

8th February 2016

IMPROVING THE DELIVERY OF LOCAL COVENANT PLEDGES

Request for Proposal – Commission description

Introduction

Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT) was established in 2012 with a £35 million endowment from the Big Lottery Fund. The aim of FiMT is to provide an evidence base that will influence and underpin policy making and service delivery in order to enable ex-Service personnel and their families to lead successful civilian lives. FiMT achieves this by funding high quality, credible research where there is an identified gap in relevant understanding, and then by exploiting the findings to effect positive change.

The Local Government Association (LGA) is a politically-led, cross-party organisation that works on behalf of councils to ensure local government has a strong, credible voice with national government. It aims to influence and set the political agenda on the issues that matter to councils so they are able to deliver local solutions to national problems. All English councils are members of the LGA (414 authorities in total) with the exception of the London Boroughs of Bromley and of Wandsworth, and Sheffield City Council. These members include 350 English councils, the 22 Welsh councils via the Welsh LGA, 31 fire authorities, 10 national parks and one town council.

The Armed Forces Covenant 'is a promise from the nation that those who serve or have served, and their families, are treated fairly.'¹ Community Covenant pledges at a local level complement the Armed Forces Covenant.² In many cases, local partnerships (focused through Local Authorities) have signed pledges of support, being variously described as signing 'the Covenant' or 'the Community Covenant'. In the Ministry of Defence's 2015 Covenant Report³, it was noted that every local authority in mainland Great Britain and two in Northern Ireland had signed a 'Community Covenant', with a further two in Northern Ireland currently working through details of implementation.

In outline, FiMT and the LGA are requesting proposals from prospective delivery partners to fulfil a commission to conduct research into the extent and manner in which local Covenant pledges are being delivered across Great Britain, and, in the light of that research, to provide advice to FiMT and the LGA on whether, and how, the delivery could be improved and what action could be taken at local and national levels to support that improvement. This work should be informed by: evidence on the extent and manner in which local Covenant pledges are being delivered across Great Britain; in-depth research into what is working well and what is working less well; examples of good practice that are replicable; and the financial, legislative and political environment within which local authorities operate.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/armed-forces-covenant> accessed 5 February 2016.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-community-covenant/armed-forces-community-covenant> accessed 5 February 2016.

³ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/491590/20160112-AFC_AR_2015_Ver_12_WEB_VER2.pdf accessed 18 Jan 16.

Part 1: Scope of Services

1.1 Overall Services

Overall services required are a thorough and comprehensive review of how Local Authorities in England, Wales and Scotland (ie Great Britain) are delivering their local Covenant pledges, highlighting effective policies and practices as well as obstacles to that delivery, and presenting the learning in a considered and persuasive manner. The review should include a systematic literature review, and seek the views of all stakeholders, including central and local government policy makers, service deliverers and service users. 'Deep dives' into emerging areas of interest will form part of the review. Surveys can be supported via the LGA survey system, and the COSLA, Solace and Confederation of Service Charities (Cobseo) networks. The review should also recommend an effective and sustainable vehicle for the sharing of good practice.

The initial findings of the review will be presented at the LGA Conference in July 2016. It is anticipated that the findings will also be subjected to political and media scrutiny.

1.2 FiMT Authorised signatories for the Improving the delivery contract

Ray Lock – Chief Executive
Tony Stables – Chairman

Part 2: The Brief

FiMT and the LGA are co-commissioning a project to support local authorities (and others) in improving the delivery of local Covenant pledges. At the heart of this project will be surveys of how the various local Covenant pledges are being delivered across Great Britain from the perspectives of all stakeholders, and an analysis and subsequent promotion of good practices.

Priority areas the project should focus on include: education, health and social care, housing, employment, front-line staff awareness and training, wider communications, remembrance and community integration, but the Commissioners expect other aspects to emerge and to be recognized.

2.1 Why is it important?

The Armed Forces Covenant provides a basis upon which the nation provides support to the Armed Forces community. However, there is a lack of understanding as to how various local Covenant pledges are being delivered in practice, and how their delivery could be supported and improved. An independent review that identifies and promotes best practice will provide a credible basis upon which improvements can be made.

2.2 Objective

The objective of this review is to support local authorities in improving their delivery of the local Covenant pledges under the Armed Forces Covenant across Great Britain.

2.3 Requirements

The requirement for this project forms 3 parts:

2.3.1 A systematic literature review of published material relating to the Community Covenant and local Covenant pledges.

2.3.2 A comprehensive survey of stakeholders involved in the Community Covenant and local Covenant pledges in Great Britain, including conducting 'deep dives' in localities identified by the Commissioners before and during the survey, and demographic analysis.

2.3.3 Identification of good practice, and the presentation of those practices.

Stakeholders include (but are not limited to) the relevant policy makers in central, devolved and local government, service deliverers from the statutory and charity sectors, and service users.

2.4 Subject focus areas

The subject focus areas include (but are not limited to) those set out in the preliminary paragraph to Part 2.

2.5 Timing

Proposals should be sent electronically to Katerina.charalambous@local.gov.uk and copied to applications@fim-trust.org by 22nd February 2016; receipt will be acknowledged.

An Invitation to tender will be sent to successful proposers on 29th February with a response required by 14th March 2016; final selection panel will be held in Central London on 17th March 2016. Proposers should note the impact of local elections on 4th May 2016.

An interim report, which could take the form of an initial draft of the final report, is expected at the end of May 2016.

2.6 Project management

The project will be managed by a Project Board comprising the co-Commissioners FiMT and the LGA. In addition, the project will also have access to a newly established Advisory Group to provide advice throughout the life of the project. The Group is likely to comprise representatives from at least the following organizations:

- Ministry of Defence
- Department of Communities and Local Government
- Education representative (possibly DfE or MOD's DCYP who have a UK-wide remit)
- NHS England
- Public Health England
- Other NHS/Public Health to be agreed
- Welsh LGA
- Local Government Association
- COSLA
- Solace
- Forces Family Federations
- Confederation of Service Charities
- The Royal British Legion

[The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) is the representative voice of Scottish local government and also acts as the employers' association on behalf of all 32 Scottish Councils. COSLA's purpose is to be the national voice for local government in Scotland and its high priority work areas reflect its commitment to promote the position of local government as the legitimate tier of governance closest to the people of Scotland. COSLA's political decision making system is designed to ensure that its member councils are at the heart of the policy development process.]

[The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (Solace) is the representative body for Chief Executives and senior managers working in the public sector in the UK. It provides members with opportunities for professional development and seeks to influence debate around the future of public services to ensure that policy and legislation are informed by the experience and expertise of its members. Whilst the vast majority of our members work in local government, some occupy senior positions in health and social care organisations, police and fire authorities and central government departments.]

[The Forces Families Federations are three separate organizations representing families of Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force personnel. It is anticipated one will be asked to act on behalf of all three on the Group].

2.7 Key deliverable

A report, including an Executive Summary and list of Recommendations, that delivers the Overall Services described in 1.1 and identifies and presents good practices.

2.8 Our evaluation criteria

To enable proposers to understand how FiMT and the LGA will evaluate the submissions, the following is a list of the most important criteria that will be applied. FiMT and the LGA will select one (or more) proposals, which in the opinion of the evaluation team represent the most economically advantageous propositions(s) having regard to some of the most important criteria namely:

- Understanding of the landscape within which the Community Covenant initiative is operating
- Understanding of the financial, legislative and political environment within which local authorities operate
- Understanding of the brief and its required outputs
- Quality of the overall presentation of the proposal
- Cultural fit and account management
- Value for money

2.9 Guideline budget

In the range £40,000 to £50,000 and subject to negotiation.

Part 3: Service levels

Service levels will be agreed with the successful bidder; however, these listed are anticipated to be the minimum requirement:

- a. Provide timing plans and literature delivery schedules to the Project Board.
- b. Attend Oversight Group meetings as required.

Part 4: Key Performance Indicators

KPIs will be agreed with the successful bidder; however, these listed here are anticipated to be the minimum requirement:

Fortnightly reviews with the Project Board to be held either at FiMT or the LGA, or via conference call, to include:

- a. Project plan review.
- b. Summary of 'journey' to date and key findings and headlines.
- c. Ongoing budget reconciliation.
- d. Future plans.

Part 5: Payment terms and invoicing arrangements

Payment terms and invoicing arrangements will be discussed with the chosen bidder, calculated in accordance with the relevant proposal, and will be subjected to an agreed structure to cover services, refunds and adjustments, discounts and rebates, materials, services and disbursements.



Ray Lock CBE
Chief Executive
Forces in Mind Trust



Abigail Gallop
Senior Adviser – Community Wellbeing
Local Government Association