

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 24 FEBRUARY 2020
REPORT ON: ADOPTION OF THE FAITH COVENANT
REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
REPORT NO: 59-2020

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To recommend the adoption of the Faith Covenant, a joint commitment by the Council and faith organisations to a set of principles for working together.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that members:

- (i) agree to adopt the Faith Covenant as set out in Appendix One;
- (ii) remit the Chief Executive to invite representatives of faith communities to consider the Covenant through a joint working group of officers and faith representatives;
- (iii) remit the Chief Executive to report on the agreement of this Covenant and any further recommendations arising from this working group.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

4. THE FAITH COVENANT

- 4.1 The Faith Covenant was developed by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society as a tool to facilitate partnership working between local authorities and faith organisations. It is a joint commitment between faith communities and local authorities to a set of principles for working together, which aims to build trust and promote open, practical engagement.
- 4.2 Faith organisations have a commitment to serve their communities, and there are many examples in Dundee of faith organisations taking social action, running local initiatives and providing services which make a positive impact on some of the most vulnerable people in our society. These include, for example, supporting children's groups, crèches, youth clubs, outreach work, help for homeless people and foodbanks.
- 4.3 Achieving the maximum social benefit from partnership working with faith organisations is particularly important given the challenges faced by the Council and other public services, and the Faith Covenant is seen as a way of unlocking the potential for faith groups to act as advocates for, and providers of services.
- 4.4 It is recommended that the Council adopt the Faith Covenant and remit the Chief Executive to arrange a joint working group of officers and faith group representatives, also involving the Third Sector Interface, to consider the Covenant and any further recommendations.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report has been subject to an assessment of any impacts on Equality and Diversity, Fairness and Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. There are only positive impacts and no issues which require mitigation.

6. CONSULTATIONS

The Council Management Team were consulted in the preparation of this report.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

DAVID R MARTIN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

DATE: 22 JANUARY 2020

THE FAITH COVENANT

**COVENANT FOR ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN
DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL AND FAITH ORGANISATIONS**

The Faith Covenant is built on the following principles:

- Faith communities are free to practise their beliefs and religious observances without restriction, and to raise their voice in public debate and to be respected, within the framework of the law.
- Public services and faith based social action should respect service users from all backgrounds, with no discrimination on the grounds of religion, gender, marital status, race, ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation or disability.
- The voice, participation and solutions that faith communities bring are important, and consultation should enable them to be brought to bear for the benefit of the wider community.
- Faith organisations and services are encouraged to work not only with the Council but with local businesses, education providers, health and other publicly funded services in order to empower communities, recognising that monopolies of funding, action and participation can be damaging.

The Faith Covenant entails the following commitments:

Dundee City Council commits to welcome the involvement of faith groups in the delivery of services and social action on an equal basis with other groups. In addition, the Council commits to:

- Building relationships and trust with faith groups;
- Adopting strategies for the engagement of faith communities in consultation exercises;
- Encouraging faith groups and their members to be involved in the reshaping and redesign of Council services;
- Establishing clear guidelines around funding;
- Sharing training and learning opportunities with faith organisations.

Faith organisations commit to work actively with Dundee City Council in the design and delivery of services to the public. In addition, they commit to:

- Seeking opportunities to bring people together to serve the community, particularly its poorest and most isolated members;
- Serving equally all local residents seeking to access the public services they offer, irrespective of their religion, gender, marital status, race, ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation or disability, and without putting any pressure on individuals to convert;
- Using resources provided for delivering a service wholly for that purpose, and not for any other;
- Ensuring excellence in the safeguarding of adults and children, health and safety, accountability and transparency in decision making;
- Responding to consultations where appropriate;
- Sharing training and learning opportunities with the Council.