

## Cabinet Member (Public Protection & Rural Affairs)



*Harrogate*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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**COUNCILLOR LES ELLINGTON**

1 Kell Grange, Ripon Road, Pateley Bridge,  
Harrogate, HG3 5NJ

Tel: (01423) 712461 Fax: (01423) 712461

E-mail: [les.ellington@toshiba-connect.co.uk](mailto:les.ellington@toshiba-connect.co.uk)

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14 September 2006

Dr John Reid MP, Home Secretary  
Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
LONDON  
SW1P 4DF

Dear Dr Reid

### **PROPOSED MERGER OF NORTH YORKSHIRE, SOUTH YORKSHIRE, WEST YORKSHIRE & HUMBERSIDE POLICE AREAS**

The Council welcomes your recent decision to no longer proceed with an enforced merger between North, West, South and Humberside Police Areas.

The Council is however concerned that there are some unresolved issues, particularly related to finance and the encouragement given for adjoining Police forces to share resources on a regional basis.

The following Notice of Motion was received with overwhelming and widespread support by the Council at its meeting held on the 19 July 2006:

*"The Council welcomed the announcement of the Home Secretary to postpone a final decision on the future of Yorkshire Police forces. It calls on him to use this time to urgently commission a report on the financial implications for each of the four police authorities, in particular the impact on Council taxpayers. Further, in view of the rural aspect of Harrogate district, a full assessment should be carried out about the impact mergers would have on successful neighbourhood policing by the North Yorkshire force."*

The Council is very concerned that North Yorkshire Police financial reserves could be volunteered for use outside of the North Yorkshire area.

The Council taxpayers of the Harrogate district, and others in North Yorkshire, have over many years, and particularly more recently, contributed directly and significantly to these funds. The Council feels it would be wrong for the funds to be used in any way that is not directly for the benefit of the residents of the Harrogate district and across North Yorkshire.

The Council is also concerned that any encouragement to use “volunteered” resources to enhance protective services across the region could lead to a diminution of resources available to support Neighbourhood Policing.

The Harrogate District covers approximately 500 square miles, much of which covers rural areas and rural communities.

These communities have their own crime and disorder problems and concerns, and the current roll out of Neighbourhood Policing across North Yorkshire is trying to ensure that each local community has closer contacts with their local Police. Even now the resources are stretched and Neighbourhood Policing has yet to fully settle down.

Any reduction in resources would undermine this service to the rural areas and seriously impact on the effectiveness of the National Intelligence Model way of working, as those links to the community at a local level would be lost.

The Council therefore urges the Home Secretary to protect the use of the current North Yorkshire Financial Reserves to the North Yorkshire area and to ensure that neighbourhood, and particularly rural, policing services are not affected by any voluntary/joint regional pooling of resources.

On a separate note, I would also like to take this opportunity to raise with you concerns over any future amalgamation of existing Basic Command Unit (BCU) areas should discussions over Police Reform return. North Yorkshire currently has three BCUs, and if Police Reform is ever supported, I would urge that these areas remain. I am extremely concerned that any enlargement of the BCU area by amalgamation with an adjoining one could lead to BCU areas that appear to represent large isolated areas in North Yorkshire and becoming unwieldy and lose touch with the local communities.

I urge you as Home Secretary to consider the Council’s concerns, particularly with respect to the use of the financial reserves in North Yorkshire and also the retention of resources in neighbourhood/rural policing.

Yours sincerely

**Councillor Les Ellington**

Cabinet Member (Public Protection & Rural Affairs)

cc: J Kenyon – Chair, North Yorkshire Police Authority  
D Canning – Chief Inspector – North Yorkshire Police