

ISLE OF MAN TT RACES SIDE CAR SUSTAINABILITY



FIRST STAGE REPORT

PROCESS, FINDINGS AND PHASED RETURN PROGRAMME

This report concludes the initial evidence-gathering phase and sets out a proposed phased pathway for further work towards TT 2027 and beyond.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The first stage of the TT Sidecar Sustainability Review has identified strong support for retaining Sidecar racing at the Isle of Man TT, but not for a simple return to the previous model.

The Review was established following the suspension of the Sidecar class during TT 2026. It was deliberately framed as a sustainability review rather than a narrowly defined safety or technical review. Its purpose has been to consider the future of the class across risk, sporting health, technical development, competitor standards, affordability, commercial relevance and alignment with the wider direction of the TT.

The initial evidence-gathering phase comprised a public call for evidence, a Competitor Panel, an Organisational Panel and a Technical Panel. Together, these strands provide a substantial and varied evidence base. Although the emphasis differed between groups, the evidence shows a clear progression towards a shared position.

- The public evidence strongly supports retention, but generally on the basis of meaningful reform;
- The Competitor Panel accepted that the class is at a crossroads and that the future cannot simply replicate the past;
- The Organisational Panel concluded that the current model faces interconnected and significant long-term challenges;
- The Technical Panel identified a credible direction based on lower speed, improved stability, reduced complexity, stronger control and better enforceability.

FIRST-STAGE CONCLUSION

The Review has identified a credible pathway for Sidecar racing to return to the Isle of Man TT in 2027, subject to the successful development and implementation of an initial risk-reduction package. The immediate priority is to convert the emerging technical philosophy into a practical, measurable and enforceable TT 2027 specification.

Any future TT 2027 package should prioritise significant speed reduction, stronger control of engine performance, improved chassis assurance, clearer bodywork and rescue-access requirements, enhanced scrutineering and appropriate competitor standards. It should focus first on interventions that can be implemented and verified within the available timeframe.

Longer-term engineering work, including detailed aerodynamic research, CAD modelling, future chassis concepts and broader vehicle-dynamics analysis, should continue in parallel and inform the next generation of regulations. This work is important, but it is not considered a prerequisite to a controlled return in 2027.

2. STATUS AND PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This is a first-stage report. It records the process undertaken, synthesises the evidence gathered to date and sets out the emerging direction, proposed TT 2027 programme and longer-term work.

This is not a final technical rulebook, incident investigation or decision on the future of the Sidecar class. It concludes the evidence-gathering phase of the Review and establishes an evidence base from which future decisions can be made. The report identifies a potential technical direction and a programme of further work, but recognises that these findings must be considered alongside the wider responsibilities of the Event Promoter and Race Organiser, including governance, operational resilience, commercial considerations and strategic priorities, before any final decision is taken.

The report provides a transparent bridge between the initial review process and delivery. It demonstrates how stakeholder evidence has informed both the proposed TT 2027 package and the longer-term programme of technical evolution.

3.BACKGROUND TO THE REVIEW

The Sidecar class was suspended for the remainder of TT 2026 following a serious incident during qualifying. The immediate circumstances provided the catalyst for the Review, but the scope was intentionally broader than any single incident.

- **Risk:** Whether the class can operate within a risk profile that is understood, reduced where reasonably practicable and defensible.
- **Sustainability:** whether participation, affordability, access to machinery and the wider competitor pathway can support meaningful racing.
- **Future direction:** whether the class can align with the increasingly professional, evidence-led and internationally visible direction of the Isle of Man TT.

The Review was also intended to fill the immediate information vacuum with a clear process, provide stakeholders with a meaningful opportunity to contribute, and avoid a premature binary choice between an unchanged return and permanent removal.

4. SCOPE AND METHOD

The first stage used a structured but proportionate evidence-gathering process, combining quantitative information, qualitative submissions and facilitated panel discussions.

The following principles guided the process:

- The Review considered the long-term future of the class rather than seeking to attribute responsibility for individual incidents;
- No technical solution was predetermined;
- The status quo was not treated as the default outcome;
- Evidence from interested parties was considered alongside the duties and professional judgement of the Race Organisation;
- Panel reports recorded themes and areas of consensus rather than producing verbatim minutes;
- Detailed regulations were deliberately deferred until an overall technical philosophy had been established.

LIMITATIONS

The public submissions were voluntary and self-selected and should not be interpreted as a representative opinion poll. The panel discussions were advisory and did not constitute formal decision-making bodies. Some technical proposals remain hypotheses requiring engineering validation. Incident and participation data also require continued refinement and transparent explanation.

5. EVIDENCE GATHERED

5.1 Public Evidence Submissions

The public call for evidence generated 472 records. After excluding blank records and exact duplicate text, the thematic analysis considered 465 unique substantive submissions. The responses ranged from short expressions of support to detailed technical papers.

The strongest themes were safety and risk; spectator and tourism impact; heritage and uniqueness; aerodynamics and bodywork; engine performance and control; affordability; participation; sporting format; chassis and stability; professionalism; and the need for evidence and specialist expertise.

5.2 Competitor Panel

The Competitor Panel brought together a cross-section of current competitors representing different levels of experience, competitiveness and background. The session tested the evidence directly with those most affected by any future change.

Competitors challenged aspects of the risk methodology but did not argue that risk should be ignored. The panel showed a willingness to consider revised technical regulations, qualification standards, different sporting formats and broader cultural change.

The Panel consisted of:

- Andy King	TT Competitor
- Ben Birchall	TT Competitor
- Bruce Moore	TT Competitor
- Eric Lenser	TT Competitor
- Lee Crawford	TT Competitor
- Pete Founds	TT Competitor
- Ryan Crowe	TT Competitor
- Steve Kershaw	TT Competitor
- Todd Ellis	TT Competitor
- Wayne Lockey	TT Competitor

5.3 Organisational Panel

The Organisational Panel brought together sporting, operational, medical, technical, marshalling and commercial perspectives. The discussion focused on what the Race Organisation could responsibly and defensibly support.

The panel demonstrated a high degree of consensus that incremental change was unlikely to be sufficient. It also introduced additional considerations around medical and physiological capability, rescue access, professionalism, governance and commercial sustainability.

The Panel consisted of:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| - Gary Thompson MBE BEM | TT Clerk of the Course, ACU Events Ltd |
| - Ed Wilson | Head of Sport, Department for Enterprise, Motorsport Team |
| - Stephen Garrett | Marketing Manager, Department for Enterprise, Motorsport Team |
| - Dr. Paul Hancock | TT Deputy Chief Medical Officer, MRMS |
| - Andy Priestley | Chief Marshal and Chairman, TTMA |
| - Trevor Denning | TT Chief Technical Officer, ACU Events Ltd |

5.4 Technical Panel

The Technical Panel included expertise in technical regulation, TT competition, chassis construction, engineering and aerodynamics. Its purpose was not to draft regulations, but to determine whether a credible technical direction could be identified.

The panel broadly supported a philosophy of lower speed, reduced complexity, increased or better-controlled weight, improved stability, stronger chassis and bodywork standards, closer performance parity and regulations that can be policed effectively.

The Panel consisted of:

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| - Dave Hagen | TT Technical Director, ACU Events Ltd |
| - Dave Molyneux | TT Sidecar Liaison Officer, ACU Events Ltd, and DMR |
| - Louis Christen | LCR Engineering |
| - Adam Christie | CES Performance |
| - Sam Christie | CES Performance |
| - Willem Toet | Sauber Technologies |

6. SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE

6.1 Public Evidence

Public submissions demonstrated a strong emotional, cultural and sporting attachment to the class. Sidecars were repeatedly described as distinctive, historic and irreplaceable. However, the more substantive submissions generally coupled support for retention with a clear expectation of reform.

Aerodynamics and bodywork were the leading technical concerns, followed closely by engine performance, cost and enforceability. There was no proven consensus on the direct cause of recent incidents, and many respondents called for independent technical analysis before longer-term rules are finalised.

6.2 Competitor Evidence

The Competitor Panel accepted that participation and recruitment are under pressure and that expectations of the TT have changed. It also recognised that poor behaviour or presentation by a small number of individuals can affect perceptions of the entire class.

Competitors emphasised that technical change must be evidence-led, affordable and compatible with the wider sporting pathway. There was no single preferred technical solution and mixed views remained around formal fitness assessment.

6.3 Organisational Evidence

The Organisational Panel viewed the issues as interconnected. Higher incident exposure, declining participation, an ageing profile in parts of the field, passenger recruitment, increasing performance and changing public expectations were seen as elements of one broader challenge.

The panel also noted that commercial demand and audience engagement for the class are materially lower than for the leading Solo classes. Commercial performance was not considered determinative, but it was recognised as part of the sustainability assessment.

6.4 Technical Evidence

The Technical Panel moved the Review from identifying problems towards defining a possible solution. Its core proposition was that the future class should be slower, stronger, more stable, less complex and more tightly controlled.

A target in the region of 95-100 horsepower was discussed as a potentially appropriate starting point, but the panel cautioned against treating horsepower in isolation. Top speed, weight, aerodynamic behaviour, chassis geometry, vehicle dynamics and enforceability interact and must be considered as a complete package.

The panel also highlighted chassis age, repair history and certification; bodywork and rescue access; fluid containment; aerodynamic research; standard or production-based engines; controlled ECUs; and the need for a documented technical history for each chassis.

7. CROSS-CUTTING FINDINGS

Finding 1: Sidecars remain valued and distinctive

Across the public evidence and both non-technical panels, there is clear recognition that Sidecars make a distinctive contribution to the TT. Their heritage, two-person dynamic, specialist machinery and visual spectacle provide value that cannot be replicated.

Finding 2: Support for retention is conditional

The evidence does not amount to a mandate for an unchanged return. The dominant position is support for retention if a credible, meaningful and sustainable reform package can be developed.

Finding 3: The current model faces a combination of long-term challenges

Risk, declining participation, affordability, technical escalation, uneven professionalism, limited commercial demand and the wider direction of the TT are interconnected. Addressing only one element is unlikely to create a sustainable outcome.

Finding 4: Minor adjustment is unlikely to be sufficient

The evidence points away from isolated or cosmetic adjustment. The immediate TT 2027 package should combine several mutually reinforcing interventions, led by material speed reduction, stronger technical control, chassis assurance, enhanced scrutineering and improved competitor standards. This should form the first phase of a wider reset rather than another temporary restriction.

Finding 5: A credible technical direction has emerged

The Technical Panel identified a viable philosophy rather than a final specification: reduce speed; improve stability; increase strength; simplify the package; control costly development; improve parity; and make compliance measurable and enforceable.

Finding 6: Top speed and overall performance require active control

Top speed was repeatedly identified as a major concern. However, power alone is not an adequate control mechanism. The future performance envelope must consider power, weight, drag, downforce, gearing, stability and the capacity of competitors to develop around restrictions.

Finding 7: Aerodynamics require research, not assumption

Aerodynamic behaviour is a legitimate concern, particularly on the unique undulations of the TT Course. The Review has not established that one component or concept is the sole cause of recent incidents. Immediate 2027 bodywork controls should therefore be proportionate and practical, while CAD, simulation and physical testing are developed as part of the longer-term programme.

Finding 8: Affordability and transition are central

A technically ideal formula that removes most of the existing field would not be sustainable. Equally, preserving existing investment cannot justify an inadequate safety or regulatory framework. Cost modelling, supply-chain analysis and realistic transition arrangements are therefore essential.

Finding 9: Technical change alone will not be enough

Competitor standards, medical and physiological capability, qualification, recent activity, presentation, behaviour, sporting format and the wider pathway require parallel work.

Finding 10: The TT can provide leadership, but should work with the wider sport

The TT occupies a unique position and can establish a new benchmark. Long-term participation will be stronger if the future formula is developed with the ACU, national promoters, constructors and competitors and can be used beyond the TT wherever practicable.

8. EMERGING TECHNICAL PHILOSOPHY

CORE OBJECTIVE

The objective is not to build the fastest Sidecar class possible. It is to build the most sustainable Sidecar class possible.

A future TT Sidecar class should deliver close, competitive and spectacular racing within a significantly more controlled technical framework. It should prioritise stability, predictability, controllability, strength and rescue access over absolute performance.

The future formula should be:

- **Safer:** addressing identifiable technical and operational risks through evidence.
- **Slower where necessary:** reducing top speed and performance escalation without removing the essential spectacle.
- **More stable:** controlling aerodynamic and dynamic characteristics appropriate to the TT Course.
- **Stronger:** improving chassis standards, repair assurance, bodywork integrity and occupant protection.
- **Simpler:** reducing unnecessary technical complexity and opportunities to circumvent the intent of the regulations.
- **More affordable:** using accessible components and limiting costly bespoke development.
- **Fairer:** improving parity and producing closer competition across the field.
- **Enforceable:** setting objective, measurable rules that can be consistently scrutineered.
- **Compatible:** supporting the wider competitor pathway and avoiding TT-only machinery wherever reasonably practicable.
- **Distinctive:** retaining the two-person skill, engineering character and spectacle that define Sidecar racing.

POTENTIAL TECHNICAL WORK AREAS

- **Performance envelope:** target power, top speed, acceleration and lap-performance characteristics.
- **Powertrain:** production-based engines, engine availability, control ECU, rev limits, gearing and methods of verification.
- **Aerodynamics and bodywork:** immediate dimensional and access controls, followed by longer-term floors, undertrays, lift, downforce and pressure-management research.
- **Chassis:** material standards, minimum specifications, age and repair history, non-destructive testing and certification.
- **Weight and balance:** minimum weight, distribution and interaction with stability and tyre loading.
- **Safety systems:** fluid containment, fuel and oil systems, fire risk, occupant extraction and marshal/medical access.
- **Technical governance:** homologation, fixed regulatory cycles, component sealing, dyno or other verification and data records.

9. MATTERS TO BE FINALISED FOR TT 2027

The first stage has established the direction of travel. The following matters must now be finalised through the TT 2027 delivery programme:

- the precise engine-control method, power range and top-speed objective;
- the detailed gearing, weight and verification controls required to support speed reduction;
- the chassis inspection, repair-certification and documentary requirements for existing machinery;
- the immediate bodywork, fluid-containment and rescue-access requirements;
- the cost of transition, component availability and the number of teams likely to comply;
- the final sporting format, qualification requirements and race exposure;
- the medical, fitness, recent-activity and competitor-standard framework;
- the governance arrangements for developing, approving, enforcing and reviewing the regulations;
- the scale and timing of longer-term aerodynamic and vehicle-dynamics work.

These are delivery questions rather than reasons to defer action. They should be resolved to a defined timetable so competitors and constructors receive sufficient certainty and preparation time.

10. NEXT STAGE OF THE REVIEW

The publication of this report concludes the evidence-gathering phase of the Review.

The next stage will develop the technical proposals identified within this report while assessing them against the wider responsibilities of the Event Promoter and Race Organiser, including governance, operational capacity, resource allocation and strategic objectives.

No decision regarding the future participation of the Sidecar class will be taken until this further work has been completed.

However, the findings of this Review indicate that a controlled return of the Sidecar class at TT 2027 appears achievable, subject to the successful completion of further technical, operational and governance work.

The TT organisation will now progress that work with the objective of reaching a final decision during autumn 2026.

11. A PHASED PROGRAMME OF CHANGE

The Review recommends a phased programme that separates the interventions required to support a controlled return at TT 2027 from the deeper engineering work needed to shape the long-term future of the class.

11.1 Phase One - Immediate Intervention for TT 2027

The immediate objective is to deliver a practical, measurable and enforceable package that materially reduces performance and improves assurance without waiting for every longer-term engineering question to be resolved.

The TT 2027 package should focus on:

- a significant reduction in engine performance and top speed;
- a more tightly controlled engine specification, using a control ECU, restrictor, rev limit or equivalent mechanism;
- gearing controls where required to reinforce the speed objective;
- minimum weight and other straightforward stability measures;
- basic bodywork and dimensional controls, including improved access for marshals and medical personnel;
- retention and strengthening of effective fluid-containment requirements;
- chassis inspection, repair certification and a documented technical history;
- enhanced scrutineering, verification and compliance procedures;
- stronger qualification, recent-activity, medical and professional standards.

11.2 Phase Two - Technical Evolution

From 2027 onwards, the Review should continue a deeper programme of engineering and regulatory development. This should include CAD and aerodynamic modelling, vehicle-dynamics analysis, future chassis architecture, homologated bodywork, alternative engine packages and closer alignment with the wider Sidecar sport.

11.3 Phase Three - Continuous Improvement

The future class should be governed through a planned cycle of review using incident data, technical evidence, competitor feedback, sporting health, participation and commercial performance. Regulations should be stable enough to support investment but capable of evidence-led improvement.

11.4 Delivery Principle

Return through controlled intervention in 2027; transform through evidence-led development thereafter.

12. INDICATIVE PROGRAMME FOR FURTHER WORK

The following programme illustrates how the next phase of the Review could be progressed. It is indicative and assumes that the technical and governance workstreams continue to support the development of a future Sidecar package.

Period	Activity	Output / Decision
By 1 Aug 2026	Publish this report and four supporting evidence reports.	Evidence-gathering phase complete.
Early Aug 2026	Establish a focused TT 2027 Technical Development Group; agree design brief, decision rights and work programme.	Draft implementation package and sporting direction.
Aug 2026	Develop the initial package covering performance reduction, engine control, gearing, weight, chassis assurance, bodywork, fluid containment, rescue access, scrutineering and competitor standards.	Draft TT 2027 technical and sporting direction.
Sep 2026	Undertake targeted consultation with competitors, constructors, the ACU, promoters and technical and medical specialists.	Refined package, cost assessment, component availability and likely grid impact.
By early Oct 2026	Complete technical appraisal and formal internal gateway review.	Recommendation on whether a defensible TT2027 package should proceed to final approval.
By end Oct 2026	Approve the TT 2027 package and communicate the final technical direction.	Competitors and constructors receive firm preparation requirements.
By end Nov 2026	Publish final TT 2027 regulations, guidance, certification requirements and scrutineering procedures.	Minimum six-month preparation period before TT 2027.
Dec 2026-Feb 2027	Support construction and conversion; establish chassis certification, technical-query process, control-component supply and intended-entry register.	Machines and teams progress towards compliance.
Feb-Mar 2027	Undertake pre-season documentation, chassis and engine verification, with dyno or other checks where practicable.	Early identification of compliance and reliability issues.
Mar-Apr 2027	Use appropriate testing or competition opportunities to assess speeds, parity, reliability and enforcement.	Final minor corrective changes where justified.
Apr 2027	Complete final readiness review across technical, sporting, medical and operational workstreams.	Confirmation of controlled return at TT 2027.
TT 2027	Deliver Sidecar qualifying and racing under the new package, with enhanced technical checks and post-session review.	Phase One implemented and evidence gathered.
Jul 2027 onwards	Continue CAD, aerodynamic, chassis and long-term formula development and complete a formal post-TT review.	Phase Two regulations and continuous-improvement programme.

13. LONGER-TERM TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT

The immediate TT 2027 package should not be presented as the final technical destination. It is the first intervention within a multi-year programme intended to create a more stable, affordable and sustainable class.

The longer-term programme should include:

- baseline CAD and aerodynamic analysis of representative outfits;
- research into lift, downforce, pitch sensitivity and stability on TT-relevant road profiles;
- future chassis and bodywork standards, including homologation options;
- continued appraisal of engine availability and future production-based powertrains;
- long-term weight, balance and vehicle-dynamics development;
- alignment with the ACU, national promoters, constructors and the wider competitor pathway;
- a formal review of TT 2027 data before further regulatory change.

The deeper engineering work should begin during the TT 2027 delivery programme but should not delay the practical interventions already identified as achievable for the next event.

14. GOVERNANCE AND REPORTING

The Event Promoter and Race Organisation should jointly own the process, with technical recommendations developed through the Technical Development Group and formally considered through established sporting and governmental structures.

The governance model should include:

- a named chair and project lead;
- documented terms of reference and decision rights;
- a single evidence and data repository;
- recorded assumptions, tests and reasons for decisions;
- management of conflicts of interest;
- regular reporting to the Race Organisation and Event Promoter;
- clear engagement with the ACU and wider Sidecar sport;
- publication of major decisions and the evidence supporting them.

The Review should retain a clear distinction between consultation, technical advice and formal decision-making. This will help ensure that final decisions are transparent, accountable and defensible.

15. CONCLUSION

The first stage of the TT Sidecar Sustainability Review has been completed within the timetable announced after TT 2026. It has gathered substantial public evidence and brought together competitors, the Race Organisation and technical specialists.

The process has not produced a simplistic answer, but it has established a clear direction. Sidecar racing remains valued. The current model cannot simply be reinstated without addressing the issues identified. Meaningful reform is expected, and a credible technical philosophy has emerged.

The next stage of the Review is to assess whether that technical direction can be translated into a practical, proportionate and defensible package for TT 2027. This will include the further technical, operational and governance work identified within this report before any final decision on the future of the Sidecar class is taken.

Should that work demonstrate that the necessary conditions can be met, the objective will be to implement a controlled return at TT 2027, alongside a longer-term programme of technical evolution and continuous improvement.

Appendix A: Supporting Reports

- [Public Evidence Submissions - Thematic Analysis](#)
- [Competitor Panel Report - 30 June 2026](#)
- [Organisational Panel Report - 13 July 2026](#)
- [Technical Panel Report - 28 July 2026](#)

Appendix B: Proposed Delivery and Development Workstreams

Workstream	Scope
TT 2027 performance package	Power reduction, engine control, gearing, weight, top-speed objective and parity.
Chassis and bodywork assurance	Inspection, repair certification, documentary history, fluid containment and rescue access.
Sporting and competitor standards	Qualification, recent activity, medical/fitness, professionalism and controlled race format.
Regulation and enforcement	Final regulations, sealing, verification, scrutineering, guidance and compliance records.
Cost and participation	Conversion costs, supply chain, lead time, grid impact and support for existing teams.
Long-term technical evolution	CAD, aerodynamics, vehicle dynamics, future chassis/bodywork and future engine formula.