

Questions – Hearing in Public into the Aftermath of the Incident on the M6 Motorway on Thursday 4th February 2016

List of potential questions to be asked by the PCC and the SPCB to the representatives of the relevant authorities on Friday 18 March 2016.

Questions for West Midlands Police

- Is there a planning protocol in place for West Midlands Police to deal with incidents such as the one on Thursday 4 Feb? And if so, does this involve joint working with Highways England and other relevant local authorities?
- If these plans are in place, are they routinely tested?
- At what time were Highways England contacted about the incident on the M6, and what time did they arrive?
- What accessibility do partner agencies have to the scene of an incident such as this whilst forensic investigation was underway (ie. Could Highways England Officers access and assess the scene to see what repair work needed to be done?)
- Who manages the closing of the Motorway and diversion of traffic whilst West Midlands Police are in control of the scene?
- What other duties did Highways England Officers perform whilst West Midlands Police were in control of the scene?
- In the event that an incident such as this may have taken place in more extreme weather what provisions have been made by West Midlands Police?
- During the period that West Midlands Police were in control of the scene did they make contact with local authorities to notify them of the incident and to arrange for any diversions to be made for traffic on local roads?
- (PCC to ask) How do you feel that West Midlands Police performed in the aftermath of this incident?
- (PCC to ask) What lessons do you feel have to be made from this incident, in terms of joint working between the relevant authorities?

Questions for Highways England

- Does Highways England have a plan for this sort of incident in the West Midlands area?
- If it does not, does Highways England intend to develop a plan to respond to incidents such as this one in the West Midlands, and will it involve the partner agencies that are in attendance today?
- When Highways England Officers attended the scene what were they tasked with (eg. Observing, redirecting traffic etc)?
- At what time was a Highways England Officer given a lead role in the clear up of the incident and what level of seniority was this Officer?
- Why was the oil spillage on the carriageway not formally identified until 07:34am?
- Is Highways England satisfied with the performance of its contractor during the clear up operation?

- Why was the decision taken not to open the M6 Toll road at no cost to motorists? In future would Highways England consider working with the owners of the M6 Toll to make it available for no charge?
- What level of communication was held with Local Authorities during the clear up and what did these communications seek to achieve?
- Does Highways England work with Local Authorities to arrange diversions away from the Motorway on local roads?
- What communication did Highways England have with the general public, including those stuck on the Motorway for a considerable amount of time?
- Why were motorists continuously allowed onto the M6 throughout the day whilst it was closed?
- In the event that an incident such as this may have taken place in more extreme weather what provisions have been made by Highways England?
- Does Highways England feel there is the need to involve local transport authorities (eg. Centro and local councils) more in the aftermath of incidents such as this, to establish safe routes for repair vehicles and the public and to minimise delays?
- What scrutiny arrangements are in place to make sure Highways England contractors are fully accountable to the public (eg. it is believed that by outsourcing highway maintenance to contractors Highways England is not obligated to respond to FOI requests on the subject)
- How do feel that Highways England performed in the aftermath of the incident through to the re-opening of the Motorway 24 hours later?
- What could have been done better/more efficiently to get the Motorway open and traffic flowing sooner?

Questions for Local Authorities

- At what point following the incident were you contacted by WMP or Highways England about the closure to the M6 Motorway?
- Were you advised to implement diversions on roads in your area to divert traffic away from the M6? If so, at what time were you advised to do this?
- Do you have an emergency plan to deal with incidents such as this one? If not, would you consider developing one in partnership with Highways England?
- Did you utilise the communications channels available to your authority to inform the public of the situation?
- How do feel your Local Authority performed in the aftermath of the incident with regards to keeping traffic flowing?
- What could have been done to manage the aftermath of this incident better?