

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE AND TRANSFORMATION CABINET MEMBER

ARMED FORCES COVENANT AND PROCUREMENT

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To propose the promotion of the Armed Forces Covenant to council suppliers through procurement initiatives.
- 1.2 The key points in this report are:
- The council is a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant
 - The covenant is a public sector pledge from government, businesses, charities and organisations to demonstrate their support for the armed forces community
 - The council has a nationally recognised approach to the delivery of its policy objectives through procurement utilising new and progressive social value flexibilities.
 - It is proposed to promote the covenant initially through specific initiatives detailed in the report

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The council is a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant. The covenant is a public sector pledge from government, businesses, charities and organisations to demonstrate their support for the armed forces community. It was brought in under the Armed Forces Act 2011 to recognise that the whole nation has a moral obligation to redress the disadvantages the armed forces community face in comparison to other citizens, and recognise sacrifices made.
- 2.2 The covenant's two key principles are that:
- the armed forces community should not face disadvantages when compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services; and
 - special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.
- 2.3 Businesses and charitable organisations who wish to demonstrate their support for the Armed Forces community can sign the covenant. Organisations can make a range of written and publicised promises to set out their support to members of the Armed Forces community who work in their business or access their products and services.

The level of support will depend on the size and nature of the organisation but typically includes policies that: encourage reserve service; support employment of veterans and service spouses/partners; give the Armed Forces community a fair deal on commercial products and services.

- 2.4 More than 800 businesses and charities have signed an Armed Forces Covenant, and that number continues to grow. Government wants to encourage this.
- 2.5 Crown Commercial Services have recently issued a procurement policy note (06/16) encouraging public bodies to promote the covenant to their suppliers through procurement.
- 2.6 The council has a nationally recognised approach to the delivery of its policy objectives through procurement utilising new and progressive social value flexibilities. It is proposed to utilise social value flexibilities to promote the covenant initially through two specific initiatives:
 - encourage suppliers and prospective suppliers to sign up to the covenant by signposting them to it through procurement resources such as the *Selling to the Council* guide and Buy4Northern Lincolnshire website (appendix A); and
 - in the first instance encourage the council's construction framework partners to sign up to the covenant as part of the framework's nationally recognised focus on social value outcomes
- 2.7 In respect of the above, the proposals will not require a supplier to be a signatory to the covenant in order to work for the council.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1. Option 1 - Do Nothing

Option 2 - Promote the covenant to suppliers as detailed in paragraph 2.6 above.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 Promotion of the covenant to suppliers will support its wider adoption in line with the government's and council's pledge.
- 4.2 The construction framework accounts for approximately 20% of the council's annual procurement spend.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 No resourcing implications have been identified.

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

6.1 Not applicable.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

7.1 Promotion of the covenant to suppliers through procurement was supported by the council's strategic procurement and commissioning group.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the cabinet member approves the promotion of the Armed Forces Covenant through procurement as set out in paragraph 2.6.

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report

Crown Commercial Service PPN 06/16 – Armed Forces Covenant

Text for inclusion in the *Selling to the Council* Guide/Buy4Northern Lincolnshire Website

1. The Armed Forces Covenant is a public sector pledge from Government, businesses, charities and organisations to demonstrate their support for the armed forces community. The Covenant was brought in under the Armed Forces Act 2011 to recognise that the whole nation has a moral obligation to redress the disadvantages the armed forces community face in comparison to other citizens, and recognise sacrifices made.

2. The Covenant's two principles are that:

- the armed forces community should not face disadvantages when compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services; and
- special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

As a signatory to the covenant, the council encourages all suppliers and prospective suppliers, to sign the Corporate Covenant, declaring their support for the Armed Forces community by displaying the values and behaviours set out therein.

3. Guidance on the various ways you can demonstrate your support through the Corporate Covenant can be found here {link}

4. If you wish to register your support you can provide a point of contact for your company on this issue to the Armed Forces Covenant Team at the address below, so that the MOD can alert you to any events or initiatives in which you may wish to participate. The Covenant Team can also provide any information you require in addition to that included on the website.

Email address: covenant-mailbox@mod.uk

Address: Armed Forces Covenant Team
Zone D, 6th Floor, Ministry of Defence,
Main Building, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2HB

5. Paragraphs 1 – 4 above are not a condition of working with the council now or in the future, nor will this issue form any part of the tender evaluation, contract award procedure or any resulting contract. However, the council very much hopes that you will want to provide your support.

