

APPENDIX Q

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 1ST DECEMBER 2009

Title:

RECOGNISING THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE LOCAL ARMED FORCES

[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Richard Gates]

[Wards Affected: All]

Summary and purpose:

The Mayor has proposed that the Council should recognise formally the contribution made by the local regiment of the Army, the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, which incorporates the former Royal Surrey Regiment, and show the community's support to the regiment.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

This proposal relates to improving lives of the whole community by supporting the local armed forces, and particularly relates to supporting the families of the local army unit. These families can experience difficulties and stresses when their family members are on active service overseas.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

The proposal is intended to contribute to community cohesion by demonstrating the Council's support for serving members of the army and their families within Waverley.

Resource/Value for Money implications:

There will be some additional cost for any receptions marking any formal honours to the local regiment.

Legal Implications:

There is a formal statutory framework for granting the Honorary Freedom of the Borough to the local regiment if the Council chooses to do this, or Members may feel an informal declaration of the Council and Borough's support might be more appropriate.

Background

1. Over the last few years, Waverley's Mayors have recognised the contributions that members of the armed forces who live in the Borough have made to national security. The Mayor has now proposed that the Council considers recognising the contribution made by the local army regiment, the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (Queen's and Royal Hampshires) which following various amalgamations incorporates the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment. This is effectively the successor to the traditional County Regiment which recruited from Waverley and the whole of Surrey, and the new regiment which now covers most of the South-Eastern Counties of England.
2. The Regiment has a local Territorial Army battalion based at the TA Centre in Farnham, the Battalion of the Royal Surrey Regiment. The Battalion has had several members serving alongside regular army forces in both Iraq and Afghanistan over the last few years. The Regiment has a long a distinguished history and is the Senior English Line Infantry Regiment of the British Army.

The process for expressing the Borough's support

3. As part of the developing links, appropriate representation by the Regiment has been included in this year's Remembrance Sunday commemoration held in Farnham.
4. The Mayor has also been keen to involve Waverley's three Town Councils and Cranleigh Parish and the Town Mayors and Cranleigh Parish have met with representatives of the Regiment. All are keen to join in some form of expression of support.
5. However, the Mayor has met representatives of the Regiment who have suggested an informal bond of friendship would be more appropriate. A note of the conclusions of the last meeting is attached as Annexe 1.

Legal Position

6. The proposed less formal link is within the Council's overall wellbeing powers.
7. The Mayor supports the principle of Waverley, the three Town Councils and Cranleigh Parish Council jointly giving some form of declaration of support, and a suggested wording is attached as Annexe 2.

Resource Implications

8. Staffing support to make the arrangements for any ceremony to mark the Borough's support and appropriate receptions could be met from within existing resources, and voluntary organisations such as the Royal British Legion or other members involved with Territorial Army Veterans Organisations have been invited to help with the preparations for this so that the event is firmly grounded in the community.

9. The Mayor's budgets are limited and generally fully committed by the end of the Mayoral year.
10. Depending on the arrangements for any mark of support, this could involve the cost of a reception and then possibly a further reception following a parade organised by the Regiment when operational commitments would permit in 2011.
11. These extra costs should not amount to more than a maximum of £2,500 which could cover any necessary scroll to mark the recognition and refreshments for a reception to be held for the Regiment and their families. This would be met from underspends in other Democratic representation budgets.

Conclusion

12. The Mayor has been keen to involve the Borough more closely with the members of the community who serve in the army, and this would seem a fitting way to recognise the contribution of the Borough's local army unit.

Recommendation

That the Executive recommend that the Council agree in principle to a declaration of support to the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment to be made jointly with the three Town Councils and Cranleigh Parish Council and to ask the Mayor, once the Town Councils have agreed their support, to convene a Special Council Meeting to be followed by a reception for the Regiment.

Background Papers (CEx)

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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