

Cabinet

8 July 2025

Medway Armed Forces Partnership Board

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Vince Maple, Leader of the Council

Report from: Adam Bryan, Director of Place

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Summary

Medway Council has signed the Armed Forces Covenant, which is a promise from the nation that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly. We want to continue to deliver the covenant and support the Armed Forces community in the best way possible and to support this ambition propose forming a new Armed Forces Partnership Board. It is proposed to meet twice a year and be chaired by the Leader of Medway Council. The partnership board will be set up to be delivered using existing officer resource and not require funding.

1. Recommendation

- 1.1. Cabinet is asked to consider and approve the creation of a Medway Armed Forces Partnership Board.

2. Suggested reasons for decision

- 2.1. Medway Council has a strong history of supporting the Armed Forces community, but there is significant appetite from both within the Council and external partners to coordinate and do more. The Kent & Medway Civilian Military Partnership Board has demonstrated the power of coming together across a Kent & Medway geography, however setting up a more localised board will enable more focus on the Armed Forces community within Medway.

3. Budget and policy framework

- 3.1. The Medway Armed Forces Partnership Board is consistent with the One Medway Plan, notably priorities 'enjoying clean, safe, and connected communities' and 'improving health and wellbeing for all.' It resonates with the sub priority 'celebrating the individuality of all parts of Medway, ensuring events and activities reflect and support the diverse communities of Medway.'

4. Background

- 4.1. Medway Council has successfully delivered and supported many Armed Forces events and activities. It holds the Employer Defence Recognition Gold Award, established a new Veteran's Hub, delivering meaningful VE celebrations and a high quality annual Armed Forces Day. There is however strong appetite from within the Council and amongst a range of valued partners to provide more coordination and support to the Armed Forces community in Medway further.
- 4.2. The proposal is that the board will provide advocacy for Armed Forces issues with a wide variety of stakeholders. The board will highlight the specific challenges and needs of Armed Forces personnel and dependents and explore potential solutions and ways to help. Membership will be drawn from the Armed Forces and Veterans community, Armed Forces Charities, key Medway Council departments and other relevant stakeholders, for example schools.

5. Options

- 5.1. Option 1 – do nothing. As listed above, Medway Council leads on and supports a wide variety of Armed Forces activity. It is feasible that we continue as we are and do not set up a new partnership board.
- 5.2. Option 2 – Set out the board as proposed. Setting up the board as proposed will provide coordination and focus to Armed Forces activity in Medway, alongside the potential for new support and initiatives.
- 5.3. Option 3 – Set up a board but with alternative terms of reference or focus. The proposed terms of reference provide one way of setting up an effective board, there are many other potential configurations that can be considered. It is proposed within the existing terms of reference that there is room for growth and change as deemed necessary.

6. Advice and analysis

- 6.1. The proposed board and terms of reference seeks to find a balance between providing an effective means of coordination and focus without time requirements being too onerous. Membership is sought from a broad range of partners and internal officers, but with scope to expand membership as deemed appropriate by the board to achieve its aims. The aims and priorities laid out in the terms of reference are in keeping with our existing armed forces activity, whilst providing room for the partnership board to focus and prioritise to ensure impact.
- 6.2. All options are viable, however option 2 provides a strong basis to support the armed forces community in a meaningful and manageable way.
- 6.3. A diversity impact assessment has been completed and is attached to this report as Appendix 2. The partnership board will have the potential to

advance equality for those within the armed forces community and people with disabilities.

7. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Lack of engagement from armed forces representatives and community	Key partners do not attend or engage with the board.	Most partners have been warmed up. Strong terms of reference and focus will help engage key partners.	DIII
Board lacks focus	There are many potential priority areas, there is a risk not much will be achieved without strong focus.	The terms of reference contain clear priorities. Early meetings will establish clear focus and priorities.	CIV
Lack of funding stalls progress	There is no funding assigned to this board, this may stifle ideas and progress made.	The focus will need to be on collective action and coordination. There may also be opportunity to apply for funding.	BIII

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very likely B Likely C Unlikely D Rare	I Catastrophic II Major III Moderate IV Minor

8. Consultation

- 8.1. Soft consultation has taken place with many of the partners who would be partnership board members, with very positive feedback given. The partners listed on the terms of reference are used to the format and will be well placed to support an effective partnership board.

9. Climate change implications

- 9.1. There are no climate change implications.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1. There are no financial implications, as the board will be set up within existing funding envelopes using staff time. Depending on the priorities of the board there may be funding required at a later date. The partnership board will seek to source funds from a variety of external sources.

11. Legal implications

- 11.1 The Armed Forces Partnership Board will not be a decision making body. It may make recommendations, which will either be implemented under existing Medway Council officer delegations or referred for decision by the Council, Leader and Cabinet or other Committees as appropriate, and in accordance with legal and constitutional provisions.

Lead officer contact

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Draft Terms of Reference

Appendix 2 - Diversity Impact Assessment

Background Documents

None