

Report To: Policy & Resources Committee **Date:** 14 November 2017
Report By: Head of Organisational Development, Human Resources & Communications **Report No:** HR/31/17/BMcQ
Contact Officer: Barbara McQuarrie/Helen Watson **Contact No:** Ext 2845
Subject: Gold Award - Defence Employer Recognition Scheme

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request that Members note Inverclyde Council's ongoing active participation in supporting the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme and to inform Members of the successful receipt of the Gold Award.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Council approved a report at the Policy & Resources Committee on 31 January 2017, giving approval to officers to apply for the MoD Employer Recognition Gold award, implement any changes necessary to meet the criteria for receiving this award, and approved the Reserve Forces Training & Mobilisation Policy.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 The highest level of award (Gold) includes proactively advocating and supporting defence and the armed forces community, communicating commitment internally to employees and externally to the wider community through established policies and examples of support, being positive to all service personnel during recruitment, enabling reservists to fulfil their annual training and mobilisation commitments and by demonstrating significant support for cadet instructors, armed forces veterans (including wounded, injured and sick) and military spouses/partners.
- 2.4 On 8 August 2017 the Ministry of Defence announced Inverclyde Council as one of the winners of the Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Gold Awards, its highest badge of honour for organisations which have signed the Armed Forces Covenant and demonstrated outstanding support for those who serve and have served. Inverclyde is only the second council in Scotland to receive this award.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Policy & Resources Committee note Inverclyde Council's ongoing active participation in supporting the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme and the successful receipt of the Gold Award.

Steven McNab
Head of Organisational Development,
Human Resources and Communications

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In 2012 the Council signed an Armed Forces Community Covenant, which was a commitment by the Council, working with other service providers, to support existing and past service personnel and their families. A working group was established and has been taking forward a range of actions to support the Covenant since 2012.

Subsequently, an Armed Forces Corporate Covenant was introduced which is a commitment by employers to support the armed services. In particular, it relates to an employer's support for reservists, and for providing employment opportunities for people leaving the armed forces. The Corporate Covenant and Armed Forces Community Covenant aligned in July 2016 with agreements now known as the Armed Forces Covenant.

The Corporate Covenant introduced an Employer Recognition Award scheme which recognises and rewards UK employers for their support to Defence personnel. 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 support with the Armed Forces Covenant.

It was agreed at the Policy & Resources Committee in January 2017 that Inverclyde Council would bid for the Gold award.

- 4.2 In order to successfully achieve the Gold Award the Council needed to increase its activities to support the Armed Forces. These activities included:
- (i) Using the Council's internal communications media to encourage staff and their families to consider becoming reservists
 - (ii) Publicising through recruitment materials (advertisements, job packs) that the Council supports reservists and welcomes applications from people who already are reservists
 - (iii) Holding events to celebrate the contribution of reservists
 - (iv) Providing advice to veterans and those about to leave the Armed Forces about working for the Council
 - (v) Demonstrating and publicising the Council's commitment, both locally and nationally, to supporting the Armed Forces as an employer
 - (vi) Including in our Recruitment Procedures an instruction that Managers give positive consideration to leaving veterans for posts where they meet the essential criteria of the post.
- 4.3 Inverclyde is only the second Scottish Council to receive this award. There were a total of 33 employers announced as winners of the gold award.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

“These companies have shown the gold standard of commitment to supporting members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and their families. They have taken meaningful steps to ensure the Defence community are not disadvantaged by the sacrifice they make in helping keep this country safe. The actions of these employers make it crystal clear that regardless of size, location, or sector, employing people with military skills is good for business.”

- 4.4 Inverclyde Council, received gold logos for use on its materials and is now listed on the Employer Recognition Scheme website.

5.0 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 The Policy & Resources Committee note Inverclyde Council's ongoing active participation in supporting the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme and the successful receipt of the Gold Award.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 **Finance**

Financial Implications:

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (if Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

There are no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

6.2 Legal

There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

6.3 Human Resources

As outlined in the report.

6.4 Equalities

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

YES

No

Equality impacts have been considered and no negative impacts on any groups are anticipated as a result of the recommendations in this report

Joining the Employer Recognition Scheme can assist Inverclyde Council in meeting its duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination; promote equality of opportunity; foster good relations.

Although the Armed Forces community as such is not a protected group under the Equality Act, the community has a higher than average representation of vulnerable groups, particularly in relation to disability and age.

6.5 Repopulation

N/A

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

7.1 Consultation took place with Councillor Dorrian, Armed Forces and Veterans Champion, and also the trade unions, and the workforce planning group, as part of our normal consultative processes.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 N/A