



Committee – Thriving People

Date Thursday 16th July 2026

Subject: Squaddie Box

Report by:

Director of Planning, Regeneration & Communities

Contact Officer:

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Executive Summary:

This report sets out the Squaddie Box proposal, as required following a motion agreed by Full Council on 13 April 2026.

Squaddie Box is an initiative delivered by a charitable organisation that provides a secure postal address for homeless veterans who do not have access to a permanent address. Through the provision of a physical mailbox, correspondence can be received and collected safely by veterans who would otherwise be unable to receive mail. The proposal is detailed in full within this report and its accompanying appendix.

Having reviewed the available data and intelligence, there is currently insufficient evidence of identified need within West Lindsey to support progressing the proposal at this time.

The report also outlines the Council's current approach to meeting its obligations under the Armed Forces Covenant Duty and demonstrates how these responsibilities are being fulfilled across West Lindsey.

Appendices to Report

- Appendix 1 - Squaddie Box Partnership proposal
 - Appendix 2 – Veterans Address Stability Infrastructure proposal
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RECOMMENDATION(S):

- a) That the Council does not implement the Squaddie Box Service at this time**
- b) That thanks be extended to Squaddie Box for their proposal and time spent working with Officers and Members**
- c) That Thriving Council note the position and actions taken by the Council which ensures compliance with that duty.**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 13th April 2026 a motion was agreed at Full Council for WLDC to consider rolling out a pilot initiative of the Squaddie Box project to the District of West Lindsey.
- 1.2 Squaddie Box is a CIC specialising in supporting veterans and emergency services personnel who are facing homelessness. The charity offers practical solutions in the form of a personal mailbox for veterans who have no fixed abode.
- 1.3 Squaddie Box provides secure physical mailboxes, placed at trusted community locations which allows mail to be delivered to a safe and secure place via the normal postal system.
- 1.4 As a specialised service for veterans, Squaddie box understand many veterans who present to homelessness services are navigating complex transition issues after leaving the Armed Forces. The Armed Forces Covenant recognises that this cohort can face challenges linked to relationship breakdown, mental health issues and the broader difficulties that can arise during transition to civilian life.

2. The Squaddie box service

- 2.1 Access to a postal address is not a requirement for services such as homelessness & housing, Department for Work & Pensions or GP services, all of which are happy to register a person for services without a postal address.
- 2.2 However, Squaddie box articulates through their correspondence with WLDC that *“even though services may technically be available, engagement from veterans can still be fragile. Something as simple as having a stable and recognised correspondence address can make a meaningful difference to how individuals reconnect with those services. It restores a degree of legitimacy and stability, allowing them to receive time-sensitive correspondence, maintain benefit claims, progress housing applications and engage with employment opportunities.”*
- 2.3 Squaddie Box go on to detail *“There is also a very human aspect to this that we see repeatedly when speaking with veterans who are struggling. For some individuals dealing with trauma, pride and the loss of identity that can accompany homelessness, the prospect of having to regularly attend a Department for Work and Pensions office simply to collect their mail can feel deeply difficult and, in some cases, humiliating. The experience can reinforce feelings of failure or embarrassment, which may lead to further disengagement from the very systems designed to help them..... Squaddie Box helps remove that barrier. By providing a secure personal mailbox with 24-hour access, veterans are able to collect their correspondence privately and at a time that suits them, without needing to attend public offices. This*

small adjustment can make a significant difference in restoring a sense of independence, dignity and control”

- 2.4 Another aim of Squaddie Box is to start providing data and insight into some of the challenges the veteran cohort face when accessing services. One of the challenges that Squaddie Box have identified nationally is the *“lack of clear operational data around the barriers faced by veterans experiencing housing instability... By working collaboratively with councils to capture anonymised insights, we hope to contribute to a clearer evidence base that can support future policy development across local government and the Ministry of Defence.”*

3. Requirement for Squaddie box

- 3.1 Although West Lindsey and wider Lincolnshire have a large cohort of veterans, this doesn't result in a high number of homelessness cases. Over the past three years, there have been 17 approaches to homelessness services at West Lindsey from people who have declared they served in the HM Armed Forces.
- 3.2 Of those 17, five were identified as having no fixed abode but they were not rough sleeping. To give those figures context, over the same period, 1,700 homeless applications were received at West Lindsey and 78 of those were identified as rough sleeping for at least one night.
- 3.3 Due to these figures indicating that there potentially would not be a high need for this service, it was proposed to Squaddie Box that the post box could also be utilised by civilians when not in use for veterans, with a priority system being in place should a veteran require this service. However, West Lindsey is still not experiencing a letter box as a barrier for people to access services.
- 3.4 Should a person who has a homelessness application with West Lindsey not have access to a mobile phone, one can be purchased by the Homelessness Prevention Office to ensure they can contact them, that can also be utilised to receive texts and calls from DWP and GP services.

4 Squaddie Box proposal & financial implication

- 4.1 The proposal would provide 1 Squaddie Box pod which would support up to 4 homeless veterans at any one time to provide a secure verified postal address for them to receive their mail in a secure place with access 24 hours a day.
- 4.2 As detailed above at 3.3, there would also be the opportunity for civilians to utilise this mailbox when it was not in use by veterans, with a clear priority given to veterans when they required it, but to maximise the use and identify whether there is also a need for this service for the wider homeless cohort.
- 4.3 The cost of installation of the pod itself would be fully funded by Squaddie Box CIC – this is detailed by Squaddie Box as costing

£1,000 and is a capital cost to the charity upfront. Should it be agreed to continue with this pilot scheme, a location for the box will need to be explored and determined in conjunction with Squaddie Box and the WLDC Member rep for Armed Forces.

4.4 The costs which would be required to be funded by WLDC are to cover the Annual Licence Infrastructure Fee of £,7500 per annum for 2 years totalling £15,000 for the 2- year pilot. These costs are set out in the Squaddie Box Partnership Proposal detailed at appendix 1.

4.5 The annual licence fee covers the following:

- Infrastructure Provision
- Safeguarding and verification Framework
- Compliance and Governance
- Operational Oversight

Full details of all elements which are covered in the licence fee are explained at appendix 1 paragraph 4.

4.6 Should the proposal be agreed, the roll out of the pilot project and the programme phasing will be implemented as set out in the Partnership proposal for a 2-year period initially, with the potential to extend should an evidenced need for this be established through the pilot.

4.7 The Partnership Proposal does include figures which are not fully evidenced in relation to savings on temporary accommodation or emergency placements, the pilot project will seek to understand how the implementation of this can have an impact on homelessness prevention and improve the lives of those who are able to utilise this service.

4.8 As no evidence of need for this can be established from a homelessness perspective, funding this from the Homelessness Prevention Grant is not an option as it does not fall within the guidance for this grant funding.

4.9 Should the proposal be agreed, it is suggested that funding for this would need to be agreed by Thriving Council Committee and the £15,000 funding required would be utilised from WLDC reserves.

4.10 More detail on the original Squaddie Box Proposal can be found at appendix 2.

5. Armed Forces Covenant Duty

5.1 The Covenant Duty is a legal obligation on certain public bodies to have due regard to the principles of the covenant, and requires decisions about the development and delivery of certain services to be made with conscious consideration of the needs of the armed forces community.

5.2 Details of how West Lindsey currently meet the Armed Forces Duty Covenant are available on the website following this link [Armed Forces Covenant | West Lindsey District Council](#)

- 5.3 This includes:
- Allocation of social housing accommodation
 - Understanding housing needs
 - Homelessness strategy, prevention and housing advice
 - Disabled facilities grants
 - Tenancy strategy
- 5.4 The published position statement and action plan was adopted in 2023. All identified actions have now been completed and implemented

5 Options

5.1 Do nothing

- 5.1.1 There is no clear evidenced need for this service and no evidenced cost savings that can yet be identified. Should the Thriving People committee decide not to implement Squaddie Box, homeless veterans would continue to be supported through our housing and homelessness services.
- 5.1.2 A postal address is not a barrier to accessing council services, DWP or Health provision, however, Squaddie Box are expressing that there are other underlying challenges faced by the veteran cohort which means that a Squaddie Box could be required. Presently, there is no data to evidence what unmet local need there is currently.

5.2 Utilise a Royal Mail PO Box

- 5.2.2 PO boxes are currently available and is an option that could be utilised by anyone and funded by WLDC should it be required from a housing or homelessness prevention perspective, for example, should a postal address be a barrier to employment which would result in someone not being able to afford accommodation.
- 5.2.3 The cost of a PO Box is detailed at the following webpage as is summarised below [Royal Mail PO Box® | Royal Mail Group Ltd](#) :

Collect your mail from your PO Box at your Customer Service Point.

Duration	Price
Monthly* (Direct Debit only)	£50.40
6 months	£243.00
12 months	£416.40

- 5.2.4 Squaddie Box suggest that a PO Box requires the user to adhere to opening times of a Post office alongside being able to navigate the post

office itself which could be a barrier to utilisation of this service for veterans who are struggling with daily interactions.

5.3 Implement a longer term scheme - securing this project for a 10-year period

- 5.3.1 The proposal at appendix 1 gives an opportunity to put Squaddie Box in place for a 10 year period. The costs for this are detailed in that proposal but summarised below:

10-Year Financial Projection (3% CPI from Year 3)

Year Annual Fee

1 £7,500

2 £7,500

3 £7,725

4 £7,957

5 £8,196

6 £8,442

7 £8,695

8 £8,956

9 £9,225

10 £9,502

Estimated 10-Year Total: **£83,698**

- 5.3.2 With the current evidenced need not being in place and the large and on-going revenue cost this would incur, it is thought that a pilot of 2 years with a lower outlay and the opportunity to continue with the service should a need be clearly identified would be a more measured approach.

	Option	Rational for not recommending
1	Implement a 2-year pilot	There is no evidence of need or correlation between homelessness prevention or access to Council services and being able to receive
2	Utilise a Royal Mail PO Box	Does not over come some of the barriers experienced by veterans
3	Implement a 10 year scheme	Not cost effective for a service where no identification of need is established

ASSOCIATED IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

None

Financial: FIN/45/27/TP/AP

The proposed 2-year Squaddie Box pilot scheme in West Lindsey would require funding of £15,000 to cover the Annual Licence Infrastructure Fee (£7,500 pa).

This would be funded from reserves.

The proposal at Appendix 1 gives an opportunity to put Squaddie Box in place for a 10 year period with a projected cost of £83,700 over the 10 year period. This would be a budgetary pressure for the MTFP.

However, Thriving People Committee Thanks Squaddie Box for their proposal and the time taken to detail how that would work in West Lindsey, but the committee does not take the Squaddie Box Proposal forward at this time.

Staffing:

This service will be managed within existing recourse capacity

LGR implications:

No LGR implication due to suggested length of pilot project

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

Not required

Data Protection Implications:

GDPR compliance is detailed in appendix 1 as being covered under the Annual Licence fee costs

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

N/A

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

N/A

Health Implications:

Barriers to accessing services alongside safe and secure housing can have a huge impact on your physical and mental health. This project suggests a correlation between having a safe and secure mailbox, and accessing these services and looks to overcome those barriers and evidence how this can create a better and healthier environment for veterans.

Risk Assessment:

A risk assessment of the location of the Squaddie Box will be undertaken as part of the implementation of the project

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

[Agenda for Council on Monday, 13th April, 2026, 7.00 pm | West Lindsey District Council](#)

Call in and Urgency:**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

☐

No

☐**Key Decision:**

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

☐

No

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