

HM Coroner Mrs Rachael Griffin
The Coroner's Office
Civic Centre
Bourne Avenue
BOURNEMOUTH
Dorset BH2 6DY

Date: 3 April 2023

Ref:

Officer:

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Dear Mrs Griffin

Regulation 28 - Report to Prevent Future Deaths

I write to provide a response on behalf of Dorset Council and the key stakeholders of Dorset Road Safe to the Regulation 28 Report, received on the 8 February 2023, following the conclusion of the inquest touching the death of Stephen Robert Wood. You raised a concern in which your opinion is that urgent action should be taken to prevent future deaths. Your concern was:

'That there is a lack of knowledge and/or understanding as to when people should report an obstruction in the road. I would request that consideration is given to making all road users aware of the dangers of obstructions in the road and to encourage them to report any hazard to the local Police force or Local Authority so that it can be removed as soon as possible, or at least other road users be warned of the hazard to prevent a future death.'

The report was sent to a number of stakeholders who have been involved in activity in response to the concern. Temporary Assistant Chief Constable ██████████ chairs the Dorset Strategic Road Safety Partnership (DSRSP) and as such, it was seen as most appropriate for Dorset Police to consolidate a response on behalf of the Partnership. DSRSP is the governance body of Dorset Road Safe (DRS). DRS is a partnership consisting of; Dorset Police, Dorset Council, BCP Council, Dorset & Wilts Fire Service, National Highways, South- West Ambulance Service Trust, DocBike, & Dorset's Office of Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC). Dorset Road Safe is a well established and strong partnership.

The Partnership have proposed the following commitments in response to the concern raised. The DSRSP will formally ratify these commitments, at its next meeting to be held on 28 April 2023.

● **Commitment 1**

Websites for Dorset Police, the respective Local Authority for Dorset and BCP, along with National Highways, will all review and ensure there is a clear link to enable reporting of obstructions and debris on the road by the public.

These links will start with clear instructions and information to the public to call 999 if they believe any obstruction or debris is putting road users in immediate danger.

Further information on these respective websites, and in the same reference area, will also advise the public on how to report smaller, non-urgent debris.

All these websites will be cross-referenced to each other to ensure the public have the right information irrespective of which organisation they contact in the first instance.

Partnership members will be reviewing their respective websites and contact details, to ensure improvements can be made to assist the public in reporting any concerns on the roads around obstructions and debris.

- **Commitment 2**

Dorset Road Safe's Partnership website will introduce a clear link around who to contact in respect of an obstruction/debris on the road. There will also be a section devoted to highlighting the associated dangers to road users.

This section of the website will act as a further cross-referencing point with all respective Partners, to ensure that the public are well informed and signposted to the correct organisation and method of contact.

- **Commitment 3**

Corporate communications colleagues from Police, Councils, and National Highways, we will be constructing a communications campaign, ready for this Spring/Summer's increased road activity, to alert all road users around obstructions/debris on Dorset's roads.

This will be conducted via various media platforms including DRS Twitter, and roadside Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS).

The sustainability of message will be an important part of this communications package, with partners ensuring that messaging continues at an agreed frequency in perpetuity, through various media – Roadside, twitter, websites etc..

In relation to those members of the public who call the police directly, I have been advised that the Force Command Centre (FCC) assesses and triages all reports of road concerns, considering an appropriate response or deployment based on the threat and risk posed. They will also advise the respective Highway Authority where a police deployment is not considered necessary.

Partnership colleagues in both Councils and National Highways have good existing arrangements for the Public to report issues on the road.

I hope this letter provides you with the assurance that Dorset Council as a part of Dorset's Strategic Road Safety Partnership is committed to keeping Dorset's road network safe for everyone and has made specific commitments to mitigate the concerns raised as a result of this particular Preventing Future Deaths report.

Yours sincerely



Chief Executive