

Council for Economic Renewal

IMPACT OF THE STRATEGIC DEFENCE AND SECURITY REVIEW IN WALES

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Regular Forces

The Strategic Defence and Security Review set out a vision to change the resourcing balance of personnel within the Armed Forces. The strategy sets out a reduction in regular forces offset by an increase in the number of reservists. The Review has resulted in significant changes to the structure and numbers of personnel in the Armed Forces.

Across the UK the numbers of regular servicemen and women are being reduced by:-

Royal Navy - 5,000

Royal Airforce - 5,000

Army - 20,000

Reductions to the Royal Navy and Royal Airforce cuts have already been achieved. Within the Army the latest tranche of redundancies for Army personnel are 5,300 in 2013 (personnel were informed in June 2013 and will leave in December 2013). Further redundancies are anticipated next year.

Transition data provided by 160 Brigade is attached at Annex A. This data is compiled from information provided by individual servicemen and women based on their views at a single point in time and is therefore not fully accurate. Caution should be used if consideration is given to using it for planning purposes.

1.2 Reserve Forces

“Reserves in the Future Force 2020” sets out the plans to integrate the reserve forces with regular forces. In terms of numbers, the Army has 19,000 Reserves but need 11,000 more with a 5,000 training margin. The Royal Auxiliary Air Force will increase to at least 1,800 by the end of 2016, and the Maritime reserves to 3,100 sailors and marines.

1.3 Current Armed Forces Based in Wales

Numbers based in Wales (approximately – numbers vary due to individual movement/deployment) :

- 2780 Regular Full Time service personnel (tri-service) as at Apr 2012
- 1994 Reservists (Army – 1866 as at 2011, Royal Navy and Marines - 128 as at 2013)

1.4 Review of Basing

The restructure of the Armed Forces has also resulted in a major review of basing, resulting in the withdrawal of troops from Germany by 2018. In Wales :-

- 14 Signal Regiment (Electronic Warfare) will move from Cawdor Barracks, Pembrokeshire to MoD St Athan in 2018, subject to terms being agreed between the MOD and the Welsh Government for the use of the Super hangar at St Athan. This will result in the closure of the Cawdor Site.
- 71 IR Squadron currently based at St Athan are moving to RAF Wittering in early 2013 and in September 2016 to 4 School of Technical Training (4SofTT) are moving to Lyneham.
- Headquarters Wales based in Brecon with HQ 160 Infantry Brigade.

1.5 Review of Reserve Estate

In Wales, the number of Army Reserve Units will increase from 6 to 7. 19 TA Centres will remain, but the TA Centres in Llandudno and Caernarfon will be closed. The majority of those serving at Caernarfon will serve at the Colwyn Bay TA centre. A new centre will be created in Cardiff, its location is currently unknown.

2. IMPLICATIONS FOR WALES

- Skill set of those being made redundant is often unknown in advance, so more challenging to match to skills demands in Wales.
- Impact on employers of increasing the number of Reserves, including for small businesses.
- Impact on local economy through the closure of Cawdor Barracks.
- Impact on services of the increased personnel living around St Athans.

3. WHAT IS BEING DONE TO SUPPORT THOSE BEING MADE REDUNDANT AND RETURNING TO WALES

3.1 Transition Governance

160 Wales Brigade (Headquarters for the Army in Wales) has established a Transition Board, which includes membership from the three services, service charities and family federations, Welsh Government and Department of Works and Pensions. They have developed enhanced transition arrangements based around 5 key areas - Employment Education Housing Health Welfare (E2 H2 W).

3.2 Transition support

In addition to support available from within the Ministry of Defence, 160 Brigade held an Armed Forces event on 25 June 2013 in City Hall in Cardiff, in partnership with Welsh Government. The event included a Transition Fair and conference for business leaders. The Transition Fair aimed to improve communication with those leaving the Regulars Forces and signposted them to help and resources available. Prospective employers were in attendance. Over 700 servicemen and women attended. The second element of the event was aimed towards Welsh businesses to advise them of the benefits of employing those leaving the Armed Forces and Reservists. A further event is being held in Wrexham in February.

The third sector also has a significant role to play in supporting veterans in Wales. The All Wales Veterans Health and Wellbeing Service has developed a common care pathway which recognises the role of the Third Sector in providing support to veterans and establishes the Service as the 'Gatekeeper', central to the assessment and management of veterans with mental health problems.

In December the Ministry of Defence announced those charities which have been successful in accessing funding to support the Armed Forces through the Armed Forces Covenant (Libor) Fund. £2.5 million was awarded to charities to support work in Wales, including almost £1m to Alabare Christian Care and Support has been which will be used to provide homes for homeless veterans in Wales and to fund a programme of specialist employability support.

3.3 Local Community Covenants

All 22 Local Authorities in Wales have now signed Community Covenants. The aim of the community covenant is to encourage local communities to support the service community in their area and promote understanding and awareness among the public of issues affecting the armed forces community.

3.4 Corporate Covenant

In 2013 the Ministry of Defence also introduced a Corporate Covenant Scheme. A corporate covenant is a voluntary pledge from businesses and charitable organisations who wish to demonstrate their support for the Armed Forces community. A link to the Corporate Covenant template is provided below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/corporate-covenant-pledge>

All corporate covenants include a core statement of commitment which those adopting the scheme sign up to. This covers the two key principles of the armed forces covenant, which are:

- no member of the armed forces community should face disadvantage in the provision of public and commercial services compared to any other citizen;
- in some circumstances special treatment may be appropriate, especially for the injured or bereaved.

The corporate covenant is intended for businesses to provide support for the Armed Forces community, principally but not exclusively around employment. In addition to supporting the two key principles of the armed forces covenant, business can select from a range of other commitments they may feel able to make. For example, participation in Armed Forces Day or through exclusive discounts to members of the armed forces community. Larger organisations may wish to actively seek to employ serving reservist personnel for the skills they possess, or strive to support the employment of ex-regular personnel and service spouses.

3.5 Future Reserves Strategy

Within “Reserves in the Future Force 2020” a number of measures are set out for reservists and employers which include:

- the introduction of paid annual leave when training as well as when on operations; Armed Forces pension entitlements, when training and on operations, under the Armed Forces Pension Scheme, to be introduced in April 2015;
- better training and access to the equipment used by their regular counterparts; access to key defence health services when training and on operations;
- transferable skills and academic qualifications; an Army Reserve training commitment of around 40 days per year, up from a current average of 35;
- legislation to ensure access to employment tribunals in unfair dismissal cases against reservists, without a qualifying employment period.

For employers there will be:

- a £500 per month, per reservist, financial award to small and medium enterprises on top of the allowances already available when their reservist employees are mobilised;
- more notice so employers are able to plan for the absences of their reservist employees;
- greater recognition for leading supportive employers;
- a national relationship management scheme to strengthen our relationships with larger employers.