



M6 Follow Up Hearing – 20th December 2016

Central Motorway Police Group Briefing Paper

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide a short briefing to the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner on the progress of recommendations made at the M6 Public Hearing made in March 2016.

2. Original Incident Update – (Please treat as confidential)

2.1 Summary: At 01:50 hours on Thursday 4th February 2016 a road traffic collision occurred on the north bound carriageway of the M6 motorway roughly adjacent to the Fort shopping Centre. The collision occurred when a black Saab 93 was in collision with the rear of a [REDACTED] LGV [REDACTED]. As a result of the collision the driver of the Saab sustained fatal injuries and was declared deceased at the scene.

CCTV evidence was interrogated and the Saab was found to be travelling at high speed prior to the collision [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

2.6 The matter was reviewed by the SIO, PS 2845 Paul Hughes and the head of the Collision Investigation Unit, Inspector Paul Talbot. Both agreed that the cause of this collision was the excess speed and intoxication on the part of the deceased Saab driver and that there would be no prosecution against any other driver.

2.7 An inquest into the death of the Saab driver was held on 12th September 2016 at Birmingham Coroners Court. A verdict of death by road traffic collision and intoxication was recorded.

3.0 Updates on recommendations 1-5

3.1 The following recommendations were made in relation to CPMG and West Midlands Police following the Police and Crime Commissioners M6 Public Hearing in March 2016. Updates on progress are shown below each recommendation:

3.2 Recommendation 1 - CPMG to review their protocols for informing Highways England of any kind of spillage on the carriageway at collision sites.

The following has now been adopted as professional practice.

When in attendance at the scene of a road traffic collision, once officers have identified any contaminant or foreign body (E.g. Diesel, Petrol, Haz Chem) present on the carriageway, the senior investigating officer or senior officer present must immediately report via personal radio to MA control. This update must include the location, suspected substance, size of leakage and potential damage caused to the road surface.

Once in receipt of this information the control staff must ensure that it is recorded on the command and control log including the reporting officer's details.

It is then the responsibility of the control room supervisor to report this information direct to Highways England without delay. All recorded information must be passed and the receiving Highways representative details recorded. Once complete an entry must be recorded on the command and control log confirming the transfer of information.

3.3 Recommendation 2 - CMPG to review their procedures for allowing early access to collisions sites by HE or other agencies in order to assess the extent of a spillage or damage that would require attention before the road could reopen.

The following has now been adopted as professional practice.

Following a road traffic collision which has resulted in a full or part closure of the carriageway, if it is determined that the road surface or street furniture has sustained damage as a result of the collision, this includes spillages; consideration must be given by the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) to allow supervised access for Highways England staff or their representatives to assess the scene and potential damage sustained to the carriageway prior to the end phase of the investigation.

The decision for supervised access will be a formal agreement unless the attending SIO identifies concerns surrounding the safety or graphic nature of the scene. In this circumstance the attending Highways representative will be informed of the concern and will be asked to confirm they accept the circumstances. If agreed then supervised access will be granted, a record of this conversation must be recorded on the command and control log.

If this is not agreed or the SIO feels that the granting of access will be harmful to the individual then the justification must be recorded on the command and control log. The facts of the scene and potential damage sustained to the carriageway must then verbally be relayed to the Highway representative, this must include an assessment of when the danger or hazards will be removed from the scene and access will be allowed in the future.

The Highways representative must report to the cordon, officers will inform control of their attendance at the scene and await direction from the SIO at the scene. Access will then be allowed, subject to above agreement, into the collision site where they will be met by an officer and provided with supervised access.

During any scene visit the Highways representatives details must be recorded on the incident log prior to access to the scene. Access will be granted under supervision to remove the risk of contamination of evidence. During this visit no photographs may be taken and no social media updates must take place as a result of information gained from this access. This is to control media exposure to prevent distress being caused to the victims' families and contamination of witnesses from media exposure. Once complete the Highways representative must report to the scene logging officer and ensure that they are recorded on the scene log as leaving the scene.

No responsibility for the health and safety of the Highways representative is accepted by Central Motorway Police Group during their attendance within the cordon; all representatives must be in possession of fluorescent jacket and make their own risk assessment during attendance.

3.4 Recommendation 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 road works associated with HS2 construction, and with the specific intention of developing a major incident response plan for the "Birmingham Box"

This recommendation was led by Highways England, as such a full update is available from Highways England.

Since February CMPG and WMP have taken part in a pre-planned severe weather exercise which tested the multi-agency response to test multi agency communication and collaboration. Although aimed at the disruption caused by severe weather, with approximately 100 representatives in attendance it provided a good opportunity to test plans.

A full debrief is being prepared. However some opportunities for learning are acknowledged and on that basis it is my understanding that Highways England are planning a further exercise which will further inform the direction of travel for additional multi agency training and exercising.

Locally, the CMPG training officer attended a Highways England led training input on All Lane Running (ALR) sections of motorway in October 2016. The learning from this input was shaped into a similar input with a police focus and was delivered to CMPG and Roads Policing officers on unit training days during November and December of 2016. This has also been incorporated into the Group's two day motorway safety training course that is undertaken by all new joiners to the department.

On 1st October 2016, officers from the CMPG took part in a multi-agency exercise hosted by Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service at Moreton in Marsh. The exercise was based on a multiple vehicle road traffic collision on a section of motorway and included representatives from Highways England, West Mercia Constabulary CMPG Collision Investigation Unit and the Ambulance Service

The scenario started as a small scale initial incident resulting in a car fire and escalated into 40 vehicles becoming involved including a school bus of children, HGV's and a van simulating a potential chemical spill. This exercise was very much centred on the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) doctrine and proved a useful undertaking to put the theory into practice.

3.5 Recommendation 4 - West Midlands Police / CMPG, Highways England and local authorities are recommended to review their protocols for declaring a "major incident"

This recommendation was led by Highways England, as such a full update is available from Highways England.

The Major Incident definition has recently been amended by the Cabinet Office:

"An event or situation, with a range of serious consequences, which requires special arrangements to be implemented by one or more emergency responder agencies."

This definition has been adopted by all partners for common understanding. This new definition could potentially see more 'Standby' activations.

West Midlands Police Emergency Planning team are in discussion with the force Learning and Development department to deliver new major incident training.

The Highways England Crisis Management Manual has been shared with CMPG / WMP. All CMPG supervisors have received a copy.

WMP are in the process of reviewing and updating contingency plans which will reflect the amended definition and the review will include activation and declaration processes.

3.6 Recommendation 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

This recommendation was led by Highways England, as such a full update is available from Highways England.

Both Highways England and West Midlands Police have comprehensive incident grading systems already in place. These have been shared across both organisations.

The changes to incident access and reporting to Highways England by CMPG already explained above, along with the application of Joint Emergency Services Principles (JESIP) for incident management means there are already well established incident grading processes, which when communication between partners is effective means there is no requirement to introduce an additional grading scale.

4.0 Additional Questions Posed by the Police and Crime Commissioner

4.1 What is different from 4th February 2016 to now?

This report sets out changes to our collaborative approach with regards to incident management on the motorway network. There are operational examples of how more effective information since February 2016 has improved incident management.

- Severe vehicle fire on the M6 northbound at junction 7 where three out of four lanes were compromised and required resurfacing, the decision was taken to remove the surface from all four lanes, which allowed the public to travel through the area and resurfacing commenced as soon as the evening peak had ceased.
- Fatal RTC near to junction 10A M6 north resulting in damage to street furniture and a requirement to remove an HGV which had left the carriageway

Both incidents required the scene access processes to be implemented as described in recommendations 1 and 2.

4.2 How do we continue to build on this progress and improve our response to major incidents?

Structured multi-agency debriefs must occur to capture learning after significant events. All opportunities for learning should be taken prior to a major incident occurring. Therefore I would recommend all agencies meet but on a quarterly basis to ensure new processes are working at an operational level for all incidents, not just significant events.

An agreement to work towards all agencies applying the Joint Emergency Services Principles is helpful, as Highways England and Kier were not initially included in the JESIP doctrine there may be an opportunity to bring them on board with some local training.

4.3 Do you perceive any impediments to progress on collaboration?

The biggest challenge remains that of public welfare during significant incidents on the motorway network. The nature of West Midlands motorways means they weave through more than one Local Authority area, often over relatively short distances meaning that a comprehensive and fully joined up response, outside of a major incident, across a number of Local Authority areas is likely to be a challenge.

4.4 Do you have a view as to where responsibility for traffic management during responses should lie in the future?

Dealing with incidents on our roads places a huge span of responsibility across blue light and other agencies, very much dependent on the scale and nature of the incident.

Initial attendance is usually a police, fire and ambulance matter, with the emphasis on saving life and preventing incident escalation. The exception to this is vehicle breakdowns and non-injury road traffic collisions, which can often involve multiple vehicles and still cause significant disruption to major roads and motorways. These matters are generally managed by Highways England on the strategic road network.

More significant incidents involving injury or death are those likely to involve more than one agency and they will go through numerous phases requiring more or less input from each partner as the incident progresses. Traffic management therefore really depends on the scale and location of the incident.

The key to ensuring the management and handover of incidents is good communication between all partners from the outset. The processes now adopted in response to recommendations 1 and 2 have seen communication and scene access improved to enable on-going incident and traffic management to be as informed as possible, outside of Major Incident plans.

Moving forward the creation of the Combined Authority may present opportunities to consider transport more strategically and therefore provide a co-ordinated multi agency response to all incidents not just significant or major incidents.

Superintendent Dean Hatton
Head of CMPG

