



REPORT TO: SPECIAL MEETING OF MORAY COUNCIL ON 16 JUNE 2021

SUBJECT: ARMED SERVICES COVENANT

BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The Council is asked to approve the Armed Forces Covenant and retain the Council's silver accreditation.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Council in terms of the Section II (20) of the Council's Scheme of Administration in relation to a new policy matter which does not fall within the terms of reference of any Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Council is invited to:-

- (i) **Consider the content of the Armed Forces Covenant; and**
- (ii) **To approve the Covenant for signature by the Council.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 There has been in existence since 2012, a Covenant relative to the armed forces community in Moray. The Covenant outlines the aspiration to ensure that serving personnel, veterans and their families are not disadvantaged in any way in accessing council or other public services. The UK Government are proposing to use the [Armed Forces Bill](#) to incorporate the Armed Forces Covenant into law – although details remain limited on what this will actually look like.
- 3.2 As it was styled as an Armed Forces Community Covenant, it was signed off by the Community Planning Partnership.
- 3.3 The Covenant is now styled as an Armed Forces Covenant to be entered into by individual local authorities. During the course of the administrative process required to retain the council's silver accreditation, it came to light that the Armed Forces Covenant required to be updated to reflect the change in emphasis since the original document was signed in 2012 and following a

refresh in 2016. The revised Armed Forces Covenant is set out in the **Appendix**.

- 3.4 A significant proportion of the Moray population are eligible in terms of the Covenant (17%) and the recent announcement of the Ministry of Defence's continued development of RAF Lossiemouth is further evidence of the need to sign this document to reinforce Moray's commitment to the armed forces personnel, veterans and their families in the area.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

The Armed Forces Covenant will meet the following National Outcome "We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilience and safe".

(b) Policy and Legal

With regard to policy see (d) below. There are no direct legal implications although Members may be aware there are proposals to legislate for public services to have due regard to the needs of the military community in terms of how public services are planned and delivered. Any legislative impact will depend on the scale and scope of the duty of due regard. Currently reservists are referenced in the special leave policy, there are numerous military veterans and spouses employed by the council and officers have been involved in specific events e.g. speed networking and engagement with Reservists through the work of the Society of Personnel and Development Scotland (SPDS).

(c) Financial implications

The financial implications for partners will depend on their input into any local projects which are developed. As stated at (b) above, the Council already supports reservists, and employs veterans and spouses. The implications of a strengthened commitment enshrined in law would need to be considered more fully when the detail of that commitment is clearer. However, initial thoughts would be that such a commitment would sit alongside the equalities commitments already in place as well as workforce planning considerations of particular skills and experience required within services.

Moray Council and Highland Council previously received project funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund. A renewed bid has been submitted to build on the previous project to develop and deliver bespoke information about the Armed Forces Covenant to Community Planning Partnerships and further relevant organisations. All materials will be tailored to be easily delivered both virtually and face to face and as downloads from various websites.

(d) Risk Implications

The signing of the Armed Forces Covenant is an open demonstration of our support to the military community. Without the Covenant in place our commitment to the military presence in our area may be questioned. In

addition without a Covenant, funding from national Government aimed at supporting the integration into the community cannot be accessed.

(e) Staffing Implications

The staff implications for partners will depend on their input into any local projects which are developed.

(f) Property

None.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

The Covenant recognises the whole community connected to the military both now and in the past. It also recognises the wider community's involvement. Local projects may support people with protected characteristics.

(h) Consultations

The report has been prepared in consultation with CMT and SMT.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The Council is asked to authorise the Chief Executive to sign the revised Armed Forces Covenant on behalf of the Council.

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Background Papers:	
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