



Department
for Transport

Baroness Vere of Norbiton
Minister for Roads, Buses and Places

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Sarah Ormond-Walshe
HM Senior Coroner
South London Coroner's Office
Floor 2, Davis House
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26 November 2021

Dear Miss Ormond-Walshe,

The tragic Sandilands tram accident on 9 November 2016 highlighted the importance of safety on the country's tram networks. Five years after the accident, our thoughts are with all of those that were affected by those events.

I am writing in response to the four Regulation 28 Reports to Prevent Future Deaths (PFDs) that you sent to the Department on 21 September 2021 and thank you for granting an extension for the response. I am responding as Minister responsible for light rail.

I thank you for raising your concerns and for the actions you recommended be taken. We have worked with, and continue to work with, key stakeholders across the Light Rail sector to fully consider these recommendations and improve tram safety across the country. The safety of passengers on Light Rail systems is of paramount importance to the Department.

Across all the PFD's recommendations, the Department has been supporting the work of the Light Rail Safety and Standards Board (LRSSB). The Department notes that the LRSSB, set up as a direct consequence of the Sandilands tram accident, has made good progress on your recommendations, and they will be writing separately to you to provide further detail on this.

Recommendation 1: a fresh assessment should be conducted as to whether trams should have automatic braking systems.

We are pleased to note the work that LRSSB has undertaken on this. In May, LRSSB published two guidance documents addressing concerns regarding driver inattention and speed management, including a consideration of the

appropriateness of automatic braking systems. Additionally, several operators are now researching and trialling driver inattention solutions on their systems, including a trial of a potential new technology on the Sheffield Supertram.

Recommendation 2: further consideration should be given on the strengthening of tram doors.

LRSSB is conducting ongoing engagement with various European Standards technical working groups and committees with a view to informing the regulation of security and crashworthiness of tram doors. We will continue to monitor the progress that LRSSB makes, and work with them, and the sector, should adoption of new standards be required. We expect LRSSB to advise on whether a change to the standards is required in 2022.

Recommendation 3: all tram operators should consider subscribing to the Confidential Incident Reporting & Analysis System (CIRAS) or similar staff reporting scheme.

We are happy to note that, as reported by LRSSB, all Tram networks in England now subscribe to CIRAS. Furthermore, we support LRSSB's plans to distribute a tramway specific guidance note, supported through a comms campaign, aimed at front line staff to promote the benefits of the scheme. Subject to sector-wide agreement, the comms plan is planned to be rolled out by Spring 2022.

Recommendation 4: consideration should be given to setting up national tram safety group.

The Department is consulting with passenger groups, system operators and key stakeholders to assess how passengers can easily raise concerns of their safety with tram operators and how this may be co-ordinated nationwide. We are in discussion with Transport Focus and LRSSB on this and will agree a solution with all stakeholders in 2022.

The Department will continue to work closely with UK Tram, LRSSB, system operators and all key stakeholders on addressing the concerns that have been raised in the PFDs.

We would like to extend our thanks the Senior Coroner and those at the South London Coroner's Office for all their hard work and diligence in this matter.

*Yours,
Charlotte*

BARONESS VERE OF NORBITON