



Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 003346
Date 12 March 2019

DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF WOLVERHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL'S DELIVERY OF ARMED FORCES COVENANT

Request:

I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information from Wolverhampton City Council.

I would like to know:

1. Whether Wolverhampton City Council has an elected Armed Forces Covenant Champion, and if so, how long they have been in the role?

The Armed Forces Covenant Champion is Cllr John Reynolds and he has been in post since he took up his role as portfolio holder for City Economy in 2015.

2. Furthermore, in reference to the 2016 'Our Community – Our Covenant; Improving the delivery of local Covenant pledges' report, (<https://www.fim-trust.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Our-Community-Our-Covenant-Report-30.08.16.pdf>) which states:

"Around half of councils report that they have an action plan, but only 20 per cent say that the plan is active"

I would like to know whether Wolverhampton City Council has an action plan.

If yes: I would like to know the details of the plan, whether it is active, and if it is monitored and reviewed.

As a recent recipient of the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award, City of Wolverhampton Council has an active action plan which is regularly reviewed on an annual basis. The attached 2018 action plan is provided for your information and was reviewed at our Covenant Board meeting on 6 March, where objectives for the 2019 plan were also discussed.

3. Has Wolverhampton City Council established an armed forces covenant forum (which includes military representatives, charities and council members)? Or is there a mechanism for co-operation at a regional level (West Midlands)?

We have an active partnership board which meets quarterly and we work with other local authorities across the region at quarterly point of contact meetings.

4. I would also like to know whether Wolverhampton City Council has any schemes specifically aimed at the veteran community (e.g employment, healthcare & housing schemes)?

We can confirm that the department holds information that you have asked for in relation to the above. However, the information is exempt under section 21 of the FOI Act because it is reasonably accessible to you, and I am pleased to inform you that you can access it on our website via the following link:

<http://www.armedforceswolves.com/>

Section 21(1) of the Freedom of Information Act exempts disclosure of information that is reasonably accessible by other means, and the terms of the exemption mean that we do not have to consider whether or not it would be in the public interest for you to have the information.

You can find out more about Section 21 by reading the extract from the Act, available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/21>

Wolverhampton Armed Forces Community Covenant Action Plan 2018/19

Introduction

The Armed Forces Community Covenant was first signed in Wolverhampton October 2012. The City of Wolverhampton Council renewed its commitment to Covenant in 2017. Several other local partners have signed covenants of their own – The City of Wolverhampton College, The City of Wolverhampton University and the Royal Hospital Trust.

Community Covenants are intended to complement, at local level, the national Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the nation, the Government and the Armed Forces. The aim of the Community Covenant is to encourage local communities to support the service community in their area and promote understanding and awareness amongst the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces Community.

The aims of the Armed Forces Community Covenant

The Covenant aims to encourage all citizens to support the local Armed Forces community and make it easier for Service personnel, families and veterans to access the help and support available from the MOD, from statutory providers and from the Charitable and Voluntary Sector, whose mission is to be fully inclusive.

The scheme is intended to be a two-way arrangement and the Armed Forces are encouraged to do as much as they can to support their community and promote activity which integrates the Service into civilian life.

These aims are reflected in the Community Covenant Action Plan

The Community Covenant Action Plan

As part of the work on the Covenant, the city is committed to producing an action plan. This will identify things that the city is already doing in relation to the covenant and any areas for future development.

Wolverhampton Community Covenant Action Plan

Theme	Action	Lead	Outcome	Measure	Status
Covenant Coordination	Improve the overall effectiveness of the Covenant Partnership in Wolverhampton	Sam Axtell	Continue to raise the profile of the armed forces community in the city.	Number of hits to Twitter and Facebook.	
		All	Covenant Board members in attendance at commemorative events across the city.	Development of a single website to house information about work related to the armed forces in the city to include the covenant, Armed Forces Day, WW1 commemoration and commemorative events.	
		Huw Allen		City of Wolverhampton Council to apply for Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award	
				Number of teams from CoWC taking part in the Army Reserve Challenge.	
		Steve Morgan	A clearer understanding of the data that exists in relation to the military community in the city	Military footprint for the city produced	
		Sam Axtell	Organisations in the city are informed about and enabled to apply for covenant funding	Number of organisations successfully applying for funding	
		Sam Axtell	A range of communities are involved in the work of the covenant through a	Number of events	

Theme	Action	Lead	Outcome	Measure	Status
			series of activities – Commemorative events, faith, veteran and young peoples' sessions		
Employment	Identify measures to support ex and transitioning service personnel and their families to achieve positive employment outcomes	Claire Macmanomy Angela Hoyle Jo Grocott Sukhminder Chahal Kate Phipps	A comprehensive support service for people from the military community seeking employment is in place.	<p>Number of events held at Job Centres (monthly)</p> <p>Number of job fairs held in the city</p> <p>Joint promotion of armed forces recruitment campaigns and job fairs as part of the Work Box</p> <p>Wolves@work champion appointed</p> <p>Yoo Recruit vacancies promoted with veterans and injured, sick and wounded.</p> <p>Council to develop guaranteed interview schemes for veterans, injured sick and wounded and military spouses/partners.</p> <p>Council to monitor numbers of veterans, injured sick or wounded, military spouses/partners and adult cadet force volunteers it employs.</p>	

Theme	Action	Lead	Outcome	Measure	Status
		Graham Brown		<p>Council to link with Careers Transition Partnership and Civvy Street to advertise for staff vacancies</p> <p>CoWC work experience scheme for veterans, injured sick and wounded promoted.</p>	
	Armed Forces Covenant	Sam Axtell/Angela Hoyle/Richard Jones	<p>Increasing numbers of city businesses have 'armed forces friendly' human resources policies in place.</p> <p>Increased employer engagement across a range of covenant partners</p>	<p>10 businesses are supported to sign the corporate covenant – 6 sign.</p> <p>Business events held (including Black Country Chamber of Commerce event on 2 May and City of Wolverhampton College networking dinner on 10 May).</p> <p>4 Mercian to engage with local employers to support the regiment/company.</p>	
Communities	To raise awareness of and support for the Armed Forces community in the city	Sam Axtell/Anita Cund	The profile of the armed forces is raised in the city.	<p>Armed Forces Day programme is delivered.</p> <p>Evaluation of and attendance at Armed Forces Day.</p> <p>Social media monitoring</p>	

Theme	Action	Lead	Outcome	Measure	Status
		Captain Mark Butler/RAF Cosford Caitlin O'Hara Jane Britton		Numbers of serving personnel taking part in the flag raising and flag lowering ceremonies World War 1 Commemoration – 2018 Royal British Legion event to thank Commonwealth Service Personnel and veterans	
Education	City of Wolverhampton College project	Richard Jones	Students informed about military history in city. Closer working between College and 4 Mercian.	Numbers of students involved Support from 4 Mercian for project work secured.	
	Civic and Historical Society project	Claire Darke	Residents more aware of the sacrifices the armed forces community have made.	Crowd funding campaign to fund a printed map showing the location of all war memorials in the City. Number of walking tours of the war memorials	
Welfare		Sam Axtell	A joined-up approach to the welfare needs of the armed forces community. Intelligence from SSAFA and the RBL is used to reach out to BME veterans and their families	Number of individuals assisted by the more coordinated approach of an operational group working to a data sharing agreement.	

Theme	Action	Lead	Outcome	Measure	Status
		<p data-bbox="689 312 860 453">Anthony Walker and Ashley Stanton</p> <p data-bbox="689 571 815 641">Anthony Walker</p>		<p data-bbox="1312 312 1863 453">Numbers of staff trained on issues related to supporting the armed forces community either face to face or through an e-learning module.</p> <p data-bbox="1312 497 1841 603">Numbers of veterans benefiting from the new Veterans Housing Bonds Scheme</p>	