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west midlands
police and crime
commissioner

M6 HEARING – ORIGINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the serious incident and disruption of 4th February 2016, the Police and Crime Commissioner organised a public hearing held on 18th March 2016. The following eleven recommendations were agreed at the hearing:

1. West Midlands Police / CMPG (Central Motorway Patrol Group) are recommended to review protocols for informing Highways England of potential large diesel and petrol spillages.
2. West Midlands Police / CMPG and Highways England are recommended to review Senior Investigating Officer protocols for Highways England to access incident sites to allow assessment of the condition of the carriageway and likely repairs, before the end of the investigative phase.
3. West Midlands Police / CMPG, Highways England and local authorities are recommended to agree a programme of exercises to plan for unplanned motorway closures, with particular emphasis on understanding the consequences of four-lane running and the likely scale of roadworks associated with HS2 construction, and with the specific intention of developing a major incident response plan for the "Birmingham Box".
4. West Midlands Police / CMPG, Highways England and local authorities are recommended to review their protocols for declaring a "major incident".
5. West Midlands Police / CMPG, Highways England and local authorities are recommended to consider the creation of a graded incident scale that allows for mobilisation of responses by the respective agencies that are proportionate to the scale of an incident on the motorway.
6. Highways England and local authorities are recommended to review their protocols for activating local authority out-of-hours traffic management capabilities in the aftermath of significant incidents.
7. Highways England are recommended to develop and implement collaboration agreements with local authorities for the shared response to significant incidents on the motorway network.
8. Highways England, West Midlands Combined Authority and the Department for Transport are recommended to renegotiate the criteria for activation of "Operation Freeway" to:
 - Lower the thresholds for activation of Operation Freeway.

- Devolve decision-making to the West Midlands Metro Mayor in consultation with Highways England, West Midlands Police and local authorities.
 - Review how the M6 (Toll) might be more effectively integrated into the response to significant incidents on the motorway network.
9. Highways England is recommended to review its operational command arrangements for significant incidents to ensure there is clarity on roles, responsibilities and delegated authorities.
 10. All agencies should immediately examine their response to risks to the welfare of those trapped in vehicles and develop a plan to provide rapid assistance to vulnerable people.
 11. West Midlands Combined Authority is recommended to convene within six months a follow up event for West Midlands Police / CMPG, Highways England and local authorities to consider progress against these recommendations.