

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 6 January 2014

Portfolio: Leisure and Community
Subject: **Community Covenant**
Report of: Director of Community
Strategy/Policy: NA

Corporate Priority: Strong and Inclusive Communities

Purpose:

To establish a Fareham community covenant to encourage local communities and public service partners to support the armed forces community within the area.

Executive summary:

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, at the local level. The aim of the Community Covenant is to encourage local communities to support the service community in their area and promote understanding and awareness among the public of issues affecting the armed forces community.

Recommendation: That the Executive agrees to

- (a) support the Armed Forces Covenant by signing a Community Covenant for Fareham;
- (b) appoint the Deputy Leader as the Member Champion for the Community Covenant; and
- (c) sign up to the Community Covenant Grant Scheme to enable bids from local community groups to apply for grant funding.

Reason:

To seek approval to sign up to a Fareham Community Covenant, for the benefit of the armed services personnel and the wider community.

Cost of proposals:

Within existing resources.

Appendix A: Proposed Community Covenant Pledge

Background papers: Communications with HMS Collingwood and Royal British Legion

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Executive Briefing Paper

Date: 6 January 2014

Subject: Community Covenant

Briefing by: Director of Community

Portfolio: Leisure and Community

INTRODUCTION

1. 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, at the local level.
2. The Community Covenant aims to encourage all parties within a community to offer support to the local Armed Forces community and make it easier for Service personnel, families and veterans to access the help and support available from the Ministry of Defence, from statutory providers and from the charitable and voluntary sector.
3. The Community Covenant does not seek to replace the Armed Forces Day event but does aim to encourage the civilian community to extend their support beyond Armed Forces Day throughout the year and on longer term projects that benefit their local community. Armed Forces Day is very much about celebrating the hard work of our Armed Forces, the Community Covenant is about supporting them.

BACKGROUND

4. Fareham Borough Council has always enjoyed a close and cordial relationship with the Armed Forces, especially with HMS Collingwood which was awarded Freedom of the Borough in July 1974.
5. HMS Collingwood is the Royal Navy's largest training establishment covering 200-acres and is the lead institution for the Maritime Warfare School.
6. There are 404 married quarters accommodation properties within Fareham Borough, not including the residential units located within the HMS Collingwood establishment.

7. There are 155 Armed Service personnel who have registered as being Service Voters on the electoral register. There will be many more service personnel who live within the Borough but who have not notified the council of their status.

SERVICE DELIVERY OPTIONS

8. Hampshire County Council signed the Hampshire Armed Forces Community Covenant in June 2011 and is committed to working to ensure that the Armed Forces community has access to the help and support they need. The following areas are of particular significance to Fareham Borough Council in terms of service delivery:
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Housing
 - Leisure Opportunities
 - Access to Welfare Benefits
9. In order to promote Fareham Borough Council's commitment to service personnel in providing these services, it may be necessary for the Council's policies to be reviewed for these service areas to ensure that the appropriate procedures are in place.
10. The Ministry of Defence announced in 2011 that £30 million in grant funding would be available over four years to encourage and support projects which strengthened mutual understanding between the Armed Forces and Civilian communities at a local level. Some of this money has now been allocated however there is still £10 million to be allocated between 2014-2015.
11. Grant funding is only eligible to local authorities which have a Community Covenant in place. Bids from local authorities are submitted to a regional panel which will be chaired on a rotating basis by the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force. The Armed Forces Covenant team and Treasury retain oversight of the process.
12. All local bids must be reviewed and approved by members of the local Community Covenant Partnership. The Partnership can include signatories to the Covenant as well as other relevant representatives. The full Partnership or a sub-group can be appointed to review local bids for Covenant Grant funding.
13. If the MOD has any queries or concerns about a bid, it will contact the local Covenant Partnership Grant Panel to act as its liaison with the local grant applicant to clarify information or seek additional information about the bid.
14. The MOD publishes its quarterly deadlines for applications to be received and when the Panel meets for making grant decisions.

PROPOSAL

15. It is recommended that the Executive agrees to sign up to the Community Covenant and that HMS Collingwood be invited to be a co-signatory.

16. It is further proposed that other charitable and voluntary sector organisations be approached and invited to join the Community Covenant in the future. For example, the following may be invited:

- Community Action Fareham
- Chamber of Commerce
- Fareham and Gosport Clinical Commissioning Group

17. A proposed Community Covenant Pledge is shown at Appendix A.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

18. There are no financial implications for the Council in signing up to the agreement however, there is an opportunity to access funding for the benefit of armed services personnel and the wider community.

CONSULTATIONS

19. The Commanding Officer of HMS Collingwood, Captain Steven Dainton CBE, has written to the Mayor to express his backing of the formalising of Fareham's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant and to recognise the support the Council provides to Collingwood.

20. The Chairman of the British Nuclear Test Veterans' Association has written to the Executive Leader to promote his organisation's work to raise awareness for health measures to support surviving veterans and to request the Council's support by signing up to a Community Covenant.

21. The Director General of the Royal British Legion has written to the Chief Executive Officer to encourage the Council to join the Community Covenant scheme.

CONCLUSION

22. The proposal outlined in this report will ensure that Fareham Borough Council demonstrates its commitment to support the armed forces community within the area.

Reference Papers: Royal British Legion Best Practice Guide to Community Covenants
MoD Community Covenant Guidance Notes

Enquiries: For further information on this report please contact Leigh Usher. (Ext 4553)