



Midlothian Armed Forces Covenant Plan 2025 to 2030

Report by Derek Oliver, Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships (Acting)

Report for Decision

1 Recommendations

Midlothian Council is recommended to endorse and approve the Midlothian Armed Forces Covenant Plan 2025–2030 and to note the future requirement to respond to the extension of the Armed Forces Duty, once enacted.

2 Purpose of Report/Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to outline the Council's statutory responsibilities under the Armed Forces Covenant legislation and associated guidance. It also presents the updated Midlothian Armed Forces Covenant Plan 2025–2030, which sets out a shared vision which is:

“To improve outcomes for serving personnel, veterans, reservists and their families by understanding their needs through data, lived experience and strong collaborative partnerships.”

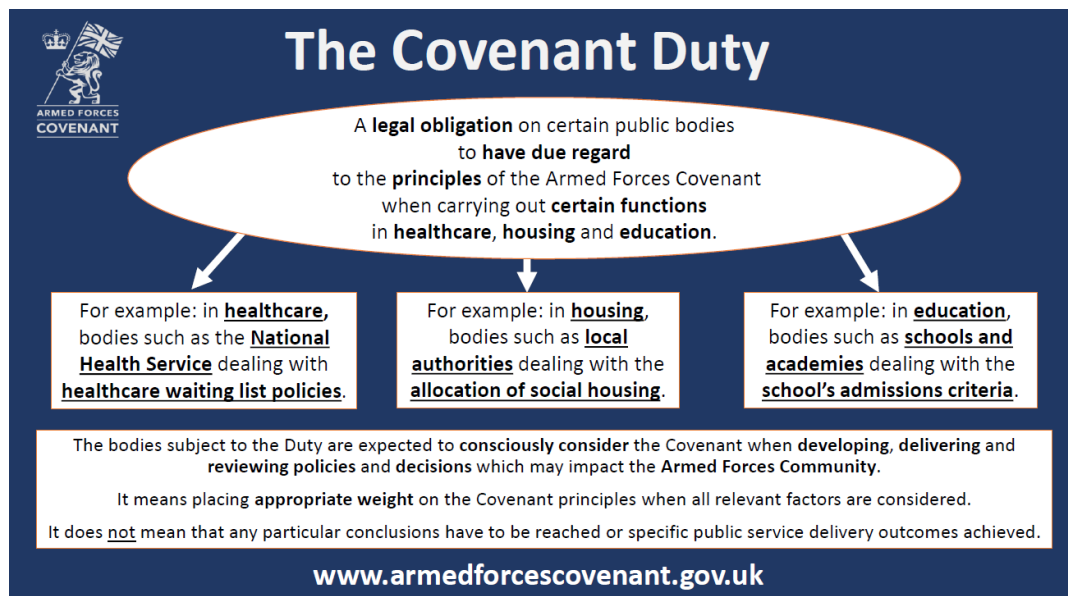
20th November 2025

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3 Background/Main Body of Report

3.1 Midlothian Council's Corporate Management Team has approved the establishment of a cross-council and multi-agency forum to support delivery of the Midlothian Armed Forces Covenant. The forum has been tasked with reviewing and updating the existing Covenant Plan in consultation with partners.

The revised Midlothian Armed Forces Covenant Plan 2025–2030 sets out a strategic framework to ensure that individuals who have served in the Armed Forces — including their families and the bereaved — do not face disadvantage in accessing public services. Our legal obligations are set out in this graphic below:



The current covenant legal duty will be extending in the future; the exact date is to be confirmed. The current legal obligation to give due regard applies to local authorities, governing bodies of state-funded schools and various NHS bodies in some specific policy areas within housing, education and healthcare.

The Covenant Legal Duty will remain as a duty of due regard to Covenant principles but will increase the scope of those obliged to follow the duty and cover more policy areas. Each policy area covered will also be much broader.

The extension of the Legal Duty will encompass all UK Government Departments, Devolved Governments and the following policy areas:

- Housing
- Education
- Healthcare
- Social care
- Childcare
- Employment and service in the armed forces

- Personal taxation
- Welfare benefits
- Criminal justice
- Immigration
- Citizenship
- Pensions
- Service-related compensation
- Transport

3.2 Midlothian's Armed Forces Covenant

Strategic Vision and Action Plan

The updated Midlothian Armed Forces Covenant Plan 2025–2030 articulates a clear vision:

To improve outcomes for serving personnel, veterans, reservists and their families by understanding their needs through data, lived experience and strong collaborative partnerships.

The accompanying action plan is structured around the following key components:

- Introduction and Background
- Overview of the Midlothian Armed Forces Covenant Plan
- Relevant Data and Insights
- Partner Contributions
- Funding Arrangements
- Detailed Actions
- Mechanisms for Reporting and Evaluation

In addition, the plan outlines a series of overarching and specific commitments aimed at delivering meaningful change. These include:

- Enhancing promotion and awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant and associated statutory duty
- Strengthening understanding of the needs of our Armed Forces communities through improved data and engagement
- Reducing barriers to support by enabling access to targeted funding opportunities
- Ensuring representation at both local and national Armed Forces Covenant forums

- Securing representation of the Armed Forces community within the Midlothian Community Planning Board
- Committing to an annual review of the plan to identify areas for continuous improvement.

4 Report Implications (Resource, Digital and Risk)

4.1 Resource

The Midlothian Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan does not require any additional financial resources from the Council at this time. However, successful implementation is contingent upon the active engagement of key staff and elected members from both the Council and partner organisations, in line with the responsibilities outlined in the plan. This collective effort is essential to ensure compliance with the Council's statutory obligations under the Armed Forces Covenant Duty.

The working group has successfully secured external funding totalling £133,000 over two years through the Armed Forces Covenant Fund. This funding will support children and young people from serving Armed Forces families and enable the implementation of the new MIPSA (Midlothian Informed Personal Support Approaches) project within the local authority area.

4.2 Digital

None

4.3 Risk

The main risk is contained in not having a plan and therefore being at risk of not fulfilling our legal obligations.

4.4 Ensuring Equalities (if required a separate IIA must be completed)

The plan is directly ensuring that armed forces individuals, reservists, veterans and families do not experience disadvantage due to their service and associated experiences. Below is the link to the completed IIA.

https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/5587/midlothian_covenant_signed_ia_form.pdf

APPENDIX A – Report Implications

A.1 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

The Single Midlothian Plan aims to reduce poverty, inequality and mitigate against the cost-of-living crisis.

A.2 Key Drivers for Change

Key drivers addressed in this report:

- Holistic Working
- Hub and Spoke
- Modern
- Sustainable
- Transformational
- Preventative
- Asset-based
- Continuous Improvement
- One size fits one
- None of the above

A.3 Key Delivery Streams

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

- One Council Working with you, for you
- Preventative and Sustainable
- Efficient and Modern
- Innovative and Ambitious
- None of the above

A.4 Delivering Best Value

The Midlothian Armed Forces Covenant adds best value by creating a structured, collaborative approach with partners to supporting serving personnel, veterans, reservists, and their families. It delivers best value by:

- Reducing disadvantage
- Sharing information on local supports
- Supporting funding applications

A.5 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

An armed forces partnership group has been established and through this forum partners have been involved in reviewing the plan and or contributing to the actions and priorities. Twelve partners are listed as formal partners in the updated Midlothian Armed Forces Covenant Plan 2025 to 2030.

A.6 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The Midlothian Armed Forces Covenant will have an impact on improved outcomes for those who have served or are serving and their families in relation to a variety of areas including housing, education, health and social care and support from the third sector.

A.7 Adopting a Preventative Approach

The Midlothian Armed Forces Covenant supports prevention by focusing on early intervention and reducing risks before they escalate into crises for serving personnel, veterans, and their families.

The Covenant's preventative approach is about early intervention, holistic support, and community integration, reducing risks of homelessness, poor mental health, educational disadvantage, and social isolation and maximising opportunities.

A.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

Partnership working through the covenant supports sustainable development primarily on three aspects these are reducing inequalities and strengthening local economies and employability. Partnership working on these areas enables us to draw on the skills and expertise of reservists, service personnel and veterans.

4.4 Additional Report Implications (See Appendix A)

Appendices

Midlothian Armed Forces Covenant Plan 2025 to 2030