

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP – 12 MARCH 2014

Title of report	ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT
Contacts	<p>Councillor Alison Smith MBE 01530 835668 alison.smith@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Community Services 01530 454832 john.richardson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Cultural Services Team Manager 01530 454601 goff.lewis@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p>
Purpose of report	To present Policy Development Group with a Draft Community Covenant as discussed and agreed by the Task and Finish group
Council Priorities	Homes and Communities
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	Officer time to support the Armed Forces Champion and measures contained within the covenant. Grant funding is available through the Community Covenant Grant Fund.
Link to relevant CAT	None
Risk Management	N/A
Equalities Impact Assessment	N/A
Human Rights	None Discernible
Transformational Government	N/A
Comments of Head of Paid Service	The report is satisfactory
Comments of Section 151 Officer	The report is satisfactory
Comments of Deputy Monitoring Officer	The report is satisfactory
Consultees	Royal British Legion North West Leicestershire Branches Armed Forces Community Engagement officer

Background papers	Cabinet Report – Armed Forces Community Covenant 14 January 2014 https://www.gov.uk/armed-forces-community-covenant
Recommendations	POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP CONSIDERS THE DRAFT COMMUNITY COVENANT AND MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 What is the Armed Forces Community Covenant?

Local authorities and the armed forces community are encouraged to work together to establish a community covenant in their area in order to:

- encourage local communities to support the armed forces community in their area
- to raise public understanding and awareness of the issues affecting the armed forces community
- recognise and remember the sacrifices faced by the armed forces community
- encourage activities which help to integrate the armed forces community into local life
- to encourage the armed forces community to help and support the wider community, whether through participation in events and projects, or other forms of engagement

1.2 Community covenants can look different in different areas. This is a scheme where one size does not fit all, and the details within a scheme will be determined by the local need and local capacity.

1.3 It is meant to be a pledge that sets out what a community covenant seeks to achieve in a particular area and, where possible, will be signed by representatives from all parts of the community. In most cases the lead signatories will be a senior representative from the local authority and one from the services who will sign on behalf of the armed forces community, whether that is the local military unit or those representing veterans' or families groups.

1.4 A Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. It is intended to complement the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces.

1.5 Many people nationally have become involved in supporting the Services community, through Service charities or more recently by participating in Armed Forces Day showing their support through fundraising, military celebrations, open days and family fun days. The Community Covenant scheme aims to build upon this support.

2.0 NWLDC SUPPORT FOR THE ARMED FORCES

2.1 North West Leicestershire is proud of its longstanding links with the serving and ex-serving members of HM Armed Forces and the Council is already fully supportive of the aims of the Armed Forces Community Covenant. At present the following annual activities are supported by the Council;

- The national initiative to fly a flag for Armed Forces Day
- The Remembrance Sunday service at Memorial Square in Coalville
- The two minute silence on Armistice Day at Memorial Square in Coalville

2.2 The Council recognises that in signing the Armed Forces Community Covenant it will allow existing relationships with the Armed Forces to be developed further particularly with the forthcoming significant national events.

- 2014 being the 100 years anniversary of the commencement of World War 1
- 2014 -18 seeing various significant World War 1 events celebrated
- 2015 being the celebration of 70 years since the end of World War 2

3.0 NEXT STEPS - NWLDC AND KEY PARTNERS

3.1 Cabinet agreed at its meeting on 14 January 2014 to ask Policy Development Group to establish a Task and Finish Group to develop and further the relationships with the Armed Forces Community.

3.2 It was proposed that the mission statement of the Group be

‘To identify key measures that deliver the principles set out in the Armed Forces Community Covenant and report back recommendations to Policy and Development Group and Cabinet at the earliest opportunity’

3.3 It was proposed that the Task and Finish group includes members, officers and representatives of the Armed Forces Community.

3.4 The Task and Finish group met on the 18 February 2014 (see Appendix 1 for minutes).

3.5 The summary recommendations from the meeting were as follows;

- That the Portfolio Holder for Community Services be nominated as the on-going Armed Forces Champion
- That the Draft Community Covenant as presented and debated at the meeting be recommended to Policy Development Group (12 March 2014) and Cabinet (24 June 2014) for adoption (see Appendix 2 for Draft Community Covenant)
- That the Cultural Services Team Manager as support officer begin working on the relevant measures