



**ARTICLE NO: 1C**

**CORPORATE & ENVIRONMENTAL  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**MEMBERS UPDATE 2012/13  
ISSUE: 4**

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**Article of: Transformation Manager**

**Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor V Hopley**

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**SUBJECT: FUTURE RESERVES 2020: DELIVERING THE NATION'S SECURITY  
TOGETHER - A CONSULTATION PAPER**

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Wards affected: Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF ARTICLE**

- 1.1 To notify Members that the Borough Council has responded to a consultation exercise issued by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in relation to the Green Paper on the Future of Reserves in the Armed Forces. A copy of the response is attached at Appendix A.
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## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 In 2010 a Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) was conducted which looked at the current structure of the Armed Forces in the UK.
- 2.2 As a result a number of changes were proposed in terms of the range and scale of future military forces; the skills required; together with the structure and use of reserve forces.
- 2.3 In order to meet the demands of the restructured approach to military forces including an enhanced use of the reserve forces, increased numbers of reserves with increased levels of training have been identified as a key factor.

- 2.4 To enable Reserve Forces to become a fully integrated part of the Armed Forces, the Government is seeking a new relationship with employers, which is open, based on mutual benefit and tailored to lessen the impact on employers in all sectors.
- 2.5 The MoD has issued a consultation exercise in relation to the proposals contained in the green paper Future Reserves 2010. The consultation focuses on three main themes the Government want to develop:
- Improving and managing the relationship between Defence, the employer and the Reservist:
  - Minimising the impact of mobilisation and deployment, and ;
  - Developing mutual benefit through reward, incentive and skills development.
- 2.6 The consultation exercise ended on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2013 and employers' responses were required through an online consultation form.

### **3.0 CURRENT POSITION**

- 3.1 On 12 December 2012, the Council's Human Resources Advisor, on behalf of the Transformation Manager, alerted all Councillors to the MoD consultation exercise and provided an opportunity for Members to contribute to the Council's overall response to the consultation exercise.
- 3.2 Responses on behalf of the Council have now been collated and the Transformation Manager following consultation with the HR Portfolio holder provided a response to the MoD in advance of the closing date, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation. This has been done via an on line form, however, questions and responses are appended as Appendix A for information.

### **4.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 4.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this article and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder. The article has no significant links with the Sustainable Community Strategy.

### **5.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no significant financial or resource implications arising from this article.

## **6.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

6.1 This item is for information only and makes no recommendations. It therefore does not require a formal risk assessment and no changes have been made to risk registers as a result of this article.

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### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Article.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The Article is for information only and does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – copy of questions and responses to the consultation



## Consultation Questions

### **The Army's Reserves**

Q.1. Given the changes we are proposing, do you agree that renaming the Territorial Army (TA) to 'Army Reserve' would better reflect the future roles and tasks of what is now the TA?

**R 1 Yes the Army Reserve title better describes how the MoD intends to utilise this part of the Armed Forces.**

### **Purposes of Mobilisation**

Q.2. Do reservists and employers support our proposals to extend mobilisation powers to non-war fighting operations such as conflict prevention activities overseas and standing commitments to garrisons abroad, such as the Falkland Islands? If not, what are the reasons for your views?

**R 2 The Council recognises the benefits of conflict prevention. Currently only a small number of staff would be affected, so it is not envisaged that there would be a significant impact on services were this to occur.**

Q.3. Do reservists and employers support the mobilisation of reservists on other extended overseas deployments and activities that fall short of operations? If not, what are the reasons for your views?

**R 3 The Council recognises the benefits of conflict prevention. Currently only a small number of staff would be affected, so it is not envisaged that there would be a significant impact on services were this to occur.**

### **Mandating Training**

Q.4. For employers, how significant would the proposed changes to reservist training be? What approach would best assist employers in managing any impact on their business? How much warning would an employer reasonably need to mitigate any impact?

**R 4 The impact of a block of 16 days mandatory training will mean an absence from the work place for an average full time employee of two working weeks and 2 days (including weekends as part of the 16 day allowance). The Council already provides for a two week absence with pay for the traditional T.A. summer camp training using the Council's special leave provisions ( 10 working days). This increase by two working days should not significantly increase any adverse impact on the Council's**

functions. However, consideration will need to be given as to whether this will be granted with pay or unpaid. The Council would also need to keep under review the amount of requests to ensure it maintains resource levels.

A planned timetable approach would be best to assist with the management of absences in the work place for reservist training. In addition to the 16 day block noted above, the additional several periods of 36 hour training provision should predominantly take place over weekends to minimise the impact of the need for employees to take annual leave etc from work. It would not be envisaged that any requests in addition to 16 day block would be granted with pay or as part of any special leave provision. To enable employers to manage this period of absence it would be helpful that as much advance notice of training dates as possible is provided so that adequate cover can be arranged to facilitate a release of the employee with as little impact on business as is feasible. A minimum of 3 months notice would be considered reasonable.

Q.5. For reservists, what notice of training would be considered reasonable? How could attendance be incentivised?

**R 5 Not applicable for the Council**

#### **Mobilisation Authority**

Q.6. Should all mobilisations require specific ministerial authorisation and immediate Parliamentary notification? Please give reasons for your answer.

**R 6 Mobilisation should be reasoned and purposeful so some senior level authorisation should be required to draw reservists out of their normal work place for substantial periods. However, whether decisions about the deployment of the Governments Armed Forces needs to be at Ministerial level is not a matter the Council have a strong view on, and will accept whatever is provided for within any legislative amendments.**

#### **Future Requirement for Regular Reserves**

Q.7. For employers, would a more formal but limited liability for regular reservists affect your perception of the attractiveness of regular service leavers? Please provide reasons for your answer.

**R 7 This requirement would not affect consideration for recruitment of ex regular service personnel. Local Government, as an employer recruits and appoints to vacancies on merit through the measurement of suitability of a candidate for a post against the post requirements, this requirement would not affect this process or be used as part of any selection criteria.**

Q.8. For members and former members of the Armed Forces, how could regular reservists be incentivised to maintain their contact details to allow efficient call out when necessary?

**R 8 Not applicable for the Council**

#### **Future Requirement for Sponsored Reserves**

Q.9. For employers, are there existing MOD (or other Government Department) policies, or provisions of UK or EU legislation that impact upon a proactive approach to the employment of reservists? If so, what are they?

**R 9 The Council is an Equal Opportunities employer and consequently would not positively discriminate in favour of reservists or any other specific sector of the workforce. However, proactive advertising could be permitted. This in turn would mean that any application would have to be considered on its merit in line with the 'Appointment on Merit' criteria provided by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. This would prevent proactive appointment unless the individual could demonstrate they were the best candidate for the Job through an unbiased assessment of qualities against the requirements for the post.**

Q.10. For employers, do you have capabilities within your organisation which may be usefully transferable to the MOD through reservists (most likely, but not limited to, sponsored reservists)? If so, what are they?

**R 10 No**

Q.11. For employers, what are the perceived advantages and disadvantages of employing sponsored rather than volunteer reservists?

**R 11 Not applicable to the Council to respond as they do not have any frame of reference upon which to draw.**

#### **Defence Proposition for Employers**

Q.12. For employers, do you support our vision for improving and managing the relationship between Defence and employers in setting conditions for an open and sustainable relationship? If not, what are the reasons for your view?

**R 12 Yes this vision is supported.**

#### **National Relationship Management**

Q.13. For large employers, would a National Relationship Management scheme be helpful in improving the relationship with Defence? If not, what are the reasons for your view?

**R 13 The Council being a relatively small employer would not envisage the need for, or input to a National Relationship Management Scheme from its perspective.**

**Openness and Preventing Disadvantage to Reservists in the Workplace**

Q.14. For reservists, have you ever been disadvantaged in the civilian workplace on the basis of your reservist status? If so, how?

**R 14 Not applicable for the Council.**

Q.15. If an Employer Charter for Reserve Service was introduced, would this result in a positive, negative or neutral contribution in the development of a supportive working environment for reservists and reserve service, and why? What other measures would you suggest to achieve an employer environment that is supportive of reservists and reserve service?

**R 15 The Council already operates with a supportive Reservist Policy, so the signing up to the suggested Charter would not change anything within the workplace for reservists. However, the positive affirmation to supporting the reservists in the public domain could encourage larger numbers of applications from reservist, who may not know the Council is supportive. It would be important in the current climate of limited resources in Local Government that the process involved in signing up to a Charter is minimal.**

Q.16. Would legislation be an effective measure to mitigate reservists being disadvantaged in a civilian workplace on the basis of their reserve status?

**R 16 The Council is not aware of any evidence of a problem in relation to discrimination or disadvantage in the workplace.**

**Legislation would open up a potential for additional employment tribunal cases, to deal with claims which may or may not be genuine. This may have a direct impact on all employers who already face a large number of potential discrimination legislation claims. The Council would like to see evidence that justifies that discrimination does indeed take place purely on the basis of a candidate's reservist status before this status should be protected by specific anti discrimination legislation.**

**The Public Sector and the Largest Employers**

Q.17. Should we expect all public sector employers to provide the level of support to reservists that the Civil Service has recently committed to? What more could be done to support self-employed reservists?

**R 17 The Council already fulfils most of the requirements identified in the Civil Service commitments. However, this Policy is manageable because of**



**the small number of reservists the Council employs. Should this number increase, the impact of this policy would be greater and potentially more costly.**

**The financial position of the public sector is different to that of civil service and a voluntary approach should be encouraged across public sector organisations rather than a mandatory one to take account of local issues and needs, which fits better with the Localisation agenda.**

#### **Self-Employed and Unemployed**

Q.18. What more could be done to make reserve service attractive to the self-employed?

**R 18 Not applicable for the Council to comment.**

Q.19. What more could be done to make reserve service attractive to the unemployed?

**R 19 In the same way as Job Seekers are required to demonstrate a willingness to apply for jobs to qualify for allowances, perhaps this could also be applied to mandatory requirements to put suitable candidates forward for reservist service to qualify for allowances.**

**Equally any allowance payable for reservist services could be made free from assessment for benefits etc.**

#### **Minimising the impact of Mobilisation and Deployment**

Q.20. What type and level of support is required for employers in order to minimise any impact of the absence of their reservist employees? How should this vary for a) large employers, b) medium employers, c) small employers, d) micro businesses and e) the self-employed?

**R 20 The Council is an employer of approximately 600 staff. The support provided by SaBRE website and information has been adequate to date for issues that have arisen in this area. However if the Reservist population is to expand and a greater number of people are mobilised, a regional strategic contact point to offer advice assistance and liaison to employers and coordinate mobilisations on a regional basis would be beneficial.**

**It is considered by the Council, that the smaller the employer the more support in terms of HR policy development and implementation would be required. It is also considered that there should be specialist advisory contacts to deal with issues that would be particular to the type of employer concerned i.e. large, medium, small, self employed etc., as each group will have different issues.**

Q.21. How could we factor in different civilian employment options into reserve service to take account of a) large employers, b) medium employers, c) small employers, d) micro businesses and e) the self-employed?

**R 21 The Council is unable to comment on this question as the question is unclear**

### **Incentives and Recognition**

Q.22. Would our proposed tiered “Kitemark” type scheme provide meaningful recognition to supportive employers? If not, what other options would you propose and how might these differ for a) large employers, b) medium employers, c) small employers, d) micro businesses and e) the self-employed?

**R 22 The Council would see that a Kitemark and award standard could be attractive to some employers. However, as this Council is already supportive, having to demonstrate evidence to achieve an award or accreditation would not be an additional incentive to this Council.**

### **Non-Financial Benefits**

Q.23. Do you agree with the assessment of the potential value and benefits that members of the Reserve Forces bring to their organisation? If not, what are the reasons for your view?

**R 23 The Council believes that in some instances, the assessed potential value to the employer from the enhanced skills obtained from the training and development the reservist receives, can be transferable back into the civilian organisation. However, as training is very often specific to the role a person is employed in and not of a generic nature, there is not always a vast amount of transferable value in the training provided for one aim to be utilised in another area.**

**The training provided by the MoD likewise will be targeted at what the individual is required to deliver within their role as a reservist. This is often nothing like the role they fulfill in the workplace. Consequently whilst the Council can see in some instances that the claims are valid, it should also be recognised that there is a limited benefit to employers from reservist training, that should not be over sold, as this may in fact discourage employer participation.**

### **Our Aspirations for Skills Development**

Q.24. To what extent would accredited reservist training be of value to a) large employers, b) medium employers, c) small employers, d) micro businesses, e) the self-employed and f) the unemployed? What specific competencies would be considered to be particularly attractive?

**R 24 The Council believes that accredited training that could be measured against a nationally recognised framework would be beneficial to all employers regardless of the size. This would provide an opportunity for employers to assess the actual benefits reservist training provides when the reservist comes back to the organisation by comparing recognised skills and qualification against their own industry standard qualification framework.**

Q.25. Would employers, potential reservists and higher education establishments support closer relationships between graduate training schemes and reservist training for students?

**R 25 The Council is keen to develop and promote graduate training schemes and would be interested in exploring the benefits of partnership working in this regard.**

Q.26. Would employers support close relationships with the MOD through Apprenticeship schemes? What scope do you see in incorporating relevant accredited skills and experience gained through reserve service within company apprenticeship schemes? What would these schemes look like?

**R 26 The Council is keen to develop and promote apprenticeship training schemes and would be interested in exploring the benefits of partnership working in this regard.**

Q.27. How beneficial would a) large employers, b) medium employers, c) small employers and d) micro businesses find feedback from Defence on a reservist following deployment on an annual basis?

**R 27 The Council would welcome feedback and evaluation on a reservist from the MoD, within the legislative requirements of the Data Protection Act. This would enhance the relationship between the reservist the MoD and the employer and provide a rounded and integrated framework for the relationship to flourish. This facility would also provide for the employer to adequately evaluate the true benefits of the reservists training activities etc and provide additional insight into the additional roles and skills an employee may possess. This can potentially lead to organisational service developments utilizing skills of individual employees and career enhancement opportunities for the individual concerned.**

Q.28. Would employers attend, or to send key staff on, regionally based employer awareness schemes? Would their attendance be significantly influenced by the opportunity to gain civilian accredited leadership and team building experience?

**R 28 The Council would be interested to learn more about these initiatives and would be minded to consider the reservist service as a training provider in this area if it was cost effective.**

**Delivering the Proposition to the Volunteer Reserves**

Q.29. For reservists, do you agree with our revised proposition (as set out in more detail in Annex F) for reservists? What aspects of this would you modify?

**R 29 Not applicable for the Council to respond.**

**Future Training**

Q.30. For current and potential reservists, how do you view the proposed training regime, in particular the requirements to complete a) stipulated levels and duration of training and b) to attend specific training events?

**R 30 Not applicable for the Council to respond.**

**Health, Welfare and Mental Health Support**

Q.31. What other measures could we consider to ensure reservists and their families are provided with appropriate health, welfare and mental health support, particularly after a) an operational deployment and b) as the reservist returns to civilian employment?

**R 31 Not applicable for the Council to respond.**

**Family Support**

Q.32. For families of current reservists, what would you like to see in terms of a) improvements to the current provision of services to you, and b) additions to the current provision of services to you?

**R 32 Not applicable for the Council to respond.**