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PUBLIC FEEDBACK – M6 FOLLOW-UP HEARING 20.12.16

When the PCC announced the original M6 Hearing, commuters and businesses affected by the disruption of 4th February 2016 were asked to share their experiences. The PCC has since written again to those who submitted evidence, and some took up the invitation to give further feedback.

Submissions to the M6 Follow-up Hearing from members of the public (in full)	
1	<p>As far as I am aware there has not been any similar incidents on the M6 to the extent of the one in Feb 2016 but the road is continually plagued by delays throughout the majority of each day. I cannot recall at any time I have travelled on the M6 in the past year when it has ever run freely without the need for the managed speed limits to be on. Clearly this is an indication of the severe pressure the motorway is constantly under and that a repeat of the 6th February incident is potentially just a single accident away. Until the HA are put to the test again we will never fully know whether any lessons have been learnt.</p> <p>One question that I would like to raise is that in the past couple of weeks there have been media reports about the West Mids traffic problems and the part played, or lack of it, by the M6 Toll Road. Their representative "claimed" that they currently take 80% to 85% of the through traffic from the M6 and so attempt to justify that they are actively playing a part in the West Mids traffic movement. I occasionally have to use the toll road but also use the A5 regularly [because of the cost of the toll road] and given the very heavy traffic on the A5 I would suggest it is the A5 that is carrying the surplus.</p> <p>I would like to ask if it is possible to require the Toll Road owners to provide full empirical evidence of how they can justify the figures that they have stated as I find it extremely difficult to marry that with the traffic levels on their road.</p> <p>Thank you for pursuing this matter with such diligence. I hope your efforts will bring about suitable changes to the way our midland Motorways are managed.</p>
2	<p>To be frank I think matters on the M6 have become worse. The number of lane closures to various traffic instances (accidents) seems to have increased. On the 20th Nov we were returning south bound from North wales - no problems till we got near junction 10 M6 to find that the motorway was closed. Lane closures were progressively signed with move to left and then with red crosses over the two outside lanes. These was completely ignored by nearly all drivers (cars coaches and lorries) resulting the inside lane being virtually stationary we were delayed by nearly an hour. How many drivers were prosecuted for passing the red crosses?? See attached photo.</p> <p>My observation is that it is this sort of behaviour which not only increases delay but infuriates other drivers. Traffic accidents are there waiting to happen because drivers</p>

	<p>are too close to the vehicles in front and if a gap is left then other cars nip in – it's like dodgems at times. The police have a difficult job to stop this behaviour but follow up on the camera would be a good start and maybe displays on how many were prosecuted. Prevention is better than cure. The M6 is not alone in this matter delays abound as we near Christmas. The M42 near Solihull is just as bad. How much all these delays cost the economy I dread to think. And finally why isn't the Toll road made cheaper or free??</p> <p>Every time there is an incident on the M6 it affects us. I travel to and from Coventry for work therefore the areas around junction 4 have a delayed affect in reaching home add this to the fact the airport, NEC, M42, Birmingham international rail station are all at this junction and the reduction in lanes of A roads, the traffic is frequently gridlocked. Little monitoring is taken of the roads surrounding for best information to be passed and decisions made. Not to mention it does affect the locals of Coleshill, Chelmsley Wood and Marston Green and all the businesses surrounding.</p> <p>It will be interesting to see the outcome which would be of benefit to the locals and commuters and not just a tick box exercise</p>
3	<p>Just to recap I was stuck on the M6 for over 10 hours on 6/2. I am a director of a hospice in Birmingham. They should open the M6. Toll road for free to ease congestion and give a boost to the economy.</p>
4	<p>I drive on the M6 daily from the South and think that variable speed limits are too dangerous especially with lorries. It would be interesting to review RTAs on the M6 throughout the variable speed limit section since this has been operational in order to see the cause, I believe that they would be mostly as a result of vehicles / lorries running into the back of a car. Traffic flow continues to be a daily nightmare although nothing like the day in question. I think that any M6 traffic for destinations beyond Birmingham should be forced to take the M6 toll which would double the lane capacity for Birmingham if these flows could expand onto the Aston Expressway too.</p>
5	<p>Over the past 3 years the traffic situation on the M6 has become much worse, road works are a constant problem. There are also long delays due to the volume of traffic using the motorway - I travel 40,000 miles a year most of this is on motorways, the only motorway which is worse than the M6 is the M25.</p> <p>I have been doing the job I am doing for eighteen years, but over the past three or four years traffic on the M6 has become a nightmare and once there is a problem with the M6 all the surrounding areas are gridlocked, it has taken me more than 45 minutes to get out of Erdington because roads are so busy when there is a problem on the motorway.</p> <p>I have heard that the Government have refused to take over the M6 toll road, I feel this is short sighted and there is an ignorance of the true situation on a motorway which is an arterial link for the rest of the country. The traffic situation on the M6 will be affecting businesses thinking of starting up in the west midlands due to time and money lost on traffic jams.</p> <p>I hope this is useful information and that something is done about the dreadful situation on this motorway.</p>
6	<p>On going problems on the motorway that I have experienced recently are:</p>

INCORRECT SPEED WARNINGS ie. NOTHING APPEARS TO BE BLOCKING ROAD , speed reduced to 40mph causing traffic to stop further back and some even having shunts and the usual mayhem as a result.

INSUFFICIENT EARLY ENOUGH WARNING FOR ROADWORKS BEING CARRIED OUT AT WEEKENDS NO WORK IS CARRIED OUT ON ROADWORKS , could speed limits be slightly increases to help flow of traffic and extra lane OPENED UP LASTLY , MOVE BROKEN DOWN VEHICLES FASTER TO OPEN UP ALL LANES. There appear to be at least 2/3 events on the network causing the problems daily.

It is impossible to plan any trip via the M6, I moved here over two years ago thinking it was well served by the road network , I am now planning to move away ,because it is a nightmare to go on the M6 during the day.

7 On the subject of recent experiences of the M6, I have communicated to Highways England a few times about their so called Smart Motorway 'MIDAS' and that they should travel the stretch of the M6 from Junction 4 to Junction 6 during rush hour. Every time I have mentioned it they say that the system is working correctly but what they don't seem to be able to grasp is that half the time they are creating the Congestion that they are supposed to be trying to prevent. The junction where the M42 meets the M6 is/can be busy but pretty much every day they apply a 40mph limit around that area, this would be fine if people stuck to that and the traffic moves efficiently, but in the real world people don't stick to it and then this leads to excessive braking which slows everyone down (especially the lorries) pretty much down to a stop and this is where the congestion happens. It takes the lorries so long to get back up to speed (through no fault of their own) and traffic just keeps backing up. Once we are past that junction and everyone is back up to speed then it's normally fine and everyone wonders what the problem was. It's so frustrating to everyone and yet Highways England just keep saying its working as expected.

Also, just before it was time to leave yesterday (05/12/16) we heard that there had been an accident involving 8 cars between Junction 6 and Junction 5, now this is in the Smart Motorway area so how did this happen, there's been so many reports of accidents both northbound and southbound around Junction 6 that it makes you wonder how effective this Smart Motorway is.