

**Council: 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016**

**OPPOSITION Motion in the name of Cllr Arjun Mitra**

Royal British Legion "Count Them In" Campaign: Making the next census count for our Armed Forces community

Council places on record its gratitude for the courage, service and sacrifice of members of Her Majesty's armed forces, past and present, during military conflicts, in countering terrorism and in carrying out peacekeeping and humanitarian duties.

Council notes:

- The obligations it owes to the Armed Forces community within the Borough of Barnet as enshrined in the Armed Forces Covenant; that the Armed Forces community should not face disadvantage in the provision of services and that special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given the most.
- The absence of definitive and comprehensive statistics on the size or demographics of the Armed Forces community in Barnet. This includes serving Regular and Reserve personnel, veterans, and their families.
- That the availability of such data would greatly assist the Council, local partner agencies, the voluntary sector, and national Government in the planning and provision of services to address the unique needs of the Armed Forces community in Barnet.

Council therefore resolves to:

- Support and promote The Royal British Legion's campaign 'Count Me In' to include a new topic in the 2021 census that concerns military service and membership of the Armed Forces community.
- Urge Barnet's elected members to sign up as individual supporters to the 'Count Me In' campaign.
- Ask the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition to jointly write to the Secretary of State for Defence, setting out the Council's position that we wish to see the UK Parliament approve a final census questionnaire in 2019, which includes questions concerning our Armed Forces community, for use in the 2021 Census.

- Ask the interim Chief Executive to write to the Borough's three Members of Parliament, and the Assembly Member for Barnet & Camden, asking them to also make representations on this matter to the Secretary of State for Defence.

*Under Full Council Procedure Rule 23.5: if my item is not dealt with by the end of the meeting I ask that it be referred to the appropriate committee or sub-committee for consideration and any necessary action.*