RESPONSE TO A REPORT TO PREVENT FUTURE DEATHS
REGULATION 29 OF THE CORONERS (INVESTIGATIONS) REGULATIONS 2013

Please do not include any living persons' names in this document, in accordance with the Chief Coroner's PFD Publication Policy (2026).

THIS RESPONSE IS BEING SENT TO:

The Senior Coroner, Timothy Brennand for the Coroner Area Manchester West in response to a '**REPORT TO PREVENT FUTURE DEATH REGULATION 28'** following an inquest into the death of **Kieran WALSH** that concluded on **20th August 2026**.

1.	**RESPONDENT** In line with our duty under Regulation 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013, Head of Planning and Development, [redacted] provides this response within 56 days (plus any extension granted) of the date of the Report to Prevent Future Deaths.
2.	**DATE OF RESPONSE** 9th November 2026
3.	**CONFIRMATION OF CORONER'S MATTERS OF CONCERN** The **MATTERS OF CONCERN** identified in the report are as follows: a) "The use of tall traffic cones to mark areas of damage [redacted]. b) This was the second death in the same proximate location with[in] a fortnight – suggesting that the anticlimbing meshing and infrastructure may be insufficient to deter people wishing to jump from the bridge. c) The incident was unwitnessed, there was no evidence to suggest that any CCTV cameras cover the bridge to assist real time suicide surveillance".
4.	**INTRODUCTION** **National Highways** National Highways is the highway authority for the Strategic Road Network of 4,400 miles of major A roads and most motorways in England, including the M60 motorway [redacted] National Highways is responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the Strategic Road Network on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport. **Suicide Prevention** Everyone's safety on our network matters to us. Tragically, suicides occur on the

	Strategic Road Network and are estimated to account for around 20% of all fatalities on our network each year. Our ambition remains that no-one should be harmed while travelling or working on our roads. Through our 'Road to Zero Harm' initiative, we are committed to playing our part in reducing harm on our network, including working to reduce the risk of suicide. As a highway authority, we recognise that we have an important role in supporting suicide prevention. However, the scale, accessibility and geographical extent of the Strategic Road Network present significant challenges, and there is no single intervention that can eliminate risk. Our approach is therefore focused on identifying opportunities to reduce risk through a combination of targeted physical measures, policy and standards, and collaborative working with external partners. We continue to assess locations nationally where physical interventions may be appropriate with potential interventions considered as part of network-wide assessment. Retrofitting suicide prevention measures to existing infrastructure can be complex, requiring careful consideration of engineering constraints, operational requirements, wider safety impacts and available funding. In October 2026, we introduced a new standard within the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges requiring suicide risk to be considered during scheme development. This is intended to help identify and consider opportunities to further reduce suicide risk as part of the design process for new and existing infrastructure improvements and renewals. Alongside this, we are continuously working with our supply chain to explore whether there are more efficient approaches to delivering interventions such as parapet extensions on existing structures with the aim of making them harder to climb. While such measures will not be suitable in all circumstances, this work aims to better understand how proven interventions might be delivered more effectively across our network where appropriate. We recognise that suicide prevention is a complex societal issue and that responsibility extends beyond any single organisation. Nevertheless, we remain committed to working within our remit to identify opportunities to further reduce risk, improve the safety of our infrastructure and support wider local, regional and national suicide prevention efforts. **Traffic Cones** Traffic cones are a simple but essential tool used on the Strategic Road Network, creating clear separation between live traffic and the people working to maintain, operate and improve the network. By providing a highly visible and universally understood boundary, they help protect road workers from high-speed traffic while guiding road users safely through temporary changes in road conditions. With the scale of our network, tens of thousands of cones are deployed every night to enable maintenance, incident response and improvement activities to be carried out safely, while keeping traffic moving wherever possible. Their flexibility, visibility and effectiveness make them an important tool for safe operations,

supporting both the protection of road users and the delivery of a reliable, resilient road network.

The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) Schedule 13, Part 8 directs that traffic cones used on public highways must comply with British Standard (BS) EN 13422.

The Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 8 (TSM CH8) - *Traffic Safety Measures and Signs for Road Works and Temporary Situations* – provides guidance for signing, lighting and guarding of road works on high-speed roads and identifies where traffic cones should be used depending upon the circumstances. National Highways authors TSM CH8 on behalf of the Department for Transport.

In addition to their primary purpose of providing delineation for road works, traffic cones can be used to highlight road defects until a repair (permanent or temporary) can be actioned. Given the large variation in possible situations, TSM CH8 does not give any guidance on the size, number, or position of cones needed in these situations. General best practice is to use the principle of 'close-coning'. This looks to ensure the cones are sufficiently visible to approaching traffic so they can safely negotiate the hazard caused by the defect.

Traffic cones are therefore an essential tool used on the Strategic Road Network for the reasons stated. The vast majority of cones deployed on the network will have a direct road safety function and restricting the use of cones for other purposes, such as marking defects, will have a negligible impact on the overall number of cones available for improvised use by members of the public.

Infrastructure

Prior to 2022, the parapets installed on [redacted] were 1.0m high which is the standard generally required for bridges (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) CD377 - *Requirements for Road Restraint Systems*). The parapets had been identified as requiring renewal for structural/vehicle containment reasons, but in view of the previous suicide history at the structure at that time, 1.8m high parapets were installed as a replacement in late 2022. These parapets are currently the highest vehicle containment parapets available for use by National Highways.

Parapets of this height, [redacted] and are generally effective as a suicide prevention measure.

CCTV

There are two CCTV cameras present in the vicinity [redacted]. They are located towards the north and south of the bridge on the clockwise carriageway, at Marker Posts 17/2A and 17/9A. The cameras are manoeuvrable, with pan, tilt and zoom functionality towards the crest of the bridge. The cameras are also used to view sections of the carriageway immediately to the north and south of Barton Bridge and as such are not directed exclusively toward the structure itself.

	CCTV cameras are used for monitoring and maintaining the Strategic Road Network. In the Northwest (NW) region this is undertaken from the National Highways Regional Operations Centre (ROC) which is situated off junction 23 of the M6 at Newton-le-Willows. ROC Operators have access to CCTV images at their workstations. CCTV is used to confirm and monitor the incident(s) as they progress. There are also five large display screens located on the wall within the NW ROC control room. The display system is configured to rotate automatically between camera feeds throughout the day, with each feed displayed for a predefined interval. However, the displays can be changed and organised dependant on operational needs and demand within the ROC. Although on continuous display, the screens cannot be monitored at all times, and their primary objective is to provide a visual aid to locate and monitor an incident once we are made aware of it. When not being used for incident management purposes, the screens provide a useful overview of conditions on the Strategic Road Network which can be monitored when workload and resources allow. ROC Operators create incident logs when incidents are identified on CCTV or reported via other means. Operators then maintain a comprehensive overview of the incident scene and surrounding area using the available cameras within the area. If a potential customer in crisis is detected via use of the display screens, or notified to the ROC by other means, the ROC will implement measures as appropriate to assist the Police in their emergency response and to mitigate the associated risks. An example of this may be where a ROC Operator would set speed restrictions at 60mph for an unconfirmed report (not via a trusted source) or 50mph for a confirmed report with supporting Variable Message Sign (VMS) displayed e.g. “Incident” or “Report of Pedestrian”. A National Highways Traffic Officer and/or the Police would be deployed to the incident, and the ROC Operator would check CCTV to confirm the incident and to provide real time information to those attending. Any confirmed customer in crisis incident would be Police-led. National Highways would provide support through the provision of rolling roadblocks and traffic management to provide a safe area for the emergency services to operate in. Greater Manchester Police (GMP) have direct access to National Highways cameras via the Highways England Traffic Camera (HETC) system and are able to both view the images and control the cameras from the GMP control room.
5.	**DETAILS OF ACTION TAKEN,** how has the concern been addressed. [If no action is proposed please explain why here]. **a) Traffic Cones;** See details of further action proposed. **b) Infrastructure;**

	See details of further action proposed. **c) CCTV;** No action has been taken regarding CCTV coverage or surveillance of Barton Bridge. The number of Operators within the ROC is determined with the intention that National Highways are able to effectively manage the activities and tasks that could reasonably be expected to occur on a specific shift. Approximately 400 cameras are assigned to the NW ROC, covering many hundreds of miles of the Strategic Road Network. The real time surveillance by cameras of specific locations such as Barton Bridge as a suicide mitigation measure would not be practical or cost effective. Deploying existing resources for this purpose would compromise other safety critical functions that the ROC Operators undertake. No action is therefore proposed regarding CCTV at Barton Bridge. Current CCTV provision at the bridge remains operational and effective for its intended use within the National Highways NW ROC.
6.	**DETAILS OF FURTHER ACTION PROPOSED** **a) Traffic Cones;** Whilst the current use of cones [redacted] is deemed legitimate, we are aware of the spate of recent incidents and the raised profile this structure currently has. Internal safety guidance will be issued in respect of [redacted] to raise awareness of the potential risks and introduce additional precautions to reduce the opportunity for the misuse of cones by third parties. The guidance is proposed to be issued on or before 30th October 2026 for an initial six-month period. Its effectiveness and continued relevance will be reviewed in April 2027 to be amended as necessary. **b) Infrastructure;** Although not a physical measure to prevent suicides, signage with contact details for the Samaritans can be effective as a measure for discouraging suicide attempts. National Highways has instigated an action to ensure such signing is attached to the inner face of the Barton Bridge parapets on both carriageways. We intend to complete this action when the next opportunity to share planned temporary traffic management presents itself. Despite the 1.8m suicide prevention parapets currently installed, National Highways acknowledge that this measure may not always be sufficient to prevent individuals from scaling the parapet where they are particularly determined to do so. While higher parapets, suitable for this location, are not currently available, we are reviewing whether anti-climb paint applied to the top rail of the parapet might provide a further deterrent. If such a measure is practical and appropriate,

	we will look to implement this in the next financial year.
7.	**SIGNATURE**   Head of Planning and Development