

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET – 14 JANUARY 2014

Title of report	ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT
Key Decision	a) Financial No b) Community Yes
Contacts	Councillor Alison Smith MBE 01530 835668 alison.smith@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Director of Services 01530 454555 steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Head of Community Services 01530 454832 john.richardson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk
Purpose of report	To seek members approval to sign up to the Armed Forces Community Covenant
Reason for Decision	To provide a statement of mutual support between the civilian community and the local Armed Forces community in North West Leicestershire building on existing initiatives and partnerships.
Council Priorities	Homes and Communities
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	All measures are to be met from within existing resources or external grant funding
Link to relevant CAT	Not Applicable
Risk Management	Risk assessments will be considered for any new measures
Equalities Impact Assessment	Not Applicable
Human Rights	None Discernible
Transformational Government	Not Applicable

Comments of Head of Paid Service	The report is satisfactory.
Comments of Section 151 Officer	The report is satisfactory.
Comments of Monitoring Officer	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees	Legal Services
Background papers	https://www.gov.uk/armed-forces-community-covenant
Recommendations	<p>CABINET IS RECOMMENDED TO</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) IMPLEMENT THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT PLEDGE WITHIN NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE 2) ESTABLISH A TASK AND FINISH GROUP FROM POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP TO DEVELOP MEASURES FOR FURTHERING THE COVENANT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH KEY ARMED FORCES REPRESENTATIVES 3) SUPPORT ANY GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR ANY IDENTIFIED MEASURES WITHIN THE COVENANT 4) DELEGATE AUTHORITY TO THE LEADER AND THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE TO SIGN THE COVENANT ON BEHALF OF THE AUTHORITY

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 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. They have shown their support in a variety of ways including 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 NWL is proud of its longstanding links with the serving and ex-serving members of HM Armed Forces and NWLDC is fully supportive 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, with a flag raising ceremony outside the Council Offices
 - A service on Remembrance Sunday held at Christ Church followed by a wreath laying ceremony at Memorial Square in Coalville
 - A two minute silence on Armistice Day with an act of remembrance at Memorial Square in Coalville

3.0 NEXT STEPS - NWLDC AND KEY PARTNERS

- 3.1 The Council recognises that in signing the Armed Forces Community Covenant it will allow existing relationships with the Armed Forces to be developed particularly with the forthcoming significant national events.
- 2014 being the 100 years anniversary of the commencement of WW1
 - 2014 -18 seeing various significant WW1 events celebrated
 - 2015 being the celebration of 70 years since the end of World War 2

It is therefore recommended to Cabinet to implement the Covenant.

- 3.2 In recommending to Cabinet the implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant it is further recommended to establish a Task and Finish Group reporting to the Policy Development

Group. This group would look to develop and further the relationships with the Armed Forces Community and consider further measures which the Council may have influence over to support the Armed Forces community of North West Leicestershire.

3.3 It is 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’

3.4 It is proposed that the Task and Finish group includes members, officers and representatives of the North West Leicestershire Armed Forces Community. Armed Forces representatives will be agreed through discussions with relevant agencies and organisations co-ordinated by the Chair of the North West Leicestershire Royal British Legion groups (Jim Rowlinson) in conjunction with the Head of Community Services.

3.5 Signing the pledge - In most cases the lead signatories of the pledge will be a senior representative from the local authority and one from the services who will sign on behalf of the armed forces community (although it may also be signed by those representing veterans’ or families groups who are keen to support principles of the Covenant).

3.6 For North West Leicestershire it is recommended to Cabinet that the pledge be signed by the Leader of the Council, Andrew Bridgen MP, the Chief Executive of the Council and Jim Rowlinson (Chair of the North West Leicestershire Royal British Legion Groups) representing the Armed forces community.

4.0 RESOURCE ISSUES

4.1 The signing of the Covenant will allow access to the Community Covenant Grant Scheme which delivers projects at the local level, and aims to strengthen the ties and the mutual understanding between members of the Armed Forces Community and the wider community in which they live.

4.2 An application for funding can be submitted by any part of the community including volunteer groups, charities and public bodies such as schools.

4.3 If agreed the Council will promote the potential for applying to the grant fund and support any proposed applications.