



Department
for Transport

From the Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State

Great Minster House
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Henry Charles
HM Assistant Coroner for Hampshire, Portsmouth
and Southampton
Coroner's Office

Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

31 October 2025

Dear Mr Charles

I am writing to address the recommendations and concerns raised in your report of 10 July following the inquest into the death of Paul David Ransom. May I first express my deep sadness at learning of Paul Ransom's death and offer my condolences to his family and friends.

I am grateful to you for extending the date by when I should respond to 31 October.

My and I officials have studied the report's findings: that in the initial period of laying the "thin surface treatment" to a road's surface, it has a particular property "early life effects" which can cause the dry road surface to respond akin to a wet road surface and affect vehicle behaviours; and may have a greater effect on motorcycles. I felt it would be useful to explain how highways maintenance is managed and, in that context, suggest how best the report's recommendations and concerns can be addressed.

This government takes the condition of our country's roads very seriously and is committed to supporting local highway authorities in maintaining the local highway network and keeping it safe. Responsibility for highways maintenance is devolved; the local highway authorities have a duty under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 to maintain the highways network in their area. The Act does not set out specific standards of maintenance, as it is for each local highway authority to assess which parts of its network need repair and to what standards based upon local knowledge and circumstance.

However, I recognise the seriousness of what has occurred regarding the road surfacing which your report cites as having caused or substantially contributed to the collision involving Mr Ransom, and the need to ensure, as far as possible, there is no recurrence. For that reason, I have committed to undertaking several measures, described below.

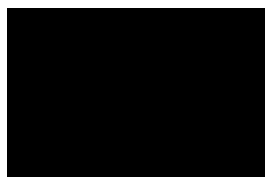
My officials and ADEPT (Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport), to whom your Report was also sent, are working closely to determine the best approach for ensuring awareness of this issue and the effect on motorcyclists, within the wider transport sector, including among local highways authorities. The issue will be discussed at ADEPT's next Board meeting.

Further, the guidance on highways maintenance which is offered to local highways authorities in the publication 'Well Managed Highways Infrastructure: A Code of Practice', will be reviewed and updated to address and take account of your report's recommendations and concerns. We are planning to comprehensively review and update the Code by November 2026 but where possible we will incorporate and issue the guidance related to this case before then.

Finally, on the need for adequate road signage, currently, signage exists for slippery roads and for loose chippings but not for the specific "thin surface treatment" road surfacing highlighted in your report. As part of the update to the Code of Practice, I have asked my officials to consider the appropriateness of signing to highlight locations where thin surface treatments have been applied.

I hope these measures assure you of what I am doing to address your report and to ultimately ensure safety on our roads, in light of this tragic case.

Best wishes,



MINISTER FOR LOCAL TRANSPORT