



Committee and Date

**Communities Overview
Committee**

21 July 2021

Item

6

Public

Shropshire Council Armed Forces Covenant

Responsible officer

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1.0 Summary

1.1 This report introduces Shropshire Council's Armed Forces Covenant, the council's pledge to ensure that serving and retired members of the United Kingdom's armed forces suffer no disadvantage in the provision of public and commercial services.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That the Communities Overview Committee review the covenant, the armed forces needs assessment and the covenant action plan, and highlight any opportunities to further strengthen the covenant action plan.

3.0 Opportunities and risks

3.1 This report is provided by for information only. Any recommendations that the committee makes would be subject to an analysis of their risks and opportunities before being put into action.

4.0 Financial assessment

4.1 This report is provided for information only. Any recommendations that the committee makes would be subject to a financial assessment for consideration before they are agreed.

5.0 Report

5.1 The United Kingdom's Armed Forces Covenant is the country's commitment to its armed forces. It's a pledge that those who serve, or who have served, in the armed forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy and society they serve. It is backed by an annual allocation of funding of £10 million from central Government, as well as by additional funding for specific projects arising from the UK's covenant. In addition the Armed Forces Act 2011 requires the Secretary of State for Defence to prepare and present to Parliament an annual report on progress in delivering the covenant's commitments.

5.2 The Armed Forces Covenant also encourages local authorities to set up their own covenant. Accordingly, Shropshire Council’s Armed Forces Covenant (**appendix 1**) seeks to:

- instigate policy changes that look to remove disadvantages faced by the armed forces community;
- ensure families with armed forces connections are supported to the upmost of its ability when accessing public services from the council and its partners;
- coordinate and support Armed Forces Day in Shropshire whilst offering a variety of discounts every year at our leisure, golf and swimming complexes;
- coordinate events such as the Shrewsbury Town FC Armed Forces Match Day, giving civilians and our local armed forces personnel the chance to meet and integrate;
- promote the virtues of the covenant and highlight how businesses can work with the armed forces to support the armed forces community; and
- actively challenge other partners, locally and nationally, who are not seen to uphold covenant values.

5.3 This work is informed by a joint needs assessment with Telford & Wrekin Council (**appendix 3**) that provides a comprehensive view of the experience of the armed forces community in relation to:

- health and wellbeing;
- education and children’s care;
- housing, employment and training;
- the criminal justice system; and
- transition to civilian life and specialist support.

5.4 The findings of the needs assessment drives the action plan (**appendix 4**) that underpins the council’s work to meet the objectives of the covenant. This action plan runs until 2023, although work has already begun to update the action plan in light of the findings of the needs assessment.

<p>List of background papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)</p> <p>Portfolio Holder – leader and strategy</p>
<p>Local Member</p> <p>All</p>
<p>Appendices</p> <p>1. Shropshire Council Armed Forces Covenant</p>

2. Armed Forces Covenant board structure
3. Armed Forces Covenant needs assessment
4. Armed Forces Covenant action plan