

Chief Executive: Angie Ridgwell



**Hertfordshire County
Council CH 0238, Robertson
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28 November 2025

Dear Geoffrey,

**Subject: Response to Regulation 28 Prevention of Future Deaths Notice –
Sarratt Road Fatal Collision (September 2023)**

Thank you for your report dated 4 September, issued under Regulation 28 following the inquest into the tragic fatal collision on Sarratt Road in September 2023. We recognise the seriousness of this incident and extend our deepest sympathies to the family and all those affected.

We have carefully considered the Matters of Concern raised in your report, namely:

That the speed limit of 60mph is too high for the stretch of Sarratt Road between the M25 over-bridge and the speed restriction sign for Sarratt Village.

In our role as Highways and Transport Authority, we have undertaken further investigation and held further discussions with the Police, with whom we work closely on all matters relating to speed limits and road safety more broadly. Together, we are committed to improving road safety within Hertfordshire.

County of opportunity

Our Findings

Speed:

The Police Investigation Report estimated impact speed between 24–44mph; no evidence of excessive speed was found. Separate evidence shows that mean vehicle speeds on Sarratt Road are typically 30–40mph, significantly below the national speed limit. We acknowledge that speed has been cited as a proxy cause of the incident, suggesting the driver of the car had insufficient time to respond in the situation.

Visibility and Vegetation:

The sightlines between the driver and the person crossing the road were found to be affected by vegetation, located on third party land. Further review identified that a hedgerow and fencing restrict visibility.

In light of the impact speed estimated by the Police and the sightlines, it is our view that the available visibility and reaction times were the key factors in this case. We recognise the sensitivity of this issue within the local community and will ensure any steps taken to improve sightlines are managed through appropriate processes without public attribution, to avoid conflict between neighbours. Our focus remains on improving safety for all road users.

Decision and Policy Context:

In considering any changes to speed limits, we are required to take into account guidance from the Department for Transport (DfT Circular 01/2013, updated March 2024) which reinforces that speed management decisions should be evidence led, integrated within an overarching 'safe system' approach, and avoid isolated hazard-based changes unless supported by robust data.

After reviewing the evidence and considering your concerns, we have met with both the Police Investigation team and the Local Policing Traffic Management Officer. To inform our response, further consideration was given to the recommendation that the speed limit along this stretch of road is too high.

The Police have set out their view on this and Chief Inspector [REDACTED], Head of Roads Policing has confirmed that:

"...the police Traffic Management Officer opinion is that the speed limit does not need to be reduced and remains within the consistency and parameters of speed management strategies."

I attach Chief Inspector [REDACTED] full letter for your information.

In the light of this and evidence contained within the Police Investigation Report, we do not consider that an isolated reduction of the speed limit at this location would address the underlying visibility issues which we believe were key contributory factors that led to this tragic incident. Instead, we propose other actions to address the issues which the evidence now available suggests were the more likely cause of the incident. This approach aligns with Hertfordshire's Speed Management Strategy and DfT Circular 01/2013, which emphasises evidence led, network wide consistency.

I set out below the action taken to date in response to this tragic event and proposed future actions.

Actions Already Taken

- Reviewed the Police Investigation Report and your Prevention of Future Deaths notice.
- Checked land ownership and planning records for the affected location.
- Initiated internal review of vegetation management processes.
- Reviewed highway faults.
- Met with investigating officers for the case.
- Sought Police Traffic Management Officer's initial position on an isolated speed limit change – which was met with concerns.
- Clarified a consolidated Police position on an isolated speed limit change.

Planned Actions (Undertaken by Summer 2026)

Speed Management:

- In light of the evidence in relation to speed, and in line with the Department for Transport Circular 01/2013 and our Speed Management Strategy, we will maintain the current limit, focusing on systemic improvements rather than changing the speed limit for an isolated hazard.
- We will consider area wide rural speed management approaches as part of our Speed Management Strategy review, which is underway, and strengthen messaging to the public to explain speed limits and road user behaviour in a rural context.

Visibility Improvements:

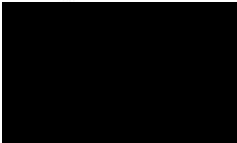
- Apply targeted vegetation clearance for safety critical sightlines, while maintaining visual cues that discourage higher speeds.
- Seek to highlight the requirements on property owners through the planning process.
- Review frontage design constraints and address these through appropriate processes to ensure safety standards are met, without creating community conflict.
- Strengthen our messaging to the public on third party vegetation responsibilities.

System Improvements:

- Propose a regular multi-agency collision review meeting after life changing, serious or fatal collisions to identify systemic issues earlier.
- Strengthen liaison with your office to improve timelines and clarity of recommendations as part of the initial investigation process.
- We can confirm that the forthcoming review of our Speed Management Strategy will consider rural speed limit requirements.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any clarification.

Yours sincerely



Chief Executive