

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Decision Report

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| <b>Decision Maker:</b>     | Executive Member for Policy and Resources      |
| <b>Date:</b>               | 25 June 2014                                   |
| <b>Title:</b>              | Planning for Armed Forces Changes in Hampshire |
| <b>Decision Reference:</b> | 5892   |
| <b>Report From:</b>        | Chief Executive                                |

**Contact name:** Ian Parker

**Tel:** 01962 847269

**Email:** [ian.parker@hants.gov.uk](mailto:ian.parker@hants.gov.uk)

#### 1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this report is to:

- 1) Identify the major changes planned for the Armed Forces based in Hampshire and its surrounding areas.
- 2) Highlight the expected impact on local communities and demand for County Council services; and
- 3) Recommend actions to respond to these changes.

1.2 Over the last decade relationships between the County Council and the different parts of the Armed Forces have improved significantly. This cooperation and improvement has been aided by the identification of resources for this purpose within the County Council and strong liaison arrangements with the Armed Forces. The changes mentioned below are significant for the personnel concerned but also for a range of services and the responses that the County Council requires to make. It is anticipated that the Executive Member for Policy and Resources would wish to welcome these changes and that the County Council signals its intentions to work with, cooperate and welcome these developments within the County.

#### 2. Background

2.1. A wide range of bases of all three services and the headquarters of both the Army and Royal Navy are located in Hampshire.

2.2. Approximately 30,000 serving men and women and civilian MoD employees are based in Hampshire in administrative, operational, training and reserve bases.

- 2.3. Hampshire has the largest concentrations of veterans in the UK notably in the Gosport, Fareham and Aldershot areas which also includes significant numbers of Nepalese and Commonwealth veterans. This extended service community makes major contributions to the economy and society of Hampshire.
- 2.4. The protracted conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have placed severe demands on the Armed Forces community. In response the County Council has improved its links with each of the forces and their voluntary sectors, became one of the Government's four Welfare Pathway Pilots and was the second local authority in the UK to sign an Armed Forces Community Covenant.
- 2.5. The establishment and operation of the Hampshire Civilian Military Partnership has further strengthened links with the Armed Forces Community.
- 2.6. These links enabled all three forces to make a major contribution during the recent flooding emergencies with the rapid deployment of manpower and equipment which greatly enhanced the capability of the civilian emergency services.
- 2.7. All County Council service departments contribute to an action plan intended to deliver timely and efficient services to the Armed Forces Community.

### **3. Changes facing the Armed Forces in Hampshire and Planned Responses**

#### **3.1. Organisational changes:**

- 3.1.1 As part of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) in 2010 there have been major amalgamations of units and reductions in staffing affecting all three services. There has also been a decision to move to much greater reliance on reserve forces.
- 3.1.2 The size of each service has been reduced particularly the Army which has created local difficulties for some personnel in finding alternative housing and employment after being made redundant. This has led the County Council to provide staff resources who have worked effectively with 145(S) Brigade and other agencies to improve the transition from forces to civilian life and to address specific difficulties experienced by Nepali and Commonwealth soldiers.
- 3.1.3 The demands of the conflict in Afghanistan have meant that some bases such as RAF Odiham have been operating at heightened levels for a number of years.
- 3.1.4 With the drawdown of activity in Afghanistan there has been a reduction in the number of service men and women who leave the forces and enter civilian life with physical injuries although it is anticipated that veterans with mental health/drug or alcohol abuse problems arising from deployment in conflict zones will continue to seek support from Adult Services for a number of years.

- 3.1.5 Support is being provided through Children's Services for the children of serving men and women affected by the uncertainty, disruption and in some cases bereavement arising from deployments to conflict zones.
- 3.1.6 The decision to move to a greater reliance on the employment of reserve forces in the future is of relevance to the County Council as an employer and also provider of support services.
- 3.1.7 For the past two years the County Council has sought to improve its support for the employment of reservists through the introduction of a reservist protocol. The County Council has recently been invited by the Cabinet Office to become one of its 'Trailblazer' authorities with a twinning arrangement to support HMS King Alfred, a Royal Naval reserve unit based in Portsmouth in its major recruitment campaign.
- 3.2. Re-basing of Military Units from Germany to the UK:
  - 3.2.1 UK military units have been based in Germany since the Second World War and these are due to be returned to the UK by 2018. This will lead to changing requirements for operational facilities, accommodation for serving men and women and their families and the levels of support services and facilities required in the community.
  - 3.2.2 These changes, which will be made in relatively short timescales, will impact on Hampshire in the following:
    - 1 The Aldershot area – a net increase of approximately 1,000 troops is expected for the Aldershot area. This revolves around the introduction of additional infantry and guards units to the Aldershot Garrison.

Representatives of all the County Council's service departments have been involved in negotiations with the Ministry of Defence (DIO) with the aim of influencing the detailed proposals for the changes in the Aldershot area. This is to ensure that future services can be provided efficiently and that resources made available to introduce changes (such as in school capacity) within the tight timetable involved with the re-basing of units. The introduction of heavy armoured vehicles with the arrival of the Scots Guards may require strengthening of bridges and other highway changes.
    - 2 North-west Hampshire – the greatest concentration of changes under the re-basing proposals will occur within Wiltshire with approximately 4,200 troops being relocated around Salisbury Plain. Whilst all of the operational facilities will be built within Wiltshire and current plans are to provide the required single person and service family accommodation in four settlements also in Wiltshire there is likely to be some spill-over into north-west Hampshire in traffic movements and demand for County Council services. Wiltshire Council has worked closely with the County Council in sharing information as the plans have evolved and any changes in demand are being monitored such as applications for admissions to schools in Hampshire.

- 3 South-east Hampshire – the operational changes proposed for Thorney Island in West Sussex will involve a net increase of approximately 300 service men and women within the next year.

Most of the service family accommodation and schooling for the Thorney Island base is provided in West Sussex but it is anticipated that there will be a significant number of families living in service family accommodation in Hampshire whose children will attend schools in the Havant area.

- 3.2.3 With all of the above changes the detailed proposals are being worked up within their budgetary limitations and it is intended that negotiations will continue with the DIO and the Army units involved to ensure that appropriate and efficient services will be planned and provided by the County Council to support incoming military personnel.

### 3.3. Restructuring of training units

- 3.3.1 Hampshire has major training units for the Armed Forces with significant changes underway leading to increased investment in some locations, one major closure and uncertainty over the long term future use of others.

- 3.3.2 Notably the Defence College at Worthy Down will be expanded with approximately a quarter of a billion pounds of investment in new and extended facilities by 2018. Negotiations are under way with the DIO to ensure that suitable provision is available in the local primary and secondary schools for the increase in personnel based at Worthy Down and to arrange for shared use of facilities from this major public investment. The procurement of the project has reached the stage where the selected contractor is due to be announced imminently. Discussions are proceeding with the DIO and local colleges on the way in which shared use of educational and recreational facilities can be achieved.

- 3.3.3 The planned closure of the Defence School of Electronic and Mechanical Engineering at Bordon and its relocation to the former RAF Lyneham site in Wiltshire will have a major impact on the surrounding community. Bordon and the surrounding settlement of Whitehill have grown up around the Army's presence for the last 110 years and the closure of the Garrison in December 2015 will have a major impact on the economy and social life of the town.

- 3.3.4 The County Council has been working with East Hampshire District Council, the DIO, the Homes and Communities Agency and the EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership to bring-forward proposals which would regenerate the town.

- 3.3.5 The town has suffered from lower levels of investment in private sector and community facilities in comparison with similar sized towns elsewhere in Hampshire and it is proposed that detailed proposals will be brought-forward for County Council intervention in the following areas:

- 1 Construction of a relief road to the west of the town to open up areas for redevelopment.
- 2 Provision of a new secondary school.

- 3 Economic development initiatives to redress the loss of employment and weak economic base of the town and improve the educational and skills levels.
  - 3.3.6 The long term retention of training at HMS Sultan in Gosport will be reviewed for possible relocation to Lyneham and given its significance to the local economy and skill base it will be important for the County Council together with Gosport Borough Council and the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership to be involved in the evaluation of such proposals.
- 3.4 Marchwood Military Port
  - 3.4.1 As part of the SDSR 2010 the MoD announced its intention to sell the Marchwood Sea Mounting Centre by April 2015. The aim was to ensure the military capability of Marchwood could continue to be met whilst allowing the development of commercial facilities on the site. The Sea Mounting Centre is a 91 ha dedication port facility which provides the MoD with the capability to send and receive goods and equipment to and from overseas. The port is linked to the National Rail network and has explosives and hazardous material handling capacity.
  - 3.4.2 A leasehold sale is proposed to a commercial operator who would provide the UK Sea Mounting (the loading and discharging of military cargo) and Total Support Force services (provision of Sponsored Reserves personnel who are contracted to provide a specific capability on operations) back to the Ministry of Defence.
  - 3.4.3 The proposed leasing of the port is currently being marketed through the formal European Union procurement process and the lease of the Centre is expected to be completed in early 2015.
  - 3.4.4 The outcome of the procurement exercise will lead to the preparation of detailed operating proposals and submission of planning applications for works within the port and infrastructure upgrades beyond the port boundaries. County Council members and officers will be involved in negotiations and consultations involving the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership, DIO and other agencies which will seek to balance the benefits of increased economic activity with pressures on transport infrastructure and the environment of the Waterside and adjoining New Forest National Park.
- 3.5 Staffing changes to units based in Hampshire
  - 3.5.1 It is anticipated that the staffing levels of the Army headquarters based in Andover will be increased by up to 1,000 staff in the next three years. This will have a positive impact on the economy of the Andover area and as with the re-basing changes negotiations are being held with DIO on the detail of this expansion and resulting changes in demand for County Council services.

**4 RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 4.1 That in preparation for the major changes underway and planned for the Armed Forces in Hampshire the Executive Member for Policy and Resources approves;
- 1) The County Council continuing to work with the Ministry of Defence, other local authorities and agencies to provide efficient and appropriate services, notably in the provision of education and health and in the promotion of reservist recruitment as set out in the report.
  - 2) That individual Executive Members and Chief Officers be asked to consider the implications for their service of these changes and report accordingly to the Executive Member.
  - 3) That an update on these issues be brought forward to the Executive Member for Policy and Resources in six months' time.

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

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| <b>Hampshire safer and more secure for all:</b>          | No  |
| Corporate Improvement Plan link number (if appropriate): |     |
| <b>Maximising well-being:</b>                            | Yes |
| Corporate Improvement Plan link number (if appropriate): |     |
| <b>Enhancing our quality of place:</b>                   | Yes |
| Corporate Improvement Plan link number (if appropriate): |     |
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**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.)**

DocumentLocation

None

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:**

### **1. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

1.1 An equalities impact assessment has been considered in the development of this report and no adverse impact has been identified. The County Council will continue to work with the Ministry of Defence in seeking to meet the aims of the Hampshire Armed Forces Community Covenant notably in assisting the Nepali and Commonwealth Forces families to make the transition from military to civilian life.

### **2 Impact on Crime and Disorder:**

2.1 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. It is intended that the impact of the arrival of significant numbers of additional troops on the night time economy of nearby communities will be kept under review.

### **3 Climate Change:**

- a. How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption? N/A
- b. How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient in its longer-term impacts? N