between

Representatives of Local Government, the Public Sector, the Charitable and Voluntary Sectors, Businesses, The Civilian Community of Hertfordshire

and

The Armed Forces Community in Hertfordshire
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SECTION 1: PARTICIPANTS

1.1 This Armed Forces Community Covenant is made between:

The serving and former members of Her Majesty’s Armed Forces and their families working and residing in Hertfordshire

And

Representatives of Local Government, the Public Sector, the Charitable and Voluntary Sectors, Businesses, and the Civilian Community of Hertfordshire

1.2 This Covenant was formally launched on 8 July 2012.

SECTION 2: PRINCIPLES OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

2.1 The Armed Forces Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. It is intended to complement the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces, at the local level.

2.2 The purpose of this Community Covenant is to encourage support for the Armed Forces Community working and living in Hertfordshire and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by members of this Armed Forces Community, particularly those who have given the most. This includes in-Service and ex-Service personnel their families and widow(er)s in Hertfordshire.

2.3 For Hertfordshire County Council and partner organisations, the Community Covenant presents an opportunity to bring their knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on the provision of help and advice to members of the Armed Forces Community.

2.4 For the Armed Forces community, the Community Covenant encourages the integration of Service life into civilian life and encourages members of the Armed Forces community to help their local community.
SECTION 3: OBJECTIVES AND GENERAL INTENTIONS

Aims of the Community Covenant

3.1 The Armed Forces Community Covenant complements the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant which defines the enduring, general principles that should govern the relationship between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces community.

3.2 It aims to encourage all parties within a community to offer support to the local Armed Forces community and make it easier for Service personnel, families and veterans to access the help and support available from the MOD, from statutory providers and from the Charitable and Voluntary Sector. These organisations already work together in partnership at local level.

3.3 The scheme is intended to be a two-way arrangement and the Armed Forces community are encouraged to do as much as they can to support their community and promote activity which integrates the Service community into civilian life.
Section 4: Hertfordshire Measures

The Hertfordshire Community Covenant

4.1 Our Principle

It is vital to recognise and celebrate what personnel serving in Her Majesty’s Armed Forces do for all of us. The sacrifice and commitment made by our Armed Forces community means that we, as a county, should ensure that no serving or retired or member of Her Majesty’s Armed Forces and veterans, nor their families should be disadvantaged as a result of serving their country and should receive fair and proper treatment in recognition of what they have done for all of us.

This Community Covenant is a living document and will be regularly revisited and updated.

4.2 Developing the Covenant

The development of Hertfordshire’s Community Covenant has been a truly countywide project – a reflection of the countywide support of the principle behind it. On 13 December 2011 over twenty five organisations from the public, private and charitable sectors came together to sign a pledge to develop the Community Covenant and have worked together since to identify ways to increase awareness of the contribution made by the Armed Forces and to deliver tangible results.

The "Hertfordshire Heroes" website will provide information about the Hertfordshire Covenant’s benefits and entitlements in one single easily accessible place, which will signpost to relevant organisations.

A copy of the pledge document and a list of supportive organisations can be found at Section 5 below.

4.3 The Armed Forces in Hertfordshire

The Hertfordshire Community Covenant is intended to be a two way arrangement between the Armed Forces Community and the civilian community of Hertfordshire. The Armed Forces Community will work with the community of Hertfordshire to

- promote an understanding and awareness amongst the public of the Armed Forces Community, their unique role and issues affecting the Armed Forces Community.
- to develop strong relationships with the local communities of Hertfordshire.
- support activities which help integrate the Armed Forces Community into local life, which in itself will aid the civilian community to develop a better understanding of the Armed Forces.
This will be through involvement in community regeneration projects, educational activities, sporting events and other forms of engagement within the Hertfordshire community as well as participation in events such as the Hertfordshire County Show, Freedom Parades, Armed Forces Day celebrations and Remembrance Services.

The Armed Forces Community within Hertfordshire can be defined as Regular and Reserve service personnel and veterans from all three Services, along with their immediate families, working and/or residing in Hertfordshire. The county is home to a number of military units, Service personnel and Service organisations that represent the Armed Forces Community and who play an important role in the Hertfordshire Community Covenant. These include:

- Permanent Joint Headquarters, Northwood, which accommodates over 2,000 service personnel from all three services.
- D Squadron of 254 Medical Regiment based at the TA Centre in Hitchin.
- 3 Platoon of E Company, 3rd Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment based at Hertford.

These are supported by cadet organisations from all three Services, and organisations such as the Royal British Legion, the Royal Naval Association, the Army Benevolent Fund and the Royal Air Force Association, all of which represent the interests of Military veterans within Hertfordshire.

4.4 Celebrating and Honouring the Armed Forces Community

There are very few people in Hertfordshire who so readily risk their lives to protect the country and its’ residents. It is this commitment that deserves to be recognised within this covenant and therefore, in order to celebrate and honour the Armed Forces Community…

- **We will** work to do more to **raise the public profile** of Hertfordshire’s Armed Forces, including better informing the community about what it is that the Armed Forces do.
- **We will** develop ways to facilitate and ease the transition of those leaving the military, into the civilian community in Hertfordshire.
- **We will** work to improve provision of information and access to public services
- **We will** work to secure **discounts** from local businesses for Armed Forces Personnel as a way of recognising what they have done for all of us.
- **We will** maintain this covenant on an ongoing basis, updating it over time and will not see it as ‘job done’ when it is first launched.

4.5 Fair access to services
Often, due to the transient nature of the work that the Armed Forces do, military personnel can sometimes face hurdles when trying to integrate into everyday community life. In these areas, the Armed Forces want to be treated fairly and properly. In order to ensure that access to services is promoted:

- **We will** work towards ensuring that all serving or retired Armed Forces personnel have appropriate access to **social housing**.
- **We will** work towards ensuring that children from Armed Forces families are not disadvantaged when applying for **school places**, specifically if moving to Hertfordshire midway through an academic year.
- **We will** work with the NHS, GP’s and others involved in care, to raise awareness of specific issues facing Armed Forces personnel, their families and veterans, and the support available, building on the work of the Hertfordshire Military Personnel, their families and Veterans Health and Wellbeing Forum
- **We will** work to ensure a seamless transition to NHS care, promoting the specific concerns and needs of Armed Forces Personnel

### 4.6 Helping Those Who Have Helped Us

Thankfully, the vast majority of Armed Forces Personnel have no additional needs or requirement of state services than any other resident. However, sometimes, due to the work that they do or have done, serving or retired Armed Forces personnel need a bit of extra support. In recognition of the work they have done for all of us, in order to help them when the need arises…

- **We will** develop the Hertfordshire Heroes brand and website, signposting to **Herts Help** as a one stop shop where serving or retired personnel can find out about the financial and welfare help available for them.
- **We will** ensure that the advice and support is available to help Military Personnel who are re-locating to Hertfordshire, to support them in their transition from military to civilian life.
- **We will** seek to promote access to suitable employment and training opportunities for those leaving active service, maximising and building on their skills gained in military service.

### 4.7 How we will keep this Covenant alive

- **Hertfordshire Covenant Board**: The covenant board will meet on a six monthly basis to ensure that it is being updated where necessary and all organisations are following through on the actions that they agreed to.
Section 5  Pledge Signing document

On 13 December 2011, the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, senior representatives of Her Majesty’s Armed Forces, the Royal British Legion, Hertfordshire County Council, all ten of Hertfordshire’s district and borough councils, NHS Hertfordshire, the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Job Centre Plus as well as other key representatives from the private, public, voluntary and charitable sectors assembled at County Hall in Hertford to sign a pledge to develop the Hertfordshire Community Covenant.

The aim of the signing ceremony was to kick start the process of establishing the covenant between the Armed Forces and the Hertfordshire community. Councillor Chris Hayward, Cabinet Member for Localism and Chairman of the multi-agency executive steering group charged with the developing the community covenant took the opportunity at the ceremony to comment that “This is an important way we can show our commitment to ensuring that those in the Armed Forces are not disadvantaged as a result of the vital work that they do for us.”

Below are a few links to coverage of the ceremony:

- Hertfordshire Horizons – page 5 of magazine
- Herts Advertiser 24
- Borehamwood Times
- Royal British Legion – page 13 of newsletter

- A couple of photos of the day
- Copy of signed pledge document
Section 6 – List of Covenant Supporters

Below is a list of the organisations currently committed to the Community Covenant. If you would like your organisation included please contact us at www.hertfordshireheroes.org

Hertfordshire County Council
Broxbourne Borough Council
Dacorum Borough Council
East Herts District Council
Hertsmere Borough Council
North Herts District Council
St Albans City and District Council
Stevenage Borough Council
Three Rivers District Council
Watford Borough Council
Welwyn Hatfield District Council
Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
Royal British Legion
Viewpoint
Hertfordshire Citizens Advice Bureaux
Hertfordshire Constabulary
Job Centre Plus
*all bus and coach companies that have signed up/bus and coach operators group
Hertfordshire Probation Service
NHS Hertfordshire
Army
Navy
RAF
Northwood HQ
Cadets & Reservists from all units in the county