Wednesday, 25th October, 2017

Present: Councillor Glen Harrison (in the Chair),
Councillors Bernadette Parkinson (Vice Chair), Mohammad Ayub,
Loraine Cox, Kath Pratt and Paddy Short

In Attendance: Tony Hayes – Veterans Association UK

Apologies: Councillor Abdul Khan

203 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Khan. Councillor Short acted as substitute representative for Councillor Khan.

204 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

No declarations of interest or dispensations were submitted at the meeting.

205 Minutes of Last Meeting

The Minutes of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 6th September 2017 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

Resolved - That the Minutes be received and approved as a correct record.

206 Transforming Care - NHS England

This item was adjourned to a future meeting.

207 Veterans Association UK

Tony Hayes, Chief Executive of the Veterans Association UK, gave a presentation on the service provided by the Veterans Association UK. He informed the Committee that he was a former soldier who had been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and referred to the numbers of former soldiers who were affected by this. He pointed out that breakdowns amongst those affected were common with many ending up on the street. He informed the Committee that the number of veterans affected were higher than recorded.

A video was shown of the stories of a number of local veterans.

Tony Hayes reported that they had opened two further offices in Kent and Nottinghamshire which were run by staff also affected by PTSD. He indicated that the Veterans Association UK provided a very holistic service for former forces personnel which included support for
those requiring housing and social welfare. He informed the Committee that they had to organise fund raising activities in order to continue the charitable service. He referred to his knowledge of housing law and how this had been invaluable when acting on behalf of clients. He also commented on the disputes he had had with social welfare to provide adequate adaptations for appropriate cases.

Members of the Committee requested further information on the cost of the service. Tony Hayes reported that the service relied on public donations and that they had employed a fund raising team in order to keep the service running. He pointed out that their organisation did not receive funding through the normal channel. He pointed out that they had not been successful with applications for CCG funding.

The Chair indicated that the Council had assisted the Charity in the past with funding for the market hall office. Tony Hayes reported that the Accrington Office was opened four days per week and that they ran community courses from the Library so facilities had improved. He referred to the number of veterans that the organisations had helped.

Councillor Short thanked the Veterans Association for the work they did and expressed concern that services, such as they provided, had to be delivered by a charitable organisation. He informed the Committee that the organisation had received a grant from the Peel and Barnfield Area Fund which had helped them to pay rental charges. Tony Hayes pointed out that rental charges were £1,500 per year.

Councillor Ayub referred to the Awards for All funding stream and asked if they had approached them. Tony Hayes informed the Committee that the Veterans Association UK had only had one project over a 12 month period but now required security for the mobile unit and intended to make a further application for funding. He pointed out that Hyndburn Homes had been very good in their assistance with housing. Councillor Short reported that Hyndburn Homes had been responsive to a request for a point of contact within the organisation in dealing with applications from Armed Forces personnel.

The Chair acknowledged the problems that the Veterans Association had had with accessing funding from CCG but encouraged the organisation to continue to apply. Tony Hayes reported on the number of applications that had been rejected and that this had been due to other similar organisations receiving funding instead. The Chair pointed out that the number of organisations making applications had reduced and suggested that this could result in the Veterans Association being more successful in future applications.

Tony Hayes explained that they had no links with the Royal British Legion but reported that they communicated well with local British Legion members. He reported that their facility in Burnley would be moving to a new location.

The Committee discussed ways in which the Council may be able to assist the Veterans Association UK and made a number of recommendations.

Resolved

1. That Cabinet promotes the support available for Veterans in this Borough through its website and through social media;

2. That Cabinet agrees to provide a letter of support for future external funding applications submitted by Veterans Association UK where that project will benefit Hyndburn residents, and that Cabinet considers
providing match funding where required on a case by case basis;

(3) That Cabinet commends the support provided by Hyndburn Homes when it comes to housing veterans, and encourages other social housing providers in Hyndburn to take a similar approach;

(4) That Cabinet considers introducing a policy whereby veterans receive appropriate prioritisation for relevant Council services, such as Disabled Facilities Grants where this can be done lawfully and in accordance with grant rules; and

(5) That Cabinet considers providing funding to enable Veterans Association UK to continue to operate out of Accrington Market Hall after July 2018.

Signed:………………………………………………

Date: …………………………………………………………

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed