



NORTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

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Dear David,

Re: Fire cover for Tadcaster following damage to the bridge during the recent flooding

Thank you for your email of 13th January enquiring as to arrangements for fire cover in Tadcaster following damage to the bridge which has divided the town. You seek clarification on two points; firstly, the proposed changes to the normal service provided, and secondly, the impact the bridge and the resultant diversion has on response times should there be an incident that the fire service needs to respond to. My response is as follows:

A. Impact of Fire Cover Changes to Flooding Related Incidents

As regards proposed changes to normal service provision following approval by the Fire Authority in December 2015, I can confirm these will have no significant impact to the response that NYFRS can provide to flooding related incidents. This issue was raised during the consultation and in response to those concerns the new compact Tactical Response Vehicle (TRV) that will replace one of the standard fire engines at Tadcaster will continue to have a pumping capability. The closest resources for water rescue are currently located at Selby and this will not be affected by the changes.

In terms of dealing with wide-scale flooding, including the need for evacuations, as we saw in the recent floods this will continue to be provided by a response from NYFRS resources drawn from across the City of York and North Yorkshire. If required these will be supplemented by resources from elsewhere across the country within the first 24 to 48 hours, in keeping with national arrangements for securing mutual assistance. This type of incident scenario was analysed as part of the research into the proposed changes during the review and the events between Christmas and New Year enabled us to conclude that this initial analysis was correct.

The proposed changes, which at Tadcaster entails one of the two fire engines being replaced by a slightly smaller vehicle with fewer staff, will probably come into service at some point over the next 18 to 24 months. The exact timing of this is still to be determined and if the on-going bridge closure suggests that there is any increased risk, then the timing of the implementation may be adjusted. We will monitor this closely. However, an initial analysis of the bridge closure (see below), does not suggest that this is the case.

B. Impact of Bridge Closure on Fire Cover

The specific matter of the bridge closure raises two issues for fire cover in Tadcaster; one is how on-call crews can respond to the fire station to collect the fire engine on receipt of an emergency call; the second is about the standard of response to the incident. Both fire engines at Tadcaster are crewed by on-call staff at night - and one is always crewed by on-call staff. Some firefighters live on the York (East) side of the river and so are unable to make a swift attendance when on-call until at least a foot bridge is erected. This is being covered by using staff who live on the fire station side of the river to provide the on-call cover. During the day (08:00 to 18:00) one fire engine is available immediately as the staff are at the fire station as part of the normal duties.

As regards the second issue (i.e. standard of response) a time delay is incurred in sending a fire engine to parts of Tadcaster on the York side of the bridge. During the daytime the diversion adds 5 to 10 minutes to the attendance time, depending on where the incident is. (These times are derived from calculations from our mobilising system but officers have also done some 'timed runs' to confirm that these are broadly accurate). Due to the on-call arrangements, this means that the bridge closure has the effect that the response times during the daytime are similar to those at night when the bridge is open.

The additional night time delay (when both fire engines already have a 5 minute delay due to the staff being on-call), is being addressed by sending an additional fire engine from York or Acomb, as well as the Tadcaster fire engine(s) via the diversion. This results in an attendance time of between 10 and 15 minutes depending on where the incident is. The difference between this and the normal attendance time at night (18:00 to 08:00) is also around 5 to 10 minutes. This standard of response, relative to the risk on the York side of the river, is considered appropriate. As a comparator, the attendance time to the York side of Tadcaster, while the bridge is closed, would be similar to the attendance times to Sherburn in Elmet, and the risk there is similar to this part of Tadcaster.

In short, the impact of the bridge closure does have implications upon the response times, but they are not considered significant when balanced against the risks presented.

I trust this response addresses the two points raised in your email but please do get in touch if you require further detail or clarification.

Yours sincerely



NIGEL HUTCHINSON
Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive