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28th November 2018

Dear Sir,

Regulation 28: Report to Prevent Future Deaths – Andrew Thomas Hanahoe

I refer to your report dated 19th June 2018 made under paragraph 7, schedule 5, of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and regulations 28 and 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013.

On behalf of all at Network Rail, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere condolences to the family of Mr Hanahoe.

As you noted in your report, Mr Hanahoe died by Suicide at Lindsells Level Crossing on 29th December 2017.

I detail below Network Rail's considered response to the matters of concern raised in your report.

Lindsells Level Crossing

Lindsells Level Crossing is a combined private bridleway and public footpath level crossing located on the East Coast Main Line. The crossing traverses four lines with trains travelling up to 125mph.

All level crossings on Network Rail's infrastructure are risk assessed to determine whether the risk associated with that crossing is reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.

Network Rail always explores whether there is an option to close level crossings and if not, whether changes can be made to make them safer. In accordance with the risk assessment for Lindsells Level Crossing, miniature stop lights and telephones are installed to assist users to safely traverse the crossing.

Proposals to close Lindsells Level Crossing

It is not within Network Rail's power to simply close a level crossing that carries a public right of way and this requires liaison with stakeholders, including the relevant local authorities to progress the necessary statutory process. Closing Lindsells Level Crossing would we believe require a large and very expensive ramped bridleway bridge to divert the existing rights of way.

Network Rail is engaging with Central Bedfordshire Council and local residents and we understand there is a collective desire to close various local crossings, including Lindsells Level Crossing, where at all possible. Network Rail is continuing to work with the relevant stakeholders to consider these options and put forward a proposal to secure funding and progress this further.

Mitigation at Lindsells Level Crossing

While the option for closing the level crossing are being pursued, our risk assessment is reviewed regularly to identify if there are any additional mitigation measures that can be implemented to make the crossing safer.

The latest risk assessment at Lindsell Level Crossing identified the option to install audible alarms as an additional mitigation measure. A program of works is currently being planned to include audible alarms and larger lensed miniature stop lights at several level crossings in the area. The target date for completion of this work on all of the crossings, including Lindsells, is March 2019.

We have also considered the additional mitigation which you reference was identified within the Post Incident Site Report (the "PISR"). The PISR is a site assessment undertaken by the British Transport Police ("BTP") immediately after an incident. While it provides valuable information the PISR is not undertaken by specialists with detailed level crossing knowledge so the actions are not always practicable and can actually make risk worse.

The PISR suggests that "repeater lights" should be installed on either side of the crossing. It is not immediately clear what is meant by "repeater lights" but we assume this refers to lights facing into the crossing. This design has been considered many times before but after detailed risk assessment, we do not use such a design due to the risk of users becoming confused about whether it remains safe to cross if the light changes once they were on the crossing. Miniature stop lights are therefore installed at the near side of the railway facing towards oncoming users. The warning time gives sufficient time to safely cross to the other side.

The PISR also suggests that anti-trespass matting should be installed on either side of the crossing. Trespass deterrent measures of this nature are considered and installed if, for example, there is evidence of people using the level crossing to trespass on the railway. There is no evidence of users taking shortcuts or other such behaviour at Lindsells Level Crossing. As a result, it is not considered that this type of deterrent is appropriate at this crossing.

Fencing at Lindsell Level Crossing

In accordance with its legal obligations, Network Rail manages its lineside boundary fencing to deter unauthorized access. A company standard specifies the type of boundary commensurate with assessed risks in the specific location.

The fencing in the area of Lindsells Level Crossing is a mixture of Class 1 (1.8m high, which includes palisade fencing) and Class 3 (1.4m high, which includes post and wire) boundary measures. The latest inspection recorded all fencing in the area of Lindsells Level Crossing to be in good condition, fit for purpose and compliant with the current fencing standard. We understand that there is no suggestion in this incident that access was taken to the railway as a result of failure of the boundary measures, therefore it is not considered that further boundary mitigation is required at this time.

Further suicide prevention initiatives

The railway industry leads the way in helping to reduce the risk of suicide, working with partners such as BTP and The Samaritans. Over 20,000 railway staff are specifically trained to intervene with people who may be at risk, and campaigns like the hugely successful Small Talk Saves Lives initiative are part of that work. As part of our local suicide prevention initiatives, we have funded and implemented a team of eight patrollers in the Thameslink area to conduct suicide prevention patrols. A further emergency intervention unit also operates in this area jointly crewed by Network Rail and BTP to respond to potential suicide and trespass incidents as fast as possible. An embedded BTP Inspector is funded to coordinate our patrolling and this has resulted in a joint patrolling pattern including in the Lindsells Level Crossing area.

We have also engaged with the local authority to discuss what work can be done in the community to reduce the risk of people taking their own lives at this and other sites.

I hope this response answers your concerns but if I can be of further assistance, or if you would like further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping, slanted lines that form a stylized, abstract shape.

**Route Managing Director LNE&EM
Network Rail**