

From: Colonel (Retired) R D Gibson MBE
Chief Executive

AGENDA ITEM No. 11(h)



LOWLAND RESERVE FORCES' AND CADETS' ASSOCIATION
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Mr John O'Hagan
Executive Director of Corporate Services
North Lanarkshire Council
Windmillhill Street
Motherwell
ML1 1AB

Our Reference: L/5/101

23 January 2008

Dear Mr O'Hagan,

REQUEST FOR A REPRESENTATIVE MEMBER FROM NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

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. This role 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 Forces (Sea, Army and Air). In addition, the Association has a key task of liaison with local authorities and employers and we promote the interests of the Volunteer Reserves and Cadets within society in general.

Within our Scheme of Association we have a number of membership places allocated to Representative Members, including representatives of Local Authorities. The Scheme is currently very prescriptive such that we have, in the past, been limited to 6 councillors and so we have focussed the allocation on the 6 council areas containing the highest concentrations of Reserve or Cadet Force units. This is highly unsatisfactory as it denies appropriate, important representation from the remaining Local Authorities in the Lowlands of Scotland, the majority of which have significant number of volunteers and cadets who provide a valuable contribution to their communities.

The Chairman, Group Captain Bob Kemp, and the Association Board seek to redress this situation and would be very grateful if North Lanarkshire Council could appoint a councillor to become a member of the Association. I attach a briefing note giving details of our functions and business outputs, along with the commitments that we ask of our members.

The boundary between Highland RFCA and Lowland RFCA discards the North Lanarkshire area. In the Lowland RFCA part of North Lanarkshire, there is a TA unit in Motherwell and some seven cadet units – Airdrie (2), Coatbridge, Motherwell (2) and Wishaw. I would be grateful if the Council might consider the matter and, hopefully, appoint an appropriate representative to Lowland RFCA.

If you need any further detail or background information please do not hesitate to let me know.

Yours ays,
Robbie

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL CORPORATE SERVICES				
25 JAN 2008				
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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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 he 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 Marine Reserve, Territorial Army and Royal Auxiliary Air Force. It also includes supporting and fostering the valuable work of the Cadet Forces – 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 TA recruiting; however, we make our expertise and advice available to all units and the cadet organisations. We also market the Army Cadet Force and do PR across the field.
- Employer Support - 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 the extensive use being made of reserves from all Services in support of enduring operations, this is a key output.
- Administration of the Army Cadet Force – this is very much Army focussed, however, Chief Executive Lowland RFCA chairs the Scottish Tri-Service Cadet Forum which seeks to improve co-operation between the three Cadet Organisations in Scotland and to address issues of common interest. Allied with this cadet role, we have an emerging task as coordinator for MOD youth initiatives in our area. This involves liaison with local authorities, youth bodies, Prince's Trust, SKILLFORCE and the like. Cadets gain a wide variety of skills and personal development activities that help to focus their energies and to prepare for whatever career path they may choose in later life. This includes Duke of Edinburgh Award, BTEC, 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.
- Works and Building Services across the Reserve and Cadet Estates - this function is a major output and is again Tri-Service. In all we manage over 150 properties, large and small, across the Lowlands and are responsible for their construction, maintenance and ensuring that they remain fit for purpose. Many of our properties are used by other voluntary organisation, eg the Scouting Movement.

These tasks are executed by the Secretariat staff in Lowland House, Glasgow, overseen by the Association Board, chaired by Group Captain Bob Kemp. The hierarchy above that comprises the President, David Younger Lord Lieutenant of the Tweeddale, 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 Glasgow and Edinburgh.

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 or cadet units) and a wide range of Selected Members. In addition, some 15% of the membership is made up of supportive local authority councillors, educationalists, employers and employees (currently Trades Union officials). Liaison with Local Authorities is particularly important to us.

COMMITMENT

In terms of organisation of our 200(+) members, the Association membership is split into Area Committees (Lothian and Strathclyde) 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 afterwards. Representative Members attend the Area Committee meeting in the area best aligned with interests, be it Lothian or Strathclyde, and the Annual Association Meeting alternates between Edinburgh and Glasgow. We also have periodic newsletters and a formal Annual Report and Accounts through which we keep members abreast of our work. 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.

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 Support) or to sit on the Board.

Our Representative Members are key to us maintaining effective links with society and the 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 Group that ensures that we are kept abreast of employer opinions and pressures.