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4 October 2017

Dear Anthony

Thank you for your letter regarding the security incident on the M1 between junctions 14 and 15.

The event was, as you note, being treated as a potential terrorist incident and there were a number of teams involved, including bomb disposal and anti-terrorism specialists, it was therefore difficult to obtain an assessment of the likely duration of the incident. This was our first incident after the recent terrorist attack and all the agencies involved proceeded with an extra degree of caution.

Minimising delays and dealing with customers caught up on our roads during such incidents is our priority and we always work to mobilise our response effectively and keep customers moving, at the same time ensuring that information is communicated via our own channels, the local and national media and traffic bulletins. With the benefit of hindsight, it is possible that we could have encouraged the police to allow the trapped traffic to be moved earlier, but this was a difficult call at the time, particularly in view of the heightened security concerns.

Whilst managing each incident on our network presents unique challenges, there are some common strategic objectives for all of them where the police are the leading agency:

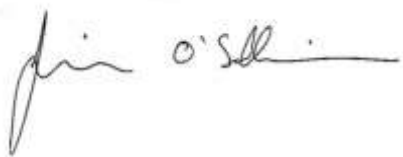
- To support police colleagues in dealing with the incident, closing roads and informing the public of the level of anticipated disruption and their choices for alternative routes.
- Working closely with multi-agency stakeholders throughout the incident to share information on the impact of closures and to set plans for early network restoration.
- To use all of our information outlets – including tactical and strategic variable messaging, press releases, social media messaging and Traffic England to provide regular and near real time traffic information updates.

With regard to the welfare of customers, it is our role to relieve congestion and provide good customer information in a timely fashion. Accountability for welfare (food, drink, medical) during such incidents is a multi-agency responsibility that should be planned and delivered under the auspices of the Local Resilience Forum. We do support these plans, and in this case, given the new circumstances we would in future encourage the police to establish a multi-agency tactical coordination group to deal differently with any welfare issues accordingly.

As you will be aware, we are in the process of setting out our long term ambition for customer service. We have a number of key initiatives that will enable us to make a step change in improving customer journeys during periods of unplanned disruption. These include working with the National Police Chief's Council to review existing joint incident management working practices across our respective operations and enhancing network control and performance - both regionally and from our National Traffic Operations Centre.

I am unable to attend the Transport Focus Public Board meeting on 14 November 2017 but I have asked Mel Clarke, the Customer Service Director to attend in my place. In the meantime Mike Wilson, Chief Highways Engineer and Nick Harris, Operations Director plan to meet with you to discuss these issues further and update you on the plans in place to deliver improvements.

Yours sincerely,



Jim O'Sullivan  
**Chief Executive**