

Wiltshire Council

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

28 March 2017

Report of the Military Civilian Integration Partnership (MCIP) / Army Basing task group

Purpose of report

1. To provide an update of activity undertaken since the previous report and provide recommendations for the scrutiny legacy review.

Background

2. On the last occasion that the Task Group reported to the Management Committee it was agreed that:
 - i) The Task Group should continue in order to receive evidence requested to answer questions raised
 - ii) That the Task Group would focus on Wiltshire Council's involvement in the Army Basing project rather than on the integration partnership as a whole.
 - iii) That the Task Group would report back once the requested evidence had been received and reviewed and the planned Army Basing Peer Review had taken place.

Activity since the previous report

3. An ongoing discussion with the MCIP programme staff has provided evidence and updates as requested.
4. The Planned Army Basing Peer Review, led by the Local Government Association, had been planned for April 2016 but was deferred to late September 2016. The five reviewers, including senior members and officers from other councils, conducted 28 interviews with 42 people over four days. One of those interviews was with the Chairman of the Task Group about the role Scrutiny had played.
5. The Task Group had hoped to hold a meeting after the publication of the final Peer Review Report in order to appraise the findings of the review. Unfortunately, to allow the Task Group to report to the Management Committee before the end of the current council, a meeting had to be scheduled before the final publication.
6. The Task Group met on 14th March and reviewed its outstanding questions and a summary of the Peer Review findings with Kevin Ladner, MCIP Programme Manager.

Conclusions

7. The summary findings of the Peer Review painted a very positive picture of Wiltshire Council's involvement in the Army Basing Programme. It would be useful to scrutinise the final report when published.

8. There is a need to ensure that Wiltshire Council learns the lessons from the first rebasing (Five Rifles), including feedback from communities through Area Boards, and applies those lessons to future rebasing.
9. There remain questions around the medium to long term integrating of army personnel into civilian communities.

Recommendations

10. The Task Group recommends the management committee include the following in the scrutiny legacy report:
 - (1) There is a need to scrutinise the final Army Basing Peer Review report when published.
 - (2) Scrutiny could have a valuable role to play in ensuring that lessons are learnt from Wiltshire Council's involvement in the initial army basing and applied to the arrival of future cohorts.
 - (3) There may be an opportunity to scrutinise any commitment to military/civilian integration made in the council's next business plan.

Report author: Toby Eliot, Corporate Support Manager, 01225 713886,
toby.eliot@wiltshire.gov.uk