

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

Date: 28 May 2019

ITEM 5(g)

Title: Recruitment of
Armed Forces Personnel

Portfolio(s): Deputy Mayor
Human Resources

Cabinet Member(s): Councillor B
Pickard

Report from Service
Area:

Resources

Responsible Officer: Janice Gillespie
Head of Resources

Tel: 6435701

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

This report asks Cabinet to agree an updated commitment to the recruitment of Armed Forces personnel. In November 2017 Cabinet agreed and updated the Armed Forces Covenant. At the same time Cabinet also agreed to guarantee ex-Armed Forces personnel an interview for a vacant post if they met the requirements of the job description and person specification (essential and desirable criteria). It is proposed this commitment is now extended to current members of the Armed Forces who serve as reservists as they face the same barriers to employment.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet agrees (in addition to the recruitment arrangements relating ex-Armed Services personnel detailed above) that the Authority will offer current serving Armed Forces personnel an interview for a vacant post with the Authority if they meet the requirements of the job description and person specification (essential and desirable criteria).

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty eight days notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 17 April 2019.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

Whilst members of the Armed Forces are not explicitly identified in the Council Plan and Policy Framework, this report relates to the following priority in the 2018-20 Our North Tyneside Plan:

Our people: Be ready for work and life – with the right skills and abilities to achieve their full potential, economic independence and meet business need; and

Our people: Be cared for, protected and supported if they become vulnerable including if they become homeless.

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Background

1.5.2 In November 2017, Cabinet agreed a recommendation to update the Authority's recruitment policy to ensure that anyone who had served in the Armed Forces is offered an interview for a post if they meet the requirements of the job specification.

1.5.3 The policy change was to support those leaving the regular forces and transitioning to civilian life as there seems to be a particular problem with employers recognising the value of military experience and the only experience veterans from the regular forces have when they leave the armed forces is military orientated.

1.5.4 However, further work undertaken by the Authority's Armed Forces Officer has found that current members of the Armed Forces who serve as reservists also face barriers to employment such as:

- Employers may believe the time needed to carry out the "reserve" commitment will impact on employment;
- Employers may believe reservists will habitually ask to leave early for parade evenings or this will impact on their ability to attend work on Monday mornings after weekend deployments; and
- There is a misconception that a reservist may often require extended periods of leave to carry out training or deploy on operations.

Many reservists are unsure if by stating they are a reservist it will be detrimental to any application for employment they may make. Also, a lot of ex-regular armed forces personnel are now joining the reserves as they transition from military life to civilian life and therefore will also come across this same barrier into employment.

1.5.5 The Authority's policy on special leave enables reservists to take up to 2 weeks leave to attend training camps.

If a reservist is called up for active operational duties the Ministry of Defence (MOD) support the civilian employer in the recruitment for a temporary post.

Reservists have the same skill sets as their regular counterparts and potential employers are not aware that on average £10,000 is invested in each reservist on developing transitional skills which a Reservist can use in both military and civilian work life.

1.5.6 The Authority's current arrangements to support armed forces personnel achieve civilian employment only relates to ex-armed forces personnel. It is recommended that the Authority arrangements are widened to include current serving personnel, including reservists.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

Cabinet can agree the proposed amendment to the recruitment policy.

Option 2

Cabinet can decide not to support the change to the recruitment policy.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

Option 1 allows the recruitment policy to be updated to guarantee an interview for a post to serving Armed Forces personnel if they meet the requirements of the job specification (essential and desirable) criteria.

1.8 Appendices:

There are no appendices for this report.

1.9 Contact officers:

Lisa Rankin, HR Specialist, Human Resources, tel. (0191) 643 5064
Laura Potter, Armed Forces Officer, Environment Housing and Leisure,
tel. (0191) 643 7732
David Dunford, Finance, Acting Senior Business Partner, tel. (0191) 643 7027

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

- (1) Information about the Armed Forces Covenant is available here
<https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/guide-local-authorities-now-available/>

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

2.2 Legal

The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires that every appointment of a person to a paid office or employment by the Authority is to be made on merit. The proposals set out in this report will provide armed service personnel with an interview for a vacant post where they meet the requirements of the job description and person specification. Such applicants will still have to undertake a competitive recruitment process, including an interview, to secure employment from the Authority

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

This commitment is a result of work by Laura Potter, the Authority Armed Forces Officer, working with Councillor Newman and Councillor Bell.

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

There is no external consultation relevant for this report.

2.4 Human rights

This report supports the aim to ensure that past and present members of the Armed Forces should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

This report supports the aim to ensure that past and present members of the Armed Forces should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens.

2.6 Risk management

There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder issues arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environment and sustainability issues arising from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive x
- Head(s) of Service x
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) x
- Chief Finance Officer x
- Monitoring Officer x
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service x