



Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board meeting

Thursday 14 March 2024, 10:00-12:00

Location: Ashbourne Room, County Hall, Hertford, SG13 8DQ

In attendance:

- Cllr Fiona Hill, Chairman Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board
- Cllr Mark Mills-Bishop, Vice Chairman Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board
- Ashley Lamprell, Hertfordshire County Council
- Kate Brierley, Hertfordshire County Council
- Cllr David Andrews, East Herts District Champion
- Cllr Alistair Willoughby, North Herts District Champion
- Cllr Claire Parris, Stevenage District Champion
- WO1 Barry Smith, 254 Multi-Role Medical Regiment
- Col Clint Read, Northwood HQ
- Clare Smith, Northwood HQ
- Andy Stephenson, Royal British Legion Herts
- Barrie Griffiths, East of England Veterans Advisory Pensions Committee
- Harper Brown, Herts and West Essex ICB
- Ricky Bartlett, Hertfordshire Constabulary
- Louise Savoury, Herts Public Health
- Pip Darby, DWP
- David Hannon, DWP
- William Brown, East Anglia Reserve Forces' and Cadet's Association Herts County Forum
- Luther Blissett OBE DL, Armed Forces United, Former Players Club CIC also attending as Deputy Lieutenant for His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire Mr Robert Voss CBE C Snt J

Guests attending:

- Stan Nilsson, 162 Hospital Squadron
- Andrew Thomas, Hertfordshire Constabulary
- Nick Brown, Chairman of the Hertfordshire Army Benevolent Fund
- Ian Pearce, Carer Engagement Worker, Carers in Herts

Not in attendance:

- Cllr Paul Seeby, Broxbourne District Champion
- Cllr Ron Tindall, Dacorum Borough Council
- Cllr Alpha Collins, Hertsmeire District Champion
- Cllr Ajanta Hilton, St Albans District Champion
- Cllr Jon Tankard, Three Rivers District Champion
- Cllr Steve McNamara, Welwyn Hatfield District Champion
- Cllr Amanda Grimston, Watford District Champion
- Paul Bishop, East Anglia Reserve Forces' and Cadet's Association
- Kristina Carrington, MOD Regional Representative
- Gail Jones, MOD Military Civilian Integration
- Lt Cdr Ian Dorward, HMS Wildfire
- Patricia Chadwick, Royal British Legion
- Hugh Ottewell, SAAFA Herts
- Angela Fox, Citizens Advice Dacorum
- Donna Schultz, Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce
- Dr Oliver Pugh, HPFT
- Leslie Billy, Viewpoint
- John Phillips, Project Nova
- Louise Briggs, Veterans UK
- Veronika Barbaglia, HCT
- Vanessa Plumley, RAF Families Federation
- Cat Calder, Army Families Federation
- Nicola Thompson, Naval Families Federation

Minutes

| 1 | Welcome from the Chairman and introductions | Actions |
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| | The Chairman commenced the meeting by extending a warm welcome to Luther Blissett OBE DL, attending to represent His Majesty's the Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire and to all attendees present. Subsequently, each participant introduced themselves, providing their name and organisation as part of the customary round of introductions. | |
| 2 | Apologies and substitutions | |
| | Cllr Hill noted the apologies (listed above) and substitutions. Luther Blissett OBE DL attended to represent His Majesty's the Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire at the meeting today. | |

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| 3 | Minutes and actions from the previous meeting held 28 September 2023 | |
| | <p>Cllr Hill introduced the agenda item and asked if Board members had any comments from previous meeting minutes held 28 September 2023.</p> <p>Item 6 – it was raised that the statement about Department of Education stating that it will no longer match the Ministry of Defence daily allowance for Combined Cadet Force adult instructors in state schools was since unable to be corroborated. It was agreed that the minutes from 28 September 2023 would not be amended but a note would be added to these minutes.</p> <p>The minutes from 28 September 2023 were agreed.</p> | |
| 4 | Standing item: The Military Perspective | |
| | <p>The Chairman invited the following Board members to share their updates.</p> <p>Deputy Lieutenant Luther Blissett, representing His Majesty’s Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire Mr Robert Voss, gave an update. Mr Blissett said that Forces United have been working on improving housing for veterans, mental health issues and suicide prevention. Projects include encouraging football clubs to establish breakfast clubs for the armed forces community.</p> <p>Colonel Clinton Read from Northwood HQ said:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northwood HQ continues to be the centre of gravity for Defence's Operational Command and Control. • Northwood HQ will shortly trial a green travel scheme, a shuttle bus in the local community which aims to deliver on their climate change and community objectives, whilst relieving pressure on the limited on site parking. • Looking forward to supporting the local community with the 80th anniversary of D-Day. • Several Afghan families have been housed in married quarters in Hertfordshire. • The Royal Navy Volunteer Band had a successful 25th Anniversary concert in October raising money for charity. • Northwood HQ has been involved in this year’s Christmas art competition from judging the shortlisted artwork to attending school assemblies. This was the first year it was expanded into special educational needs schools and as a result they will deliver a bespoke day at Woolgrove school as the prize for that winner. The Day of Adventure, organised by Northwood HQ, is taking place on 19 March with the Lord Lieutenant, Chairman and Vice Chairman of Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board and Chairman of Hertfordshire County Council planning to attend. | |

WO1 Barry Smith, 254 Medical Regiment updated the Board.

- The 254 Medical Regiment is now reformed as a Multi Role Medical Regiment meaning their role has changed and are now trained to take people from the battlefield and operate closer to the front line rather than passing to the field hospital.
- There is a new squadron, the 162 Hospital Squadron which has permanent staff and is the only formed Army subunit in the county. They will be recruiting heavily, mostly medical staff.
- Stan Nilsson will be the representative on this Board for the 162 Hospital Squadron.
- Herts County Show is coming up in May 2024. If you would like to join the military village, please be in touch with Barry. Looking for tri-services support and all military charities are welcome.

William Brown, East Anglia Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association Herts County Forum, gave an update about number of Reserves, Reservists deployment, employer engagement and Cadets

- Volunteer Reserves 3,590 people joined the Volunteer Reserves in the last year. This is a decrease of 1,810 from the year before (33.5%). The current Volunteer Reserve Trained Strength is as at 1 October 2023 is as follows:
 - a) Maritime Reserve - 2,720
 - b) Army Reserve - 24,440
 - c) RAF Reserve - 2,760
- Reservists continue to serve in support of operations worldwide. Currently more than 600 Volunteer Reservists are in permanent service and in excess of 5,500 Reservists are on FTRS.
- 11 Gold Awards, 22 Silver Awards and 94 Bronze Awards have been awarded across East Anglia. Five employers revalidated their Gold Award and four employers who revalidated their Silver Award.
- There are over 135,000 young people and nearly 26,000 adult volunteers in approximately 3,500 cadet units across the UK.

After the updates, there was a discussion about leases of community buildings for Cadet organisations which has been raised at County Council.

The Army Engagement Team will be hosting an event held in Stevenage. If you don't employ Reservists but you would like to attend, please get in touch with Barry.

All to be in touch with Barry Smith if you'd like to join the Military Village at the County Show.

William Brown to promote the HCC Locality Budget Scheme with his organisation.

Barry Smith to send details of Army Engagement Team event in Stevenage.

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| | <p>All County Councillors have a Locality Budget, and the Vice Chairman expressed his thanks to those who support the Cadets through that funding.</p> <p>Lt Cdr Ian Dorward, HMS Wildfire was not in attendance to give an update. Ashley Lamprell will enquire if he would like to provide an update.</p> | <p>Ashley Lamprell to ask if HMS Wildfire would like to provide an update post meeting.</p> |
| <p>5</p> | <p>Carers in Hertfordshire presentation</p> | |
| | <p>Cllr Hill invited Ian Pearce, Carer Engagement Worker from Carers in Herts to present to the Board about the work of his organisation with a view to join the Board.</p> <div data-bbox="344 539 398 598" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>CinH Presentation generic 2024.pptx</p> <p>After the presentation there was a discussion about the transitional arrangement for when carer stops caring. Ian Pearce will investigate this and share information with Ashley Lamprell (see post meeting note below).</p> <p>Colleagues from DWP mentioned support available from the jobcentre. Hemel Hempstead Job Centre was highlighted as having an active group for ex-forces as well as a breakfast club.</p> <p>The importance of carers regarding themselves as members of the Armed Forces community was mentioned. This means additional support is then available.</p> <p>Carers in Herts are planning to sign the Armed Forces Covenant on 13 April. Barry Smith and Ian Pearce to be in touch about this event.</p> <p>It was suggested that young carers be signposted to Cadet and Scout organisations. Ashley Lamprell to share information and contacts for Cadets and Scouts with Ian Pearce.</p> | <p>Ian Pearce to share information about transitional arrangement for carers (see post meeting note)</p> <p>Barry Smith and Ian Pearce to be in touch about Carers in Herts signing the Covenant.</p> <p>Ashley Lamprell to share information and contacts for Cadets and Scouts with Ian Pearce.</p> |
| | <p>POST MEETING NOTE</p> | |
| | <p>Ian Pearce shared some information after the meeting about transition arrangements for carers when they stop caring. A summary has been added to the minutes for Board member's information.</p> | |

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| | <p><i>Carers in Herts says that a big issue for bereaved carers is the loss of income. For example if they, or the person they cared for receives Attendance Allowance or PIP, a mobility vehicle, Carers Allowance and any domiciliary care, it will cease once they stop caring. Bereaved carers can continue to use all Carers in Herts services for three years after their caring role stops, they can access the bereavement service as well as development and learning sessions.</i></p> <p><i>DWP says the Universal Credit Operational Guidance about Carers states, “UC works for carers as it gives support to those who can only work part-time due to their caring responsibilities and when people are able to increase their working hours when caring responsibilities change. Work coaches should always ensure that any work-related activities are tailored to the individual’s circumstances.</i></p> <p><i>Commitments from carers is to be defined on a case-by-case basis. Jobcentres focus on getting people into work if they can work. Caring responsibilities differ but if someone needs to care for someone for more than 35 hours per week, they should not be expected to undertake any other work or work search activities. As a further example, if they provide care for 20 hours per week, they should not be expected to work or search for work for 15 hours. Even then, there is flexibility regarding individual circumstances.</i></p> <p><i>Jobcentres can also ensure that any customer is receiving all that they are entitled to, for example Basic Allowance, Carers Allowance, Housing Payments etc and to ensure payments are made on time.</i></p> | |
| 6 | Update: Education Subgroup progress report | |
| | <p>Cllr Mark Mills-Bishop was invited to update the Board about progress made by the Education Subgroup as recently appointed Chair of the Subgroup.</p> <p>Cllr Mills-Bishop mentioned the priorities for the group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoping at first meeting to garner areas of interest/need. Please email Ashley Lamprell if you have any areas of work to suggest that the group take forward. • Admissions policy for children of those currently serving • Any gap in attainment because children of those who are serving are moving schools • Veterans in prison • Secondary school entrance exams being only on one date, prior to when many Service families will have their received their posting. | <p>Any Board member with a suggestion for areas of work for the Education Subgroup to undertake to email Ashley Lamprell</p> |

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| | <p>Support for young carers and Cadets was also mentioned as an important element.</p> <p>Cllr Mills-Bishop expressed gratitude to Colonel Read for their involvement in the Christmas art competition from judging artwork to attending assemblies and answering children’s questions.</p> <p>There was a suggestion that the three Subgroup Chairs should meet in order to coordinate action plans.</p> <p>Louise Savoury promoted the updated Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for unpaid carers which contains a recommendation section including for schools and how we enhance schools awareness. The JSNA is available to read here and JSNA on a page.</p> <p>The Service Pupil Premium was mentioned and Hartsbourne Primary School was highlighted for how they use the SPP with other local schools to optimise it’s impact.</p> <p>There was a discussion about challenges relating to a specific case of housing in East Herts. Stoll was mentioned as an organisation that assists with housing for veterans. Ashley Lamprell to strengthen our connection with Stoll.</p> | <p>Ashley Lamprell to facilitate a meeting between 3 Subgroup Chairs</p> <p>Ashley Lamprell to reach out to Stoll for an update on their support available in Hertfordshire</p> |
| 7 | Update: Housing Subgroup progress report | |
| | <p>Cllr Fiona Hill invited Andy Stephenson, Chairman of Herts Royal British Legion and recently appointed as the Housing Subgroup Chairman to give an update to the Board. Andy Stephenson presented and spoke to this draft action plan for the Subgroup for 2024:</p> <p>He introduced the members of the Subgroup:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrew “Freddie” Lomas – Welfare Office at Northwood HQ • Nick Brown – Chairman of the Army Benevolent Fund Hertfordshire • Cllr Jon Tankard from Three Rivers Council • Chris Phillips from RBL • Chief Inspector Ricky Bartlett of Hertfordshire Constabulary <p>Chief Inspector Bartlett explained work that has begun to train police officers to “ask the question” when speaking with people who are homeless. There are also plans to work with the Domestic Violence team and women’s safe refuges.</p> | |

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| | <p>There was a discussion about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the use of the word veteran and the phrase Armed Forces community. • legislation that someone must have left the Military within 5 years to have the local connection clause not apply when seeking social housing. Andy Stephenson thinks that all District and Borough Councils already have a policy to remove the local connection requirement for those who have served regardless of the date they left. <p>It was agreed that Board members involved in the above discussion points would have a further meeting to agree a way forward.</p> <p>Colonel Clint Read said that he would caution that research into defence policy (in draft objective 5) is out of scope for this group and suggested focus could go elsewhere. It was agreed to remove objective 5 from the housing action plan.</p> | <p>Ashley Lamprell to set up meeting with Cllr Hill and relevant Board members on 5 year stipulation and use of veteran or Armed Forces Community</p> |
| 8 | Update: Health Subgroup progress report | |
| | <p>Harper Brown, NHS, gave an update on the progress of the Health Subgroup.</p> <p>The Health Subgroup covers 3 areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social prescribing – all social prescribing teams are being trained by Op COMMUNITY colleagues at HCNS in working with veterans and support available. 2. Primary Care – 134 practices across the Herts and West Essex ICB are organised into 34 Primary Care Networks covering 1.6million people. All but 1 PCNs have at least 1 Veteran Friendly accredited practice. There is a lot of work to ensure we have a practice in all PCNs accredited. 3. Secondary Care – All but one Trusts in Hertfordshire (including acute, community and mental health) are accredited as Veteran Aware. The Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance works with Trusts to assist in accreditation. <p>Health Subgroup is currently exploring the following areas for next year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dentistry – NHS will have delegated budget to local Board which includes dentistry • Maternity Services • Targeted health and lung checks for cancer • Mental health and Suicide Prevention Board • Addiction Service | <p>Harper Brown and Cllr Andrews to connect after the meeting regarding the PCN to be accredited as Veteran Friendly</p> |

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| 9 | <p>Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board Action Plan 2024/25</p> <p>Cllr Hill asked Kate Brierley to introduce the Board's action plan for 2024/2025</p> <p>Kate Brierley shared this proposed action plan noting that we can incorporate the changes discussed at this Board meeting.</p> <p>It is good practice to have this action plan so that other organisations can see how they are able to contribute and where resources can be allocated to make things happen.</p> <p>It was noted that we will remove Objective 5 from the housing plan as per item 7.</p> <p>The Action Plan was endorsed as a work in progress and under the proviso that there will be a meeting between those Board Members concerned.</p> | <p>Ashley Lamprell to set up meeting with those concerned about the Action Plan wording.</p> |
| 10 | <p>Close</p> <p>Cllr Fiona Hill thanked everyone for joining the meeting and noted that the next meeting will be held in October 2024 but date and location to be determined. Cllr Hill thanked Luther Blissett OBE DL for attending and invited him to make any final remarks.</p> <p>Luther Blissett DL noted that he will report back to the Lord Lieutenant that he felt the meeting was an excellent example of partnership working and outcome focused. He committed to helping reach out to more of the Armed Forces community through his work and to collaborate with those in the room.</p> <p>The meeting closed.</p> | |

Next meeting: 9 October 2024 10:00-12:00noon (location TBD)