

# COUNCILLORS' INFORMATION BULLETIN

Tuesday, 10 April 2018

**Bulletin No: IB/919**

## INFORMATION ITEM

## Pages

### 1 **Delegated Planning Decisions**

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Delegated planning decisions for the week beginning 2 April 2018 are attached. Contact for enquiries: Jean McPherson, Group Manager: Development Management on 01293 438577.

### 2 **Response to Question to Cabinet Member: Armed Forces Covenant**

Councillor R Burgess asked the following **question** of the Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Community Engagement:

"In the summer of 2013 Crawley Borough Council signed the Armed Forces Covenant. Since that time, on a year by year basis, how many people have been helped by the covenant and what has been the nature of the help received in these cases?"

The following **answer** has been provided:

"Annual data is not collected for the total number of people helped by the Armed Forces Covenant, however the wide range of partners ('The Partnership') do keep records of people who have been helped, and case studies which may be directly or indirectly attributed to the existence of the Covenant.

The Partnership continues to focus on raising awareness of the needs of the armed forces community and providing access points for support, and this has been its focus for the past few years, recognising that it can help to signpost individuals in need to established armed forces support services. In the past year, 13 officers from partner agencies including Sussex Police, Sussex Partnership Trust, the Assessment and Treatment Service, and Crawley Homes, the Contact Centre and Community Development have received the training to become Armed Forces Champions (7 officers from CBC), and are active in developing others' knowledge and awareness, and act as a specialist point of contact for enquiries. The Contact Centre is actively raising the awareness of team members to support the armed

forces community, and our annual commitment to Armed Forces Day also helps us and partners raise awareness, going from strength to strength each year.

There is an active focus on the needs of the Armed Forces community at Crawley Borough Council. This is recognised by the fact the Council has been awarded the Bronze Award in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme and is waiting to hear on whether it will receive a Silver Award; Over the past year we have received positive feedback on the involvement of council officers in their support of veterans in need. For example:

- Contact was made with a Veteran via the Armed Forces Network at the Crawley Drop In who was having difficulties in regards to housing benefit. The Network liaised with a Housing Service Champion who put the veteran in contact with the relevant person to resolve the difficulties being experienced.
- Feedback was received from a SSAFA Caseworker who attended Crawley BC with a client who was having difficulty relating to housing. The member of CBC staff on hearing that the client was a veteran, disappeared and returned with the Service Champions Resource Folder and was able to help the client. The SSAFA Caseworker was really pleased to see that the member of CBC staff was aware of the Covenant and had the resources to hand. The SSAFA Caseworker reported that they had visited other local authorities although they have signed the Covenant, those on the frontline were unaware.

The Housing Needs Assessment process has various provisions for members of the armed forces (or previous members of the armed forces) in the Housing Allocation Scheme – namely:

- They are exempt from the normal local connection criteria (for example, they can join the Housing Register even if they have not lived in Crawley for the normally required 5 years)
- If they would normally qualify for bandings A+ or A, they get additional preference by means of their Priority Housing Date being backdated by 3 calendar months.
- If someone needs to move to adapted accommodation because of an injury or disability sustained as a result of armed forces service, they qualify for banding A.
- As part of the local lettings plan, one or two properties in each new development which includes Social Housing is prioritised for current or former members of the armed forces. This has resulted in several current or former members of the armed forces being re-housed into long term accommodation.

The Housing Needs team confirmed that since the beginning of 2013, they have received 80 Housing Register applications where the applicant has indicated that one of their local connections is that they are currently serving in the regular armed forces or have served in the regular armed forces within the last 5 years.”

3      **Response to Question to Cabinet Member: K2 Bowls Hall**

Councillor D Crow asked the following **question** of the Cabinet Member for Wellbeing:

“On an annual basis, what has been the total number of users of the K2 Bowls Hall in each year from 2013 to 2017?”

The following **answer** has been provided:

Attendance at the K2 Bowls Hall for 2012/12 to 2016/17 is as follows:

Year	Total Attendance
2012/13	4866
2013/14	3496
2014/15	6756
2015/16	6597
2016/17	6871

4      **Response to Question to Cabinet Member: Community Events**

Councillor A Pendlington asked the following **question** of the Cabinet Member for Public protection and Community Engagement / Cabinet member for Planning and Economic Development:

“Given the considerable financial investment that the Council makes in community events each year, could you please give details of how you are monitoring both footfall and the feedback received on these events, to ensure that we can demonstrate that the Council is prioritising our money wisely on events that the people of Crawley really want to attend?”

The following **answer** has been provided:

“We monitor footfall at our events to ensure spectator safety and to observe audience numbers.

We monitor feedback by:

- Using the town centre footfall counters to compare visitor numbers on event days compared to non-event days
- Regularly asking questions of town centre businesses about events
- Receiving informal feedback from retailers following events
- Using event staff / volunteers to ask attendees for comments
- Checking on comments left on social media channels.

We also ask for residents to get involved in the planning of our events. For example, we’ve recently asked for film ideas for our three nights of outdoor cinema in September.

The purpose of our events is to:

- Increase footfall in the town centre
- Promote community engagement and cultural interaction across the town
- Generate income in our facilities and within our parks.

In addition, we support many more events – council, voluntary and private sector – across the town with promotion and we have a growing number of commercial events being booked in our parks and open spaces.”

5      **Staff Changes: March 2018**

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Staff changes for March 2018 are attached for Councillors only.

6      **Press Releases**

Press releases are available at [www.crawley.gov.uk/news](http://www.crawley.gov.uk/news)