

10. **DERBYSHIRE ARMED FORCES COVENANT (SLF)**

1. **Purpose of the report**

To consider a request from the Chair of the Derbyshire Armed Forces Covenant Board that the Authority becomes a signatory of the Derbyshire Armed Forces Covenant.

Key Issues

- **Along with other local authorities based in Derbyshire the Authority has been invited to sign up and support the Derbyshire Armed Forces Covenant.**
- **The purpose of the Covenant is to make sure that those in the Armed Forces Community are not disadvantaged compared to other citizens and recognise that special treatment may be appropriate in some circumstances.**

2. **Recommendations(s)**

1. **To confirm that the Authority becomes a signatory of the Derbyshire Armed Forces Covenant.**
2. **To authorise the Chair to attend the launch event in March 2019 and to sign the Covenant on behalf of the Authority.**
3. **To note that the lead officer will produce a plan setting out how the Authority will honour the Covenant.**

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

3. This proposal contributes the directional shift Connecting People enabling everyone to connect with the National Park.

Background Information

4. The Authority has been recently invited to become a signatory of the Derbyshire Armed Forces Covenant along with 10 other Local Authorities in Derbyshire. A copy of the draft Covenant is set out in Appendix 1.
5. The Covenant recognises that when joining the Armed Forces individuals and their families sacrifice some of their civilian freedoms to expose themselves to dangerous situations which in many cases have resulted in serious injury or death.
6. In recognition of these sacrifices the Covenant sets out the following two key principles:
 - Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether regular or reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should not face any disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services.
 - Special treatment is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured or the bereaved.
7. The Covenant encourages its signatories to take these principles into account when writing and implementing policies and make sure that they are integrated into all the services, support, engagement and work carried out by the local authorities in Derbyshire. A key element of this is making sure that service personnel, veterans and their families are integrated into civilian life and are able to engage with their local community.

8. The Covenant identifies ways in which local authorities can make an impact these include:
- Health Care and Wellbeing
 - Education
 - Mobility and Deployment
 - Housing
 - Social Isolation and a sense of community
 - Transition
 - Employment and Employers
 - Remembrance and Recognition.
 - Information Sharing
9. While it is recognised that in many of these areas the impact the Authority can make is limited compared to a County, Borough or District Council there are still opportunities to make a contribution.

Proposals

It is proposed that, in recognition of the sacrifices made by the armed forces community, the National Park Authority agrees to become a signatory to the Derbyshire Armed Forces Covenant and identifies a lead officer who will develop an action plan to identify ways in which the Authority can contribute to the key principles.

In March 2019 a special event will be held at County Hall in Matlock where the Covenant will be launched and representatives of the signatories will be asked to formally sign the document. It is proposed that the Chair of the Authority is nominated to attend the event and authorised to sign on behalf of the Authority.

Note that if the Authority becomes a signatory the branding in the final document will be updated.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

Financial:

10. There are no direct financial implications arising from being a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant.

Risk Management:

11. There are no significant risks. There may be a reputational risk should the Authority decide not to be a signatory.

Sustainability:

12. There are no sustainability issues

Equality:

13. As the Authority is already committed making sure that it does not discriminate against groups and individuals who fall within the nine protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010, our existing policies and procedures and service delivery already recognise that alternative treatment is appropriate in some cases.

14. **Background papers (not previously published)**

None

15. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Draft Armed Forces Covenant

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

Sarah Fowler, Chief Executive, 29 November 2018