

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL**25 OCTOBER 2017****Report by Deputy Chief Executive****LOWLAND RESERVE FORCES' AND CADETS' ASSOCIATION**
REQUEST FOR COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To consider the request from the Lowland Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association for a representative member from the Council.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That the Council consider the request from the Association.

BACKGROUND

3. Prior to the local elections, an exercise was undertaken to establish which of those organisations to which the Council had previously appointed a representative were seeking continued representation after the elections.

4. A report was submitted to the meeting of the Council on 24 May which contained details of those organisations that had confirmed they were seeking continued representation from the Council. This included the Lowland Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association. However the request for the nomination of a representative to the Association was continued at the meeting.

REPORT

5. A further letter has now been received from the Lowland Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association again inviting the Council to consider the appointment of a representative member. The Council had formerly been represented on the Association by Councillor Gordon McCaskill.

6. The role of the Association includes a range of responsibilities in support of the Royal Naval Reserve, Royal Marine Reserve, Territorial Army, Royal Auxiliary Air Force and the three Cadet Organisations (Sea, Army and Air). A paper providing background information in relation to the Association, details of its roles, and an indication of the role of members of the Association and the time commitment that is involved is attached.

RECOMMENDATION

6. That the Council consider the request from the Association.

Local Government (Access to information) Act 1985.

Report Author

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Background papers

Letter dated 19 September 2017

LOWLAND RESERVE FORCES' AND CADETS' ASSOCIATION - BACKGROUND BRIEF

BACKGROUND

The Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association for the Lowlands of Scotland is a public body, established by statute, to provide advice and support to the Defence Council on behalf of the Reserve Forces and Cadet Movement in our area. It is one of 13 Associations covering the United Kingdom and we have a sister Association, with the same outputs and tasks, in the Highlands.

The role embraces a range of enabling responsibilities in support of the Volunteer Reserve Forces - Royal Naval Reserve, Royal Marines Reserve, Army Reserve and Royal Auxiliary Air Force. It also includes supporting and fostering the valuable work of the Cadet Organisations – Sea Cadet Corps, Army Cadet Force and the Air Training Corps. In addition, the Association has a key task of liaison with public bodies, local authorities and employers and we promote the interests of the Volunteer Reserves and Cadets within society in general.

ROLES

Within the role above, the Association has two main functions. The first is business outputs in direct support of Volunteer Reserve Force units and Cadet Organisations. In outline:

- Support to Recruiting - principally advice on regional and local marketing and advertising in support of Army Reserve recruiting; however, we make our expertise and advice available to all units and the cadet organisations.
- Employer Engagement - our tri-Service responsibilities are to generate support for the Volunteer Reserves amongst the employer community, and to assist units and reservists managing their relationship with employers. This includes assisting with specific casework that might arise, possibly during a period of mobilisation. The employer gains much from an employee who gains additional skills, management qualifications and leadership experience through their training. However, the employer may need assistance in managing during periods when the reservist may be called for mobilised service. Given that the Reserves are integral to the UK's Defence capability, this is a key output.
- Administration of the Army Cadet Force – this is very much Army Cadet focussed, however, Chief Executive Lowland RFCA chairs the Scottish Cadet Tri-Service Forum which seeks to improve co-operation between the three Cadet Organisations in Scotland and to address issues of common interest. Cadets gain a wide variety of skills and personal development activities that help to focus their energies and to prepare them for whatever employment or career path they may choose in later life. This includes Duke of Edinburgh Award, BTEC, SQA awards, communication skills, working as a team, leadership, confidence and a host of other “soft” skills that are so valued by future employers and indeed society at large. This has close synergy with Curriculum for Excellence (and Scottish Government National Outcome 4) and we engage with schools to ensure that cadet achievement can gain proper recognition.
- Works and Building Services across the Reserve and Cadet Estates - this is a major output. In all we manage over 150 properties, large and small, across the Lowlands and are responsible for construction, maintenance and ensuring they remain fit for purpose. Many of our properties are used by other voluntary organisations, eg Scouts and Guides.

These tasks are executed by the Secretariat staff in Lowland House, Glasgow, overseen by the Association Board, chaired by Colonel Allan Lapsley, a Glasgow businessman. The hierarchy above that comprises the President, Guy Clark Lord-Lieutenant of the Renfrewshire, and he is assisted by his Vice Presidents who are the remaining 13 Lord-Lieutenants of the Lowlands, including the Lord Provosts of the Cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The second primary function of the Association is that of promoting the Volunteer Reserve Forces and Cadet Forces across the region. This is achieved through a broad Association membership mainly comprising a Tri-Service spread of ex officio members (all serving in command of volunteer reserve units or cadet units) and a wide range of Selected Members. Some 30% of the membership is made up of supportive local authority councillors, educationalists, employers and employees (currently Trades Union officials). Liaison with Local Authorities and Members of Parliament (both Westminster and Holyrood) is particularly important for us.

COMMITMENT WE ASK OF MEMBERS

Our Members are key to us maintaining effective links with society; and the Members of Parliament and Local Authority councillors who support us very much encourage a two-way flow of information. Employers too provide valued input and we have a specific Regional Employer Engagement Group that ensures that we are kept abreast of employer opinions and pressures.

In terms of organisation of our 250(+) members, the Association membership is split into Area Committees (Lothian, Strathclyde and Border) which currently meet on a six-monthly basis to be kept abreast of reserve and cadet matters in general and any particular emerging issues of importance. The Area Committees usually meet in May and October and there is an Annual Association Meeting (our AGM) which takes place in March. Meetings are held in the evening and last around 90 minutes followed by a supper. Members attend the Area Committee meeting in the area best aligned with interests, be it Lothian, Strathclyde or Border, and the Annual Association Meeting alternates between Edinburgh and Glasgow.

In addition to asking members to attend meetings, we regularly seek their views as they act as an important sounding board for opinion. Furthermore, we ask that members promote the Volunteer Reserve Forces and Cadet Organisations within their own spheres of influence in the manner in which the member feels most comfortable. Members may be asked from time to time to serve on one of our sub committees (eg Employer Engagement) or to sit on the Board.

Full Members have voting rights in the Association and the term of membership is normally 5 years, extendable by mutual agreement. As a public body, we are required to follow the guidance and principles of public life as given by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Our Regulations are quite prescriptive in terms of age such that members move from Selected Membership to Co-opted Membership in the April following their 65th birthday. Whilst Co-opted Members may not vote at the Annual Meeting, they most certainly have very full voice and input to the Association and what we do.