



Norfolk Armed Forces Community Covenant Board

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 4 October 2017,
Army Reserves Centre, Aylsham Road, Norwich, NR3 2AB

Present:

Tony Tomkinson (TT)	Norfolk Armed Forces Commissioner
Lt Col Justin Stenhouse (JS)	1 st The Queen's Dragoon Guards
Sqn Ldr James Poynton (JP)	RAF Marham (representing Wg Cdr Geary)
Kevin Pellatt (KP)	SSAFA
Lisa Thipthorp (LT)	RAF Families' Federation
Jamie Athill (JA)	Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association
Maj Gavin Rushmere (GR)	3 rd Battalion, Royal Anglian (3ANG)
Cllr Keith Kiddie (KK)	Norfolk County Council
Simon Davis (SD)	Norfolk County Council
Cdr Richard Pethybridge (RP)	Royal Navy
Mark Goldsmith (MG)	DWP Job Centre Plus
Derek Holesworth (DH)	NHS
Ivor Bartrum (IB)	East Anglia Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association
Chris Haystead (CH)	Norfolk City Council
Eve Cronin (EC)	Norfolk County Council (representing Jan Feeney)
Merry Halliday (MH)	Norfolk County Council
Bev Herron (BVH)	Norfolk County Council

Guests:

Helen Debenham (HD)	Project Nova
Andy Simpson (AS)	Help for Heroes

Apologies:

John Boisson	Royal British Legion
Wg Cdr Stewart Geary	RAF Marham
Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen	Breckland Council
Cllr Elizabeth Nockolds	King's Lynn and West Norfolk Council
Jan Feeney	Norfolk County Council
David Ashworth	Norfolk County Council

1.0	Welcome introductions and apologies	Actions
1.1	TT welcomed the Board and guests. MH read out apologies (noted above) and ran through fire evacuation procedures for the building. Attendees introduced themselves and it was noted that MG is now the regional lead for the Armed Forces Covenant for DWP Job Centre Plus.	
1.2	TT extended thanks on behalf of the Board to Lt Col Justin Stenhouse for the community spirit shown by members of the 1 st The Queen's Dragoon Guards in Nevada during the recent shooting incident.	
2.0	Minutes from 17 March 2017	
2.1	The Board agreed minutes.	

3.0	Approval of Finance Sub-Group Terms of Reference (ToR)	
3.1	At the March meeting Board agreed to establish a Finance Sub-Group from its membership to strengthen the governance arrangements and the scrutiny process for funding bids (both to the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant and external funding such as the MOD Community fund).	
3.2	The Finance Sub Group met for the first time in April 2017 to develop ToR.	
3.3	KK asked for clarity regarding the use of 'scrutiny' in section 2.2. MH explained that bids will be looked at on a case by case basis by the Finance Sub-Group after a period of review and challenge by MH/BH. The sub-group will then review the bid for tone and content and request amendments prior to it being seen by Board for final approval. Meetings will be held on a needs basis but the majority of business will be carried out by email in order to maximise Board members' time.	
3.4	The Board agreed the Terms of Reference for the Finance Sub-Group.	
4.0	Update on the 2017/18 Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan	
4.1	MH took the Board through progress against the Action Plan on an exception basis including updates on specific areas of activity. Reference numbers stated below in brackets relate to actions in Action Plan.	
Building Communities		
4.2	(1.1) Norfolk-wide Covenant Pledge requires greater involvement from all districts and this will take longer than anticipated; therefore, the delivery date will be extended to January 2019. MH explained there are varied levels of understanding and activity between local authorities. It was noted that military presence within a district has an influence on Covenant activity.	
4.3	Local authorities in Lincolnshire have done something similar – LT to give MH information.	LT/MH
4.4	District / borough councils to be invited to a future meeting specifically for them to learn more about the Covenant.	TT/MH
4.5	(1.5) Cadet forces work – a programme of Prevent Duty Training has been delivered to those cadet forces that signed up for it. Norfolk's Army Cadet Force adult volunteers have also received training on working with young people with mental health conditions such as ADHD / Autism.	
4.6	TT has been contacted by the Cadet Band in Gt Yarmouth who are keen to be part of this work. TT/MH to follow up.	TT/MH
4.7	It was noted that the Board were pleased to see the number of cadets at the Battle of Britain ceremony at County Hall on 15 September.	
Health, Welfare and Housing		
4.8	(2.1) Following two failed funding bids to establish a mobile dental unit at RAF Marham a meeting is being held on 18 October with a service provider and representatives from Marham to see if a space can be found on base to run a fixed number of dental clinics for families of serving personnel. This will be limited to check-ups only and will have a fixed number of appointments available. If this goes ahead it will provide additional information with regard to	BVH

	the need for better provision of dental care. This will feed into the research work on dental provision in the West of Norfolk being carried out by Healthwatch Norfolk.	
4.9	DH to speak to Commissioners in local CCGs to find out what can be done to improve the availability of dental services.	DH
4.10	As a result of the issue being highlighted by RAF Marham, the RAF Families Federation are considering surveying other RAF bases to see if the issue applies elsewhere (to note RAF Valley have also highlighted problems and have looked at the possibility of mobile provision).	LT
4.11	(2.0 / 2.2) - DH explained he specialises in commissioning mental health services, including those for veterans. Each Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has an armed forces champion to ensure the armed forces communities' issues are constantly revisited. South Norfolk CCG are the lead for mental health in Norfolk and DH is making sure that veterans' needs are high on the agenda when contracts are commissioned. Action is ongoing.	DH
4.12	(2.4) Supporting local charities – This project has not started yet –It was agreed that part of the issue is the number of charities and the business skills that exist among some of them (this was linked to issues with funding and business planning). Board were asked to identify ways to take it forward.	All
4.13	JA suggested a phone call to COBSEO to establish the national view of how many military charities exist in Norfolk.	MH
4.14	MG volunteered to speak to the Suffolk Armed Forces Covenant Board (w/c 9/10/17) to see what they have done to support local military charities.	MG
4.15	HD agreed to look at issue from a charity perspective.	HD
Education, Employment and Skills		
4.16	(3.0) EC said the service will be an Integrated Health and Employment Service, rather than purely employment. Norfolk statistics show that unemployment is low but those that are out of work have a high proportion with muscular-skeletal or mental health issues. The service has been set up in recognition that although DWP will help to get people into work and NHS will give clinical help, the two issues would benefit from integration.	
4.17	The project is currently seeking funding (decision Jan – April 2018) from the EU Social Fund. It will be a countywide project led by NCC and delivered by partners including charities. What is actually delivered will align with need so the 'offer' will differ across Norfolk. NAFCC were asked to nominate a member to sit on the Steering Group for the project - Kevin Pellatt volunteered and this was agreed. KP to report back to Board with progress.	KP
4.18	(3.1 / 3.2) MG is now the DWP's regional lead for the Armed Forces Champion. This will include sitting on Suffolk's Armed Forces Covenant Board as well as Norfolk, and is alongside his role as a work coach. MG recently held an awareness day for identified Armed Forces Champions in DWP where representatives from Armed Forces came to talk to them. Further work will include a similar day with charities. The introduction of Universal Credit means there is no longer a way of identifying veterans in the system. MG met with CTP to try and establish numbers of service leavers – according to CTP there are	MG

	currently 212 veterans seeking employment in Norfolk. However different systems are showing different figures so the true picture remains unclear. MG to continue this work.	
4.19	(3.3) - Nationally, service children perform better than all children. In previous years Norfolk's service children have outperformed other service children at Key Stage 2 in the country. However, results this year have not continued this trend. Performance was: good in reading; writing was inline; spelling, punctuation and grammar was slightly below; but there was a real dip in mathematics. This means the overall measure of reading, writing and maths was brought down by maths. This will be the focus for schools going forward.	
4.20	Key Stage 1 results across all service children were strong and above the national average.	
4.21	The Board discussed the effect of redeployment on children's education. Mobility can effect results largely because of different curriculums, the effect of moving school and in some cases different education systems when a child comes from another country. This was handled well when the QDGs came here and those children continue to perform well. However, Marham have had a higher rate of continuous mobility which has had a large impact. Everyone is working hard to try and manage this to ensure the best outcome for children.	
4.22	(3.4) MOD Business Pledge - IB now has a position on Board which will help with this action. In September a paper was taken to Norfolk County Council's Communities Committee to raise awareness of the benefits to local businesses of employing service leavers and veterans.	
4.23	Norfolk Community Learning Services have been working with QDG spouses to assist with employability, including giving 1-2-1 advice on adult learning opportunities. Two courses held on the base were not attended due to childcare issues. LT suggested looking at the RBL Lifeworks programme as a future resource for the QDG spouses. Future activities will focus on family events on the base during school holidays to support spouses while soldiers are on operations and on exercise	MH
4.24	(4.1) Promoting the Covenant - The date for completion of this activity will be revised to October. MH to speak with LT to see how it can be moved forward.	MH/LT
4.25	(4.2) E-Learning - The national Armed Forces Covenant e-learning package has been rolled out to NCC staff and members. Once departmental champions have been identified this will form a core part of their awareness training. A meeting is scheduled w/c 9/10/17 with NCC Customer Service Centre to start integrating questions about armed forces service into call handling, and to link with the Veterans' Gateway.	MH
4.26	RP explained he had recently attended the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association Covenant Conference in Wandsworth where they spoke about training which RBL have provided to front line local authority staff in London. RP to send details to MH and LT.	RP
4.27	(4.3) NAFCC minutes - these will be published from the April 2017 meeting going forward.	MH

5.0	Budget	
5.1	BVH gave an overview of the current budget position.	
5.2	SD explained that the money given to Cherry Tree Academy to join the B2B programme is working well.	
5.3	IB asked for clarity around the money to be given to the Walnut Tree Project and NSFT. BVH explained that the Board agreed to fund the Walnut Tree £10k subject to additional funding being committed over two years from NSFT. This funding has been confirmed by NSFT and NCC has released the money. However, in the interim Walnut Tree have changed their bank details and company status – this means that there is a delay due to NCC systems having to be brought up to date.	
6.0	Funding Bids	
6.1	MH expressed her gratitude to members of the Finance Sub-Group for shaping bids to date.	
6.2	<p><u>Current bids include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jon Eggin Trust - has been submitted to the MOD Local Grants fund. • Bid from RAF Marham in connection to STEM work at Cherry Tree Academy - JP to follow this up as paperwork has not been seen by NAFCC. SD offered assistance with the bid, if required. • Chedgrave Parish Council for the construction of a war memorial – this bid to the MOD Local Grants Fund has been withdrawn due to a successful bid to WREN. However the Parish would like assistance with a bid in 2018 for the launch event for the memorial. 	JP
6.3	<p><u>Stand Easy</u> – This Norwich based acupuncture charity would like to bid for MOD funding under the Local Grants Fund, but they need to meet two criteria to satisfy MOD requirements. These are: to demonstrate there is a need for their service; and to provide evidence acupuncture is an effective treatment for PTSD. The British Acupuncture is funding research to evidence the efficacy. HealthWatch Norfolk are conducting the research. Stand Easy need 20 volunteers who suffer from PTSD to do the study; they currently have seven. Board were asked to put forward anyone they thought would benefit from the study – they do not need to be in Norfolk but need to be able to travel.</p>	All
6.4	HD to contact Stand Easy to see if a service could be offered to people suffering from alcohol / drug abuse.	HD
6.5	Representatives from Stand Easy and HealthWatch Norfolk will be coming to the March Board meeting to present the findings.	
	Break – the Board moved to the Billiard Room for presentations.	
7.0	Presentations	
7.1	Veterans' Gateway – unfortunately JB was unable to attend the meeting so MH took the Board through the contact statistics from launch date to 31 August.	
7.2	Project Nova – With guidance from Norfolk's AFC, Project Nova secured £20k to run a project to support veterans who are at risk of entering the Criminal Justice System (CJS) or have entered the CJS. HD explained the project	

	focuses on domestic violence perpetrators and the impact it has on their families. The project will be operational within the next 2-3 weeks.	
7.3	Help for Heroes (H4H) – AS took the Board through what H4H is currently doing and explained the need to identify hubs where work can be carried out, joining up charities and creating a better signposting for those that need help.	
7.4	<p>TT asked what this meant for Norfolk and how H4H envisaged working here. AS has visited the Britannia Veterans’ Centre. He recognises the good work being done but asked whether there was a strong enough link to health centres for example? AS explained that Birmingham have identified that a lot of veterans are entering the system through front line services, however getting treatment and navigating through the health system was an issue. Therefore, they have appointed ‘navigators’ to help individuals get through the system and get the help they need. H4H are also assisting with identify gaps, part of which is about getting charities to work better together.</p> <p>Board discussed that Veterans Norfolk was put in place to do exactly this – to bring charities together and the Covenant has also been working to do this. It was agreed that H4H and Veterans Norfolk together could potentially help to improve things.</p> <p>AS passed around booklet detailing what H4H is doing and his contact details.</p>	
7.5	TT thanked all of the speakers and Board moved back to the Officers Mess.	
8.0	AOB	
8.1	TT proposed the rebranding of the Norfolk Armed Forces Community Covenant to the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant in recognition that the national programme has dropped the use of ‘Community’. Board agreed.	
8.2	TT proposed better engagement with all District / Borough Armed Forces Champions. It was agreed that the current system is not working and that engagement is not consistent, however there was a reluctance to invite all 7 representatives to join the Board on a regular basis. Board agreed that TT should further investigate the possibility of a meeting specifically with the District / Borough representatives to develop a way forward.	TT/MH
9.0	Dates of next meetings	
9.1	<p>Wednesday 24 January 2018 – workshop to plan future direction and projects (location TBC).</p> <p>Next Board 14 March 2018 – MH extended John Boisson’s invitation to host the Board meeting at Halsey House in Cromer. This is the RBL’s residential care home in Norfolk. It was proposed the meeting start at 1pm to allow time for Board members to travel there.</p>	