

Committee: **Executive Committee**
 Date of meeting: **13th November 2019**
 Report Subject: **Time Off For Reservists Policy**
 Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Nigel Daniels, Leader / Executive Member Corporate Services**
 Report Submitted by: **Andrea J. Prosser – Head of Organisational Development**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
x	x	30.10.19				13.11.2019	12.12.2019	

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement from the Executive Committee to introduce a new policy for the Authority for Time off for Reservists (Appendix 1).

2. Scope and Background

2.1 The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) encourages employers to support defence and inspire others to do the same. The scheme encompasses bronze, silver and gold awards for employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the armed forces community, and align their values with the Armed Forces Covenant.

2.2 Providing support for reservists, including leave for training is an important element of the Silver Award - the Council does currently make provision for this in its Schedule of Leave of Absence. The Council has been granted silver award status pending the formal introduction of the proposed policy.

2.3 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC) is a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant, launched in 2011 by the UK government, to promote and support the Armed Forces Community.

2.4 BGCBC is also the lead organisation in delivering on the Armed Forces Covenant at a local level. The Armed Forces Steering Group is the delivery body. Administrative support comes via the Policy and Partnerships team. The Steering group is chaired by Cllr Brian Thomas, Armed Forces Champion.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Option 1

Support the implementation of a Time Off for Reservists Policy by endorsing the proposed policy.

3.2 Option 2

Suggest amendments to the proposed policy for implementation.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 The other four Gwent authorities have all already achieved the Silver Award (as have many other Welsh local authorities and other public bodies) and Newport and Caerphilly have now achieved the Gold Award in 2019.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget**

Each department will need to consider any time off for Reservists and the costs of any cover arrangements. BGCBC currently has 1 member of staff registered as a reservist. Therefore, current cost implications are limited.

5.2 **Risk**

Failure to implement the attached policy will prevent BGCBC from achieving the Silver Award

5.3 **Legal**

This information is contained within the attached policy.

5.4 **Human Resources**

Benefits of Reservist Training:

- World-Class transferrable training – paid for by Department for Defence
- Employees gain accredited, transferable skills
- Enhanced recruitment and employee retention
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Reservist training leave has to be formally requested as far in advance as possible, the Council will try to allow leave wherever service needs allow. There is currently one member of staff who acts as a reservist.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

This information is contained within the attached policy.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

This information is contained within the attached policy.

6.3 **Involvement** (consultation, engagement, participation)

Meetings have taken place with the Regional Armed Forces Coordinator who has confirmed the policy is in line with the vision of the Gwent and South Wales authorities.

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

This information is contained within the report.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

N/A

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

N/A

6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**

N/A

6.8 **EqIA**

This policy is reactive in nature and the Ministry of Defence will be making decisions on who is called for service or training and when. Any impact in terms of the policy is likely to be positive in that those with protected characteristics who might have challenges combining working for BGCBC with being a reservist would find it easier because this policy is in place. EqIA attached at Appendix 2.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 Managers will be required to monitor all Reservist arrangements when either deployed or required to attend training.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 –Time Off for Reservists Policy

Appendix 2 – EqIA