

Mr Richard Travers  
HM Senior Coroner for Surrey  
HM Coroner's Court  
Station Approach  
Woking  
GU22 7AP

23 February 2023

Dear Sir

**Re: JORDAN KEVIN PRY, DECEASED**

### **Regulation 28 report to prevent future deaths**

Thank you for your report of 30 December 2022 (**Report**) following the conclusion of the inquest into the death of Jordan Kevin Pry.

This letter seeks to address HM Senior Coroner's concerns set out in section 5 of the Report; namely that, in HM Senior Coroner's opinion, there is an ongoing risk of further death at the location of marker post B4348 on the M25 anti-clockwise carriageway (**Location**), pending the implementation of an informed and comprehensive plan for risk management.

I would like to emphasise to Jordan's family and the Coroner's Court that Connect Plus takes safety very seriously, and we remain absolutely committed to maintaining and enforcing the highest standards of road safety across the M25 Project Road Network.

Set out below is an overview of enhanced measures at the Location which have been or are in the process of being implemented (**Enhanced Measures**), together with the programme of work to complete the comprehensive plan for risk management (**GG 104 Programme**). Connect Plus Services (**CPS**) has provided a written commitment to Connect Plus to implement both the Enhanced Measures and the GG104 Programme.

#### **(1) Enhanced Measures**

HM Senior Coroner will recall from evidence heard at the inquest that in May 2009 the Secretary of State for Transport signed a 30 year contract with Connect Plus (M25) Limited (**Connect Plus**) for the M25 Project Road Network. The Secretary of State's interest has since been transferred to National Highways Limited (**National Highways**). As is the case with privately financed projects, Connect Plus subcontracted a significant proportion of its core operations and maintenance obligations to CPS under a 30-year operations and maintenance agreement. National Highways retained control of most of the technology for the functioning of the M25 Project Road Network related to safety-critical assets, such as the setting of speed limit signs on overhead gantries.

Evidence heard at the inquest established that the Location is included on a list of vulnerable locations in the CPS Severe Weather Plan. Since the inquest, CPS have developed a number of further enhanced risk management measures, summarised below. These enhanced measures are required to be kept under review by CPS; and any updates are to be made on an annual basis, or more frequently as the data dictates. Connect Plus will continue to monitor CPS's implementation of the enhanced measures through regular meetings with CPS, through audit, and through monthly steering group meetings with CPS and National Highways.

### ***1.1 Enhanced inspections***

- a) CPS Incident Support Unit (**ISU**) crews are carrying out weekly driven visual inspections to observe the slot drains and catchpit surfaces in order to identify debris build up, such that the catchpit inlets are not covered by debris and the slot drains are not obscured by debris for a continuous length of greater than 15m. Should any issues be identified, CPS will liaise with National Highways to secure the necessary lane closures to enable such issues to be addressed.
- b) CPS and National Highways are discussing the implementation of the following procedure:
  - i) National Highways Traffic Officers, through their regular routine patrols, will monitor the presence of surface water at the Location;
  - ii) When CPS is notified of a severe wet weather event by either National Highways or via the CPS weather service provider, the ISU crew will, as part of their network safety patrol function, be deployed to the Location by the CPS Network Control Room Team. The ISU crew will monitor if there is excess surface water in the Location;
  - iii) Where excess surface water is identified by the ISU crew or the National Highways Traffic Officer, they will contact the National Highways South East Regional Operations Centre (**SEROC**) and request that appropriate signs and signals are set. National Highways will then consider whether this will include either reduced speeds and/or Variable Message Sign (**VMS**) stating "SURFACE WATER SLOW DOWN";
  - iv) The CPS Network Control Room will create an INFORM incident log, for command-and-control logging and audit purposes, to record the observation and interventions made;
  - v) The CPS Network Control Room will arrange and deploy secondary response/s intervention as required/requested by SEROC;
  - vi) The CPS Network Control Room will use National Highways network CCTV images to monitor surface water until it has been notified that there is no longer excess surface water present.

- c) CPS are developing an inspection guide/checklist to enable CPS ISU crews to have a clear understanding of the acceptable levels of surface debris on the hardstrip, central reserve and slot drains. This will be issued in March 2023 as an addendum to the ISU inspection check sheet.
- d) CPS are carrying out a trial of catchpit sensors to monitor the level of water and flow at the Location. The data gathered will be used to monitor asset performance and inform any changes to intervention frequency. CPS have installed these sensors at two catchpits in February 2023.
- e) CPS are investigating the developing technology market to establish whether there are reliable and suitable passive monitoring systems for detection of surface water at the Location.
- f) CPS are reviewing the best practice within 'Asset delivery asset maintenance requirements' standards and intend to incorporate any relevant elements in the Services Plan 2023.

## **1.2 Enhanced maintenance**

- a) Signage
  - i) CPS will continue to maintain the existing permanent 'Road Liable to Flooding' sign at MP35/2 in accordance with signage asset requirements.
  - ii) Temporary 'Road Liable to Flooding' signs were installed in advance of the Location at MP436/7 & MP436/4 on the anti-clockwise B carriageway, and these are subject to a weekly driven visual inspection at prevailing traffic speeds to ensure presence and function.
- b) Drainage system inspection and cleanse
  - i) Visual inspections will be undertaken by a CPS specialist drainage subcontractor of the slot drains and catchpits on the nearside and central reserve of the anticlockwise B carriageway (including the last catchpit located on A carriageway in the central reservation). The assets will be cleansed if the slot drain inlets are blocked or silt levels in the pipes or catchpits are 25%, or greater, full;
  - ii) Inspection and cleanse will be undertaken by a CPS specialist drainage subcontractor of the crossing pipe and catchpits around the Location;
  - iii) The hardstrip and central reserve will be swept by the CPS maintenance team.
  - iv) The next planned visits to undertake the above activities (i), (ii) and (iii) are April 2023 (three months after the last visit) and October 2023 (in readiness for the winter period).

- c) Vegetation management
  - i) A swathe cut to 3m will be carried out by CPS to control vegetation and reduce the risk of leaf fall;
  - ii) CPS will also attend the adjacent landscape plot (LV1972) to remove excess vegetation and reduce leaf burden.
  - iii) The next planned visits to undertake activities ci) and cii) are June 2023.

## **(2) GG 104 Programme**

Evidence heard at the inquest included the completion of the recommendations and complementary measures detailed within the Clacket Lane Surface Water Safety Risk Assessment dated April 2022. This risk assessment was undertaken by Atkins in 2021, was commissioned by Connect Plus and CPS, and follows the framework contained within National Highway's GG 104 - Requirements for Safety Risk Assessment in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

The purpose of the safety risk assessment was to establish what further control measures could be introduced to reduce the risk of collisions due to excess surface water, and whether such measures are justified. The Clacket Lane Surface Water Safety Risk Assessment makes four key recommendations, together with three complementary measures.

Connect Plus and CPS meet on a fortnightly basis to discuss progress with the GG 104 Programme. Connect Plus, CPS and National Highways also hold monthly steering group meetings.

Enclosed with this letter is an outline of the GG 104 Programme timetable. A summary of the recommendations and complementary measures is set out below together with what has been carried out to date, and what is planned.

### ***2.1 Recommendations***

- a) Recommendation 1 – Review of, and if appropriate improvements to, the drainage maintenance and inspection regime

Review of the existing maintenance and inspection regime to ensure that existing requirements are being met, whether there is a case for exceeding the Network Management Manual requirements, and consideration of best practice for the maintenance of slot drains. WSP, an independent engineering consultancy with highways and drainage experience, have been appointed by CPS to deliver recommendations 1-3 and complementary measure 3. WSP's findings will be discussed with Connect Plus, CPS and National Highways by 16 June 2023.

- b) Recommendation 2 – Development of surface water contingency plans

Review and develop the effectiveness of existing contingency plans, with the aim of taking a proactive approach to managing heavy rain events and surface water to reduce the risk of a collision occurring, including consideration of existing systems in place to assess how warnings or restrictions can be signed for road users, especially at night.

c) Recommendation 3 – Improvement to drainage system

Follow up on the previous review of flooding hotspots to investigate possible anomalies and identify potential improvements that are justified.

d) Recommendation 4 – Cost benefit analysis of carriage reprofiling

Undertake an assessment to determine the presence of flat sections on the approach to Clacket Lane services and if the profile of the surface can be amended to improve water flow paths. Should the assessment highlight issues, high level remediation proposals will be developed to a point where a cost-benefit analysis can be undertaken.

The CPS design team are developing design proposals which will be costed, and a cost benefit analysis undertaken with assistance from the author of the Clacket Lane Surface Water Safety Risk Assessment. Buildability advice will be provided by one of Connect Plus's Framework contractors. National Highways have provided CPS with their standard Scheme Appraisal Report template which is envisaged will provide the structure for the cost benefit analysis. The outcome of the cost benefit analysis will be discussed with Connect Plus, CPS and National Highways by 1 September 2023.

## **2.2 Complementary measures**

- 1) Review of carriageway resurfacing: CPS are reviewing whether changes to the type of carriageway surfacing would provide any beneficial risk mitigation. CPS will discuss the outcome of their review with Connect Plus and National Highways by 6 March 2023.
- 2) Investigate whether the existing fixed warning sign could be illuminated: National Highways, Connect Plus and CPS have decided to undertake a thorough review of the signage required at the Location against NH standards. CPS will discuss the findings of the CPS design team's review with Connect Plus and National Highways by 28 April 2023.
- 3) Verge review: A review of any residual hazards in the verge at this Location is being undertaken by WSP as part of the Recommendation 2 workstream to determine if there are further changes that can be made to reduce the risk to vehicles. WSP's findings will be discussed with Connect Plus, CPS and National Highways by 16 June 2023.

**(3) Update to HM Senior Coroner**

Connect Plus has a shared commitment with National Highways and CPS to deliver the programme of work set out above. Accordingly we believe that we will be in a position to provide HM Senior Coroner with an update by 29 September 2023 on the recommendations and complementary measures of the GG 104 Programme, together with any further actions that have been taken, or are planned, to mitigate the risk of further collisions at the Location.

Yours faithfully



Chief Executive

Connect Plus (M25) Limited