

ARMED FORCES VISITS TO SCHOOLS

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The PPG has been asked to consider what, if any, guidelines should be put in place to govern goodwill visits by the Armed Services to Council premises, particularly schools. This paper provides information on this matter and makes a recommendation for Members to consider.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members accept that no guidelines are necessary.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A motion was submitted by Councillor Nisbet, seconded by Councillor Morton, for consideration at the Council's meeting on 2 October 2008, in the following terms –

“This Council requests that the Social Affairs Policy and Performance Group considers what, if any, guidelines should be put in place to govern goodwill visits by the Armed Services to Council premises, particularly schools.”

- 3.2 There are currently no guidelines dealing with this issue in relation to schools or, so far as I am aware, other Council premises. These have not been considered necessary thus far.
- 3.3 There is a long tradition of links between H.M Armed Forces and the local government, communities and schools in Argyll and Bute. These links have taken many different forms:
- Historically, units of H.M Armed Forces have been deployed/based in Argyll and Bute. Examples include Royal Air Force units being based in Oban, Islay and elsewhere during World War II, Royal Navy presences at Rothesay and Dunoon etc, etc.

- Currently Argyll and Bute is home to the Faslane Naval Base and associated Royal Marines detachment.
 - There are many examples of particular units/individual service personnel carrying out “public works” on a small scale.
 - The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders were granted the freedom of Argyll and Bute by the former Argyll and Bute District Council.
 - There are clear links between the Council and the Royal Navy, particularly with ships such as HMS Argyll, HMS Campbeltown etc, etc.
- 3.4 H.M Armed Forces have carried out “goodwill” visits on a number of occasions, to schools in Argyll and Bute. These events are generally structured in such a way as to provide information about the activities of the particular element of the Armed Forces which is putting on the display.
- 3.5 Other Armed Forces to Argyll and Bute may not be centred around particular premises, whether operated by the Council or not. For example, a Royal Navy ship may anchor off a town in Argyll and Bute, with the crew coming ashore to participate in various activities of a civic/ceremonial/goodwill nature. This type of visit would generally be arranged/co-ordinated through the Council, with involvement on the part of the offices of Leader/Provost as appropriate. There may be other linkages, for example, with the office of the Lord Lieutenant for Argyll and Bute.
- 3.6 I am unaware of particular problems having arisen in relation to Armed Forces visits to Argyll and Bute in general. They seem to be well managed and, as a general premise, any use of Council premises would be picked up and considered as part of the wider process for making the necessary arrangements.
- 3.7 With specific reference to schools operated by the Council within Argyll and Bute then the current situation is that visits in general (whether by the Armed Forces or other agencies/organisations) would, in the majority of cases, be arranged via the Head Teacher. Advice would be available to Head Teachers, on request, from the Education Service of the Council as and when required, on a case by case basis.
- 3.8 With further reference to schools, I am aware of only one instance where an issue has been raised about a visit by Armed Forces to a school. This related to a Primary School visit in the Helensburgh and Lomond area in 2007 and, after consideration of the matter within the Education Service, it was determined that no action needed to be taken.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 There is a history of Armed Forces visits to Argyll and Bute, and to Council premises, including schools, within the area. These have generally been conducted in a way which is entirely appropriate and have generally been viewed positively by the public in Argyll and Bute. There has been one instance where a member of the public has raised an issue about a visit to a school in Argyll and Bute in recent years, which has been considered appropriately.

5. IMPLICATIONS

<i>Policy:</i>	No change to current position
<i>Finance:</i>	None
<i>Personnel:</i>	None
<i>Legal:</i>	None
<i>Equal Opportunities:</i>	None

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Director of Community Services

For further information please contact:

Director of Community Services
Argyll and Bute Council
Kilmory
Lochgilphead
PA31 8RT