

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
CITY OF INVERNESS AREA COMMITTEE**

10th September 2015

| | |
|-------------|-----------|
| Agenda Item | 20 |
| Report No | CIA/53/15 |

FREEDOM OF THE HIGHLANDS – THE ROYAL REGIMENT OF SCOTLAND

Report by the Inverness City Area Manager

Summary

The Council agreed on 18 December 2014 to confer the Freedom of the Highlands on the Royal Regiment of Scotland. Plans are in hand for events on 15 and 16 October 2015 and this report invites Members note the arrangements planned for the City and agree the attendant cost.

1. Background

- 1.1 Within the Town House, Chamber there is a framed scroll which states that The Queen's Own Highlanders (Seaforth & Camerons) received the Freedom of Inverness on the 4th March 1961 (a month after they were formed after the amalgamation of The Seaforth and Camerons). Having the Freedom allows a Military Unit to parade through the streets with Bayonets fixed and Colours flying when the situation warrants it. Major Maurice Gibson lodged a request for and on behalf of the Army to invite the Council to grant Freedom Status to the Royal Regiment of Scotland which has been agreed by Council.
- 1.2 The Highlanders, 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland paraded through the streets of the Highland Capital on 29th June 2014 as part of The Royal Regiment of Scotland with the consent of the Convener. The Council agreed to the request as the Royal Regiment of Scotland did not have the Freedom of the Highlands. Its antecedents do but they are no longer in the Army's Order of Battle.
- 1.3 Noting the above Council agreed to the request at the meeting held on 18 December 2015 with Ceremonies to be held at a later date. Discussions have taken place and arrangements prepared.

2. Planned Events

2.1 15th Oct Inverness

Approximately 200 -250 marching troops from the Royal Regiment of Scotland including their Pipe & Regimental Bands accompanied by Cruachan IV, the Regimental Mascot (a pony) will March through the City to the Northern Meeting Park where they will form up for a Drumhead Service and the official Ceremony of Bestowing the Freedom of the 'Highland Council Area' upon the Royal Regiment of Scotland.

- 2.2 After the ceremony the Royal Regiment of Scotland will exercise their right to March through the City with Bayonets fixed and Colours Flying. They will follow a route passing Eden Court, along the front of Council HQ, down Ardross Street, passing the Cathedral where a salute will be taken then returning to Eden Court.
- 2.3 After the March-past there will be a Reception for the Royal Regiment of Scotland and VIP's in attendance.
- 2.4 The Royal Regiment of Scotland was formed in 2006 and draws support from across the Highlands, unlike its predecessors (e.g. the Seaforths and the Camerons) who tended to recruit from specific Districts such as Dingwall and Inverness. In consequence, following the celebrations in Inverness, there will be Parades in Wick, Dingwall and Fort William, the cost of which will not be met from the Inverness Common Good Fund.

3. Governance

- 3.1 Historically, Freedom Status has been an award made by towns and counties to esteemed members of its community. However, in contemporary society, the awards tend to be entirely ceremonial, given by local government to those who have served in some exceptional capacity, or upon those whom they wish to bestow an honour. The term Freeman confers no special privileges on the recipient (Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. Section 207).
- 3.2 There is a long history between Inverness and the Military Family, with the granting of Freedom Status being marked with the highest standard of ceremony and general recognition. The plans for the celebrations include the presentation of Commemorative Coins and a Pipe Banner along with the Ceremonial Scroll.

4. Implications

- 4.1 Resources: The total cost for the City events and share of the above is £24,401.00
- 4.2 Legal: The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (as amended) Section 206 requires not less than two-thirds of the Members voting to support a resolution for the admission of honorary status. It also requires a roll to be kept containing the names of persons admitted. Freedom Status was unanimously agreed by Council on 18 December 2014.
- 4.3 Rural: Granting Freedom Status across the Highlands has enhanced the ability of the Royal Regiment of Scotland to promote the opportunities it can offer to all Highland Communities.
- 4.4 Equalities: The use of the term Freeman is considered gender specific and a gender neutral term would be better; however this request is for the regiment to have freedom status and not for individuals to be regarded as freemen. While the term Freeman confers no special privileges on the recipient, if an alternative

term was used (e.g. Honorary Citizen) the application process would need to be explicit about there being no special privileges attached to the honour. Council confirmed that the term Freemen would continue to be used.

There are no other implications arising from this report.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The events are set to take place in Inverness on 15 October 2015. The granting of Freedom Status to the Highlands has been greeted with much appreciation by the Royal Regiment of Scotland who will be giving events the highest standard of support with senior representatives of the Army being present. The events do justice to the high reputation that Inverness has had for ceremonial events of this calibre for centuries and will enhance the general profile of the City.

6. Recommendation

6.1 Members are invited to note the arrangements being made and agree that £24,401.00 be allocated from the Inverness Common Good Fund Civic Hospitality budget towards the costs associated with the granting of Freedom Status agreed by Council on 18 December 2014, to the Royal Regiment of Scotland.

Author: David Haas, Inverness City Area Manager. Tel (01463) 785018

Date: 20 August 2015