

DURHAM CONSTABULARY

Mike Barton LL.B.
Chief Constable

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Date: 10 June, 2014

Dear Mr. Tweddle,

Regulation 28 Notice

This is a response to the Regulation 28 Notice sent to Durham Constabulary on the 3rd of April 2014 regarding the death of Melvin Bandtock on the 28th of December 2013 whilst riding his motorcycle on the B6313 Craghead Lane, Craghead.

The matter of concern by the Coroner for the Constabulary was that the process for contacting Durham County Council was done by an individual call handler on an ad hoc basis with no monitoring or supervision. There was also a concern that there was no oversight that might lead a supervisory officer to conclude a potentially serious situation was developing on the County's roads. This is not the case for both issues.

The report of a road accident or of dangerous road conditions being reported by a member of the public would initially be taken by a call handler within the Force priority dispatch centre. That report would then be transferred to a dispatcher pod which has responsibility for deploying the most appropriate resources for a defined area of the County. If there was more than one report they would be taken by different call handlers but they would all be transferred to the same dispatch pod.

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Mr A Tweddle
H.M. Coroner
PO BOX 282
Bishop Auckland
County Durham
DL14 4FY



The dispatchers for that area would then deploy officers to the incident and contact Durham County Council as appropriate. There is also a dispatch pod (call sign LA) which deals with all highways issues for the County. Any incident which was affecting the road network would have a 'highways' tag placed on it and would be managed in conjunction with the area response. The LA dispatcher, having overall view of the County's road network, would normally be the dispatcher who would contact the Council, should issues become apparent. This would be recorded on the incident log so the area dispatcher would know this had been done and action was being taken. The dispatch room is overseen by 2 supervisors and an inspector is on duty at all times to manage critical incidents and firearms deployments. The duty inspector will also be able to contact the duty superintendent if a significant or major incident occurred. This means that if there was a serious situation developing then there would always be supervision available to manage it and an inspector or above to provide a strategic oversight.

The lines of communication between the Constabulary and Durham County Council for road related issues are well established. The Constabulary receives daily e-mails of the winter maintenance programme and the contact details of the duty manager for the Council are on that e-mail. We also have the regular out of hours contact for clearing debris and other items from the carriageway when required. T/CI [REDACTED] from Durham and Cleveland Specialist Operations and T/CI [REDACTED] have met with Durham County Council Head of Technical Services, [REDACTED] and reaffirmed that those arrangements are still in place and fit for purpose.

As the main concerns expressed were that the Constabulary's procedures for dealing with such incidents were managed on an ad-hoc basis, I would like to reassure you that this is not the case. I have confidence that we have robust, well managed procedures to deal with such reports as we receive them and also good lines of communication with our partners at Durham County Council to ensure their resources are deployed effectively.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Chief Constable

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