

Response of Erewash Borough Council to the Regulation 28 Report made by Mr G. Clow HMAC following the inquest into the death of Miss Heather Frances
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My name is [REDACTED] and I am employed by Erewash Borough Council (the Council) as the Principal Planning Policy Officer and I make this statement on behalf of the Council in response to the concerns raised by the Coroner in his regulation 28 report.

In his report the Coroner noted that:

(5) Support or opposition from local authorities and councils will respectively increase or decrease the prospects of the risks inherent in that stretch of track being reduced. In the absence of support from local authorities and councils, Network Rail will be less likely to make an application to close or rationalise crossings along this stretch of track, given the known opposition from some persons living near, or using, the crossings. If an application is made, it will be less likely to be granted in the absence of support from the relevant local authorities and councils.

There are a number of pedestrian crossings along the section of track adjacent to the Attenborough Nature Reserve one of which, the Barton Road crossing, lies within the area of the Borough of Erewash.

In July 2015 Erewash Borough Council were consulted by Network Rail as part of that organisation's Level Crossing Closures Programme. Information shared with the Council as part of the consultation included a briefing note (**Appendix A**) explaining the conditions at the Barton Road pedestrian rail crossing whilst also providing an estimation of its daily number of users. The briefing note set out a suggested replacement for the current crossing, with the advantages and disadvantages of installing a ramp and step-style footbridge explored.

As part of the Level Crossing Closures Programme, the Council were invited to respond to Network Rail's Equality Stakeholder Engagement Topic Guide (consultants [REDACTED] had been appointed by Network Rail to undertake an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) to investigate the impact of any works affecting the crossing). On behalf of the Council, I produced the response looking at the various issues from the perspective of Planning Policy. In the Council's submission (**Appendix B**), support was demonstrated for any proposal, including a replacement footbridge, which would help to improve both the safety for crossing users as well as increased accessibility at the crossing for disabled and non-disabled users.

In light of recent events, were Network Rail to recommend the closure of the Barton Road crossing as a means of reducing/removing risks to those crossing

the railway line, Erewash Borough Council would not in principle oppose such a recommendation. However, as per the Council's submission to the aforementioned Closures Programme consultation, the installation of an accessible footbridge remains the preferable way of increasing safety at the crossing whilst continuing to allow pedestrians and cyclists to cross the line and access areas located on both sides of the railway.

Signature:

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the official.

Dated: July 1st 2021