

# Report 12/2019: Near miss with a track worker near Gatwick Airport station

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## **Summary**

At 23:24 hrs on 2 December 2018, a track worker narrowly avoided being struck by a train between Horley and Gatwick Airport stations, on the boundary between Surrey and West Sussex. The track worker, a controller of site safety (COSS), was undertaking work related to the electrical isolation of conductor rails and moved out of the path of the train just before it reached him.

[CCTV Footage of the near miss at Gatwick Airport station \(courtesy of Govia Thameslink Railway\)](#)

The Network Rail isolation planning process meant that BAM Nuttall planners lacked the information needed for them to establish the exact location at which work was to be carried out on the track. The planners lacked the skills and experience needed to understand this and so provided a system of work which provided no protection from train movements at the actual location of the task. The COSS recognised that the planned system of work lacked adequate protection from train movements, but undertook the task without implementing an alternative safe system of work. A second track worker involved in the isolation task did not challenge the COSS about the unsafe method of working. The underlying factor was that Network Rail isolation processes did not provide planners outside Network Rail with sufficient information to always be able to plan safe systems of work.

## **Recommendations**

The RAIB has recommended that Network Rail should improve its isolation planning processes so that safe system of work planners receive the information they need to plan all associated work safely. The RAIB has also recommended that BAM Nuttall should improve its safe system of work planning process to ensure that its planners do not plan work without sufficient information to identify appropriate protection measures.

The RAIB has also identified four learning points relating to working in accordance with appropriate safe systems of work, challenging unsafe work practices, planners seeking additional information when needed to plan safe systems of work and use of train horns.

## **Simon French, Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents said:**

Once again the RAIB has to report on an alarming near-miss between a train and a track worker. We have seen far too many of these incidents in recent years, and the recent tragic accidents at Stoats Nest Junction, just a few miles from Gatwick, and at Margam, which is still under investigation, are a stark reminder of how terrible the consequences of mixing trains and people can be.

When engineering work takes place on and around lines electrified on the conductor rail system, it is important that the conductor rails are isolated and earthed, to protect everyone from electrical hazards. Straps between the conductor rail and the running rail are the usual means of achieving this, although it's good to see that remote isolation devices are now being introduced at some locations. Placing and removing these straps is an important task, which can expose people to great risk if it is not planned and carried out to a high standard. In this case the plan called for some straps to be fitted on tracks outside the area protected by the possession arrangements, even though there was an alternative site available, where the straps could have been placed within the possession. The information about the alternative site was not available to the planners who needed it, and they did not identify the need for additional protection from trains when the straps were to be applied. We are recommending that Network Rail improves its processes so that all planners get the right information at the right time.

The staff who were given the defective plans did not challenge them. Having managed to place the straps without incident, they went out to remove them the next day, knowing that the straps were attached to lines outside the possession, but believing that no trains would pass by while they were doing their work. It was considered OK to take a risk to get the job done, and no-one felt able to challenge this.

We have previously recommended, in two recent reports, that Network Rail should improve the leadership skills of team leaders and supervisors. Work is being done to address this, but railway industry staff at all levels must understand the importance of good leadership: getting people to do the right thing, at the right time, all the time.

## **Notes to editors**

1. The sole purpose of RAIB investigations is to prevent future accidents and incidents and improve railway safety. RAIB does not establish blame, liability or carry out prosecutions.
2. RAIB operates, as far as possible, in an open and transparent manner. While our investigations are completely independent of the railway

industry, we do maintain close liaison with railway companies and if we discover matters that may affect the safety of the railway, we make sure that information about them is circulated to the right people as soon as possible, and certainly long before publication of our final report.

3. For media enquiries, please call 01932 440015.

**Newsdate: 26 September 2019**

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## **UN Human Rights Council 42 – UK Statement under Item 10**

The UK firmly believes that technical assistance can help States realise their human rights obligations. This is why I was delighted to be appointed the first International Ambassador for Human Rights earlier this year to further enhance and support the UK's work in this area. The broad aim of this role is to work in coordination with Ministers to strengthen the multilateral human rights system and help it deliver tangible human rights improvements globally.

The UK believes it is important to challenge States that violate human rights, but it is equally important to support States that are working to fulfil their human rights obligations. We encourage other countries to take a similar approach, and to provide political and financial support to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Turning to specific country situations, I refer to our separate statements delivered on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Ukraine.

The UK welcomes the continued co-operation between Georgia and OHCHR but remains deeply concerned that those in effective control of Abkhazia and South Ossetia refuse access to OHCHR and other human rights mechanisms. We are also concerned by civic inequality based on ethnicity and that the latest "borderisation" activities and severe restrictions on crossing regimes by the de facto authorities have further restricted freedom of movement, affecting the most vulnerable.

It was unfortunate that the Tbilisi Pride March of Dignity was cancelled due to concerns for participants' safety. We welcome Georgia's commitment to support and protect the rights of all its citizens. In Cameroon, we believe the forthcoming national dialogue must tackle the root causes of grievances in the North-West and South-West regions. We remain ready to support credible efforts towards peace.

Finally, the UK recognises the serious, unequivocal threat that climate change poses to our planet, and to the protection, strengthening, and

enjoyment of human rights. We should consider how to use this agenda item to encourage States to address climate change and its effects on the protection and enjoyment of human rights.

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## Japan Rugby World Cup: Investment in UK Housing & Regeneration

The Japan Rugby World Cup: Investment in UK Housing & Regeneration Event aims to encourage and foster positive trade relationships between both Japanese investors and British business executives with regards to international investment in UK housing.

“It gives me great pleasure to be here today at the British Embassy in Tokyo at such an exciting time for Japan and for rugby lovers around the world. My home town is birthplace of the other Rugby Code but I am sure Huddersfield will forgive me in return for the reference to a fine bit of Yorkshire.

Our delegation has only been here for a short time but we have been made to feel incredibly welcome and on behalf of my team I would like to extend our thanks to everyone who has hosted us so far for their generosity and hospitality.

It has also been good to see our friends from Sekisu House very much on their home ground and I look forward to visiting their dream factory tomorrow.

For me personally it is also great to be back here in Japan: a country I have visited previously and got to know well through my time working many years ago at the Japan Local Government Centre. It's a great shame we are not able to stay for longer to enjoy the tournament and catch up with old colleagues. Hopefully the England team won't be saying the same thing at the end of the group stages.

As Chief Executive of Homes England I think I have one of the best jobs in the Government and the private sector, working to solve one of biggest domestic challenges facing the country at the moment.

I lead an organisation of over 1,000 people who are all dedicated to increasing the pace, scale and quality of housing delivery in England.

Homes England is a relatively new agency, having only been formed in January 2018.

We were formed to address one the Government's top domestic policy priorities, fixing the housing market, which has failed to deliver enough homes for decades.

This shortage of new homes has led to high property prices and rents, and has prevented a whole generation from buying their first home.

Very simply, England needs to significantly increase the number of homes built year on year, and Homes England is tasked with ensuring more people in England have access to well-designed homes in the places they want to live.

To achieve this, Government has given us the tools to intervene in the housing market to ensure more homes are built in areas of greatest need, and to improve the affordability of housing.

Beyond getting more homes built, we are determined to create a more resilient and diverse housing market by supporting new entrants and pioneering new methods of construction.

The scale of the challenge is significant, last year in England we built just over 220,000 homes and Government has tasked us with working with the sector to build 300,000 a year.

While the challenge is significant, so are the resources Homes England has to deliver on its mission.

We expect to spend £27bn in the next five years, in addition to leveraging significant additional investment by partnering with the private sector. We already have already launched separate funds with Barclays and Lloyds and are looking for new opportunities. This is important. Homes England may be a government agency but it works primarily with and enabling private organisations.

As an organisation we have been given the remit to build significant capability. The agency is doubling in size and we now have a vastly experienced workforce from a wide range of primarily private sector backgrounds including land buyers, bankers, investors and developers. We are a in many senses private skills operating in the public sector.

And as owners of significant amounts of public sector land with land assembly powers we are well placed to act as master developer, substantially reducing the risk of new large scale housing projects for private sector partners.

This experience and resource makes us a commercially astute organisation, capable of delivering ambitious projects competently and at pace.

Put simply we are an organisation with the money, land, and powers to deliver the homes the country needs.

But in order to succeed we need partners working in construction, finance, design, development, affordable housing, local government, asset managers and all others involved in the development process to work with us.

We are well placed to introduce you to the English residential market, partner with you to unlock opportunities.

In many ways we are the Fumiaki Tanaka of the English housing market. As

scrum half, we don't kick the points or score many tries. Our role is to use our skills to bring partners into the game and present them with the opportunity to succeed.

And it's fantastic to one of these partners here today, Mr Kenta Konishi from Sekisui House UK.

Our new joint venture – HoUse – with Sekisui and regeneration specialist Urban Splash is a testament to teamwork, shared ambition and innovation.

Being part of bringing one of the world's largest and most innovative housebuilders to the UK is a matter of immense pride for all of us at Homes England.

They have a proven track record of delivery quality homes at scale, having built nearly 5% of all the homes delivered across Japan last year.

This ability to deliver at scale and their expertise in modern methods of construction makes them a superb addition to the English housing market.

We are greatly looking forward to seeing House's first development at our new town in Northstowe, the biggest new town in England for over 50 years.

To date, Homes England has made great progress. In October 2018 we published our Strategic Plan setting out the steps we will take with the industry to respond to the long-term housing challenges facing the country.

In the last financial year we directly supported the completion of over 40,000 new homes and unlocked land with capacity for 35,500 homes, but there is still much to do, and to achieve our goals we need ambitious partners.

Others will speak in more detail about the range of investment opportunities the UK residential market has to offer.

I will say though that Homes England is actively working to build our investment pipeline in partnership with developers and asset managers with strong equity raising and development delivery capabilities.

This work is crucial if we are to achieve our objective of diversifying the housing market.

We are already supporting the growing Build to Rent sector via our cornerstone investment in PRS REIT's £250 million IPO and we are working to further develop our equity investment capabilities.

As with Build to Rent, supporting new homes for people of specific demographics is an important part of diversifying the market.

A lack of high quality homes for older people to downsize in to leaves these people stuck in large properties that would be perfect for new families.

As a result the growing capacity of the care home and retirement village sector to provide well designed homes with excellent amenities to suit the

needs of an ageing population is fundamental to a functioning housing market.

Just as we need to diversify what we build, we need to diversify how we build, and for Homes England, embracing new technology and new methods of construction is vital to getting homes built at the pace and quality we want to see.

If you'll forgive another rugby analogy, England's Rugby World Cup winning coach Sir Clive Woodward was famously mocked by the media for buying each of his players a laptop in the build up to their ultimately successful World Cup challenge in 2003.

However he understood the importance of technology in getting the best out of his players. The team used this technology to analyse their performance and the games of their opponents in incredible detail which gave them an on field advantage. His mantra was "whoever wins in IT tends to win".

I think this is as good a lesson for the housing sector as it is for the world of sport.

Productivity and innovation growth in the UK construction sector has been low for the past 25 years and continues to lag behind the UK economy as a whole and the UK construction workforce is ageing.

Based on current entrant and exit rates, the construction sector could shrink up to a quarter by 2026.

However we know that if we keep building in the way we do at the moment, we will only hit our target if the construction workforce expanded by 40%

If Homes England is to achieve its objectives, we need to seriously shake up how we build homes in England by increasing the capacity of the off-site manufacturing industry, using our land and investment capabilities to push the sector to incorporate greater use of Modern Methods of Construction, as well as support the sector to test and learn about new technologies.

Homes England is actively supporting MMC across our land and investment interventions and is looking to do more in this space.

Bringing Sekisui to the UK is a key part of this.

Looking ahead, acting as master developer on a greater number large strategic developments will give Homes England even greater power in the market to drive the use of modern methods of construction, new technologies of all kinds, as well as ensure high quality design and sustainable homes.

But as I've said, in order to change the housing market and get homes built and build the homes we need the support of new ambitious partners who support our objectives and want to work with us.

My hope is that our visit to Japan has helped to strengthen existing relationships and will be the catalyst for new ones.

I wish the Cherry Blossoms the very best of luck in the tournament and thank you again for your hospitality, I now need my team to find a French company we can partner with so we can be sure of a trip to the next World Cup in France.”

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## **Research and analysis: The future farming and environment evidence compendium – historical editions**

Previously published editions of the evidence compendium.

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## **Research and analysis: The future farming and environment evidence compendium – latest edition**

This compendium brings together existing statistics on agriculture to summarise the current state of the agricultural industry in the United Kingdom.