

# TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 6<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2012

## TELFORD AND WREKIN ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

### REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES AND CO-OPERATIVE COUNCIL

#### PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

##### 1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

1.1 That the Council signs up to the Telford and Wrekin Armed Forces Community Covenant and delivers against its commitments within the Covenant outlined within the document included in Appendix 1 of this report. The Armed Forces Community Covenant has been developed with members of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and representatives from the Armed Forces who have a presence within Telford and Wrekin and will be implemented through the following;

- Official signing of the Armed Forces Community Covenant by key representatives to be held on 14<sup>th</sup> December
- Establishment of a 'Community Covenant Partnership' to oversee the implementation of the Covenant linked to the LSP Executive Group, the Community Covenant Partnership will consider applications to the national Community Covenant Grant Funding Scheme
- Where appropriate the Community Covenant Partnership would identify any specific needs relating to the Armed Forces Community and identify how these could be addressed via the existing LSP working arrangements

##### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Cabinet agree to the development of an Armed Forces Community Covenant within Telford and Wrekin and to the specific commitments made by the Council that are included within the draft Covenant.

2.2 That the Leader of the Council and the Mayor be authorised to sign the Covenant on behalf of the Council.

2.3 That support is given to establishing a 'Community Covenant Partnership' linked to the Local Strategic Partnership with responsibility for overseeing the delivery of the Community Covenant and considering local applications to the national Community Covenant Grant Funding Scheme.

#### SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

<b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Objective(s)?	
	Yes	Improve local people's prospects through education skills and training. Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities and address health inequalities. Put our children and young people first.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	The aim of the Covenant is to assist in identifying

		and addressing the needs of the Armed Services Community within Telford and Wrekin.
<b>TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE</b>		The Armed Forces Community Covenant will be signed and adopted on 14 <sup>th</sup> December. It is proposed to establish the Community Covenant Partnership by February 2013.
<b>FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</b>	Yes	Support will be provided to the Community Covenant through officer time which is funded through existing Council budgets. There is no additional funding available within the Council to support the Community Covenant, however as described in paragraph 3.2.3 bids can be made to the Ministry of Defence by the Community Covenant for funding to support specific projects. MLB 19.11.12
<b>LEGAL ISSUES</b>	No	Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a general power of competence.
<b>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>	Yes	The Armed Forces Covenant provides an opportunity to further strengthen the relationship between the Civilian and Armed Forces communities in Telford and Wrekin. It is intended that the delivery of the commitments within the Covenant and the establishment of a partnership group will assist in identifying and meeting the needs of the Armed Forces Community within Telford and Wrekin.
<b>IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS</b>	No	There is potential for a positive impact on residents who live in any ward within the borough.

## **PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **3. INFORMATION**

#### **3.1 Background**

- 3.1.1 An Armed Forces Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community, the Armed Forces Community includes serving personnel, reserve forces, veterans and their families. The aim of the Community Covenant is to encourage local communities to support the Service community in their area and nurture understanding and awareness amongst the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces Community.
- 3.1.2 The Armed Forces Community Covenant provides an opportunity for organisations within Telford and Wrekin to make a formal public commitment to working to support the Service community within the borough. Telford & Wrekin Council along with other organisations already have a good relationship with the Armed Forces Community in Telford and Wrekin, and the aim of the covenant is to build upon these existing relationships and to facilitate the development of new relationships where appropriate.
- 3.1.3 The Armed Forces Community Covenant sets out the key principles relating to how the partners signing up to the covenant will work together, along with the aims of the Covenant. As well as providing an overarching commitment by signing the Community Covenant pledge, the covenant also provides an opportunity for organisations to include specific 'measures' of support. The measures of support within the Telford and Wrekin covenant have been developed in consultation with the Army's Community Engagement Team and also reflect our priorities within Telford and Wrekin. The measures focus upon ensuring access to information about local

services, employment, skills and training, housing, health and wellbeing and community involvement and engagement.

- 3.1.4 The Armed Forces Community Covenant is attached in Appendix 1. The Covenant incorporates our Cooperative Values and a number of measures are included that relate to how the Council will support the Armed Forces Community within the borough. These measures are included in section 4 of the Covenant and specifically focus on ensuring that the Armed Services community are able to access Council services. The other measures relate to supporting the Armed Forces Community to receive appropriate advice and guidance to access housing, employment and to develop their skills. This includes offering work experience placements to former members of the Armed Forces.

### **3.2 Delivering the Armed Forces Community Covenant in Telford and Wrekin**

- 3.2.1 In order to be effective the Armed Forces Community Covenant needs support from a wide range of agencies that are able to contribute to meeting the needs of the Armed Forces Community. Therefore the Telford and Wrekin Covenant will also be signed by a range of organisations, not just the Council, and is supported by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Executive Group. The guidance relating to the Armed Forces Community Covenant recommends that a partnership group takes responsibility for overseeing the delivery of the Covenant and identifying any ongoing needs within the Armed Forces Community. It is suggested that this 'Community Covenant Partnership' role is delivered through the existing LSP Executive. Organisations that aren't currently represented on the LSP, but who are signed up to the Covenant would be invited to attend the LSP Executive when the Armed Forces Covenant is being discussed. It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Cooperative Council represents the Council on the Community Covenant Partnership along with representatives from the other organisations who have signed up to the covenant.
- 3.2.2 The Armed Forces Community Covenant is designed to be a high level document that sets out the commitment of the Civilian and Armed Forces Communities to work together. There will be an opportunity to develop more specific pieces of work and projects through the Community Covenant Partnership, there is potential to develop more specific plans to underpin the overarching covenant, if it is felt to be appropriate.
- 3.2.3 Once an area has signed their Armed Forces Community Covenant it is possible to access the national Community Covenant Grant Scheme. This funding delivers financial support to 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. An application for funding can be submitted by any part of the community; this might include voluntary groups, charities, and public bodies. Bids in the first instance must be considered by the Community Covenant Partnership at a local level. It is recommended that existing structures and chains of communication should be used as the scheme is intended to be as bureaucratically 'light' as possible. Bids will then be submitted to the Ministry of Defence to be considered by their Community Covenant Grant Panel.

### **3.3 Signing the Armed Forces Community Covenant**

- 3.3.1 The Armed Forces Community Covenant will be signed by the relevant representatives on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2012. The 'signing event' will provide an opportunity for organisations to show their commitment to the Armed Forces

Community Covenant and will assist with raising awareness of the document within Telford and Wrekin. Once the document has been signed it will be made available for the public to access through the Council's website, progress updates on the work of the Community Covenant Partnership will also be provided on a regular basis.

#### **4 IMPACT ASSESSMENT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

##### **4.1 Financial Implications**

Support will be provided to the Community Covenant through officer time which is funded through existing Council budgets. There is no additional funding available within the Council to support the Community Covenant, however as described in paragraph 3.2.3 bids can be made to the Ministry of Defence by the Community Covenant for funding to support specific projects.

MLB 19.11.12

#### **5 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

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