

**HELMSLEY TOWN COUNCIL**  
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Ms J Mulligan  
North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner  
12 Granby Road  
Harrogate  
HG1 4ST

By email – [info@northyorkshire-pfcc.gov.uk](mailto:info@northyorkshire-pfcc.gov.uk)

25th October 2019

Dear Ms Mulligan

The meeting of Helmsley Town Council on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019 was attended by Phil Whild, Group Manager of North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, and Jonathan Foster, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, and the council would like to thank them for their attendance.

The council was not invited to respond to news that the provision of appliances in Helmsley was to change, was not officially informed of the plans and does not agree with the reasons given for the lack of a consultation – i.e. that the changes are, in the opinion of the NY Fire and Rescue Service, an ‘improvement’ and ‘enhancement’ and that therefore there is no need for consultation. In future the council would prefer to be informed by the Fire Service rather than members of the public.

The council objects to the plans to replace fire engines with 3-person Tactical Response Vehicles (TRVs) for the following reasons:

- The impression the council got was that the service is trying to find a home for its surplus TRVs which may be more suited to a fire station crewed during the day and used as a back-up appliance, not a frontline response vehicle for a fire station like Helmsley.
- A TRV cannot carry sufficient water or a water pump, an important consideration for a rural area like ours when many properties are not served by mains water.
- The inability of TRVs to carry sufficient water even if they had the physical space as they cannot practically or legally support the weight.
- The fire engine is suited to much of the work it has to do in this area like chimney fires and farm fires.
- The Standard Operating Procedure to ride with 3 crew on a B Type was withdrawn when TRVs were introduced but why can't a crew of 3 on a B type turn out to the same restricted incidents that a TRV with a crew of 3 can turn out to?
- There does not seem to be a practical reason why the fire engine cannot carry the improved battery-operated and portable cutting gear on TRVs.
- The TRV has an insufficient if not a dangerously inadequate supply of breathing apparatus.
- Ladder length on a TRV is only 9m rather than a fire engine's 13.5m and this will cause a delay when attending fires in buildings higher than two-storeys. There are many substantial

two-storey buildings and some three-storey buildings in the area, notably Bransdale View Extra Care Facility.

- The TRV does not carry a roof ladder, surely an important piece of equipment for chimney fires which must be an issue in such a rural area.
- It seems more sensible to have suitable equipment available and not need it especially as the first five minutes of attendance by the fire service are critical. In many instances a TRV will not be of any use and the crew will be waiting for a fire engine. Tragedies may be averted if the right equipment is available.
- It does not see the proposed substitution of a TRV for a fire engine as a service improvement in any way.
- There is concern that the introduction of a TRV will pave the way for further downgrading/diminution in fire service for Helmsley and surrounding area without consultation.
- The Fire Service should increase its recruitment efforts in Helmsley.
- The Fire Service, especially in areas where recruitment and retention are too low, should urgently address the inadequate pay structure that was mentioned by your officers, in that on-call payments do not reflect the substantial commitment required. The Authority should consider a temporary 'retention' payment in areas where there is a recruitment and retention problem of a scale that means that a crew for a fire engine cannot be raised. It may well be a problem in other rural areas with a similar demographic. Other authorities such as Ryedale District Council do this when there is a shortage, e.g. for planning officers, and it will cut the waste in resources of recruiting and training staff who do not stay.

Yours sincerely

Victoria Ellis

Victoria Ellis  
Clerk to Helmsley Town Council

CC

Kevin Hollinrake MP

Phil Whild, Group Manager of North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Jonathan Foster, Deputy Chief Fire Officer

North York Moors National Park Authority Chief Executive Mr A Wilson

Howardian Hills AONB

County Councillor Val Arnold

Ryedale District Councillors S Arnold and J Windress

Ryedale District Council Chief Executive S Burlet

North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel, NYCC

Parish councils & meetings in the Helmsley area & Kirkbymoorside & Malton Town Councils