

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Cabinet
Date:	26 July 2010
Title:	County Council Services in Support of the Armed Forces in Hampshire
Decision Reference:	1807
Report From:	Chief Executive

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. This report seeks to:

- Re-affirm the importance of effective joint working between the County Council and the Armed Forces based in Hampshire.
- Highlight the impact that the presence of all 3 Armed Forces has on the economy, environment, culture and communities of the County and the accompanying demand for County Council services.
- Demonstrate how County Council support services are required by the Armed Forces community as a result of deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Secure approval to actions intended to:
 - improve the strategic planning between the County Council and the Armed forces
 - enhance the effectiveness of support for serving personnel, their families and veterans through the Welfare Pathway Project
 - deliver joint short-term and construction projects for the benefit of the Armed Forces and civilian communities in Hampshire.

2. Background

2.1. Hampshire has a greater range of armed forces than any other county in the UK (see Map 1). The Army has major units in Aldershot, Bordon, Middle

Wallop, Minley and Winchester. The headquarters of United Kingdom Land Forces has recently been established in Andover and the only dedicated Army port in the UK is operated at Marchwood.

- 2.2. The Royal Navy has its headquarters and major port based in Portsmouth along with other key operational, training and research units in the south-east of Hampshire.
- 2.3. RAF Odiham is a front line support helicopter station which is the home base of the RAF fleet of Chinook heavy lift helicopters.
- 2.4. Approximately 22,000 serving personnel are stationed in Hampshire along with approximately 6,000 civilians directly employed by the Armed Forces in Hampshire (including Portsmouth). In addition, large numbers are employed in the defence and supply industries and the local economies benefit from expenditure by the Armed Forces and their serving personnel and families.
- 2.5. Each service has its own pattern of operating within Hampshire with varying types of locations, scale of units, type of residential accommodation for serving personnel and their use of services within the local area.
- 2.6. The Armed Forces are estimated to bring in the region of £1bn of expenditure per annum to the County's economy, with several towns and villages being heavily reliant on the resulting revenue and capital expenditure.
- 2.7. Many of the military bases are in remote locations and the issues faced by their communities are similar to those experienced by rural communities in Hampshire including isolation from employment and services and limited access to public transport. Other bases are located in or adjoining urban areas but are still largely segregated from the local communities.
- 2.8. Approximately 5% of the school children in Hampshire come from families with a military background.
- 2.9. The Armed Forces are one of the largest employers in Hampshire, occupy a wide range of land and buildings and have a unique set of needs for County Council services.
- 2.10. In recent years increasing numbers of reservists have been deployed to combat areas. Many reservists live away from their military bases and so do not receive the same support that exists in service communities and have differing needs for County Council welfare services.
- 2.11. For most of the past forty years, security considerations led to increased isolation between the Armed Forces and their surrounding communities. However with the settlement of the conflict in Northern Ireland, the Armed Forces are now actively seeking to re-engage with their local communities.

3. Armed Forces Impact upon Hampshire

- 3.1. Decisions taken by Central Government to intensify or decrease the Armed Forces presence in Hampshire will have a major collective impact on the County. An example is the recent decision to relocate operations from Wiltshire and establish the UK Land Forces HQ in existing buildings owned by the Ministry of Defence to the west of Andover. This investment will benefit the local economy whilst also creating a demand for children's and adult services, generating additional traffic movement and increasing the demand for public transport.
- 3.2. The forthcoming Defence and Security Review may lead to major changes to operational units and the use of the Ministry of Defence estate in Hampshire. This would have consequential impacts on the local communities, the economy and environment of the County and the personal demand for County Council services by serving personnel, their families and veterans.
- 3.3. The recent wars in Iraq and ongoing operations in Afghanistan have required in more intensive patterns of deployment of certain operational units based in Hampshire. This has led to:
 - Increased stress on serving personnel and their families with resulting demand for County Council welfare services.
 - Major increase in the number of service people with serious physical and/or psychological injuries requiring long-term support in-service and after leaving the Armed Forces. With the prospect of continuing engagement in Afghanistan it is expected that the demand for County Council support services from veterans and the families of serving personnel will continue to increase.
- 3.4. Many serving personnel and their families continue to have some isolation from their local communities and despite extensive welfare support provided by the Armed Forces and their benevolent associations there is likely to be an increasing demand for County Council and Health services.
- 3.5. Following their period of service, a large number of people have settled in Hampshire and make significant contributions to the culture and communities of the County. As a result of injuries suffered whilst serving many of these people will require specialist County Council support for themselves and their families.
- 3.6. Ex-service personnel have a greater than average representation amongst the homeless and within the criminal justice system despite extensive services currently provided by local and central government, the armed forces welfare and charitable organisations.

4. Actions taken by the County Council in support of the Armed Forces

- 4.1. A number of improvements to services have been made as reported to the Executive Member for Policy and Resources in December 2009 and linked to the County Council involvement with the South East Super Garrison Partnership. The importance of this work has been reported to the Hampshire Senate and opportunities explored with other agencies to improve support for the Armed Forces.
- 4.2. The County Council responded to the aims of improving support for all aspects of military life as set out in the Government's command paper 'The Nation's Commitment' with a series of initiatives including:
- a) Improving schools admissions, tracking attainment levels and special educational needs for military families
 - b) Issuing concessionary leisure cards for serving personnel and their families living in Hampshire
 - c) Commissioning a survey of attitudes towards a range of services/influences on the lives of Armed Forces families living in Hampshire
 - d) Creating an economic board with the Armed Forces in the north-east of the County aimed at assisting training, investment and employment opportunities for people leaving the Forces.
 - e) Constructing a new footpath to provide an improved and safer route between the service housing at RAF Odiham and the local schools and village centre
 - f) Introducing Trading Standards advice to military families about avoiding rogue traders
 - g) Continuing the County Council's recognition of the role of the Armed Forces both within Hampshire and nationally. The County Council has supported the provision of military museums in the County and events such as homecoming parades including that for 11 Light Brigade on their return from deployment in Afghanistan in which over 600 troops were welcomed back to Winchester.
 - h) Assembling a working group from the HR department and the County Council's reservists with the aim of bringing forward improvements in the way reservists are supported before, during and after deployment which may be used as a model by other employers.
- 4.3. Other initiatives are underway which are intended to utilise the County Council's capacity/expertise across departments whilst working with other partners such as advice on new facilities/adaptations for injured personnel and veterans.

- 4.4. The initiatives taken by the County Council in 2009 led to an invitation to become one of the Government's 'Welfare Pathway' Pilots. Proposals are being worked up with the Ministry of Defence, the three Services and their welfare and charitable organisations. These seek to improve the contact arrangements, range and depth of services provided by the County Council and other agencies for families and veterans requiring support services. The problems experienced by service families and veterans requiring targeted support include Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence.
- 4.5. A revised model of the Welfare Pathway is being prepared which better fits the circumstances in Hampshire. This will be piloted along with those of five other authorities until September 2011 with the expectation of legislation and the national roll-out of additional duties on local authorities and other agencies.

5. Information for future service planning

- 5.1. The County Council gathers extensive information on educational, economic, physical and other social data but information on the Armed Forces demand for and use of its services is limited. In order to improve the targeting of services, it is proposed that this data should be supplemented by additional monitoring of school records, mental health referrals, drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence amongst serving and ex-service personnel and their families.
- 5.2. As a first step to improving its evidence base the County Council commissioned Ipsos MORI to carry out a survey of Army personnel in Hampshire to better inform future policy decisions. Over 4,000 questionnaires were sent to Army families based in Hampshire seeking their opinions on a range of services available locally. The responses provide assessments of the perceived importance of these services, together with opinions on their quality. The results of the survey have already been used to amend some of the County Council services and details of the survey are appended to this report. The outcomes of the survey will be shared with the Armed Forces and other service providers with the aim of tackling key needs/areas of concern identified in the survey.

6. Proposals to improve joint working with the Armed Forces

- 6.1 A three stage approach is proposed:

Stage 1 - Continue to make early improvements to services

- 6.2 Considerable progress has been made with these first stage initiatives such as the changes in educational support for military families and others are being worked up with County Council departments.

Stage 2 - Develop the Welfare Pathway pilot

- 6.3 This to be targeted at meeting the needs of serving personnel, families, veterans and reservists (including County Council employees).
- 6.4 The Welfare Pathway will:
- Provide improved information for individuals on the availability of support services within and beyond the County Council.
 - Improve partnership working to fill existing gaps in provision and overlaps between the County Council, Armed Forces Health and other support services.
 - Enhance the training available to service leavers.
 - Ensure people leaving the Armed Forces are better equipped to deal with civilian life particularly those suffering from physical or psychological injuries.
 - Engage with groups such as the Nepalese community in Hampshire and other families of service personnel recruited from outside of the UK.
- 6.5 Widespread consultation is being held with the Ministry of Defence, Armed Forces and related welfare organisations and charities aimed at agreeing a model which will work effectively in Hampshire and be of value for adoption elsewhere in the UK. A workshop is to be held in Winchester in September with the aim of agreeing with partner organisations how improved and more accessible services can be made available to the Armed Forces community.

Stage 3 - Introduce new partnership arrangements with the Armed Forces

- 6.6 Currently liaison with the Armed Forces is through a series of formal or ad-hoc arrangements including membership of the Aldershot Super Garrison Partnership and contact through the Hampshire Senate. A Civilian/Military Delivery Board is proposed to replace the current liaison arrangements and for the Board to comprise senior members and chief officers of the County Council and Armed Forces.
- 6.7 It is proposed that the work of the Board should comprise four main areas:
- a) Sharing information and advance warning of forthcoming policy decisions which would impact on the interests of the County Council and/or the Armed Forces and Health to enable better service planning such as the funding and provision of transport infrastructure and educational facilities. Greater monitoring of the use of County Council support services by service personnel, their families and veterans is

proposed. The intention would be for both sides to be able to make better strategic decisions in deciding policy and allocating resources.

- b) Oversee the Welfare Pathway Pilot with working groups for key topics corresponding to the themes of the Local Area Agreement for Hampshire.
- c) Identify short term projects with the Armed Forces to improve service planning and delivery which are capable of completion within the anticipated six-monthly meeting cycle of the Board.
- d) Assemble and deliver construction of joint projects to improve support facilities and services for the Armed Forces and the wider community.

7. Resources

- 7.1. It is intended that any immediate changes in services should be met from within existing budgets. However, it is anticipated that the requirements for medium/long-term support services should be considered in the preparation of future delivery plans. It should be noted that early intervention in support of veterans and/or their families is likely to lead to improved outcomes for the customer and also longer term reductions in the total cost of care which the County Council would be obliged to provide.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. Repeated deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan have put armed forces personnel, their families and veterans under severe pressure. The County Council is the principal provider of services which contribute to providing a stable and supported base for the Armed Forces community. It will be highly important for the County Council to provide strong and effective support in the short/medium terms whilst personnel continue to be deployed in combat zones abroad.
- 8.2. Close ties have existed between the County Council, the Armed Forces and their support services and charities for many years and the recommendations seek to build on these relationships, provide more efficient planning and delivery of support services and extend this support by jointly developing projects with the Armed Forces and their partner organisations.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 That recognition be given to:
 - a) the importance of the contributions made by the Armed Forces to life in Hampshire and;
 - b) the need for effective joint working to enable the County Council to provide strong support services for serving personnel (including reservists), their families and veterans.

- 9.2 That approval be given to the three-stage approach set out in the report to enhance the support provided and the Chief Executive be authorised to:
- a) implement further early improvements to County Council services in support of the Armed Forces.
 - b) make support services more accessible through the operation of the Welfare Pathway Pilot with the Armed Forces, Welfare and Benevolent Organisations and other partners.
 - c) establish a joint County Council / Military Delivery Board to:
 - i) oversee strategic/long-term planning and decision making in the operation of the Armed Forces in Hampshire and the support services provided by the County Council,
 - ii) identify, resource and deliver short term joint County Council/military projects,
 - iii) assemble, design and manage joint construction projects to improve support facilities and services and,
 - iv) that Councillor David Kirk, the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services be appointed as the County Council's lead representative on the Delivery Board.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	Yes
Corporate Improvement Plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	Yes
Corporate Improvement Plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	Yes
Corporate Improvement Plan link number (if appropriate):	

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u> Report to Executive Member (P&R)	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u> December 2009
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
<u>Title</u> Government Command Paper The Nations Commitment		<u>Date</u> July 2008

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

An equalities impact assessment has been considered in the development of this report and no adverse impact has been identified.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

The County Council has a legal obligation under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to consider the impact of all the decisions it makes on the prevention of crime. The proposals in this report have a positive impact on the prevention of crime.

3. Climate Change:

- 3.1. By providing opportunities to influence the form of Armed Forces development and public transport links.
- 3.2. By providing early intervention in the design of new military installations in Hampshire.