

**REPORT:** Environment & Urban Renewal  
Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 24 November 2010

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Environment & Economy

**SUBJECT:** Annual Road Traffic Collision & Casualty  
Report

**WARDS:** Boroughwide

## **1. PURPOSE**

1.1 To report road traffic collision and casualty numbers within the Borough in the year 2009 and to recommend a continuance of road traffic collision reduction work.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**It is recommended that:**

- 1) the overall progress made on casualty reduction in Halton be noted and welcomed;**
- 2) an ongoing programme of road traffic collision reduction schemes and road safety education, training and publicity be endorsed subject to resource availability; and**
- 3) concerns with regard to the achievement of further casualty prevention, as a result of resource reductions, be noted.**

## **3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The report attached as Appendix 'A' sets out full details of the numbers of traffic collisions and casualties in the year 2009, and compares these figures with those for previous years. These results are exceptionally good. The report also gives details of progress towards various national targets for casualty reductions and highlights concerns regarding the resources available to continue this work at its present level in the future.

3.2 In summary during 2009:

- There were 291 road collisions involving personal injury in Halton, producing 415 casualties, both totals being the lowest in over 20 years;
- 39 of the casualties were classed as serious, and there were 2 deaths. The total of 41 serious injuries or deaths is the lowest in over 20 years;
- The child serious injury and fatality total of 4 represents a large, if probably unsustainable, reduction from the total of 11 in 2008;

- The number of people of all ages being slightly injured fell from 435 in 2008 to just 374;
- Casualty numbers in the three key nationally set target areas remain well below the 2010 final target levels.

Overall, the results confirm the success of casualty reduction work, funded through Halton's second Local Transport Plan and the Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership, supported by targeted enforcement and local road safety education, training, publicity and traffic management initiatives.

3.4 Although the 2009 total of just 4 casualties in the children killed or seriously injured category is an excellent and welcome result, as can be seen in Appendix 'A', there is considerable numeric volatility in this category and this yearly total is unlikely to be routinely repeated or bettered. However, a recent child safety audit and intensive accident data analysis work will be used to inform all future work in this area with the aim of producing consistently low casualty numbers in this category.

3.5 All schools in Halton now have School Travel Plans in place, but because of the scheduled withdrawal of government grant support for this service at the end of the current financial year, these documents with their safety-based implementation plans are unlikely to be carried through without another funding source being identified.

3.6 Last year the previous government, through the DfT., consulted on a series of road casualty reduction targets that it was proposing to set for the year 2020. With the change in national government, these targets have not been confirmed. The national focus of future casualty reduction work thus remains unclear.

3.7 There has been a trend over recent years towards distributing casualty reduction funding for engineering works more widely, into more numerous sites with less intense groupings of collisions. This has resulted from both the success in treating the high-density casualty sites and the realisation that the resilient problem areas could benefit more from measures to address driver behaviour and attitude, rather than further engineering interventions.

3.8 At the sites now being treated, collision patterns are extremely hard to establish and greater reliance has had to be placed on Police advice and consultation to achieve further accident reductions. This approach is being successfully combined with a greater emphasis on road safety, education, training & publicity. However, the effectiveness of any casualty reduction approach can only be assessed over 3 and preferably 5 years to ensure that trends are firmly established and firm conclusions can be drawn.

## **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no direct funding implications of this report. However, the funding for casualty reduction work is derived from a number of sources. These include:

- **The Local Transport Plan** - Provides capital funding for engineering based casualty reduction schemes and part funds the Safe Routes to School initiative which is currently set to end on 31 March 2011;
- **Halton's Revenue Programme** – Provides funding for local road safety education, training and publicity initiatives, the School Crossing Patrol Service and traffic management measures; and
- **The Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership:** The partnership is funded through Halton's, Cheshire West and Chester's, Cheshire East's and Warrington's Road Safety Grants, which to date have been used to support pan Cheshire safety camera enforcement and strategic road safety, education, training and publicity initiatives. The new government has already cut the capital and revenue funding in this area with a direct impact on the support for initiatives and road safety officer staff numbers locally. The Road Safety Capital Grant (£75k) has been cut in entirety whilst the Road Safety Revenue Grant has been cut by 27% (£90k). In its recent CSR announcement the Government did not confirm this funding will be renewed in its current form beyond March 2011 and it is likely that funding that maybe available for road safety will be contained within the Council's formula grant allocation. It is not possible to say therefore at this stage what will be available for road safety in 2011/12 and beyond. Consequently, the entire future of the Partnership remains in doubt. Members of the Partnership are currently working to review the options for sustaining it beyond March 2011.

## **5.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

5.1 There is a variable and uncertain road safety risk associated with failure to implement an effective annual programme of road traffic accident prevention measures. Failure to implement a programme or a lessening of current resource allocations could lead to an escalation of accident and casualty numbers.

## **6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The work on casualty reduction is consistent with the policies and approaches incorporated in Halton's second Local Transport Plan.

## **7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### **7.1 A Safer Halton**

Road safety casualty reduction work of all types supports this priority through the introduction of initiatives and interventions designed to deliver a safer environment.

### **7.2 Children & Young People in Halton**

By helping to create a safer environment, road safety casualty reduction work assists in the safeguarding of children and young people and in the achievement of accessible services.

### **7.3 A Healthy Halton**

A reduction in road casualties will have the direct benefit of releasing health resources and thereby enable funding to be focused on other areas of health care.

#### **7.4 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton.**

There are no direct implications for this priority.

#### **7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal.**

There are no direct implications for this priority

### **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 There are no direct equality and diversity issues associated with this report.

### **9. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no direct social inclusion, sustainability, best value, legal or crime and disorder implications resulting from this report.

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### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

There are no background papers under section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.