

**Executive Board**  
**27.07.20**

**ARMED FORCES (AF) COVENANT AND  
DEFENCE EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME (DERS) BRONZE  
AWARD**

**Recommendations / key decisions required:**

To approve for the Council to sign the Armed Forces (AF) Covenant and to support joining the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (DERS) at Bronze Award Level.

**Reasons:**

Nationally all County Councils have signed the AF Community Covenant, Carmarthenshire did so in 2013. Whilst extant, the Community Covenant has now evolved into a whole AF Covenant - with increasingly developed central processes and a more joined up approach to capturing information, monitoring and reporting through the WLGA and Welsh Government. All Councils are being encouraged to sign the AF Covenant.

Signing the AF Covenant is a mandatory precursor for the DERS which encourages employers to support defence and inspire others to do the same. The scheme provides for bronze, silver and gold awards for employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the armed forces community, aligning their values with those of the AF Covenant.

Relevant scrutiny committee to be consulted N/A

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Exec Board Decision Required | YES |
|------------------------------|-----|

|                           |    |
|---------------------------|----|
| Council Decision Required | NO |
|---------------------------|----|

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER: - Cllr. David Jenkins**

Directorate: Chief Executive's

Name of Head of Service:  
Noelwyn Daniel

Report Author:

Gwyneth Ayers

Designations:

Head of ICT and Corporate  
Policy

Policy & Partnership Manager

Tel Nos.

01267 246270  
01267 224659

E Mail Addresses:

[NDaniel@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:NDaniel@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

[GAyers@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:GAyers@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

**Executive Summary**  
**Executive Board**  
**27.07.20**

**Armed Forces (AF) Covenant and  
Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (DERS) Bronze Award**

**The Armed Forces Covenant**

The AF Covenant represents a pledge that those who serve in the Armed Forces (AF), whether Regular or Reserve, and those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and services. There is also acknowledgement that special consideration may be appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given the most, such as the injured and the bereaved.

There are currently no definitive and comprehensive statistics on the size or demographics of the Armed Forces community within Carmarthenshire. This includes serving Regular and Reserve personnel, veterans, and their families. However, following a campaign by the Royal British Legion during 2016, there has been an agreement to ensure that the 2021 census includes questions regarding the Armed Forces community.

The Armed Forces Act 2011 created the requirement for an annual AF Covenant report to UK Parliament each year, setting out how the UK Government supports our Armed Forces, their families and veterans in key areas such as healthcare, housing and education.

The Welsh Government launched the first Wales AF Covenant Annual Report on 16th May 2019. The report has been laid in the National Assembly for Wales and outlines plans and initiatives in place to support the AF community across Wales over the next 12 months. It has been widely publicised, and the collaborative, partnership-based outcomes and actions have been endorsed by the Minister for Housing and Local Government.

**Our work in Carmarthenshire**

Carmarthenshire County Council signed up to the Community Covenant in 2013 and has been supporting the forces community. However, following further developments at a national level, the Community Covenant has now evolved into a wider AF Covenant and it is therefore an opportune moment for this work to be recognised more formally by refreshing the commitment. Doing so would demonstrate both the Council's continued support for the AF community and assure national alignment.

As part of our commitment to the Community Covenant, examples of our work include:

- The appointment of a Regional Armed Forces Officer to lead on the delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant across Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire through funding from the Ministry of Defence and the Welsh Government
- Access to 'Veterans Hubs' funding to strengthen links with third sector organisations to provide advice, support and referrals and additional support for awareness raising events in key areas of the county
- Working with colleagues in Education and Children's Services to look at supporting Service Children in Education and building an evidence base upon which to target the available support and resources where it is needed

- Working with colleagues in Homes and Safer Communities to promote the support available for the Armed Forces community and to strengthen links with external agencies such as SSAFA and the Royal British Legion
- Hosting various events and drop in sessions through services such as yr Hwb and the Help for Heroes support at Carmarthen Leisure Centre.

In addition to the Covenant, it is recommended that the Council applies for the DERS Bronze Award. This action would demonstrate the Council's commitment to being armed forces-friendly and open to employing reservists, armed forces veterans (including the wounded, injured and sick), cadet instructors and military spouses/partners. In return Carmarthenshire County Council would be registered on a public database and receive an electronic certificate and logos for appropriate display. The requirements for achieving this award are outlined in Section 1: Principles of The Armed Forces Covenant and Section 2: Demonstrating our Commitment of the attached Armed Forces Covenant.

Once Carmarthenshire County Council has signed the AF Covenant and gained the Bronze DERS Award (through self-nomination) consideration can then be given to whether the Council would wish to progress to the Silver and then subsequently the Gold Award, which have additional requirements to fulfil these standards.

**DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?**

**YES - Armed Forces Covenant**

## IMPLICATIONS

**I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :**

**Signed:** Noelwyn Daniel

**Head of ICT & Corporate Policy**

| Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities | Legal       | Finance     | ICT         | Risk Management Issues | Staffing Implications | Physical Assets |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| <b>NONE</b>                             | <b>NONE</b> | <b>NONE</b> | <b>NONE</b> | <b>NONE</b>            | <b>NONE</b>           | <b>NONE</b>     |

### 1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

There are no additional implications to be considered before the County self-nominates for the Bronze DERS Award. In order to achieve this status the Council needs to demonstrate it is a 'supportive organisation' and we believe that the steps taken since 2013 in signing the Community Covenant, appointing an Armed Forces Champion, working with the Council's service departments to develop provision and being proactive in terms of partnership work with other agencies and organisations would fulfil this requirement. Several Welsh local authorities are already recognised as part of the awards and Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire Councils are also working towards their recognition at the moment.

### 3. Finance

A regional Armed Forces Liaison Officer has been appointed to work across Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire councils with funding secured through the Ministry of Defence and Welsh Government.

### 7. Staffing Implications

Support for the AF Covenant and DERS application have been discussed and agreed with colleagues in People Management who are confident that we can fulfil the requirements to achieve the Bronze Award as outlined in Section 1 a 2 of the Covenant.

## CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Noelwyn Daniel

Head of ICT & Corporate Policy

1. Scrutiny Committee N/A

2. Local Member(s) N/A

3. Community / Town Council N/A

4. Relevant Partners

The Council lead on co-ordinating the Carmarthenshire Armed Forces Steering Group and supports the Regional Armed Forces Forum which are both key for a for engaging with local and regional partners.

5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations N/A

### Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW

| Title of Document   | File Ref No. | Locations that the papers are available for public inspection  |
|---|--------------|--|
| The Welsh Government's Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report 2018 |              | Cymraeg:<br><a href="https://llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/llywodraeth-cymru-adroddiad-blynyddol-2018.pdf">https://llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/llywodraeth-cymru-adroddiad-blynyddol-2018.pdf</a><br><br>English:<br><a href="https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/armed-forces-covenant-annual-report-2018.pdf">https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/armed-forces-covenant-annual-report-2018.pdf</a> |