



Council
29 October 2019

Title	Renewing the Armed Forces Covenant
Report of	Head of Governance
Wards	All
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	No
Enclosures	Appendix 1 – Draft Armed Forces Covenant
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Summary

This report provides Council with a draft of the Armed Forces Covenant for approval which will renew Barnet's commitment to the Covenant which was originally approved in July 2012.

Officers Recommendations

- 1. That Council pledges its support for the Armed Forces Covenant by approving Barnet's Armed Forces Covenant as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.**
- 2. That Council notes that a signing event will be arranged with partner organisations following approval.**
- 3. That Council note that a report will be presented to the Community Leadership and Libraries Committee on monitoring delivery of the associated Action Plan.**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 The Armed Forces Covenant was published by the secretary of state in May 2011. It sets out the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces.
- 1.2 Barnet originally signed the Armed Forces Covenant on 1st July 2012.
- 1.3 'Renewing the Covenant in the Capital' is a project that has been developed to help improve the understanding and delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant across the London Boroughs and the City of London.
- 1.4 The project is being delivered in response to concerns that since it was originally signed, deployments and staff changes had led to a reduced understanding and visibility of the Covenant in London Boroughs and their military communities.
- 1.5 The project gives an opportunity and a platform for Boroughs to demonstrate their commitment, share best practice and adopt new approaches from across the country that may be applicable in London.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To ensure Barnet Council policies have been adjusted to suit the Covenant and are accessible by all through dedicated council web pages.
- 2.2 Obtain a commitment from Members and senior officers to renew the Covenant and make sure that frontline staff aware of the Covenant and how to best signpost those in need.
- 2.3 Establish an Armed Forces network between councils, military units and service providers to share knowledge.
- 2.4 Increase awareness of the Covenant within the Council and its partners, military units and service families.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 None.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Once the recommendation has been approved, the Council, representatives from health, education, employment, housing, multi-faith and voluntary sectors in Barnet, representatives from the emergency services and the Armed Forces Community will sign the renewed covenant.
- 4.2 Barnet Council will move towards receiving an Employers Silver Award and subsequently Gold Award when criteria have been met.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.1.1 The agreement of the renewing of the Armed Forces Covenant in Barnet would contribute to the delivery of all corporate priorities and objectives.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.2.1 Staff time from different services which will be contained from within existing budgets.

5.2.2 If there is a community focused initiative in the Barnet area that will benefit the links between the community and the military, the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust could help by providing grants of up to £20K.

5.3 Social Value

5.3.1 The agreement of the renewed Armed Forces Covenant will benefit the social value for the Armed Forces Community through various service areas with better advised means of communication.

5.3.2 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.

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

5.4.1 Council approved the original Covenant in 2012. Given the significant and cross-cutting nature of the Covenant, it is considered that Full Council approval is required as it is a matter which is so significant that it requires all Members to determine (Council Constitution, Article 4 (The Full Council)).

5.5 Risk Management

5.5.1 If the armed forces community are not supported this could have negative impact and carries a reputational risk to the council.

5.5.2 If there is a low take up of training to frontline staff this may impact the service delivery to the Armed Forces Community.

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

5.6.1 Recognising the Armed Forces Community in relevant service area considerations and policies will ensure inclusion without prejudice.

5.6.2 The Armed Forces Covenant recognises that the whole nation has a moral obligation to members of the Armed Forces and their families and it establishes how they should expect to be treated. It exists to redress the disadvantages that the Armed Forces Community faces in comparison to other citizens, and to recognise sacrifices made.

5.6.3 In some cases this will require special consideration, especially for those who have given the most such as the injured and the bereaved. The principle behind the Covenant is that the Armed Forces Community should not face disadvantage because of its military experience. The Covenant covers issues from housing and education to support after Service, and in it veterans have great importance.

5.7 **Corporate Parenting**

5.7.1 To allow measures to be put in place to support the needs of children of serving Armed Forces members and their families.

5.8 **Consultation and Engagement**

5.8.1 Consultation with the Project Manager for the Renewing of the Armed Forces Covenant at a meeting held in June 2019 with Armed Forces Champion, Leader, Senior Staff and partners.

5.8.2 Engagement between the Barnet Armed Forces Champion and the Project Manager for the Renewing of the Armed Forces Covenant for delivery of training to upskill senior staff and frontline staff.

5.9 **Insight**

5.9.1 A review of Council Policy Best Practice document and other London Boroughs commitments to the Armed Forces Covenant.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 Barnet Council Action Plan

6.2 Local Authority Guide Overview

6.3 Letter to Leader

6.4 Council Policy Best Practice document

6.5 Details available on Armed Forces Covenant website for grant applications.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/covenant-fund>