



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

**CABINET
SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA ITEM
Item 100 An Armed Forces Community
Covenant for Brighton & Hove City**

4.00PM, THURSDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2011

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA ITEM(S)

The following agenda item although provided for on the agenda front sheet was not available at the time of despatch. The Leader of the Council has agreed to accept this report as a matter of urgency for the reasons set out in the report.

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100. An Armed Forces Community Covenant for Brighton & Hove City Report of the Strategic Director, Communities (copy attached).	1 - 32

Subject:	An Armed Forces Community Covenant for Brighton & Hove City		
Date of Meeting:	13 October 2011		
Report of:	Strategic Director, Communities		
Lead Member:	Cabinet Member for Communities, Equalities & Public Protection		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Mary Evans	Tel: 29-1577
	Email:	mary.evans@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Key Decision:	No		
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 3, Access to Information Procedure Rule 5 and Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) were the sensitive nature of the issue and the relatively short time between meetings.

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 At Council on 21 July 2011 a Notice of Motion was submitted by the Mayor that proposed recognising the contribution of the UK's armed forces by supporting the development of a Brighton & Hove Armed Forces Community Covenant.
- 1.2 The council noted the recent commitment by Central Government to enshrine the national Armed Forces Covenant into law. One particular aspect of this initiative is to develop, support and fund a Community Covenant Scheme. The aim of this would be to bring about tangible benefits to the Armed Forces Community by supporting local councils, the private sector and the community, faith and voluntary sectors to work with local Armed Forces communities.
- 1.3 The council also noted a range of recent initiatives across Brighton and Hove which have sought to recognise the unique contribution of the armed forces, including, for example, awarding of Freedom of the City to Henry Allingham and Flight Lieutenant Marc Heal.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That a programme of activity be developed in consultation with the local armed forces community to form the Brighton & Hove Community Covenant, to enable publicity of existing initiatives as well as the development of new plans as appropriate.
- 2.2 That Brighton and Hove apply for funds to support the Community Covenant by March 2012.

2.3 That the plans for a Community Covenant and the engagement process be publicised on Remembrance Day 2011.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 The Government has published a new Tri-Service Armed Forces Covenant which sets out a new relationship between the Government, voluntary and charitable bodies, civil society, local government, and those serving in the armed forces and their families.

3.2 The Covenant covers a wide range of services and issues, including issues such as healthcare, education and housing. A summary is attached at Appendix A (The Armed Forces Covenant).

3.3 In parallel to this, the Government has produced, via the Ministry of Defence, its own response. One particular aspect of this document concerns a new Community Covenant Scheme. On this initiative the Government's document states:

“Government is launching an Armed Forces Community Covenant Scheme which will encourage public service providers at Local and Unitary Authority level, the private sector and the voluntary and community sectors to volunteer targeted support for their local Armed Forces community. This could take the form of, for example, additional support in accessing local service delivery such as local housing or free access to leisure facilities, discounts in shops and restaurants. The Community Covenant is intended to be a two way arrangement so we will actively encourage the local Service population to provide support to their local community.”

3.4 Associated with this, the Government has also launched a Community Covenant Grant. The Ministry of Defence will allocate up to £30million over four years. The general premise of this fund is that:

“The Grant will be to support projects, at the local level, which strengthen the ties or the mutual understanding between members of the Armed Forces Community and the wider community in which they live. The Scheme will consider applications from local groups for practical projects which deliver rapid results in support of the Armed Forces Community.”

3.5 Further details of this scheme, plus the specific criteria, are attached at Appendix B. Applications are invited for sums from £100 to £250,000 (although bids for amounts greater than this may also be considered in exceptional circumstances). It is envisaged that many of the requests will be for smaller amounts of funding to support local projects and some examples offered by the Ministry of Defence include:

- one-off activities such as an activity camp involving the Armed Forces and young people;

- a community outreach project that brings together veterans with their non-Service equivalents to highlight what support is available to them in their local community.

One key factor to note is that bids may only be submitted from areas which have already established a Community Covenant in their area.

4. CURRENT ACTIVITY

- 4.1 Across the city, there are a number of communities that are disadvantaged or face serious challenge. The council's State of the City report notes that, for example, 28,000 people across the city are estimated to have some form of common mental disorder such as anxiety or depression that limits their potential. 22% of the children and young people up to the age of 19 live in poverty, with the figure reaching 47% in East Brighton. And 12% of the city's areas live within the 10% most deprived areas in England.
- 4.2 In the same way that the council, with its partners in both the statutory and community, faith and voluntary sectors, work together to tackle the impacts of these issues, the new Community Covenant offers the chance for partners across the city to do the same for the Armed Forces.
- 4.3 Nationally, officers of the Armed Services and their families face a number of issues:
- 4.3.1 The current size of the UK ex-Service community (both veterans and their dependants, including dependent children), is over 10.5 million people, and with a more elderly profile than the general population.
- 4.3.2 A minority (6%) of the adult ex-Service community are currently experiencing difficulties and not receiving the help, advice or support they need. This is equivalent to around half a million people with unmet welfare needs.
- 4.3.3 In the general population, women are more at risk of mental health problems than men, whereas in the ex-Service community mental health problems afflict men as much as women.
- 4.3.4 Unemployment among 25-49 year olds in the ex-Service community is higher than the rate nationally.
- 4.3.5 More than half (52%) of the adult ex-Service community have a long-term illness, disability or infirmity, which is higher than in the adult population (35).
- 4.3.6 In the ex-Service community, the unemployment rate among adults of working age is 6%; hardly different from the 5% in the general working age population. However, this hides an unemployment rate among younger members of the ex-Service community (aged 18-49), which is as much as twice that of their peers nationally.
- 4.3.7 Whilst they may not necessarily wish to ask for charitable welfare assistance, over half of the adult ex-Service community (around 4.6 million people) have experienced at least one significant personal difficulty in the last year.

4.3.8 The problems encountered by younger and older members of the ex-Service community differ. Older members are more likely to encounter difficulties with mobility and house and garden maintenance. Younger members are more likely to experience financial, employment or psychological difficulties.

4.3.9 Members of the ex-Service community aged 65 and over, when compared to their peers in the general population, are:

- less likely to be 'very happy'
- less likely to experience complete social isolation
- in better or equivalent health
- more likely to experience mental health and hearing problems

Younger ex-Service community

Members of the ex-Service community aged 16 – 64, when compared to their peers in the general population, are:

- more likely to be 'very happy'
- more likely to experience major health problems

Relative to their peers nationally:

- 16-44 year olds are more prone to mental health problems
- 16-44 year old veterans have higher prevalence of muscular-skeletal complaints
- 45-64 year olds are more prone to cardio-vascular or respiratory conditions.

4.4 Locally in the city, people already support the services' community by:-

- fundraising
- taking part in a number of events and celebrations such as the Freedom Parade and through particular initiatives such as awarding the freedom of the City to Veteran Service men/Women, most recently to Flight Lieutenant Marc Heal (at the same time as Aung San Suu Kyi).

4.5 At Brighton & Hove City Council, the following services already provide support to the Armed Forces Community:-

- The **Housing Benefits Team** provides a liaison service for Armed Service men and women in conjunction with the Royal British Legion.
- There is a National Disregard for War pensions and War widow pensions from £10.00 onwards which affects the amount of Housing Benefit that can be awarded. Currently Brighton & Hove City Council are one of only "5" councils in the country that disregards any full war pension and war widow pensions received when assessing housing benefits claims.

4.6 As an employer the council has publicly supported SaBRE since May 2008, an organisation which supports Reservists. The council is listed on their website as a supporting employer and supports employees who are members of the Territorial Army by granting them one week paid leave, in addition to their other leave entitlement, to attend reserve forces annual training camps. Any additional

commitments would be covered by annual or unpaid leave and, as far as possible, we would facilitate the release of reservists for mobilisation.

4.7 In working towards the development of the Community Covenant and other support activities in Brighton and Hove, there are a number of proposals in train:-

- A Sussex-wide veterans' health needs assessment to be completed by March 2012.
- Consultation and engagement with the armed forces community and their representative organisations in Brighton and Hove to identify their priorities for action from September until December 2011.
- Bench marking across the country for best practice of setting up a range of activities to support the Covenant.
- Full launch pre-Christmas of the Heroes Welcome Campaign – which encourages local businesses to provide discounts for Armed Services officers.

4.8 One key aspect of this work is the need to engage the Armed Services to make sure any local Covenant delivers meaningful outcomes for those directly affected as well as the wider city.

4.9 In line with the Community Engagement Framework a period of three months is required for effective engagement with the armed forces community and their representatives. A questionnaire has been sent to currently serving service personnel from the city to elicit their initial views and more detailed follow up consultation activity is planned for the Autumn. This gives the council the opportunity to understand, with partners, what might form the basis of a productive, deliverable workplan.

4.10 The basis of this could then feed into the detailed creation of a Brighton & Hove Community Covenant and any applications to the new Community Covenant Grant scheme.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 In line with the Community Engagement Framework a period of three months is required for effective engagement with the armed forces community and their representatives. A questionnaire has been sent to currently servicing service personnel from the city to elicit their initial views and more detailed follow up consultation activity is planned for the Autumn.

6. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

6.1 Any costs involved in the development and supporting of the Community Covenant scheme will be met from existing resources or by accessing the grant funding highlighted in section 3.4.

Finance Officer Consulted: Neil Smith

Date: 12/10/11

Legal Implications:

- 6.2 The power to take the measures recommended in paragraph 2 above derives from the council's power under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2000 to do anything it considers likely to improve or promote the social or economic well-being of its area. The power may be exercised for the benefit of all or any persons resident in the council's area. Additionally, exercise of the power must be consistent with the Sustainable Community Strategy for Brighton & Hove. In this instance, two priorities identified by the Strategy (improving health & wellbeing, and strengthening communities & involving people) render the exercise of the council's well-being powers relevant in relation to the Brighton & Hove Armed Forces Community Covenant.

Lawyer Consulted:

Oliver Dixon

Date: 12/10/11

Equalities Implications:

- 6.3 The equalities implications are as detailed in the body of the report.

Sustainability Implications:

- 6.4 There are no direct sustainability implications from this report.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 6.5 There are no direct crime and disorder implications from this report.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 6.6 There is a clear opportunity for additional funding as detailed in the body of the report.

Public Health Implications:

- 6.7 The health implications for veterans to be addressed by the health needs assessment referred to in paragraph 4.7 of the report.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 6.8 The citywide implications are as detailed in paragraph 6.2 above.

7. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 7.1 Evaluations of options for activity will be explored through the consultation process.

8. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 To respond to the Community Covenant Notice of Motion referred to Cabinet on 22 September 2011.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

- A. The Armed Forces Covenant Summary
- B. Community Covenant Grant Criteria

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT



THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

**An Enduring Covenant Between
The People of the United Kingdom
Her Majesty's Government**

– and –

**All those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of
the Crown**

And their Families

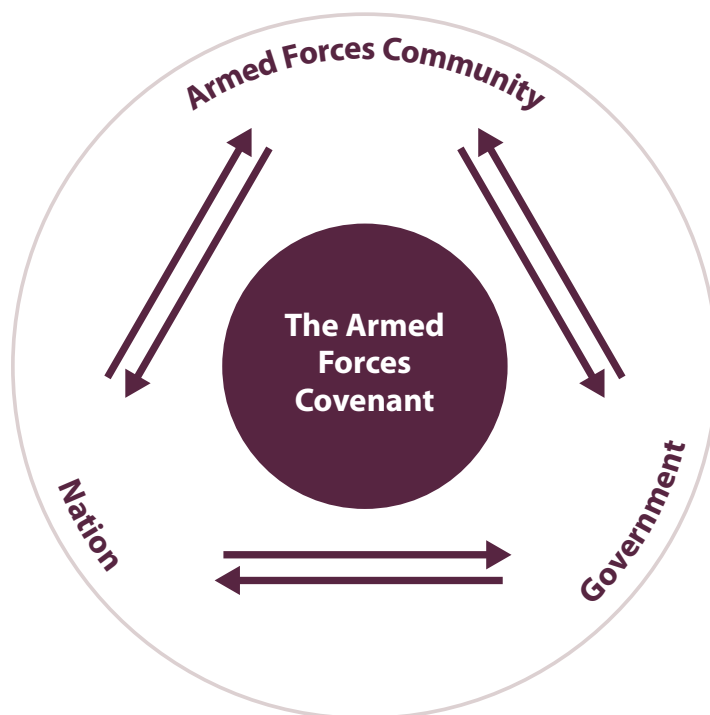
The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm. Our Armed Forces fulfil that responsibility on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and, sometimes, suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty. Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. In return, the whole nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families. They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment.

Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

This obligation involves the whole of society: it includes voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and the actions of individuals in supporting the Armed Forces. Recognising those who have performed military duty unites the country and demonstrates the value of their contribution. This has no greater expression than in upholding this Covenant.

GUIDANCE ON THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

Figure 1: The Covenant Diagram



This document accompanies the Armed Forces Covenant and provides guidance on how it is to be put into effect, by describing:

- A. The parties to the Covenant.
- B. A definition of the Armed Forces Community.
- C. The scope of the Covenant, by outlining the areas in which it can be expected to apply.
- D. Obligations and principles which flow from the Covenant.

This guidance note is available for the use of any organisation – Government Departments, the Armed Forces, local authorities, charitable bodies etc – which wishes to apply the Covenant to its particular circumstances. It will be updated as necessary.

The guidance note does not describe the actions being taken by the UK Government to support the Armed Forces Covenant. These are set out in a separate document, entitled **“The Armed Forces Covenant: Today and Tomorrow”**.

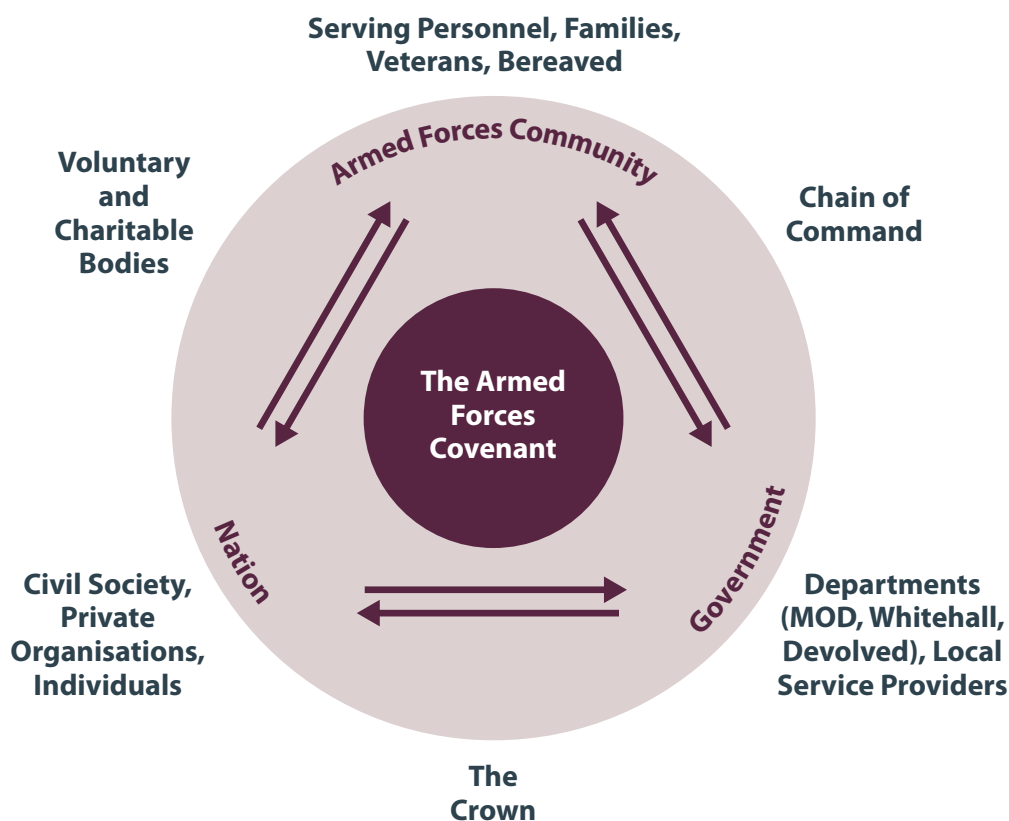
A. PARTIES TO THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

The Armed Forces Covenant is a covenant between the Armed Forces Community, the Nation and the Government.

Figure 2, building on the core Covenant diagram, shows the place occupied by different groups in this context. It illustrates that some bodies and individuals are associated mainly with one role, but others have more than one role. The dual role of the Chain of Command, as both a part of the machinery of government and at the heart of each of the Services, is especially important to the effective operation of the Covenant. Voluntary and charitable bodies are part of civil society, but also embody the Armed Forces Community at commemorative events.

A more detailed definition of how the Armed Forces Community is made up is contained in the next section.

Figure 2: Parties to the Covenant



B. DEFINITION OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

The Armed Forces Community is defined, for the purposes of the Armed Forces Covenant, as including all those towards whom the Nation has a moral obligation due to Service in HM Armed Forces. Inclusion in the community is neither dependent on nor limited by strict criteria, nationality, or legal definitions, and it does not confer any legal rights.

The whole of this community is covered by the Covenant and the obligations and principles which flow from it. The obligations are owed to the Armed Forces Community as individuals, as well as collectively. Being part of this community, of some 10 million people, entitles an individual to recognition and sometimes to support. However the level of support made available will vary. It will take into account the need for assistance, and may also reflect what an individual has contributed through Service. Inclusion in the community does not, therefore, mean identical entitlement to support.

The Armed Forces Community includes:

Regular Personnel – Individuals currently serving as members of the Naval Service (including the Royal Navy and Royal Marines), Army or Royal Air Force.

Reservists – Volunteer Reservists, who form the Royal Naval Reserve, Royal Marine Reserve, Territorial Army and the Royal Auxiliary Air Force, and Regular Reservists, who comprise the Royal Fleet Reserve, Army Reserve and Royal Air Force Reserve.

Veterans – Those who have served for at least a day in HM Armed Forces, whether as a Regular or as a Reservist.

Families of Regular Personnel, Reservists and Veterans – The immediate family of those in the categories listed above. This is defined as spouses, civil partners, and children for whom they are responsible, but can where appropriate extend to parents, unmarried partners and other family members.

Bereaved – The immediate family of Service Personnel and veterans who have died, whether or not that death has any connection with Service.

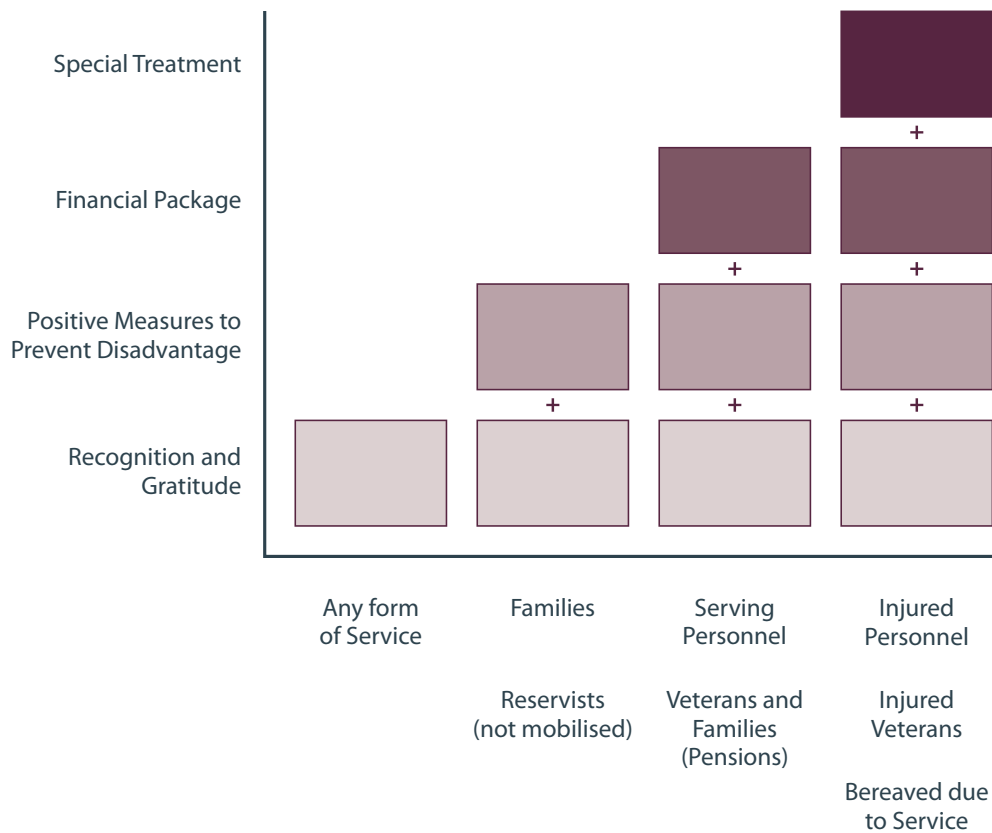
Levels of Support

As noted above, support to the Armed Forces Community will reflect the needs and commitment of individuals within that community and the moral obligation of society towards them. However it will generally be cumulative in nature, with members of certain groups receiving more levels of support than others. This is illustrated in Figure 3. Although a broad representation of this type can only be indicative, it shows for example that the support available to serving personnel would normally be in three areas – recognition and gratitude, positive measures to prevent disadvantage, and a financial package.

Reservists are in a special position, as although they receive the same level of support as their Regular counterparts when mobilised, the commitment they are making when not mobilised must be recognised. The Reservist has a greater liability than the wider civilian

population and they should be fully supported in meeting the additional challenges they face.

Figure 3: Levels of Support Available



The Supporting Civilian Community

Beyond the Armed Forces Community, and outside the scope of the Armed Forces Covenant, are other groups which play an important role in meeting defence objectives. These groups carry out an extremely wide range of functions, and include (but are not limited to) members of the Merchant Navy, the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, other defence civilians and contractor staff; cadets and the adult volunteers who support them; and the extended families of Serving personnel.

All supporting civilians, in very different ways, make valuable contributions for which they deserve recognition and in some cases support. Some groups support the Armed Forces directly, consistent with the Whole Force Concept. When members of these groups are deployed alongside members of the Armed Forces, they are entitled to increased levels of care and support, including in the event of injury or death, and often on a comparable basis to their Armed Forces colleagues.

C. SCOPE OF THE COVENANT

The Armed Forces Covenant sets a framework for how the Armed Forces Community can expect to be treated, but it is not possible to specify in detail how it should be applied in every case and at every time. The demands of Service and other constraints may prevent these expectations and aspirations being met in some circumstances. However the Covenant should influence policy, service delivery and standards in the areas and ways set out below. In many cases these will be a responsibility of Central Government Departments and Devolved Administrations but, in other cases, responsibility will lie with local service providers or organisations within the voluntary or commercial sectors. Particular attention will be required when public services are subject to reform or to greater local control.

This section describes the expectations and aspirations implicit in the Armed Forces Covenant, but not the specific actions being taken to achieve them. For the UK Government, these actions are being published separately in “**The Armed Forces Covenant: Today and Tomorrow**”.

1. Terms and Conditions of Service

Service personnel should be sustained and rewarded by Terms and Conditions of Service (TACOS) which recognise the freedoms and choices that they have voluntarily given up. These TACOS should be fair to personnel and wherever possible give flexibility to match family circumstances, whilst meeting the needs of the MOD and conforming to wider Government policy. They will be kept under regular review by the MOD.

The terms under which individuals serve, such as enlistment and engagements, are binding in every sense. The conditions offered, in return for the commitments and risks to which Service personnel are subject, should be fair in terms of both the financial and non-financial package. The recommendations of an independent body should constitute an integral part of the process used to determine pay.

2. Healthcare

The Armed Forces Community should enjoy the same standard of, and access to, healthcare as that received by any other UK citizen in the area they live. For Serving personnel, including mobilised Reservists, primary healthcare is provided by the MOD, whilst secondary care is provided by the local healthcare provider. Personnel injured on operations should be treated in conditions which recognise the specific needs of Service personnel, normally involving a dedicated military ward, where this is appropriate for them, and medical rehabilitation in MOD facilities. For family members, primary healthcare may be provided by the MOD in some cases (eg when accompanying Service personnel posted overseas). They should retain their relative position on any NHS waiting list, if moved around the UK due to the Service person being posted.

Veterans receive their healthcare from the NHS, and should receive priority treatment where it relates to a condition which results from their service in the Armed Forces, subject to clinical need. Those injured in Service, whether physically or mentally, should be cared for in a way which reflects the Nation’s moral obligation to them whilst respecting the individual’s wishes. For those with concerns about their mental health, where symptoms may not present for some time after leaving Service, they should be able to access services with health professionals who have an understanding of Armed Forces culture.

3. Education

Children of members of the Armed Forces should have the same standard of, and access to, education (including early years services) as any other UK citizen in the area in which they live. The Services should aim to facilitate this in the way they manage personnel, but there should also be special arrangements to support access to schools if a place is required part way through an academic year as a consequence of a posting. For personnel posted overseas, the MOD provides early years and educational facilities where the numbers support it, although the range of provision and choice may not be as great as in the UK. In certain cases assistance will be available to support Service children's continuity of education, given the requirement for mobility.

Service personnel should expect to receive appropriate training and education for both personal and professional development, including the opportunity to gain nationally recognised civilian qualifications, in order to support them throughout their Service career and to prepare them for life after leaving the Service.

4. Housing

In addressing the accommodation requirements of Service personnel, the MOD seeks to promote choice, recognising the benefits of stability and home ownership amongst members of the Armed Forces where this is practicable and compatible with Service requirements, and also that their needs alter as they progress through Service and ultimately return to civilian life. Where Serving personnel are entitled to publicly-provided accommodation, it should be of good quality, affordable, and suitably located. They should have priority status in applying for Government-sponsored affordable housing schemes, and Service leavers should retain this status for a period after discharge. Personnel may have access to tailored Armed Forces housing schemes or financial arrangements, depending on their circumstances, to help them in purchasing their own property. Those injured in Service should also have preferential access to appropriate housing schemes, as well as assistance with necessary adaptations to private housing or Service accommodation whilst serving. Members of the Armed Forces Community should have the same access to social housing and other housing schemes as any other citizen, and not be disadvantaged in that respect by the requirement for mobility whilst in Service.

5. Benefits and Tax

Members of the Armed Forces Community should have the same access to benefits as any UK citizen, except where tailored alternative schemes are in place. They will also contribute through taxation, but the taxation system may be adapted to reflect their particular circumstances (a current example would be the Contribution in Lieu of Council Tax arrangements).

6. Responsibility of Care

The Government, working with the Chain of Command, has a particular responsibility of care towards members of the Armed Forces. This includes a responsibility to maintain an organisation which treats every individual fairly, with dignity and respect, and an environment which is free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. Special account must be taken of the needs of those under 18 years of age. The Government has a responsibility to promote the health, safety and resilience of Servicemen and women; and to ensure that they are appropriately prepared, in the judgement of the Chain of

Command, for the requirements of any training activities or operations on which they are to be engaged. However operational matters, including training and equipment, fall outside the scope of the Armed Forces Covenant.

7. Deployment

The special impact of operational deployment on both personal and family life should be recognised. Depending on the nature of the operation, this may include financial support to deployed personnel, welfare support to individuals and family members, and where possible facilities to enable good communications with home.

8. Family Life

Service families give up certain freedoms and choices in order to support the Service. To sustain family life, family members should have the same access to childcare, training and employment opportunities as any other citizen. Support should be available to minimise the impact of mobility caused by Service, drawing on active monitoring by the Chain of Command. Support should also take into account the effects of postings to remote locations, often away from family connections, for example in promoting transport and accessibility measures.

9. Commercial Products and Services

It is for the commercial sector to determine its approach to members of the Armed Forces Community. The Government should work with the commercial sector towards a situation where they have as good access to commercial products and services, including financial services, as any other citizen. Providers of products and services should be encouraged to understand and mitigate the circumstances faced by this community, such as mobility and deployment, and to welcome and cater for its members as good and valuable customers.

10. Transition

Support should be available for all Service personnel in order to assist their transition from Service to civilian life. Provision should include training, education, appropriate healthcare referral and job-finding preparation and assistance. It should also include information, advice and guidance on such matters as housing and financial management, and the availability of support from Government Departments and the Voluntary and Community sector. The level of support will be dependent upon individual circumstances.

11. Support After Service

The Covenant involves an obligation for life, and the commitment and sacrifices made by veterans in the past, as well as their continuing value to society, should be properly recognised in the support they receive. In accessing services, former members of the Armed Forces should expect the same level of support as any other citizen in society. Pension schemes should be fair and appropriate to the particular circumstances of Service personnel. All veterans will be able to access advice and in some cases additional support, from the MOD (Service Personnel and Veterans Agency), elsewhere in Government, and the charitable sector, although their access may be affected if they do not live in the UK.

Those who have been injured in Service, or have a health condition relating to Service, should receive additional support which may include a financial element depending on

their circumstances (eg through the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or War Pension Scheme). Bereaved families should receive assistance commensurate with the loss that they have suffered, including help during the vital, but difficult, Inquest process.

12. Recognition

The Armed Forces Community is entitled to appropriate recognition for the unique Service which it has given, and continues to give, to the Nation, and the unlimited liability which the Service person assumes. This recognition will include national commemorations and celebrations such as Remembrance Sunday and Armed Forces Day. The award of campaign medals and individual gallantry awards will continue to be used in recognition of individual sacrifice and meritorious service. The HM Armed Force Veterans Badge is available to all veterans in recognition of their service.

13. Participation as Citizens

The Armed Forces Community should be able to participate as citizens to the same extent as any UK citizen, subject to the necessary constraints on the activities of public servants. This includes taking a full part in the electoral process. Members of the Armed Forces Community who are not UK citizens should be able to access routes to citizenship as easily as others seeking citizenship, unaffected by any Service overseas.

14. Changes in Defence

The Armed Forces will always need to evolve to meet the challenges they face. That will inevitably lead, from time to time, to turbulence and uncertainty in the lives of Serving personnel and their families. Such changes should be managed in a way which treats individuals fairly and minimises uncertainty wherever possible.

15. Recourse

Members of the Armed Forces Community should have means of recourse open to them, if they believe that they are not being treated in a fair and appropriate way. Established routes of recourse such as complaints processes or Ombudsmen should be sensitive to the particular circumstances of the Armed Forces Community. In addition, for Serving personnel and those who have recently left service, there should be a responsive system for handling complaints relating to their service in the Armed Forces, overseen by the Service Complaints Commissioner.

D. OBLIGATIONS AND PRINCIPLES

Figure 4 superimposes on the core Covenant diagram a summary of the obligations which the different parties to the Armed Forces Covenant owe to each other. It also illustrates that all these obligations must, to be effective, be underpinned by trust and goodwill on all sides. However the obligations are not conditional; the duty of a member of the Armed Forces to serve is never dependent on other considerations.

Figure 4: Obligations



These obligations do not require detailed explanation, but it is possible to derive from them a number of additional principles, which should similarly govern the actions of the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces Community.

The Nation should:

1. Honour the commitment and sacrifice of the Armed Forces Community.
2. Celebrate the work of those charitable and voluntary bodies which help to support that community.
3. Strive to keep close the links between the Armed Forces and the society they defend.

The Government's aspiration for the Armed Forces Community should be:

4. No disadvantage due to Service in the provision and continuity of public services.
5. No disadvantage in dealings with wider society, eg in accessing commercial services, or in pursuing careers outside the Armed Forces (as spouses, Reservists, or veterans).

To achieve this, the Government should consider:

6. Measures to minimise the social and economic impact of military life for those currently serving and their families.
7. Positive measures to enable equality of outcome with other citizens.
8. Special treatment for the injured and bereaved, as proper return for their sacrifice.

Reflecting the Nation's respect, serving members of the Armed Forces should seek to:

9. Uphold the standards and values of their respective Services.
10. Not bring the Armed Forces into disrepute in any of their actions.
11. Engage with society, and understand their relationship with it.
12. Use their time in Service to build resilience and the skills needed in civilian life.

And the whole Armed Forces Community should:

13. Take pride in their status.
14. Identify themselves as members of the Armed Forces Community when appropriate.
15. Help themselves, including by understanding their rights and obligations.

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COMMUNITY COVENANT GRANT – FUNDING APPLICATION CRITERIA

INTRODUCTION

1. This guidance note provides information on the Community Covenant and how to access funds to support projects via the Community Covenant Grant. The process, guidance and associated documents will be kept under review and amended as necessary with the latest version being available on the Ministry of Defence (MOD) website (see below).

AIMS OF THE COMMUNITY COVENANT

2. A Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. The Community Covenant is signed by various members of the local community including representatives of the Armed Forces and Local/Unitary Authorities. It may also be signed by charities, volunteer groups and other parties keen to support the principles of the Community Covenant. It is intended to complement, at local level, the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces. Please see www.mod.uk/covenant, which provides guidance on how to establish a Community Covenant in your area. Community Covenants have already been established in Oxfordshire, Hampshire, Vale of Glamorgan and North Yorkshire and examples of best practice from these areas can be found on the website. Many people have become involved in supporting the Service community through Service charities, or more recently by participating in Armed Forces Day. They have shown their support through fundraising, military celebrations and open days, attending homecoming parades and repatriation ceremonies and offering commercial discounts. Even simple demonstrations of support, such as displaying the Armed Forces Day window sticker in cars and businesses, have had a positive effect and boosted the morale of our Armed Forces community. The Community Covenant scheme aims to *build* on this local level of support, and not to replace it.

3. The aims of the Community Covenant are to:

- encourage local communities to support the Armed Forces Community in their areas;
- nurture public understanding and awareness amongst the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces Community;
- recognise and remember the sacrifices faced by the Armed Forces Community;
- encourage activities which help to integrate the Armed Forces Community into local life;
- to encourage the Armed Forces Community to help and support the wider community, whether through participation in events and joint projects, or other forms of engagement

AIMS OF THE COMMUNITY COVENANT GRANT SCHEME

4. The aim of the Community Covenant Grant Scheme is to deliver financial support to projects at the local level, which strengthen the ties or the mutual understanding between members of the Armed Forces Community and the wider community in which they live. It is administered by the Ministry of Defence on behalf of Her Majesty's Government and MOD/CTLB currently have funding for this financial year and the next three financial years to support bids. Bids may only be submitted

from areas which have already established a Community Covenant in their area, and applications are invited for sums from £100 to £250,000 (although bids for amounts greater than this may also be considered in exceptional circumstances). It is envisaged that many of the requests will be for smaller amounts of funding to support local projects. This guidance explains how those interested in making a bid for funds available can do so.

WHAT MIGHT BE ACHIEVED THROUGH THE SCHEME

5. The Scheme will consider applications for projects that deliver tangible results and meet the overall aims of the Community Covenant. An application for funding can be submitted by any part of the community; this might include volunteer groups, charities, public bodies such as schools, and so on. Bids will be considered in the first instance by the Community Covenant Partnership¹ at a local level. Bids that the Partnership are happy to endorse will be submitted to the MOD to be considered by the Community Covenant Grant Panel.

6. There are many types of projects that might be supported by this fund – and some that will not be suitable. The list below aims to provide some ideas but should not be seen as restrictive; local partnerships will know what kind of project would best meet the needs of their particular population and do not intend to be overly prescriptive.

7. Examples of projects could include (but are in no way restricted to):

- local infrastructure, such as a children’s playground which might be used by children from both Service accommodation and the wider community;
- projects that increase the integration of Service personnel, veterans and their families with the wider community;
- projects that improve the health, welfare or financial literacy of Service personnel, veterans and their families;
- one-off activities, such as an activity camp involving the Armed Forces and local young people, in which the Scheme would meet the travel and subsistence costs of the Service participants;
- an exhibition at a local library/town hall etc, explaining what a local Armed Forces unit has recently been doing (eg in Afghanistan);
- an “oral history” project, where the local branch of a regimental association, locally based Armed Forces personnel or a specific group of Armed Forces personnel recorded their experiences or discussed them with local schoolchildren;
- a community outreach project bringing veterans together with their non-Service equivalents to highlight what support is available for them in their local community or to increase the level of targeted support;

8. In addition, the following should be borne in mind:

- There needs to be a clear demonstrable benefit to Armed Forces Community *and* their local community;
- The application is more likely to be successful if the non-Service element of the partnership (e.g. Local Authority, charity or community group or commercial organisation) also commit to incurring expenditure;

¹ The Community Covenant Partnership is defined, for the purpose of this document, as the parties represented by the lead signatories to the Community Covenant. In many cases bids will be considered by Civil/Military Partnership boards however where these have not been established the bid(s) must be jointly considered by, at a minimum, the Local Authority and a local Armed Forces representative(s) to the Community Covenant.

- MOD can only provide one off funding so where there is an ongoing cost – such as maintenance or staff costs, we will look for the non-Service element of the partnership to commit accordingly;
- MOD may stagger the release of funds depending on the size and nature of the bid and will communicate this clearly prior to entering into a commitment.

THE TYPES OF PROJECT THAT WE WILL BE UNABLE TO FUND:

9. As a Government Department, there are some activities that it would not be appropriate for MOD to fund, this may include (but is not restricted to) the following:

- Topping up existing grants and aids where they come from another Government Department;
- Where money only benefits one person;
- Repeat or regular projects that require a source of uncommitted funding;
- Monuments or memorials;
- Research;
- Investments;
- Paying for ongoing costs of existing partnership activity;
- Fundraising activities;
- Staff costs beyond a 12 month period;
- Endowments (to provide a source of income);
- Projects or activities that the state has a legal obligation to provide;
- The provision of medical treatment

10. MOD reserves the right not to approve funding for a project where:

- it judges it does not support the overall aims of the scheme;
- it judges that funding should be provided to another project which, in its opinion, offers better return of benefits for the funds that are being requested;
- projects of a similar nature or benefit to particular Service groups that have previously been approved; or the amount of funding sought is judged to be too high;
- other reasons that arise – the MOD will provide an explanation for its decision should a project not be supported.

THE PROCESS

11. Bidders will be asked to complete a business case on the template provided by us. After agreement from the Community Covenant Partnership that the proposed bid can be progressed applications will be considered by a panel led by MOD officials which also includes outside members (e.g. a representative of local government, Service charities, families federations) whilst recognising that final decisions need to be made by officials responsible to the Accounting Officer in MOD. For the financial year 2011-12 the panel will meet to consider bids in October and December 2011 and potentially March 2012. We aim to respond to completed bids within 15 days of panel assessment. For 2012 it is likely that we will hold a panel each quarter. If there is an urgent requirement for money before then please contact the team. Bids for consideration in October 2011 should be submitted by 30 September 2011. Deadlines for subsequent bidding panels will be published online at www.mod.uk/covenant.

12. The panel will be given a standard score sheet with which to judge each bid, this will consider:

- Who the project benefits and how
- Whether this activity has attracted funding before
- Total project costs
- When benefits will be realised
- Overall impact of project
- Whether matched funding is being requested.

13. Bidders will need to identify an individual or individuals who will be responsible for managing the project. Wherever appropriate, funding for the project will be released from MOD to the relevant Local Authority who will manage the finances. Where this is not possible, funds can be released directly to the project bidder. MOD will be required to account for money issued to Local Authorities or project bidders; accordingly, Local Authorities and project bidders may be required to provide information on request to MOD in order to enable auditing processes to be conducted. This is set out in the terms and conditions for accepting funds (see below).

14. In allocating funds, the aim is to achieve a broad spread of grants – not only geographically, but also with regard to the section of the Armed Forces Community participating, the nature of the activity and consequent level of bid. If an application is successful you will be asked to sign our terms and conditions for accepting funding; these can be found [here](#).

RECEIVING THE FUNDS

15. The Community Covenant Partnership will receive cash payment from the Defence Budget. The recipient will be the Local Authority or nominated person / company (to be agreed at time of accepting bid). Where sums are large, or the project is dependent on particular milestones being met, we may agree with you to phase release of funds to ensure that the project is on track to deliver.

ONGOING RESPONSIBILITIES

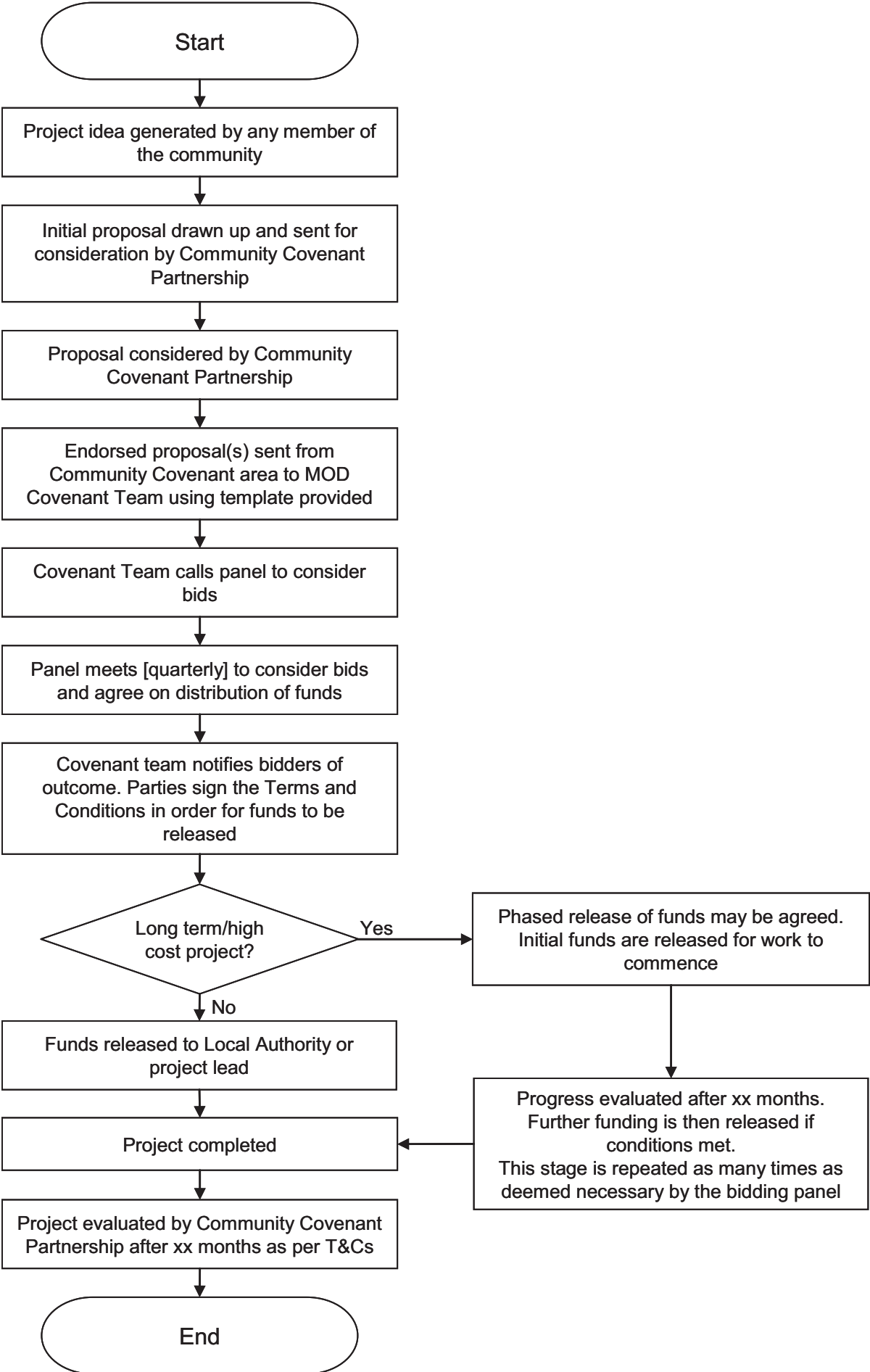
16. The **Community Covenant Partnership** will be responsible for ensuring that: the grant is used for the purpose stated in the business case; funds are managed prudently and deliver value for money; a full account of expenditure is retained for accounting purposes; and that they are satisfied the project manager has the required skills to manage the project.

17. Ultimately, the **MOD** is responsible for accounting for money released via this scheme. It is therefore necessary to put a number of steps in place, outlined in the terms and conditions, to ensure that we are able to fulfil this duty.

REVIEW

18. MOD will regularly review how the scheme is administered and will welcome feedback on this guidance and process. We will amend the process and guidance as we gain experience and will put the most recent version of documents on the website.

FLOW DIAGRAM OF BID PROCESS





Terms and Conditions for Accepting Funding from the Community Covenant Grant Scheme

1. The nominated individual(s)/parties to the bid on the application form are responsible for managing the project
2. It is the responsibility of the Community Covenant Partnership to ensure value for money
3. It is the responsibility of the Community Covenant Partnership to ensure that the proposed activity appropriately delivers the stated benefit.
4. The parties to the bid agree to commit to spend any associated ongoing costs identified in the business case
5. A full account of expenditure must be retained by the Community Covenant Partnership for audit purposes. This includes retaining receipts and invoices for three years.
6. The parties to the bid agree to report on the project after x time and y money (to be stipulated by MOD) has been spent on how much was spent and what benefit has been achieved. Please note that this will be proportionate to the amount of money granted – and could range from a couple of paragraphs in an email to us for a coffee morning to something more substantial for a playground. This is not meant to be onerous, but ensure that we appropriately account for use of tax payers' money.
7. If the bid seeks funding for a project to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults, it is the bidder's responsibility to ensure acceptable safeguarding policies and procedures are in place.
8. Depending on the type of project there may be a requirement for public liability insurance or qualified leaders – it is the bidder's responsibility to ensure that there is adequate insurance in place.
9. If funding is for a consumer durable, MOD accepts no liability for misuse or maintenance. It is not liable for consumables (such as staff costs) unless specifically stated in the business case.
10. MOD will retain relevant data to share best practice with other areas who wish to bid for funding
11. The MOD is not responsible for ensuring appropriate planning permission or associated costs.
12. MOD are not liable for overrun of project costs.
13. Unspent funds must be returned in full.
14. Where the funding is for a building, the cost and depreciation do not reside on MOD's balance sheet.
15. MOD retains the right to tell others about the project in order to promote the scheme.

16. Accepting these terms and conditions does not confer any further contractual obligation on MOD.

17. Other terms and conditions may be applied specific to the bid.

Signed _____

Date _____

For MOD Covenant Team

Signed _____

Date _____

For Local Authority

Signed _____

Date _____

Project Lead

