



Cabinet (Resources) Panel

3 March 2015

Report title	Armed Forces Community Covenant Grants Scheme	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Elias Mattu and Councillor Peter Bilson Leisure and Communities and Economic Regeneration and Prosperity	
Key decision	No	
In forward plan	No	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Tim Johnson, Place	
Originating service	Economic Inclusion	
Accountable employee(s)	Sam Axtell Tel Email	Consultation and Community Involvement Officer 01902 554918 Sam.axtell2@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	N/A	

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is recommended to:

1. Approve the proposal for the Council to establish an expenditure budget for Community Covenant Grants.
2. Approve the proposal for the Council to approve the payment of grants to individual recipients.
3. Approve delegated authority for the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Communities in consultation with the Strategic Director, Place, to agree any further changes in budget and grants payments to organisations successful in securing grant under the scheme.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 Cabinet Resources Panel is asked to approve the establishment of the expenditure budget for Community Covenant Grants and to approve the payment of grants to individual recipients.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 A community covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 The covenant sets out what a community covenant seeks to achieve in a particular area and, where possible, has been signed by representatives by all parts of the community.
- 2.4 Wolverhampton's Armed Forces Community Covenant was signed at a ceremony in the Mayor's Parlour on 2 October 2012.
- 2.5 In addition to the lead signatories, RAF Cosford and Wolverhampton City Council, other signatories include:
- The Voluntary Sector Council
 - The Chamber of Commerce
 - City of Wolverhampton College
 - The Clinical Commissioning Group
 - University of Wolverhampton
 - Some Local Neighbourhood Partnerships
 - The Royal British Legion
 - Wolverhampton Partnership
 - Wolverhampton Interfaith and Regeneration Network
 - SSAFA Forces Help
 - West Midlands Fire service
- 2.6 The community covenant is supported by the Community Covenant Grant Scheme which has been established to financially support projects, at the local level, which strengthen the ties or the mutual understanding between members of the Armed Forces Community and the wider community in which they live. £30 million has been available nationally over a three year period. The Council receives the grant on behalf of any successful applicants. A scheme has been established locally. The final round of the current scheme will close locally in December 2014. The Ministry of Defence has announced that £10

million will be available in perpetuity for community covenant activity but it is not yet clear what the focus of activity will be and whether the grants scheme will continue.

3.0 Progress, options, discussion, etc.

3.1 At a local grants panel in October 2014 and subsequently at Regional level, a grant of £2370 was approved. In the final round of the current scheme approximately £58,000 of funding is being sought by local community organisations. The outcome of these applications will be known in February 2015.

3.2 A breakdown of the funding that has been submitted to regional panel for approval is outlined in the table below at 2.3. Please note that some of the groups that have applied are outside the Wolverhampton geographical boundary and are from Albrighton. This is because of Wolverhampton's relationship with RAF Cosford, our nearest military base, and lead co-signatories to the Wolverhampton community covenant.

3.3

Group	Project title	Amount requested
Albrighton and Donnington Playscheme Committee	Albrighton and Donnington Playscheme	2,370 ¹
RAF Cosford	Coaching for Kids	4,227
Wolverhampton City Council	Community Covenant Awareness raising	3,950
Brownies	Joint Brownie Holiday	5,362
St Mary's Nursery	Outdoor Classroom	2,150
St Mary's CE Primary School	RAF Children's Spitfire Club	12,835
Stonham Housing Group	Stonham Veteran's Service	25,437
	Total	56,331

3.4 The conditions of the funding require the local authority to act as a partnership body for the funding. This places certain responsibilities on the community covenant partnership to ensure value for money, monitor that the funded activity delivers the stated benefits and retains records for audit purposes. A copy of the terms and conditions is appended to this report.

3.5 A community covenant action planning sub-group has been established to oversee this monitoring activity.

3.6 The work is led by the consultation and community involvement officer of the economic inclusion team who also leads the action planning sub-group. Her role is to co-ordinate the grants panel, action planning group and the Covenant Board who has overall strategic responsibility for the covenant in Wolverhampton.

- 3.7 The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Communities is the Armed Forces Community Covenant Champion for Wolverhampton. This role includes chairing the Armed Forces Community Covenant Board meeting and being an advocate for the covenant.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 This report seeks approval to establish a revenue budget under Inclusion and Employment up to the value of £56,330 should the applicants be successful in securing Community Covenants Grant. This report also seeks approval to pay grants to the recipients set out in section 2.3 and delegates authority to increase the revenue budget and approve any further grants awarded under the scheme. The Council will be responsible for invoicing the MoD and paying and monitoring grant payments to groups.
- 4.2 Further guidance has been sought from the MoD in addition to the terms and conditions appended to this report. They have confirmed that, whilst the Council has a monitoring role, it will not be accountable for any claw back should any local groups fail to spend their grant allowance, act fraudulently or overspend on project costs.

[ES/10022015/U]

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 As the partnership agency for the funding, there are no legal implications for the Council. In the event of any misappropriation of funds, fraud or underspend, the MOD would be responsible for leading any investigation (a process that the local authority would cooperate in).

[KO/29012015/C]

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 Whilst the armed forces are not one of the nine protected characteristics under the Equalities Act, the action plan has been developed entirely with equalities in mind, seeking to address not only the inequalities that the armed forces face (in relation to issues such as health care and education) but also their dependants, many of whom will be female or children.

7.0 Environmental implications

- 7.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

8.0 Human resources implications

- 8.1 There are no direct Human resources implications arising from this report.

9.0 Corporate landlord implications

9.1 There are corporate landlord implications arising from this report.

10.0 Schedule of background papers

N/A