REPORT of
DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND IMPROVEMENT

to
STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
26 NOVEMBER 2026

ARMED FORCES COVENANT DELIVERY GROUP

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To update Members on Maldon District Council's renewed commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant and the progress made since signing the Council's new pledge in February 2026.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Members delegate authority to the Director of Strategy of Improvement, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to support the delivery of the Council's commitments and oversee progress against the Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

3.1 The Armed Forces Covenant is a national commitment which recognises that those who serve, or have served, in the Armed Forces, together with their families, should be treated fairly and should face no disadvantage because of their service.

3.2 Maldon District Council formally renewed its Armed Forces Covenant pledge on 12 February 2026, reaffirming its commitment to supporting the Armed Forces community across the district.

3.3 The Council currently holds Bronze accreditation under the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme and has identified opportunities to strengthen delivery and work towards attaining a Silver accreditation.

3.4 Since renewing the pledge, officers have been developing arrangements to support delivery of the Council's commitments and to provide a more structured approach to monitoring progress.

3.5 Key areas of focus include:

- Raising awareness of support available to members of the Armed Forces community.
- Strengthening partnerships with local and national support organisations.
- Promoting employment and volunteering opportunities.
- Recognising and celebrating the contribution of serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families.

- Supporting future progression through the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme.

3.6 A draft Action Plan has been prepared to translate the Covenant commitments into practical actions, ownership arrangements and measurable outcomes. Current priorities include recruitment practices, staff awareness, partnership engagement, leisure opportunities, civic participation and support for remembrance activities.

3.7 An Armed Forces Delivery Group has been established, comprising the Head of Health Integration and Wellbeing, relevant officers, and colleagues and Members with previous service experience. The Group will ensure activity reflects local needs and priorities, implement the Council's Covenant commitments and deliver the Action Plan. It will be overseen by the Director of Strategy and Improvement, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Renewing the Armed Forces Covenant will strengthen the Council's support for serving personnel, veterans, reservists and military families across the district. The Delivery Group and Action Plan will provide clear oversight, helping to turn the Council's commitments into practical, meaningful outcomes for the Armed Forces community.

5. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2025 - 2028

5.1 **Supporting our communities**

5.1.1 Supporting the Armed Forces Covenant contributes to the Council's wider ambitions to support healthy communities, strengthen partnerships and promote inclusion across the district.

5.2 **Delivering good quality services**

5.2.1 The Covenant supports an inclusive approach to service delivery and demonstrates the Council's commitment to ensuring fair access to services and opportunities for all residents.

6. IMPLICATIONS

(i) **Impact on Customers** – The Action Plan delivery will have a positive impact by strengthening awareness of, and access to, support and services for serving personnel, reservists, veterans and their families across the district.

(ii) **Impact on Equalities** – The work supports equality of access by helping to ensure that serving personnel, reservists, veterans and their families are not disadvantaged because of their service. No adverse equality impacts have been identified.

(iii) **Impact on Risk (including Fraud implications)** – The Delivery Group will strengthen oversight of the Council's Covenant commitments and reduces the risk of actions not being delivered or monitored effectively. No specific fraud implications have been identified.

(iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – Delivering the Action Plan will have no direct financial implications. Any expenditure required will be managed through the Council's usual budgetary and governance processes. An annual budget for the Armed Forces Covenant is already in place.

(v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – The Head of Health Integration and Wellbeing will support delivery of the Action Plan as part of their role. Officers and ex-serving colleagues who wish to contribute will be engaged through the appropriate processes, with their line manager's agreement.

(vi) **Impact on Devolution / Local Government Reorganisation** – No direct implications have been identified at this stage. The Delivery Group will provide a clear mechanism for maintaining oversight of the Council's Armed Forces Covenant commitments and supporting continuity through any future changes to local government arrangements.

Background Papers: None.

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