

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

HG Mark Bricknell
HM Senior Coroner
Town Hall
St Owen Street
Hereford
HR1 2PJ

Dear Mr. Bricknell

Mark Francis Eccles (MB/MD/5039/22)

I write further to your Regulation 28 report dated 25 October 2024, to prevent future deaths, following an investigation into the death of Mark Francis Eccles.

I have noted the matters of concern that you have raised, and would respond as follows.

1. Visibility at the junction is limited.

It should be noted that the Council's Highways Accident Investigation and Safety Manager visited the site, where the accident occurred with the Police, which is a standard practice with all fatal collisions, and as a result made the following assessment:

- a) Since the collision, the landowner has reduced the original boundary hedge/fence so as to improved visibility.
- b) However, significant improvements in visibility would involve modifying the verge height, removal of earthworks, and altering the vertical profile of the B4362, which is a sizable piece of engineering work.
- c) In response to your report, the Council will now install an "official" highways mirror to improve visibility at this junction, and the existing one that has been privately installed since the collision will be removed.

As set out in Herefordshire Council's existing Road Safety Policy, the Council undertakes an annual review and analysis of all locations which have higher numbers of Personal Injury Road Traffic Collisions throughout the county. Following detailed investigation, engineering improvements are implemented, in line with existing prioritisation criteria and budgetary constraints. This accords with the Council's Statutory Duty under Section 39 of the Road Traffic Act 1988.

At this specific location, there has been one further personal injury collision in the last 20 years, and it has not therefore featured in the prioritised list for engineering works or other improvements.

As you will be aware the features and challenges found at this location are not dissimilar to a significant percentage of Herefordshire's historical road network. These networks were constructed prior to current design standards and will be replicated across a sizeable proportion of roads across the United Kingdom.

You will appreciate that with limited funds, it means that as a Highway Authority the Council is simply unable to address the sites with fewer accidents, instead having to prioritise works on those locations with a higher numbers of personal injury accidents.

As the budget for 2024/25 year is already fully committed for scheme delivery, we will nonetheless reassess this location as part of the upcoming 2025/6 year, with a view to determine if any improvements to visibility are justified as a priority, over and above other schemes. If they do, then the Council will undertake the necessary works next year. We will write to you of the progress in this regard at the appropriate time.

2. The junction is subject to the National Speed Limit

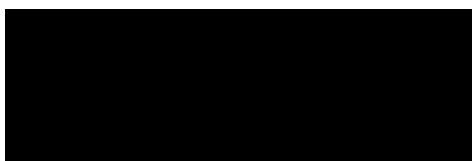
It should be noted that this junction is subject to the National Speed Limit. The character and nature of this road conforms with appropriate Department for Transport criteria when setting speed limits, and it does not recommend the use of speed limits to tackle individual, isolated locations like this junction.

Given your concerns, however, the Council will review the enforcement arrangements with the Police and will inform you of our assessment if such measures are to be implemented on this location.

I trust you will find the Council's response as outlined above as proportionate to the concerns you have raised.

In conclusion, it needs to be stressed that the Council takes all accidents seriously, and where appropriate implements measures to make the highways network safer provided the threshold for number of road accidents on individual sites is met.

Your sincerely


CHIEF EXECUTIVE