a letter was written to thank Norfolk Community Foundation for administering it. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A generic presentation was developed to talk about the Covenant, but it was not developed by the group mentioned in the minutes. It requires some further work to ensure it is dynamic. An early version has been delivered to the QDGs. • SCA had raised a question as to whether engagement with local authorities was being done too early? KP updated the Board that several meetings have taken place with District Councils and this area of work is progressing well. 	
1.5	Minutes from March 2019 were agreed as a true record.	
1.6	Protocols for future Board meetings	
	<p>It was agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Board members to raise questions by indicating to MH. • MH to convey a list of those wishing to speak on each item to KP and KP to invite Board member to speak. • A time limit may be introduced by KP for questioning. • No 'side meetings' to take place while members are speaking. • MH/BH to advise on items during the meeting to assist Board members in decision making. • A number of identified actions to be monitored to ensure sufficient progress is being made by Board. 	
2.0	Defence Transition Services (DTS) Presentation – Gavin O’Kelly	
2.1	A presentation was given to Board members on the MOD’s Defence Transition Service (DTS). The service consists of 13 people across the UK. A soft launch is currently planned for October 2019, followed by a hard launch in January 2020, however dates are subject to change. The service will seek to signpost service leavers to a variety of other organisations through their links across the country with relevant agencies. These links are currently being developed. An initial estimate is that they will support 3000 people a year.	
	LT arrived.	
2.2	The following questions were raised:	
2.3	How will DTS define case work? The majority will be on the phone due to resourcing levels for the service. There is a desire to also carry out home visits.	
2.4	Is the service open to reservists? Probably, but not fully scoped as yet.	
2.5	What is the window for eligibility i.e. day after someone joins or a set time after discharge? The policy for eligibility has not been published yet. DTS are looking to copy CTP (Career Transition Partnership) guidelines and work on the basis of 2 years before and 2 years after discharge. However, they recognise that discharge can be for a number of reasons which could impact upon the window, so someone who has been discharged for longer than 10 years will probably be discouraged from accessing the service.	
2.6	Concern was raised at the resource levels for the service. Where are employees currently based? All are home workers. The level of resource will be dependent upon uptake. The Defence Referral Protocol will be used once	

	someone contacts the service to ensure they are contacted within 48 hours. Individuals from the Veterans' Welfare Service have a similar model.	
2.7	How is the service being developed to work with Veterans' Gateway? GK was unable to give a detailed answer but confirmed that work is being carried out at a high level to ensure the two services complement each other.	
2.8	Are there too many charities already doing similar work to DTS? It was agreed that it is a crowded market but DTS will not interfere with this. The need for DTS has been identified at Parliamentary level. The current funding for the service is 2 years followed by a review. There is potential for it to join with the Veterans' Welfare Service and it may be affected by the new Office of Veterans' Affairs.	
2.9	Will families be included in the service? Where a referral has been from a spouse there will be an automatic decision to include the family in any support given. This will also be a consideration for face-to-face contact rather than telephone as it will provide a better picture of the service leaver's life and the sort of support they and their family may need.	
3.0	Jon Egging Trust Presentation – Laura Carey	
3.1	A presentation was given to Board by the Jon Egging Trust. The Trust seeks to inspire the next generation to be the best they can be. They work with young people who are facing barriers to education through no fault of their own. The Trust uses volunteers from the military community. They have worked with Downham Market Academy and RAF Marham.	
3.2	The following questions were raised:	
3.3	Does the Trust link with Cadet Forces? Yes, largely Air Cadets currently. It was recognised that linking with Cadet Forces is a way of continuing engagement with some young people after they have completed the programme at school.	
3.4	Is the Trust looking to work in London / South East? Work is being carried out in the South East but there is a lack of resources / coverage in London. The fund-raising team now in place is looking at ways to expand the offer.	
3.5	The Trust has worked extensively with RAF Marham but not with Robertson Barracks – is there a move to do so? One of the objectives of the Trust is to engage more with the Army. Working with Robertson Barracks would be most welcome.	
3.6	How does the Trust define success? The Trust is implementing a new 'tracking system' to allow them to engage further with young people who take part in the programme and see what happens in terms of their achievement, staying in education and then moving on to a career. Data will start to improve by the end of this academic year. There are however, some young people that the Trust loses touch with.	
3.7	JN wished to convey the good work done by the Trust having worked with them at RAF Marham.	
	Break LC and SR left the meeting	
4.0	Budget	

4.1	BH took the Board through the Budget paper, drawing their attention to section 5 the introduction of the Norfolk 2020 Fund and section 7 changes to national funding which may impact upon the NAFC budget.	
4.2	JW asked why the funding referred to in section 6.2 for Outside the Wire and Forces United had been unsuccessful? Outside the Wire was unsuccessful as it was deemed to duplicate the TILS (Transition, Intervention & Liaison Service in the NHS) and Forces United because it was felt that it duplicated what other football clubs had done.	
	AM arrived, introduced himself and agreed to take any questions on DTS outside the meeting.	
5.0	Working practices	
5.1	The paper sought to initiate a review of working practices. The following sections cover the Q&A posed.	
5.2	a) How the Board can remain effective and aspirational for Norfolk's armed forces community? b) How we collectively maintain oversight of relevant activity by our respective organisations that may influence the work of the Board?	
5.3	Board felt that development of the 'Norfolk Pledge', which will tell members of the Armed Forces community what they can expect in the County, along with the action plan will keep the Board on track for being effective and aspirational. Board agreed that the Covenant is resourced effectively, and the Armed Forces community is well represented and engaged fully with its work. It was felt that the right people / organisations are represented on the Board to maintain oversight and that mechanisms are in place for updates and concerns to be raised.	
5.4	a) Is the informal planning session in January still required as activity to deliver the action plan is now underway? b) Are two meetings per year sufficient to progress activity and ensure that all members are cited on the current activity of the Board? c) Do workstream leads need additional planned meetings with the Commissioner as previously envisaged to report progress?	
5.5	Board agreed that the January meeting is useful and debated whether all members of Board should be present or a smaller group such as the workstream leads. Board agreed that the January meeting should go ahead with an informal format and include all members of the Board to allow for business outside of the main workstreams to be picked up.	
5.6	Board discussed the mechanisms in place to update members outside of formal meetings. The Commissioner is alerted to any areas of concern by MH/BH and where relevant these are shared with members. This is in recognition that the Board is a voluntary body and therefore members are subject to other duties / responsibilities. It was agreed that communication and the need for the whole Board to meet may be triggered by a major change of direction or an issue which is deemed significant enough by the Commissioner.	
5.7	Board agreed that workstream leads should continue to provide update reports and that the Commissioner, MH/ BH to provide support in order to progress. The Commissioner will meet with workstream leads as and when deemed necessary outside of Board.	
5.8	a) How do we ensure that the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant fund supports a wide range of projects that represent the best value for money and support key drivers for change, tackling the issues identified through the action plan?	

5.9	The Board agreed that the inclusion of an informal January meeting to talk about activity outside of the action plan will assist with this. It will provide an opportunity for members to suggest areas of work where they think funding could be effective. Board noted funding bids are currently scrutinised first by MH/BH and then by the Finance Sub-Group, prior to being circulated to Board for a final decision. A scoring system is not used.	
5.10	The Board agreed an action to identify new areas of activity suitable for funding. KP will lead on this and pick it up at the January meeting.	KP
5.11	SJ alerted the Board to a new funding stream from Breckland District Council, administered by Norfolk Community Foundation that will provide community grants for VE/VJ day commemorations in 2020. The fund could be used to match fund projects that apply to the Norfolk 2020 Commemoration Fund.	
6.0	Action Plan – Workstream updates	
6.1	Promoting the Covenant – in addition to the workstream report:	
6.2	KP updated the Board on this workstream.	
6.3	MG extended an invitation to the Commissioner to attend an Employment Advisor meeting at DWP to talk about the Covenant. MG to provide dates.	MG
6.4	LT said the Forces Families Jobs website that has gone live and asked for it to be promoted at the Employment Advisor meetings that KP attends.	KP
6.5	MR suggested that the Covenant, Business Pledge and Forces Families website could be promoted at Business Forums / events held in Breckland. This could apply to the Promoting Covenant and Employment and Skills workstream. MG to consider.	MG
6.6	Employment and skills – in addition to the workstream report:	
6.7	MG updated Board on this workstream. Kim Wright (Partnership Manager DWP) is inputting into the group, particularly with a view to identifying companies that the workstream can engage with.	
6.8	KP expressed concern that he has put 5 local companies in touch with DERS (Defence Employer Recognition Scheme) but their signing up has not progressed for a number of reasons. The Board discussed issues including whether the DERS scheme is focused too much on getting companies to sign up rather than what happens after they do so. The way in which officers delivering DERS is regionally based and therefore potentially too stretched to actively pursue all leads.	
6.9	JW reported that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital at King's Lynn has been very proactive engaging with serving personnel and families on RAF Marham. This was felt to be good practice but not replicated by some companies. Getting more companies to actively engage with the armed forces community is seen as key to progress. MG to explore with the workstream lead.	MG
6.10	Education – in addition to the workstream report:	
6.11	LT updated Board on this workstream. Since the report was written it has been discovered that the Board's planned Education Conference on 8 November will clash with an event being held by VNET (Viscount Nelson Education Network) involving up to 203 Norfolk schools. The Board were asked how the workstream should proceed.	

6.12	<p>Board decided the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NAFC Education Conference planned for 8 November 2019 should be postponed and a new date identified in 2020. LT to contact VNET to establish whether a slot could be identified at the VNET conference for a presentation to be delivered and if so, to establish how many places could be taken by members of Board. 	LT
6.13	Health and Wellbeing workstream	
6.14	Board were asked to note that a workstream update report was not received from the workstream lead Derek Holesworth and that DH had not sent apologies for the Board meeting. KP to meet with DH to discuss way forward.	KP
6.15	The Commissioner will be giving a presentation about the Covenant to GP Practice Manager Groups in Norwich City and South Norfolk with a view to increasing the number of GP practices signed up to the Veteran Friendly scheme. This work is being coordinated by Andrew Hayward.	
6.16	The remainder of the workstream is looking at how to make best use of the Veterans' Gateway, linking it to Norfolk Community Directory and increasing the amount of local information is available. There is currently some confusion as to how this and services such as TILS are linking up. This work is ongoing.	
7.0	AOB	
7.1	<p>Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (DERS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> College of West Anglia has now achieved a Gold Award. Queen Elizabeth Hospital at King's Lynn, 3Sun and Norfolk County Council have achieved Silver Awards. 	
7.2	GDPR - Board members were informed that a form would be sent out shortly asking them to agree to having information shared by MH / BH for various activities that fall outside of normal NAFC business such as Civic Events. This is to meet obligations under GDPR.	MH
7.3	<p>QDG Update</p> <p>JD to send potential dates to MH/BH for KP to meet the new CO at QDGs.</p>	JD
7.4	<p>DWP Update</p> <p>MG informed the Board that DWP are making the role of Armed Forces District Lead full-time. MG to attend a workshop and feedback to Board.</p>	MG
7.5	TP informed the Board that Navy FiiT, an online service focusing on improving mental health, will be available via an external link shortly. TP to inform the Board when this happens.	TP
7.6	HK informed the Board that he had attended the RBL County Chairman's Seminar recently. The RBL are launching a new poppy logo, a poppy which will be fully recyclable and new collection boxes.	
5.5	Date of next meeting(s)	
5.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal Workshop – 14 January 2020 at Army Reserve Centre, Aylsham Road, Norwich starting at 10am. Next formal Board meeting - 18 March 2020 at Robertson Barracks, Swanton Morley starting at 10am. 	