

Chief Executive: [REDACTED]



Sent via email:
[REDACTED]

Hertfordshire County Council

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10 April 2025

Dear [REDACTED] - Senior Coroner's Officer

Re: Regulation 28 Notice – Joshua Weavers

Thank you for your 2025 Regulation 28: Report to Prevent Future Deaths dated 17 February 2025. We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere condolences to the family of Joshua Weavers; our thoughts are with them.

The safety of the public using our bridges and infrastructure is paramount. We appreciate your report and provide our response to the concerns raised which relate to our duties and powers as local highway authority, namely:

That the safety measures in place on the [REDACTED] to guard against pedestrians either jumping or falling from the bridge do not meet current guidance and therefore gives rise to a risk of future deaths occurring.

Immediately after Joshua's sad death, we erected notices on the footbridge and road bridge to help deter future suicide attempts by signposting people to the Samaritans. Additionally, we considered what could be done in relation to the heights of the parapets on the bridges. As your report noted, these are lower than the current standards for new bridges. These standards were introduced relatively recently and are not retrospective on existing structures. Many other bridges both locally and nationally have similar or lower parapets than those set out in the current standards.

We explored simple ways to raise the height of the parapets on the footbridge but unfortunately, concluded that this could not be done safely without up-to-date information on the condition of the structure, parts of which are impossible to access

under normal circumstances. Regrettably, there are no 'quick fixes' available to raise the height of the footbridge parapets.

We therefore considered an alternative approach of closing the footbridge. This would create a lengthy diversion for pedestrians to access the southern road bridge and an increased risk of pedestrians crossing the dual carriageway at an unsafe location.

The southern road bridge was built at a similar time to the footbridge and also has relatively low parapets. It would be possible to raise the parapets on the southern road bridge, however in working with other agencies involved, the relative isolation of the footbridge was the principal concern. It was also considered that diverting people to the southern road bridge, would exacerbate the isolation of the foot bridge.

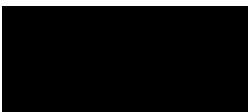
With no immediate options to improve suicide prevention, we felt it was better to wait for the Inquest's input before considering other options. This requires a Principal Inspection of the bridge to assess the condition of the structure and we could then ensure this takes into account the findings from the Inquest.

To inspect the footbridge and southern road bridge safely, we need Network Rail's permission for a time when the railway is closed and the overhead power lines turned off. We will use the next Principal Inspection to assess the feasibility of raising or replacing the parapets with new, higher versions. We are currently liaising with Network Rail and will undertake the Principal Inspection at the first opportunity. Once this is complete, we will be able to better understand the feasibility and costs of parapet improvements and consider the most appropriate course of action.

We take our responsibilities in these matters very seriously and having considered immediate responses, with the benefit of the report of the Inquest's findings, we are exploring all appropriate options to help reduce the risk of another death at this site.

Once again, we offer our heartfelt sympathies to Joshua's family for their loss.

Yours sincerely



Chief Executive