

Wiltshire Council

Full Council

15 February 2022

Item 21 – Members’ Questions

From Cllr Ruth Hopkinson, Corsham Ladbrook

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing and Interim Cabinet Member responsible for Finance & Procurement, Commissioning and Commercialisation

Question (22-04)

I am not aware of any recent/ regular updates to the Council re the military basement in the South of the County. Can you please provide an update, along with information concerning progress made & the WC Officers tasked with coordination with the military?

Can you also provide an update on the Covenant & any progress made to advancing it?”

Response

Army Basing Programme

The Army Basing Programme was successfully completed in March 2021. Key statistics are:

- 4,000 troops plus family members moved to Wiltshire from Germany and other UK bases
- £1.8m invested into infrastructure in the south of the county
- 1,475 new family homes built
- New early years day care centre in Tidworth used by both military and civilian communities
- New schools and medical centre

Since completion of the programme, the following successes have been identified at a local level:

TIDWORTH

- Increased partnership working between the military and Area Boards including the following initiatives that are open to all people regardless of whether they are military or civilian. They have all been run since March 2021

- ✓ New youth club
- ✓ Pop-Up family events
- ✓ Opportunities for young people
- ✓ Support for Carers and vulnerable people
- ✓ Engaging with Minority Groups
- ✓ The **vaccination centre** at the Tidworth leisure centre owned by the MOD has been very successful with a lot of time given by Military, leisure staff and volunteers.
- ✓ Discussions between the AWS and the area board has started to help redevelop an old market in Tidworth to contain a **fully equipped youth hall**
- ✓ Cllr Chris William continues to be active in his role as **Armed Forces champion**

STONEHENGE

- The Stonehenge Area Board has **funded** Summer Holidays and trips, Easter Holiday Craft packs and a programme of Summer Holiday Activities in Larkhill.
- The Stonehenge Area Board has re-established the **Local Youth Network** including military partners from Larkhill and Bulford.
- Ian Blair-Pilling is the Stonehenge Councillor rep and is in touch with the MOD on a regular basis, constantly **engaging** with them and bringing them into all that we do

PEWSEY

- A joint military and Pewsey area board consultation & showcase event will take place in **Upavon Camp** in February to help integrate that community into the village and ensure that they are receiving the necessary provision, support and services.

WARMINSTER

- **Community Engagement Event** being held in July at Warminster Garrison. Large event with showcase of military vehicles etc as well as local business fair, health and wellbeing section, local sports clubs giving demos etc
- **Area Board MCI** themed engagement event planned for spring
- AWS in Warminster have held **activities for families** throughout periods of covid restrictions, but are beginning to get more engagement now face to face activities have restarted.

Moving forward

- At an operational level, the Community engagement Managers in Tidworth and Stonehenge areas have worked with the Garrison Commander and Lt Col Nick Turner (SO1 Engagement) to ensure that their work is as integrated as possible, and that meetings and communications are rationalised.

MCI Partnership

The MCI Partnership met most recently in December 2021. It was agreed that the future focus of the partnership would shift from basing towards integration and meeting the needs of the military and civilian communities.

Change of Commanding Officer at Headquarters South West along with other personnel is currently in progress. Colonel Gary McDade will be in post as CO from 14 February 2022.

WC Officers are currently working with HQSW to plan a series of visits for Wiltshire Council's Leader and CE to maintain familiarity and working relationships with key bases in the county.

Armed Forces Covenant

Council Officers continue to deliver the Armed Forces Covenant through the following key projects:

The Armed Forces Act (2021)

- Introduced a duty to have due regard to the principles of the [Armed Forces Covenant](#)
- The new duty will apply to specified persons or bodies, including councils, when exercising certain housing, education or healthcare functions (excluding social care).
- Work is underway to ensure Wiltshire Council is prepared for the new duty, this includes awareness-raising/comms, identifying staff training needs, review of policies in the specific areas of the duty, participating in regional discussions to share good practice, identifying potential costs or additional burdens, and using learning from local implementation of other legislation such as the Equality Act 2010.

Armed Forces Outreach Service.

- Funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund, the mobile outreach service operates across the South West providing support, signposting and raising awareness of the AF Covenant. The Outreach Officer is employed by WC and is an Army Veteran of 30 years' service.

Events Attended:

- People in the Park – a 1000 person attended event which highlighted the requirement for face to face and meet and greet.
- Salisbury Plain 100 - 500 attendees mainly from the Gurkha community, activities focused on bridge building.
- Pilot event at Longhedge in partnership with Abri Housing Association - the event generated over 3000 social media engagements.
- Bournemouth Air Show – veterans engaged with.
- Regular events such as Veterans Breakfast clubs
- Support to establish new veterans' allotment in Salisbury

Defence Employer Recognition Scheme.

- Wiltshire Council has been asked to revalidate its Gold Award under the DERS for a further 5 years by 31 March 2022.