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# THE SOLENT ARMED FORCES COVENANT PARTNERSHIP

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**Strengthening Delivery Together**



**GOSPORT**  
Borough Council



**ISLE of  
WIGHT**  
COUNCIL



**Portsmouth**  
CITY COUNCIL



**SOUTHAMPTON**  
CITY COUNCIL

**A Review of the Strengthening Covenant Delivery Programme**

**2017-2020**

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# 1. Introduction

**1.1 Context:** The Solent Armed Forces Covenant Partnership (SAFCP) has been working to strengthen local delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant since 2016. The Partnership has an appetite to sustain momentum and progress made during the programme beyond 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 when current funding for the Strengthening Covenant Delivery Programme ceases. This report considers the impact of the Strengthening Covenant Delivery Programme to date and makes recommendations for future capacity beyond March 2020 when the Programme ends.

**1.2 Background:** In 2016, the SAFCP formed based on shared commitment and service arrangements. The Partnership set out its intention to improve local delivery of Covenant commitments to the Armed Forces Community within Portsmouth, Southampton, Gosport, and the Isle of Wight (IOW) (Solent) by:

- a) identifying health, education, housing, employment and welfare need within the Solent Armed Forces Community to support evidence-based prioritisation, commissioning and policy decisions
- b) developing communications materials and raising awareness of the covenant and the local offer in a way that enables the Armed forces Community to understand and make use of the support available to them
- c) working with partners to develop the provision of good quality work experience for service leavers and service families across the Solent
- d) providing support for all partners to engage fully with the Employer's Recognition Scheme as an active demonstration of our shared commitment to the covenant

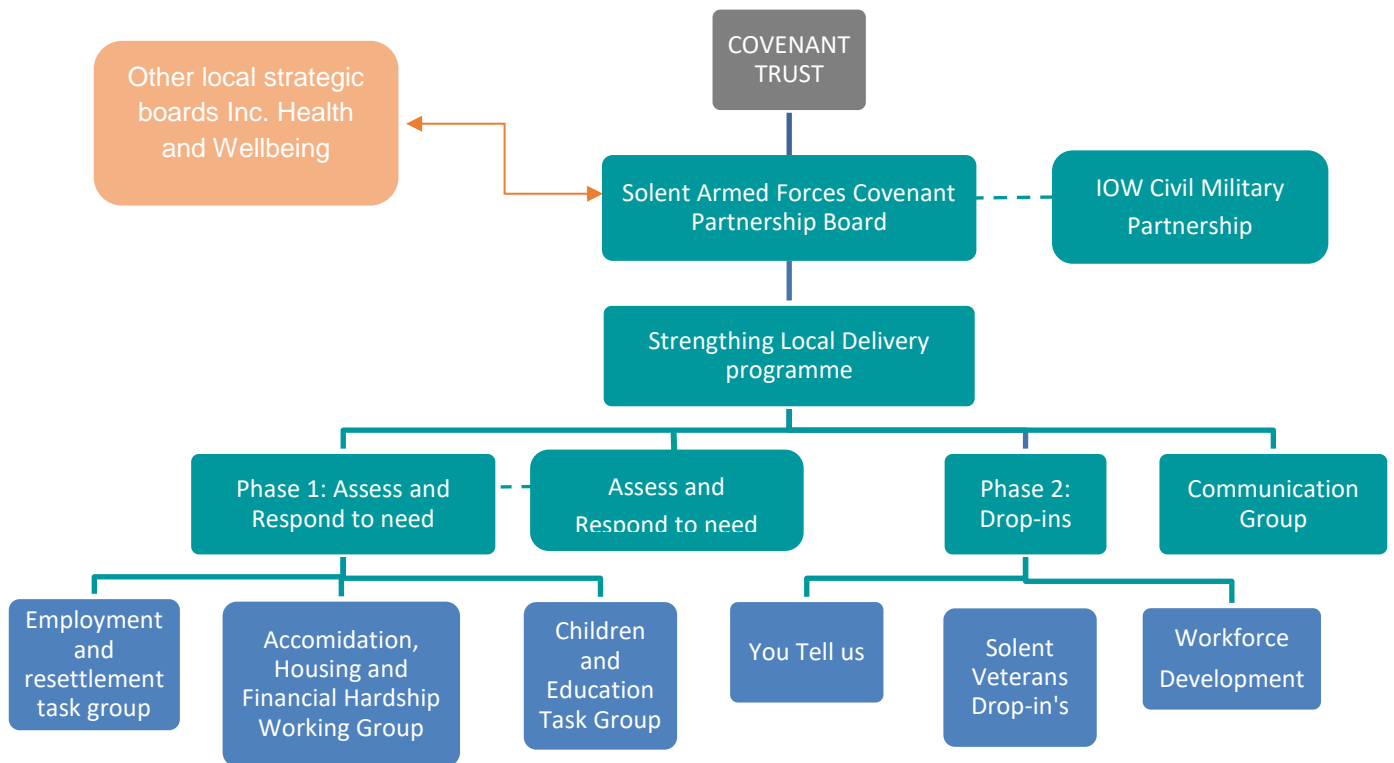
## 1.3 Scope of the programme:

The SAFCP Work Programme received Covenant Trust Funding awarded in 2017 and 2018 totalling **£313,997 in two Phases:**

- **Phase 1: Strengthening Local Covenant Delivery (CFL16-99):** Award of **£161,000** for a project length of 2 years (1<sup>st</sup> August 2017 - 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019). This Phase focused on production of a comprehensive needs assessment, development of good quality work experience, and ensuring all Councils involved in the partnership fully engage in the Defence Employers Recognition Scheme.
- **Phase 2: Strengthening Local Covenant Delivery (CFL17-99):** Award of **£152,997** for a project length of 2 years (1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020). This Phase focused on developing multi-agency veteran's drop-ins, involving the community through a robust 'You Tell Us' system, and increasing capacity to meet the needs of the Armed Forces Community through work force development.

Raising awareness among serving personnel, reservists and veterans of the support they can expect from Local Authorities was a feature within both Phase 1 and Phase 2.

## Governance and Work streams



### 1.4 Methodology:

Evaluating the impact of local Covenant initiatives was a key objective identified by the SAFCP in 2016. This report will consider the impact of the Solent Strengthening Covenant Delivery Programme by:

1. Reviewing Programme Outputs against Programme milestones and key dates (Section 2)
2. Reviewing value for money against Programme forecasts (Section 3)
3. Considering distance travelled (Section 4)
4. Considering the cost to benefit ratio of 4 Programme Case Studies (Section 5)
5. Providing Conclusions and Recommendations (Section 6)

## 2. Review of Programme Outputs

Review of Programme Milestones and Key Dates:

Objective	Activity	Achieved by	Status
<b>2.1 Understand the needs of serving personnel and veteran population:</b>			
	• Needs Assessment: Undertake comprehensive survey	Jul. 2018	Complete
	• Gap Analysis: Of provision and specific project/communications planning based on findings of Needs Assessment	Sep. 2018	Complete
	• Focused work streams respond to assessment recommendations	Dec. 2018	On-going
	• Needs Assessment: Refresh against updated national and local data/knowledge	Mar. 2019	Postponed to 2021
	• Mainstreaming future Needs Assessment: Agree methodology	Oct. 2019	In progress
<p><b>Summary:</b> August 2018, saw the publication of the <a href="#">Solent Community Needs Assessment</a>. This was a collaborative effort with input from a range of agencies. It has been widely shared, and identified, by some, as an exemplar. The Assessment made recommendations that are being progressed within dedicated Working Groups. These Groups have increased the capacity of the Partnership to progress work by drawing together skills and knowledge from across the Solent.</p> <p><b>Lessons Learnt:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Relationships lay at the heart of the success of Solent Armed Forces Needs assessment, enabling it to achieve greater reach and depth than data enquiry alone;</li> <li>2. Drawing together partners in a collaborative process created a catalyst for change in parallel to the Assessment</li> <li>3. Whilst undertaking the Assessment in-house, rather than commissioning out, led to a greater depth of understanding, this did impact on capacity for other key activity which should be considered within future programme scheduling</li> <li>4. Even with such goodwill, there were significant limitations to the data available, and the ability to cross-reference information. This would need to be resolved at a national level</li> </ol> <p><b>On-going work:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The various working groups and work packages set up to progress recommendations from the Solent Needs Assessment will require on-going dedicated capacity to ensure work remains focused and relevant</li> <li>• Capacity will also be required to coordinate and refresh the Needs Assessment at a regional level in 2021. This is to ensure that the work of the SAFCP remains considered, and to ensure that resources available continue to be deployed to maximum effect.</li> <li>• Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) services provide key support to the local Armed Forces Community. Within a continuing austere funding landscape, there is a need to build resilience within the sector to enable the current level of service to be maintained into the future.</li> </ul>			

## 2.2 Develop Communications:

Objective/Activity:	Achieved by:	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benchmark public opinion</li> </ul>	Sep. 2017	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication Plan: Approach and plan developed</li> </ul>	Oct. 2017	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Covenant webpages: Developed for all four local authorities.</li> </ul>	Aug. 2018	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Support Service information: Uploaded to Veterans Gateway</li> </ul>	Feb. 2018	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Descriptors: Employment, Housing, Education, Health</li> </ul>	Sep. 2018	On-going
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You Tell Us: Feedback informing communications and work stream activity</li> </ul>	Jun. 2019	On-going
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communications Plan: Review, seeking mainstreaming opportunities</li> </ul>	Feb. 2019	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication Plan: Handover to relevant Partners as per mainstream plan</li> </ul>	Mar. 2020	Pending

**Summary:** In total, since April 2017 the project's accumulative reach to 31st December 2019 was estimated to be about **1.7** million people across the Solent. Obtaining reach figures to 31st March 2020 has been disturbed by wider world events. Whilst there will be some duplication within this number, it is reasonable to conclude that the project has fully realised its initial ambition of raising the profile of the Covenant within the Solent region. Most activity has been achieved through extensive social media, press articles and events. Radio and television has also been used to share information. You tell us surveys based upon key themes have been completed by almost 100 veterans, providing valuable insights to help future communication strategies.

### Lessons Learnt:

1. Managing expectations has been, and is likely to continue to be, a key feature of any communication work in relation to the Covenant;
2. Working with other organisations including the Royal British Legion to consider and align the Solent communication plan helped to maximise impact. It required a more considered approach that relied heavily on established relationships making it vulnerable to staffing changes;
3. Campaigns which involved original local content had most reach;
4. Use of existing platforms including Council webpages conserved programme resources but have had aesthetic and functional limitations;
5. Whilst the reach of the campaign to date is impressive, we have no concrete understanding of the impact of these outputs.

### On-Going work:

- The local offer is emerging but will require some dedicated resource to become established and remain fit for purpose as the agenda evolves
- The communication plan, whilst developed, will require co-ordination and monitoring to ensure that reach and messaging remains on target and relevant
- Development of key performance indicators that drive the partnerships action plan and test the impact of outputs

## 2.3 Develop good work experience:

Objective/Activity:	Achieved by:	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Armed Forces Staff in Local Authorities: Identified</li> </ul>	Sep. 2017	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Armed Forces staff networks: Established</li> </ul>	Jun. 2018	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work experience pathway for Armed Forces community: Developed</li> </ul>	Mar. 2018	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RBLI Lifeworks: Support developed</li> </ul>	Jan. 2019	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access civilian work opportunities: support leaving service personnel</li> </ul>	Mar. 2018	On-going
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide good quality opportunities: Working with others</li> </ul>	Sep. 2018	On-going

**Summary:** Work to identify members of the Armed Forces Community within the council's workforces has identified over 150 staff across the region. These staff have been positively engaged through Armed Forces staff forums enabling them to contribute to and shape direction locally. We have worked in partnership with key stakeholders to consider need and develop the [local offer](#). Work experience pathways for members of the community have been established and this has led to numerous [success stories](#). Pilot work to provide a specific response to members of the community seeking work has resulted in the establishment of an Armed Forces Covenant Recruitment officer role working across the Solent.

### Lessons Learnt:

1. Working together to develop the offer was essential for ensuring it was meaningful, sustainable and flexible enough to support the spectrum of need identified
2. Delivering RBLI lifeworks in the council offices created a significantly enhanced opportunity that it would be good to see replicated in other areas
3. Most people in the Armed Forces community find work independently, those who struggle, often have additional issues that need to be addressed for them to be at their best in work
4. The need of this community to have understanding and supportive work opportunities is similar to other focus groups, and lessons from this programme could be utilised for developing a more diverse workforce
5. Making the effort is financially and ethically justified, however there is still work required to ensure buy-in for the strategy and associated opportunities across all council.

### On-Going work:

- Maintenance and review of the local offer to ensure that it remains current and fit for purpose;
- Continue to work with partners to position Solent councils' work experience offer as part of a co-ordinated approach to address the needs of the armed forces community unemployment;
- Develop systems for Solent councils to provide specific information for personnel and families in resettlement and transition about integration support they can receive.

## 2.4 Engage in the Defence Employers Recognition Scheme:

Objective/Activity:	Achieved by:	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supportive Policies: Review and develop</li> </ul>	Mar. 2018	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Armed Forces staff made aware of benefits/support available</li> </ul>	Jan. 2019	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defence Employee Recognition Scheme (ERS) awards: Apply as appropriate.</li> </ul>	Mar. 2018	On-going
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain awards: Ensure sustainability plans in place</li> </ul>	Sep.2018	On-going
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment days with range of local units</li> </ul>	Mar. 2019	On-going
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication Campaign: Linked to reservists</li> </ul>	Feb. 2019	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased Number of Reservists and Active Cadet Units</li> </ul>	April 2019	On-going

**Summary:** Across Solent councils there has been significant effort put into developing policy, relationships and understanding in relation to the Defence Employers recognition scheme. All councils have progressed to either Gold or Silver in the Defence Employers Recognition scheme (ERS); in some cases from a standing start. Advocacy work has drawn in the local business community and led to some joint activities. Work has also been undertaken to ensure Councils values in respect of the Covenant are echoed in the supply chain through procurement processes and work with commissioning managers. Staff and members from across Solent Councils have participated in Defence experience days in an effort to 'grow our own' reservists.

### Lessons Learnt:

1. Solent Councils existing close connections to the Defence and the Armed Forces community necessitated going above and beyond to demonstrate required standards; this step change required a deeper understanding the role of the ERS within the Armed Forces Covenant.
2. Engagement with local reserve units enabled additional needs to be identified in relation to full time reservists.
3. There were some unintended positive consequences of engaging the supply chain, with more than one provider engaged and supported to develop their practice going on to secure Covenant Funding.

### On-Going work:

- Review and co-ordination of engagement of Defence Employer Recognition scheme; awards applications and sustainability plans.
- The development of KPI's to test the impact of sustainability plans in relation to need identified within the Armed Forces community.
- Develop an employment strategy that enables Reservists to be seen as business assets across all Council departments.



## 2.5: Development of Veterans Drop-ins

Objective/Activity:	Achieved by:	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Veterans Family monthly drop-ins: Established</li> </ul>	Sep. 2019	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer recruitment and training</li> </ul>	Jun. 2018	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solent drop-ins: Consistent process for identifying need within all agreed</li> </ul>	Mar. 2018	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Offer Pathway: Mapped</li> </ul>	Jan. 2019	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross Referral Pathway: Established within provider network</li> </ul>	May. 2019	On-going
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration: Attendance and survey feedback used to evaluate reach</li> </ul>	Sep. 2019	On-going
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainability Plan: Developed</li> </ul>	Oct. 2019	On-going

**Summary:** Three Veterans family drop-ins have been established within the Isle of Wight, Southampton, and Gosport. Each drop-in has been designed bespoke to local need, offering a range of support from direct access mental health provision to practical support with housing, finance and employment. Volunteers and staff have been trained in Armed Forces Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) to help with making every contact count. To date **153** Veterans and their families have attended and benefited from this provision. Waterfall funding for the drop-ins from the Solent Armed Forces Covenant Partnership concludes in April 2020. Delivery partners are working to sustain these provisions through mainstreaming and organisational fund raising activities.

### Lessons Learnt:

1. The development of three local drop-ins delivered by three different providers has required strong partner relationships, to bring providers together and create systems that work for everyone.
2. Commissioning a number of local providers has had the unintended consequence of creating opportunity for informal mentorship and peer support amongst the providers, who have differing experience and specialisms.
3. Whilst the drop-ins have proved a lifeline for those who attend them, attendance numbers reflect only a fraction of the veterans and their families we know reside in the Solent. It has taken time for trust and awareness to be developed within the community.
4. The development of a shared registration and 'Solent pass' system has required significant consideration in respect of GDPR and organisational fit. This work has delayed the launch and roll out of this system and could be considered a missed opportunity.

### On-Going work:

- There will be an on-going need to continue to work with providers to ensure pathways of support within the Solent align with other initiatives including the Portsmouth Military Wellbeing Alliance
- Communication campaigns to improve messaging and reduce the stigma associated with seeking support are needed to enable more veterans to benefit from the support on offer
- Review and Co-ordination of Solent Pass scheme

## 2.6: Workforce Development

Objective/Activity:	Achieved by:	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer Recruitment and Training</li> </ul>	Jun. 2018	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent process for identifying need within all Solent drop-ins agreed</li> </ul>	Mar. 2018	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Offer Pathway Mapped</li> </ul>	Jan. 2019	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross referral pathway established within provider network</li> </ul>	May. 2019	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration: Attendance and survey feedback used to evaluate reach</li> </ul>	Sep. 2019	On-going
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainability Plan: Developed</li> </ul>	Mar. 2019	On-going

**Summary:** Workforce development activities have enabled over **60** frontline practitioners across the Solent to become more aware of and better able to respond to the needs of the Armed Forces community. These have included Armed Forces Mental health first aid training, lunch time learning sessions, introduction of SE Forces Connect materials, ensuring e-learning developed by Warwickshire Council is accessible on Council platforms.

### Lessons Learnt:

1. Capacity for front line workers to be classroom trained or undertake e-learning is limited and this affected the pace at which training could be used as a mechanism for organisational change.
2. Small bite sized learning opportunities such as lunchtime learning discussion sets, case studies and the development of 'essential learning' sheets are more accessible and have been well received.
3. Making sure that the 'right people' are trained to maximise the opportunity.
4. Using a network approach post training to maintain involvement and support people to continue to develop.

### On-Going work:

- Roll out of essential learning sheets and tool box talks across the partnership.
- Revisit Armed Forces Mental Health First Aid cohort to take stock of the use/ and effectiveness of this training within the community one year on.
- Develop workforce development plan for the Solent Partnership.

### 3. Programme Funding

The SAFCP Programme benefited from Covenant Trust funding awarded in 2017 and 2018 totalling **£313,997**. Award of funding was in two distinct phases:

- **Phase 1: Strengthening Local Covenant Delivery (CFL16-99): £161,000** awarded for a project of 2 years (1<sup>st</sup> August 2017- 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019). Funding to focus on the production of a comprehensive Needs Assessment, development of good quality work experience, and ensure all Councils involved in the Partnership fully engage in the Defence Employers Recognition Scheme
- **Phase 2: Strengthening Local Covenant Delivery (CFL17-99): £152,997** awarded for a project of 2 years (1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020). Funding to develop multi-agency veteran's drop-ins, involve the community through a robust 'You Tell Us' system, and increase capacity to meet the needs of the Armed Forces Community through work force development

Raising awareness among serving personnel, reservists and veterans of the support they can expect from Local Authorities is a feature within both Phases 1 and 2.

<b>3.1 Finance Summary (Phases 1 and 2)</b>	
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>£313,997</b>
<b>Expenditure to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020</b>	<b>£229,767</b>
<b>Committed outstanding</b>	<b>£61,386</b>
<b>Total Forecast Expenditure</b>	<b>£291,153 (92.7%)</b>
<b>Variance</b>	<b>£22,845 (7.3%) [Forecast underspend]</b>

<b>3.2 Budget by Activity</b>	<b>Phases 1 and 2 Forecast</b>	<b>Final Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<b>a. Needs Assessment and External Evaluation</b>	<b>£ 41,260</b>	<b>£ 32,467</b>	<b>-£ 8,793</b>
<b>b. Communications Campaign</b>	<b>£ 14,478</b>	<b>£ 12,668</b>	<b>-£ 1,810</b>
<b>c. AFC Programme Manager</b>	<b>£125,293</b>	<b>£116,435</b>	<b>-£ 8,858</b>
<b>d. Insight and Engagement Officer</b>	<b>£ 45,083</b>	<b>£ 44,935</b>	<b>-£ 148</b>
<b>e. Veterans Drop-ins</b>	<b>£ 83,834</b>	<b>£ 82,653</b>	<b>-£ 1,181</b>
<b>f. Digital Development</b>	<b>£ 4,049</b>	<b>£ 1,995</b>	<b>-£ 2,054</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£313,997</b>	<b>£291,153</b>	<b>-£22,844</b>

It has been confirmed by the Covenant Trust that any savings made can be stretched into 20/2021 to enable the continuation of programme activities.

## Financial Commentary:

- a. Needs Assessment and External Evaluation:** The Solent AFC Needs Assessment was under-taken in-house, rather than commissioned externally. In respect of partnership working, this reduced duplication of effort, providing additional value to the programme. In January 2019, original intentions were to engage in a peer-to-peer review as the primary mechanism of evaluating the programme. This was not progressed. This was because of capacity issues identified within the external peer Local Authorities. This led to an alternative approach of self-review and an internally commissioned cost benefit review of some key activities.
- b. Communications Campaign:** The decision to integrate Covenant Communications within existing platforms enabled the funding to be re-focused. In 2019, this facilitated dedicated capacity to develop a sustainable Communications Strategy.
- c. AFC Programme Manager, Insight and Engagement Officer:** Since February 2019, income has been generated by the AFC Programme Manager undertaking chargeable work on other local authority agenda's. In parallel the AFC Insight Officer role has been adjusted to full time. This has enabled the programme to a pilot and demonstrate a more efficient and sustainable working model, cross-pollination between agenda's and produced savings.
- d. Veterans' Drop-Ins:** Three veterans' family drop-ins commissioned. In addition, MHFA training delivered to volunteers and frontline practitioners across the Solent. A small saving has been made from venue hire.
- e. Digital Development:** In agreement with the Covenant Fund Trust, the funding was re-positioned, enabling the procurement of *Kahootz* licences to facilitate the Solent Shared Workspace.

## 4. Distance Travelled

### 4.1 The baseline:

In 2016, [Our Community, Our Covenant](#), captured best practice in relation to covenant delivery. In 2017 all councils in the partnership undertook the 'Our Community our Covenant' self-assessment for the purposes of providing a baseline for the Solent programme. The assessments identified cross-cutting themes for development including the need for improved understanding, increased clarity, awareness raising and collaboration.

<b>Cross cutting themes from Portsmouth, Southampton, Gosport &amp; IOW baseline self-assessments, July 2017:</b>		
<b>Strategic Enquiry</b>	<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p><i>Vision &amp; Commitment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness of the significance of the military population in the area</li> </ul> <p><i>Individuals:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment from Leaders Champions and Lead Officers</li> </ul> <p><i>Communication:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standard information sharing mechanisms in place that could be adapted</li> </ul>	<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p><i>Vision &amp; Commitment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reaffirmation of local pledges</li> <li>Development of local descriptors</li> <li>Gain more awareness of need</li> <li>Dedicated capacity to build on existing delivery and connect up existing services</li> </ul> <p><i>Collaboration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solent Partnership makes best use of resources</li> </ul>
<b>Appreciative Intent</b>	<p><b>Aspirations</b></p> <p><i>Vision &amp; Commitment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved understanding amongst front line staff</li> </ul> <p><i>Individuals:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarity of role and regular</li> </ul> <p><i>Communication:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness of help/services available</li> </ul> <p><i>Collaboration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linking the delivery of covenant to other local partnerships</li> <li>All stakeholders are engaged</li> </ul>	<p><b>Results</b></p> <p><i>Vision &amp; Commitment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved Needs Assessment, through better recording, gathering and sharing of data to inform local actions needed</li> </ul> <p><i>Collaboration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear local statements of entitlement</li> <li>Impact is evidenced</li> </ul> <p><i>Communication:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of website/pages</li> </ul>

### 4.2 Review of Self Assessments 2019.

In 2018 the SAFCPB agreed to use a peer to peer review as the primary mechanism evaluating the programme. A template for the review was developed, but the review it's self was abandoned in January 2019 due to capacity issues identified within the peer local authorities that had been identified. In lieu of peer review, in August 2019 a self-assessed review of the baseline was undertaken using the template developed for the peer to peer review to quantify distance travelled and identify areas for future development.

**Cross cutting themes from Portsmouth, Southampton, Gosport & IOW self-review, August 2019:**

<p><b>Strategic Enquiry</b></p>	<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p><i>Vision &amp; Commitment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full understanding of local need via needs assessment</li> </ul> <p><i>Individuals:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment from Leaders Champions and Lead Officers</li> </ul> <p><i>Communication:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated points of contact, consistent and aligned communication</li> </ul> <p><i>Collaboration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solent Partnership maximises reach and makes best use of resources.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p><i>Vision &amp; Commitment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emerging and evolving local offer</li> </ul> <p><i>Individuals:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased capacity to support the agenda</li> </ul> <p><i>Clarity and focus:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting others to 'Think Forces'</li> </ul> <p><i>Collaboration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working together to be sustainable.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Appreciative Intent</b></p>	<p><b>Aspirations</b></p> <p><i>Vision &amp; Commitment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share best practice and training aids</li> </ul> <p><i>Individuals:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify the role of the lead officer</li> </ul> <p><i>Communication:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase awareness of help/services available</li> </ul> <p><i>Collaboration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All stakeholders remain engaged</li> </ul>	<p><b>Results</b></p> <p><i>Vision &amp; Commitment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathering and sharing of data to inform outcomes plan.</li> </ul> <p><i>Collaboration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of key performance indicators to measure and monitor impact</li> </ul> <p><i>Communication:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define link between reach and impact.</li> </ul>

This review revealed that whilst significant achievements have been made in relation to awareness raising and collaboration, there is still work required to:

- continue to refine and articulate the local offer in an accessible way;
- develop key performance indicators to that drive the partnerships action plan and test the impact of outputs; and
- build capacity within Local Authorities to reduce reliance on one/key staff members being the driver of Covenant implementation.

## 5. Cost Benefit Analysis: Case Studies

As the programme ends in March 2020, it is timely to review a number of 'success stories' that have been delivered since the program began in April 2017. This will contribute to the sustainability planning where we will review the work of the Covenant Partnership.

A case study for each of the four councils involved in the partnership highlighting these 'success stories' is set out as follows:

### 5.1 Portsmouth: Fort Cumberland Basha Retreat

**Summary:** This case study demonstrates the benefits of the collaborative work to establish new and innovative initiatives, by detailing the in-kind support provided to local charity, Forgotten Veterans UK (FVUK), to establish a successful veteran's camp called the [Basha Retreat](#) in Portsmouth.

**Cost of project: £53,200**

**Solent Covenant Partnership Investment: £2,660 (in kind)**

**Equivalent value generated from investment: £14,650**

**Beneficiaries: 530**

**Cost/Benefit: £133.03 per day (3:1 Ratio)**

**About Forgotten Veterans UK (FVUK):** Gary Weaving, an injured Army veteran, set up the FVUK having taken learning from his own experiences. FVUK was awarded its charity status on 3rd November 2017 and last year celebrated its second anniversary.

FVUK provides a range of support and acts as a gateway to other charities and specialist assistance. FVUK, was founded on volunteering, with Trustees and members of its peer support 'buddy' service, giving their time free. As a fledgling charity, FVUK have identified a need for support to enable them to compete for funding more effectively.

**Establishing the Basha Retreat:** In February 2018, FVUK approached Portsmouth City Council (PCC) keen to develop a veterans 'Basha' camp within Portsmouth. The camp would provide a place for veterans to get some head space in a supportive environment. Volunteers would run the camp. The charity wanted the Council to provide suitable space, support with the set up costs, and help draw in further funding.

**Formal Opening:** The Basha Retreat formally opened on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018. The Armed Forces Covenant Programme Manager (AFCPM) assisted with arrangements for the Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire to be the guest of honour and officially open the camp. Coverage of this event in [The News](#) built on the positive press from June 2018 which the AFCPM also supported. The Fort celebrated its first anniversary on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2019.



A new getaway for veterans officially opened in Fort Cumberland, Portsmouth, on Monday November 26. It has been created by Forgotten Veterans UK in conjunction with Historic England.

## **Investment & Costs:**

### **Investment:**

In partnership with Portsmouth City Council Officers, AFCPM identified a suitable Historic England site: Fort Cumberland, Eastney. The AFCPM worked with Historic England and FVUK to negotiate space at Fort Cumberland for the camp. The negotiations with Historic England resulted in a secured site for the camp with a 12month rent in-kind arrangement saving the charity **£11,470** in overheads.

The initiative needed endorsement from Historic England's board. In June 2018, the AFCPM worked with FVUK to facilitate an awareness-raising event, alongside lobbying. This resulted in letters of support from prominent local veterans' charities, the Council, and Local MP for Portsmouth South. Coverage of this event, in [The News on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2018](#), was an equivalent advertising value of **£2,230**.

The AFCPM also worked with FVUK bid team to apply for a further £18,000 through the Covenant Trusts, Small Grants programme. Whilst this application was not successful, the exercise crystallised thinking about how the camp would operate, costs involved, and provided a template for future bidding. The AFCPM also worked with FVUK to consider sponsorship opportunities that resulted in the offer of **£950** (the cost of one camping bay) from a local business.

**Equivalent value generated from investment: £14,650.**



## Costs:

FVUK have estimated the cost of establishing the Basha retreat, (less in-kind support), is **£53,200**.

The Strengthening Covenant Delivery Programme could not directly award funds to the camp. However, through the AFC Programme's Phase 2 funding, the FVUK received training worth **£1,560** in Armed Forces Mental Health First Aid.

Between February 2018 and November 2018, the support provided by the AFCPM to assist with the establishment of the Basha Retreat at Fort Cumberland is calculated at approximately 40 hours, equating to **£1,100** of time provided in kind.

**Total costs including Covenant Partnership Investment in kind: £55,860.**

The AFCPM remained actively involved in the development of the camp. Supporting further funding applications, and donning overalls to support with restoration.



## Measuring the Benefit:

Since November 2018, veterans have experienced 530 camping days at the Basha Retreat. Those who have attended the camp reported that it has significantly improved their mental well-being. In addition to camping, 1300 veterans have visited the Fort, to receive support from FVUK.

At the end June 2019, NHS England visited the Fort to observe the help and support given to veterans. They were impressed with the standard of mental health care and the unique peer-to-peer operation. Following up the visit, Kay Evans from NHS England noted "*I do many visits, and some stand out, and this was one. I am emailing to say we can continue to focus on the care and needs of individuals and support excellent leadership and collaboration such as yours*"

### **Cost/Benefit Analysis**

- FVUK have estimated the cost of establishing the Basha Retreat, (less in-kind support): **£53,200**
- Covenant Partnership Investment in kind (promotional, training and grant application): **£2,660**
- Equivalent value generated from investment: **£14,650**
- Beneficiaries: **530**

Combined, these bring the total cost of establishing the Basha Retreat as **£70,150**. This excludes volunteer support to restore and run the Basha Retreat which is estimated to be significant.

This equates to **£133.03** per day for camping support.

There is currently no equivalent offer for Veterans locally. FVUK report that those who have attended the Basha Retreat feel it reduced the likelihood them drawing on emergency services and experiencing unplanned hospital admissions.

The estimated average daily cost on an adult acute ward at hospital is £400 per day (dependent on treatment).

## 5.2 Southampton: Armed Forces Day 2019

**Summary:** This case study focuses on the benefits of holding the [Southampton Armed Forces Day on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019](#). The event was a celebration with a parade of military personnel, veterans, cadets and a military vehicle cavalcade through the City Centre.

**Cost of Event: £10,000**

**Covenant Partnership Investment: £200 (officer time)**

**Equivalent value generated from investment: £5,000**

**Beneficiaries: 5,000**

**Estimated boost to Southampton local economy: £50,000**

**Cost/Benefit: Positive net cost/benefit ratio 5:1 for the event**

**About Armed Forces Day in Southampton:** Armed Forces Day is a chance to show support for the men and women who make up the Armed Forces Community. The annual event is on the last Saturday in June with celebrations taking place up and down the country. Those who have signed the Armed Forces Covenant are encouraged to celebrate Armed Forces Day in demonstration of the commitments they have made.

In 2016, members of the local Veterans Breakfast Club successfully lobbied Southampton City Council to put aside funds for the celebration of Armed Forces Day. The Council committed a fund of £20,000 to support the local Veterans Armed Forces Day committee in facilitating 2018 and 2019 events. The first Southampton Armed Forces Day event in Southampton took place on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018.

Armed Forces Day in Southampton 2019 provided an opportunity to build upon learning from the first event and evaluate the impact of this activity.



**Armed Forces Day 2019:** The Solent Armed Forces Covenant Insight and Engagement Officer (AFCIE) worked with the Southampton City Council events team, Communications Team and elected Armed Forces Champion, Cllr. McEwing, to support planning, and provide guidance to the Armed Forces Day organising a committee of volunteers.

Early on, funding was identified as an issue, with welfare and necessary road closures absorbing most of the available budget. On behalf of the volunteer committee, the AFCIE negotiated a reduction in costs with the Council's partner Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP), for road closures based upon their shared commitment to Defence. This enabled a reduction equating to an equivalent value saving of **£5,000**.

The AFCIE also supported coordination between the Armed Forces Day committee and the Blighmont Reserve centre. This enabled the event organisers to benefit from secure overnight parking for many of the display vehicles and equipment, and the reserve centre to host an additional Armed Forces Day in the form of an 'open day' to the public on the Saturday 29th July.

Between January and June 2019, an estimated 12 hours of AFCIE time was used supporting Southampton Armed Forces Day preparations, equating to £200.

The Council also provided free use of Guildhall Square, free electricity, free use of the Civic Centre Car Park, free use of its promotional space within the city centres civic realm, promotion through the Council's digital channels, event equipment, and professional advice, attendance at committee meetings, drafting event plans and providing support on the days of the event. Worth an equivalent value of £3,000.



## Measuring the Benefit:

Promotion of the event by Southampton City Council reached over 120,000 people:

- Facebook: 12,232
- SCC Twitter: 45,815
- SCC Events Twitter: 55,438
- LinkedIn: 6,995
- SCC Events Instagram: 1,319

The event provided an opportunity to raise awareness and reinforce the importance of the Armed Forces Covenant and role of the Armed Forces in the local area. Coverage of the event in local paper, the [Daily Echo](#), was costed with an equivalent positive advertising value of **£800** for a full-page advert.

*An AFD volunteer says: 'I feel humbled to have been a part of the proceedings that we have witnessed. It had a couple of hiccups that the committee will identify and iron out ready for the next one. But, as a whole, it was a great display of our service personnel past, present and future. We had visitors, local and from as far away as Hereford, Sheffield and many different places in-between, (meeting up with old friends and or making new ones) along with great exhibits and entertainment. Thank you all for your support, see you next year'.*

An estimated 5,000 people attended Southampton Armed Forces Day 2019. An assumption is that each person spent about £10 on food and drink at the event giving an estimated boost to the local economy of **£50,000**.

This provides a positive net cost/benefit ratio in the region of 5:1 for this event.

### 5.3 Gosport: Support to resolve complex cases

**Summary:** This case study focuses on the benefits of a resource that supports members of the Solent Armed Forces Covenant Partnership to resolve individual cases where the scenario falls outside of existing policy and there is uncertainty about how best to apply the Covenant. The case study focuses on the work undertaken to support a Veteran in Gosport to find move on accommodation following successful engagement with local charity, Alabare.

**Covenant Partnership Investment: £550 (officer time)**

**Direct Beneficiaries: 1**

**Estimated societal benefit: £20,128 (minimum)**

**Cost/Benefit: 36.6:1**

**About Alabare:** Alabare founded in 1991, supports homeless, vulnerable and marginalised people and provides a range of support including accommodation and life skills to give people confidence and opportunity to move on and re-build their lives.

**Ben's<sup>1</sup> story:** Ben joined the Army soon after finishing school. During his service, Ben was deployed to Bosnia, Northern Ireland and Iraq. During one tour, Ben was wounded and his injury resulted in being medically discharged after 7 years' service. Ben moved back to his hometown with his partner and young child. This relationship broke down. Ben struggled with his physical and mental health, he lost his job, and became homeless.

In 2015, Ben was referred to Alabare and was provided with accommodation in one of their Gosport Homes for Veterans. Ben thrived in the supportive environment and sustained engagement with services. When it was time to move on Ben's application for longer term local authority housing was refused.

**Finding a solution:** Gosport Borough Council (GBC) were wary of accepting Ben's housing application. The Armed Forces Covenant programme Manager (AFCPM) worked with Alabare and GBC to understand these issues and re-consider the application in the context of the Covenant. Despite there being no legislative requirement to accept Ben's application, GBC accepted that much of the trouble Ben had experienced was linked to his service, therefore the spirit of Covenant, in respect of reducing disadvantage applied.

The AFCPM worked with staff at GBC to review the case and consider what was required for the application to be accepted. GBC wanted reassurance that Ben had turned his life around and would continue to work with services to maintain his positive progress. Alabare agreed to remain involved in an outreach capacity, and the AFCPM worked with Ben and Alabare to develop a plan to sustain the tenancy. GBC accepted

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<sup>1</sup> \*This is a real account. However, names have been changed to protect the individual's privacy.

the plan and offered Ben an introductory council tenancy. He moved into his own accommodation in May 2018.

Since then Ben has adhered to all terms and conditions of his tenancy agreement and, was offered a secure tenancy. With support from Alabare, Ben has also gained qualifications, making him more employable.

**Covenant Partnership Investment:** Between February and May 2018, the AFCPM provided an estimated 20 hours of support to Ben's case: equating to a value of **£550**.

### **Measuring the benefit:**

In 2015, the cost of a single person sleeping rough in the UK for 12 months: estimated at **£20,128<sup>2</sup>**. Based upon this figure the benefit to cost ratio (BCR) of this work is estimated at 36.6:1, meaning for every £1 spent over £36 was realised in benefits.

This case provided an opportunity for councils within the partnership to consider application of the Covenant, creating a blue print for responding to similar cases in the future.

In addition to the direct benefits Ben has experienced, and the cost benefit to public services, his move into a Local Authority tenancy has meant that Alabare could offer his room within their accommodation to another homeless veteran.

Ben's story is one example of the support that AFCP officers have given to resolve complex cases. From August 2017 until September 2019, Solent AFC partnership officers have supported in the resolution of 16 similarly complex cases. Of these **5** relate to securing Local Authority accommodation to prevent homelessness and all have been successfully resolved. Extrapolating the cost/benefit calculations from Ben's story in relation to officer time and the cost of homelessness indicates an accumulative impact saving of over £100,000; which is equivalent to nearly a third of the cost of the total programme alone.

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<sup>2</sup> 2015. Crisis. At What Cost? An estimation of the financial costs of single homelessness in the UK. Nicholas Place, Centre for Housing Policy, University of York.

## 5.4 Isle of Wight (IoW): Veterans Family Drop-in

**Summary:** This case study focuses on the investment and successful delivery and use of the [Isle of Wight Veterans Drop-In Centre](#) opening on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2018. A Project was set up with the aim to establish a drop in service on the IoW specifically to meet expected demand for welfare, wellbeing and the mental health services of veterans living on the Island who reported logistical issues with accessing services on the mainland.

**Covenant Partnership Investment: £40,000, equating to £15 per veteran/spouse per month.**

**Direct Beneficiaries: 115 veterans and spouses.**

The [Veterans Outreach Service \(VOS\) Isle of Wight Drop-In Centre](#) opened 16<sup>th</sup> May 2018, extending the original provision in Portsmouth. The VOS Team includes mental health professionals with a wealth of experience of working with ex-service personnel. All VOS's services are free to service users and one of the few places veterans can access immediate mental health support. A total of 27 Delivery partners have been involved since May 2018 with 16 organisations regularly represented.

**Covenant partnership investment:** £40,000 commission for the delivery of drop-in services.

### **Measuring the Benefit:**

Over the period May 2018 to Feb 2020, 119 Veterans and/or spouses received clinical triage for mental health, 115 registered with the drop-in which saw up to 21 attendees each month and a total of 271 Delivery Partner engagements. The most popular services being SSAFA, RBL, and Citizens Advice.

On the Isle of Wight, Veterans needing to access mental health services can wait up to 36-weeks for NHS Therapy. The VOS drop in equipped with clinical staff provided attendee's with immediate access to mental health assessment, reducing the risk of escalation. 67% of those receiving a clinical service from VOS via this drop in show improvement in their mental health after their engagement.

100% of attendee's surveyed strongly agreed/agreed that they were able to obtain the information and help that they needed and overall, the service was helpful.

Many veterans seen at the IoW Drop-In have disclosed apprehension at the prospect of having to travel to Portsmouth to access the services available at the drop in and /or therapeutic support. The availability of the VOS IOW Drop-In has ensured an equal and inclusive access to these services for island veteran residents.





## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 6.1 Conclusions

a) It can be seen both from the programme outputs and the case studies in this report that the Armed Forces Covenant Partnership has enjoyed significant success in raising the profile of the needs of the Armed Forces community; leveraging additional funding and other resources; building relationships with relevant agencies; and gaining a greater understanding of need.

b) Overall, the programme has delivered a healthy financial return on investment. However, its success must be looked at more widely than in purely financial terms. Its impact on the lives of veterans, families and other members of the Armed Forces community has been described by service users as 'life changing'.

c) By working on a Solent-wide basis, it has been possible to maximise the impact of resources (especially the Armed Forces Covenant Officers role) and build more effective partnerships agencies, whose boundaries may not correspond to local authority boundaries.

d) Successfully bidding for awards under the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme has raised the profile of the Covenant, generated reputational benefits, and galvanized efforts to deliver Covenant outcomes.

e) Although much success has been achieved, some outcomes are only partly delivered or, by their nature, are ongoing. Therefore, the partnership must put arrangements in place to ensure that momentum is not lost and that the good work to date is not wasted.

### 6.2 Recommendations for 2020 and beyond

- Ongoing capacity is identified to continue implementing recommendations from the Solent needs assessment.
- Capacity is identified to coordinate and refresh the needs assessment at a Solent level in 2020 to ensure that the work of the SAFCP remains considered and that resources available continue to be deployed to maximum effect.
- Build resilience within the voluntary and community sector (VCS), which provides key support to the local Armed Forces community,
- Develop key performance indicators that drive the partnerships action plan and test the impact of outputs;
- Clarify the role of Lead Covenant officers and work to build capacity more generally within Local Authorities to reduce reliance on one/key staff members as the driver of Covenant implementation.
- Monitor ongoing delivery of the communication plan to ensure that reach and messaging remains regular, on target and relevant.
- Identify adequate resource to provide general administrative support to co-ordinate and manage the partnerships various board, task groups, shared workspace and key events calendar,

- Review engagement with the Defence Employer Recognition scheme and decide future ambition for retaining/improving current award levels
- Ensure co-ordination of Solent Pass scheme and migration of shared workspace in 2020.

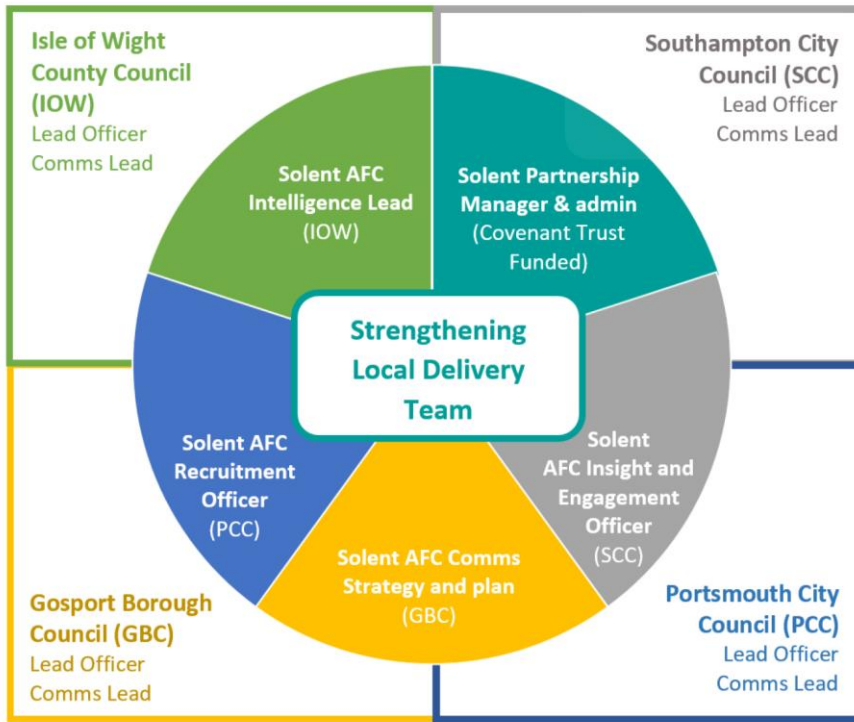
## **7. Forward Plan**

### **7.1 Developing a forward operating model**

With ongoing work and aspiration to maintain momentum and activity, the Solent Armed Forces Covenant Partnership Board (SAFCPB) spent 2019 considering how best to use baseline resources and the limited funding available to create a forward model for maintaining Covenant delivery in the Solent. A number of options were proposed; doing nothing and staying the same were both eliminated as viable options. In September 2019 the option to remodel, rationalise and refocus the current role of the Armed forces Covenant Programme manager, supported by lead officers, and in-kind support from partners was approved.

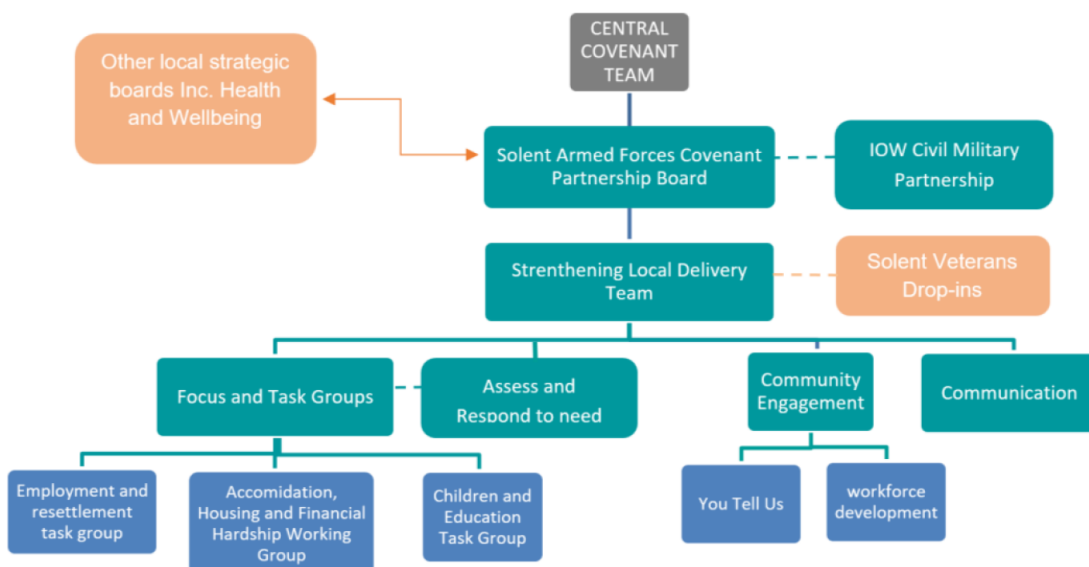
### **7.2 The new operating model:**

The new model seeks to increase resilience within the SAFCPB by distributing some on-going elements currently undertaken by the Strengthening Covenant Delivery Programme across the partnership to create the Strengthening Local Delivery Team (SLDT). The SLDT will replace the strengthening Covenant Delivery Programme. Funding for the new operating model is only secured until 31st March 2021 and the SAFCPB have taken an action to establish a funding task group with the principle objective of drawing in funding and sponsorship to enable the model to continue post 20/21.



Within the Governance structure, The MOD Central Covenant Team will replace the Covenant Trust as the central point for Covenant Policy. Reporting to the Covenant Trust will continue until stretch funding has been spent. Solent Veterans Drop-in's no longer funded by the partnership will continue to work closely with the SLDT to meet the needs of the Armed Forces community.

**Governance and work streams: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 and Beyond**



## **7.3 Millstones 2020/21 (Updated September 2020)**

### **April 2020 - September 2020: (reduced work plan reflects wider context)**

Work with local partners to co-ordinate virtual offer in response to identified need.

Ensure Armed Forces community knows where and how to access online support.

Ensure opportunities for partners to showcase services and show respect and recognition through virtual for VE and Armed Forces Day.

Submission of Gold applications Gosport and Southampton

### **October 2020 - March 2021:**

Review of working groups and work packages to align to Covenant Legislation Focus groups

Formation of recovery task group to identify emerging themes

Development of Key performance indicators

Refresh communication plan

Develop cross partner Armed Forces Community employment strategy

Commence thematic needs assessment.

### **April 2021 - September 2021:**

Thematic Needs Assessment published.