

Cabinet (Resources) Panel

27 June 2017

Report title	City of Wolverhampton Council Armed Forces Corporate Covenant	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor John Reynolds City Economy	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Keren Jones, City Economy	
Originating service	Skills Team	
Accountable employee(s)	Sam Axtell	Consultation and Community Involvement Officer
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Report to be/has been considered by	Place Leadership Team	31 May 2017
	Strategic Executive Board	6 June 2017

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is recommended to:

1. Approve the proposal for the City of Wolverhampton Council to sign a Corporate Covenant during Business Week in September 2017.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Cabinet (Resources) Panel for the City of Wolverhampton Council to sign a Corporate Covenant.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In 2012 Wolverhampton signed the Armed Forces Community Covenant. A Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. Community Covenants are intended to complement, at local level, the national Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the nation, the Government and the Armed Forces. The aim of the Community Covenant is to encourage local communities to support the Service community in their area and promote understanding and awareness amongst the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces Community.
- 2.2 Since signing the Community Covenant the City of Wolverhampton Council has been proactive in leading work in this area. We have had some significant successes including:
- An impressive social media campaign within the council in 2016/17 with 55 Facebook and Twitter posts throughout the year with a total reach of 633,000. Our most popular post related to Remembrance Day in November of last year.
 - Leading an exciting new initiative in Wolverhampton to celebrate Armed Forces Day on 24 June 2017.
 - We have focused on and excelled in our work around employment. We have established a work experience scheme for veterans within the council and have run a successful pilot for young people wishing to join the armed forces who might not meet the initial criteria, to help them get up to speed. We have also worked with our military partners to provide recruitment opportunities at our highly successful job fairs throughout the year. One of the job fairs was held at our local reservist unit at Fallings Park. Our work in the field of employment has been so successful that the Council has been awarded The Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Silver Award by the Ministry of Defense (MOD).

3.0 Corporate Covenant

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Council should develop its work around the covenant and take the next step by signing a Corporate Covenant. A corporate covenant is a written and publicised voluntary pledge from public bodies, businesses and charitable organisations who wish to demonstrate their concrete support for the armed forces community.
- 3.2 The corporate covenant has been designed to complement and sit alongside the community covenant. The armed forces community covenant sets out the moral obligation of society towards members of the armed forces community and the community covenant provides a mechanism for local authorities and communities to express support for members of the armed forces community. The corporate covenant is

designed to allow public bodies, businesses and charitable organisations to express their support, and commit to ways in which they can provide that support.

- 3.3 All corporate covenants include a core statement of commitment that those adopting the scheme sign up to. This covers the 2 key principles of the armed forces covenant, which are:
- no member of the armed forces community should face disadvantage in the provision of public and commercial services compared to any other citizen
 - Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given the most such as the injured or bereaved

Each organisation will also be encouraged to offer support in a way most appropriate to their situation and capacity, with the pledge document including a 'menu' of options for them to sign up to. This menu covers employment support for veterans, reservists, service spouses and partners, as well as support for cadet units, Armed Forces Day, and discounts for the armed forces community. There is also an opportunity for public bodies, companies and charitable organisations to add their own commitments based on local circumstances.

- 3.4 The City of Wolverhampton Council's draft Corporate Covenant is included at Appendix A. The pledges within the document are a natural extension of our existing work in this area and include recognition of some of our positive Human Resources and commissioning policies; actively promoting our commitment to the Armed Forces as an organisation; as well as developing a new piece of work to support local businesses to sign the Corporate Covenant.
- 3.5 It is proposed to sign the Corporate Covenant at a Business Breakfast event sponsored by the MOD during Business Week (commencing 25 September). This will raise the profile of our work in this area and provide an opportunity for us to promote the Corporate Covenant to local businesses.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. All the pledges are already part of our existing policies or are scheduled into existing work programmes.
[HM/08062017/T]

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.
[TS/07062017/Q]

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 Whilst not being one of the protected characteristics within the Equality Act, one of the founding principles of the national and local covenants is that the armed forces community faces discrimination in certain aspects of civilian life. The Corporate Covenant is part of a package of measures to address this.

6.2 An equality analysis undertaken shows that there will be positive equality implications in the signing up to the Covenant, as many armed forces members belong to one or more of the protected characteristic and will be given support to integrate in civilian life.

7.0 Environmental implications

7.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

8.0 Project Implications

8.1 No additional project support will be required to deliver this proposal.

9.0 Human resources implications

9.1 This report has significant Human Resources implications as it relates to existing Human Resources Policies. The Corporate Covenant has been developed in cooperation with this department.

10.0 Corporate landlord implications

10.1 This report does not have any Corporate Landlord implications

11.0 Schedule of background papers

11.1 None



City of Wolverhampton Council

We, the undersigned, commit to honour the Armed Forces Covenant and support the Armed Forces Community. We recognise the value Serving Personnel, both Regular and Reservists, Veterans and military families contribute to our business and our country.

Signed on behalf of:
Ministry of Defence

Signed on behalf of:
City of Wolverhampton Council

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Position: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____



CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

The Armed Forces Covenant

An Enduring Covenant Between

The People of the United Kingdom
Her Majesty's Government

– and –

All those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of the Crown

And their Families

The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm. Our Armed Forces fulfil that responsibility on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and, sometimes, suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty. Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. In return, the whole nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families. They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment.

Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

This obligation involves the whole of society: it includes voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and the actions of individuals in supporting the Armed Forces. Recognising those who have performed military duty unites the country and demonstrates the value of their contribution. This has no greater expression than in upholding this Covenant.

Section 1: Principles Of The Armed Forces Covenant

1.1 We, City of Wolverhampton Council, will endeavour in our business dealings to uphold the key principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, which are:

- no member of the Armed Forces Community should face disadvantage in the provision of public and commercial services compared to any other citizen
- in some circumstances special treatment may be appropriate especially for the injured or bereaved.

Section 2: Demonstrating our Commitment

2.1 City of Wolverhampton Council recognises the value serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families bring to our business. We will seek to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, by:

- promoting the fact that we are an armed forces-friendly organisation;
- actively encouraging employees to participate in remembrance events to remember members of the armed forces and civilians who have died during armed conflicts;
- seeking to support the employment of veterans young and old and working with the Career Transition Partnership (CTP), in order to establish a tailored employment pathway for Service Leavers;
- endeavouring to offer a degree of flexibility in granting leave for Service spouses and partners before, during and after a partner's deployment through our existing comprehensive arrangements for leave, including flexi leave, annual leave, unpaid leave and the Buying Annual Leave Scheme.
- seeking to support our employees who choose to be members of the Reserve forces through our leave policy, including by accommodating their training and deployment where possible;
- to include placements for veterans as part of the council's work experience scheme;
- leading and supporting Armed Forces Day in Wolverhampton;
- offering a discount for WVActive membership to serving personnel and veterans;
- support organisations to create employment and training opportunities for the armed forces community through our commissioning and procurement activities;
- supporting local businesses to sign the Corporate Covenant.

2.2 We will publicise these commitments on our website, setting out how we will seek to honour them and inviting feedback from the Service community and our customers on how we are doing.