West Sussex County Council response to the Regulation 28: Report to Prevent Future Deaths Relating to the inquest into the death of Pathushan Sutharsan

Following the receipt of the covering letter and Regulation 28: Report to Prevent Future Deaths issued by Penelope Schofield, Senior Coroner for West Sussex, dated 7th June 2020 (), the County Council would like to respond with the comments and actions detailed below.

Following the police notification of the fatal collision involving Mr Sutharsan the authority began its own now well-established investigation procedure. Based on the information available at the time a number of remedial measures were implemented to mitigate the occurrence of a similar incident involving cyclists travelling on the Downs Link. The measures were detailed in our report to the coroner dated the 7th December 2020. In summary these works consisted of:

- Forming a chicane at the bottom of the downhill approach to the A281, compelling users to slow down as they enter the obstacle and to prevent a fast approach on to the junction with the A281
- Permanent, conspicuous signs have been installed down the slope and on the chicane with varying messages warning of the main road ahead
- Traffic signs on the A281 warning motorists of the crossing point have been standardised in both directions. The new warning signs show warnings for equestrians, pedal cyclists and include a 'Pedestrian Crossing' plate.
- Vegetation has been cleared back to improve visibility at the crossing point.

It is considered that the combined above works will mitigate the risk of a similar collision to that of Mr Sutharsan occurring in the future at this location. With regard to the Matters of Concern raised:

A feasibility study looking into ways to improve the crossing point is currently being undertaken by the authority's term consultant, WSP. An options appraisal report will be completed by October 2021. The study is primarily focused on, but not limited to, the options for a bridge or traffic light controlled road crossing.

If the report determines that there are appropriate, technically feasible solutions, the preferred option will be progressed through the WSCC's capital governance procedures, either as a project to be taken forward in the Local Transport Investment Programme or as a major scheme. In either case a full business case will be developed, and the scheme assessed against the County Council's objectives and priorities for potential inclusion in a future capital programme.

Following consultation with the BHS, and in addition to those measures mentioned above, we have recently altered the height of the Speed terminal signs so that they do not block the site line for equestrians. Further planned improvements for this summer are enhanced red surfacing to further highlight the crossing to drivers and additional hedge cutting to further improve the visibility for people crossing the road.

Regards,

Chief Executive West Sussex County Council County Hall Chichester PO19 1RQ