

Written statement of a non-key officer decision
Director for economy, communities and corporate

Title	MOD Armed Forces Grant - Strengthening Local Government Delivery of the Covenant
Decision maker	Director for economy, communities and corporate
Date of decision	23 March 2018
Report exemption class	Open
Purpose	<p>To accept the offer of grant on behalf of Herefordshire Council and local authority partners in Shropshire, Worcestershire and Telford & Wrekin.</p> <p>Herefordshire Council has secured an Armed Forces Covenant Grant from the Ministry of Defence to fund the development of pilot veteran hubs in Herefordshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire and Telford & Wrekin and the employment of staff to support the respective covenant partnerships in the four council areas.</p> <p>The bid was a 'cluster bid' led by Herefordshire Council on behalf of, and in consultation with, Herefordshire's Civilian Military Task Group and the other councils' covenant partnerships. Herefordshire Council would act as accountable body for the funds.</p>
Decision	<p>That:</p> <p>(a) it be agreed that Herefordshire Council act as accountable body for the £246,820 Ministry of Defence (MoD) funded programme to enhance local government support provided through the armed forces covenant in Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Worcestershire council areas; and</p> <p>(b) the programme director housing and growth be authorised to take all operational decisions necessary to deliver the project in accordance with the terms of the grant.</p>
Reason for the decision	<p>As set out in the report. Documents relating to this decision are available at</p> <p>http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=50025864</p>

Consultation	
Options considered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="571 235 1431 573">1. Do Nothing - To date, all councils have nominated members of staff who, without exception, support their covenant partnerships in addition to their specific roles. This means that there has been no sole dedicated resource to the partnerships since they signed their covenants. Should this offer of funding not be accepted the delivery of the covenant will remain at the current level and the improved outcomes identified within the funding bid would not be realised which could be to the detriment of the armed forces communities in each of the counties <li data-bbox="571 607 1431 1070">2. This funding has been bid for in two tranches. The original application was submitted in November with further funding being offered in January to specifically develop pilot veterans' hubs. We have been successful in acquiring an offer for both elements so if the funding is not accepted then the opportunity to develop these hubs will also be lost to deliver those pilots. For Herefordshire specifically, a small working group was developed to discuss the concept and agree what could be offered as part of the bid submission and whilst it was agreed that if the grant was not successful there was a will to develop a hub but it would need some significant funding and also need staff in place to support the development and co-ordinating of any funding. <li data-bbox="571 1104 1431 1406">3. An alternative could be that another authority could be the accountable body, however, this council has been the driving force behind the cluster bid having identified a need for this support in the county and we would want to ensure that this opportunity for the funding that this can bring is maximised. Herefordshire council will utilise the existing Grants & Programmes Team that has previously overseen the covenant funding on behalf of the MoD so can draw on that expertise.
Declarations of interest	
Call-in expiry date (decisions are not subject to call-in where special urgency provisions apply)	29 March 2018

Officer:	Date 23 March 2018
Director for economy, communities and corporate (Geoff Hughes)	

