

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL7 September 2022Report by Director of Business Operations and PartnershipsNOMINATION OF VETERANS' CHAMPION**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to consider the nomination of a Local Veterans' Champions.

**RECOMMENDATION**

2. That the Council consider the nomination of a Local Veterans' Champion.

**REPORT**

3. In 2012 East Renfrewshire Council signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant. The terms of the Covenant require the Council to acknowledge and understand that those who serve, or who have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect. The Covenant focusses on helping members of the Armed Forces community have the same access to government and commercial services and products as any other citizen and ensures that they suffer no disadvantage as a result of their service.

4. To support the delivery of the Covenant, the Council employs a Veterans Support Adviser. This officer works across the East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Council areas.

5. One of the elements of the Covenant is that each local authority should appoint an elected member to be the local Veterans' Champion, to be an advocate for local veterans and their families.

6. Traditionally in East Renfrewshire this role has been taken on by the Provost. However there is no specific requirement for this to be the case and looking at the elected members appointed by other Scottish councils, 12 councils have appointed either their Provost or Deputy Provost. Renfrewshire Council have nominated their Provost whilst Inverclyde Council have nominated their Deputy Provost.

7. Information has been provided by Veterans Scotland setting out the Role Description. To assist Members this is attached.

**RECOMMENDATION**

8. That the Council consider the nomination of a Local Veterans' Champion

**REPORT AUTHOR:**

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## **Local Authority Armed Forces and Veterans Champions – Role Description**

### **Definitions:**

The Armed Forces and Veterans Community includes Serving and former members of the Armed Forces, regular and reserve, their families, cadets, the Merchant Navy and may include others with an interest in them.

### **Introduction**

All 32 Local Authorities in Scotland are signatories to the Armed Forces Covenant. This means that each council acknowledges and understands that those who Serve, or who have Served in the Armed Forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect. The Covenant focusses on helping members of the Armed Forces community have the same access to government and commercial services and products as any other citizen and ensures that they suffer no disadvantage as a result of their Service.

### **The Profile**

The Champion should ideally be an Elected Member of the Local Authority and ideally be supported by a Local Authority Officer.

Personal experience of the Armed Forces Community, as a member or former member of the Armed Forces, regular and reserve, or with a direct family connection, can be an advantage, but not essential.

### **The Role**

#### **Advocacy**

1. Advocate on behalf of the Armed Forces Community within the Local Authority area.
2. To raise the profile and needs of the Armed Forces Community, internally and externally, with the Local Authority.
3. To engage with the preparations for Armed Forces Day within the Local Authority area.
4. Regular liaison with the Civic Secretary to ensure that all forthcoming military ceremonial events are included in the Local Authority calendar of events, in line with Armed Forces Covenant obligations to recognise Service; and ensuring that other Members and Officers are aware of such events.
5. To ensure close liaison and involvement on all military ceremonial matters in which the Leader/Provost/Chairman is involved (e.g. Armed Forces Day flag raising, attendance at local Armed Forces events, , etc.).
6. Encourage and support local organisations to apply to the Scottish Government's Scottish Veterans Fund and the UK Government's Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund and similar grants in order to secure funding for local initiatives that will benefit the Armed Forces Community
7. Work with the third sector to promote the support services available to the Armed Forces community and assist with casework as appropriate.

8. Where possible, it is expected that Armed Forces and Veterans Champions will seek to deliver a long-term legacy from their time in the role.

#### Liaison & Communications

9. To raise awareness of the role of an AF Champion across the Armed Forces and civilian communities within the Local Authority area.
10. To form positive working relationships with local Armed Forces Commanders, other AF Champions (e.g. NHS, Police, DWP) and representatives of other Local Authorities within the area of responsibility for those AF Commanders to better understand and address the needs of the Armed Forces Community within the context of local authority roles and responsibilities.
11. Within the local authority area, liaise with the Armed Forces Community (e.g. AF Families Federations), Reserve Forces and Cadet Associations (RFCAs), Third Sector (including Veterans Scotland) and local Veterans Groups to identify issues that need to be addressed and resolved or areas of good practice that could be replicated either locally or nationally. This is likely to include supporting local Firm Base (or similar) meetings where such organisations have the opportunity to network and consider issues faced by members of the Armed Forces community.
12. Engage with the relevant Scottish and UK Government Departments and public/private sector organisations on matters relating to the Armed Forces community.
13. To keep the local MPs and MSPs informed of the activity and issues within the Local Authority in relation to the Armed Forces community on at least a quarterly basis.
14. To stay informed of relevant developments through attendance at conferences (including the annual Veterans Scotland Gathering), seminars and Task Groups, where appropriate.
15. Attend the annual Armed Forces and Veterans Champions Gathering, and encourage attendance by appropriate Local Authority staff.

#### Scrutiny and Policy

16. Ensure, where appropriate, that the interests of the Armed Forces Community, within the Local Authority area, are properly considered and prioritised within the Council's policies, strategies and plans in line with the Local Authority's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.
17. Consider the impact of council decisions and policies on the Armed Forces Community in line with the Armed Forces Covenant.
18. Ensure that council services likely to be used by the Armed Forces Community within the Local Authority Area are robust and performing effectively in line with the Armed Forces Covenant.
19. To work closely with other Councillors and senior Local Authority staff with particular reference to the Local Authority's obligations to the Armed Forces Covenant.

20. To report Annually to the Executive/Cabinet/Local or Joint Committee detailing the Council's activities and achievements over the previous 12 months in respect of their obligations to the Covenant. Such a report should include observations on where policies are falling short of expectation as well as more positive messages.
21. Report to the Leader and Cabinet as appropriate.

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