



Royal National Lifeboat Institution
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Mr Michael Cook
Scottish Borders Council
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24 June 2015

Dear Mr Cook,

Thank you for your recent letter. A similar letter was received from David Parker, Leader, Scottish Borders Council and my reply echoes the response sent to Mr Parker. You raise a number of important points and I hope I can in some way address your concerns.

The crew of St Abbs have proved themselves to be committed, courageous and selfless in their service to the RNLI in the 104 years that the station has helped save lives at sea. Both I and the RNLI are very grateful to them and the community that has supported them.

With this in mind, the unanimous decision by the charity's Trustees to close the lifeboat station was a difficult one and not taken lightly. We only make such decisions after extensive research and analysis, and only if we are confident that lives will not be put at risk. We consider the location of existing search and rescue assets and changing patterns of sea use to ensure that the right lifeboats are stationed at the right locations while making best use of the public donations on which the charity relies.

In the case of St Abbs, we conducted a review of the stretch of coastline between St Abbs and Redcar. Put simply, our research showed that there isn't sufficient need to have two lifeboat stations – St Abbs and Eyemouth – so close together on this stretch of coastline. Our rescue data and analysis of neighbouring stations shows that the services currently covered by St Abbs lifeboat could be covered by adding a D class lifeboat to Eyemouth lifeboat station just two miles away. We estimate it would take the D class stationed at Eyemouth from five to ten minutes to reach a call out at St Abbs depending on conditions. In addition, over a third of St Abbs' services in the last five years have been attended by Eyemouth lifeboat, which demonstrates there is already a natural overlap of services in this area.

The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea

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