

REPORT TO: Environment and Urban Renewal
Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 15th November 2017

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community &
Resources

PORTFOLIO: Transportation

SUBJECT: Annual Road Traffic Collision & Casualty Report.

WARD(S) Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To report on road traffic collision and casualty numbers within the Borough in the year 2016 and to recommend a continuance of road traffic collision reduction work.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

1) The overall progress made on casualty reduction in Halton over the past decade, be noted;

2) Concerns with regard to the achievement of further casualty prevention, as a result of resource reductions, be noted; and

3) The continuing programme of road traffic collision reduction schemes and road safety education, training and publicity be endorsed.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Department for Transport (DfT) has advised that comparisons with previous years' figures should be interpreted with caution, given that there have been changes in the systems for severity reporting by police forces. Whilst this year's figures for Halton are a cause for concern, it must be emphasised that this is based on one year's figures only and remembering that casualty figures can be very volatile from one year to the next. Many collisions occur that could not have necessarily been avoided regardless of the effort or engineering measures put into road safety. However, trends will now need to be carefully monitored over coming years in order to try and determine whether there is any correlation between casualties and the reduction in resources that can be put into road safety. The Mersey Gateway works must also be seen as a contributory factor over the last few years, as the available highway network decreased in size and consequently traffic migrated onto more minor roads.

3.2 Appendix 'A' sets out full details of the numbers of traffic collisions and casualties in the year 2016, and compares these figures with those for previous years. Whilst the long-term trends remain downward last year saw significant increases in the numbers of people being slightly injured (SLI) and of those killed/seriously injured (KSI) compared to the figures for the previous year. Within the KSI total, both the number of adults and of children increased but the latter figure is known to be volatile in Halton due to the low numbers and fluctuates from year to year.

3.3 **In summary during 2016:**

- **There were 258 road traffic collisions involving personal injury within Halton, this total is above what the level trend lines would have indicated. These incidents produced 354 casualties, a 16% increase on the 2015 figures;**
- **45 of the casualties were classed as serious, and sadly there was 1 death, compared to 4 in 2015. The total of 46 killed or seriously injured (KSI) is significantly higher than last year, but not notably above the levels achieved in other recent years;**
- **The child serious injury (CKSI) total of 6 represents a large percentage increase over 2015's total of 2. The CKSI annual total is subject to relatively large year to year variations.**
- **The number of people of all ages being slightly injured (SLI) increased to 308 from 272 in 2015.**

3.4 It remains to be seen if the casualty and collision increases seen locally in 2016 are a return of an upward trend (after last year's dramatic reduction and recent year's flat-lining) or just a temporary increase caused by unique local circumstances. Nationally, road casualties decreased by 3% in 2016, as set out in the Department for Transport 2016 Comprehensive Annual Report on Road Casualties available via:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2016>

Looking at the data and in terms of casualty reduction in 2016, Halton was one of the worst performing Local Authorities, both regionally and nationally.

Examination of the table and chart on page 3 of Appendix A reveals that with the exception of Local Authorities within the Liverpool City Region, most surrounding Local Authorities achieved significant reductions in KSI numbers.

3.5 Halton's 2016 casualty figures illustrates there are no guarantees that achieving further reductions will be possible, especially in the current climate of reduced resources

3.6 As previous annual reports to this PPB on this subject have stated, in April 2011, Halton lost capital and revenue grants allocated specifically for Road Safety which in part funded Road Safety education, training and publicity

and associated staff resource. Like many parts of the Council's activities, the resources available to promote road safety have significantly reduced. This means that work must now be prioritised to where the largest potential accident savings can be achieved.

- 3.7 In 2010, the ten year casualty reduction targets set in 2000 expired. The new Government published its 'Strategic Framework for Road Safety' in May 2011, based on what the Government described as the "key principles" of localism, the "Big Society", non-regulatory approaches and deficit reduction. Within this Strategic Framework is an Outcomes Framework which does set out an expectation for progress on road casualty reductions. Without providing specific targets, and quoting a central KSI reduction forecast of 40% by 2020 based on a 2005-09 base average, the Framework sets out a belief that reductions can be made by encouraging best practice amongst local authorities and comparing local progress with national trends. The only other countries in the EU that do not have targets as part of their road safety strategies are Luxembourg and Malta. The national focus of future casualty reduction work remains unclear.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The work on casualty reductions is consistent with the policies and approaches incorporated in the Liverpool City Region's Transport Plan for Growth.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no direct funding implications from 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
- **Halton's Revenue Programme** – Provides funding for local road safety education, training and publicity initiatives, the School Crossing Patrol Service and traffic management measures.

Since April 2011, Halton has suffered the loss of specific annual Government funded capital and revenue Road Safety grants of £75k and £396k respectively. The continued appliance of national austerity measures looks set to require further reductions in the local resources available to continue road safety education, publicity and training campaigns

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **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.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton' priority.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Any 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.

6.4 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.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'Halton's Urban Renewal' priority.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 It is possible that continued reductions in road safety education, training and publicity resources could have an adverse effect on the Borough's road accident casualties and collision numbers but this link can only be established over a period of several years. No full risk assessment is required.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

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

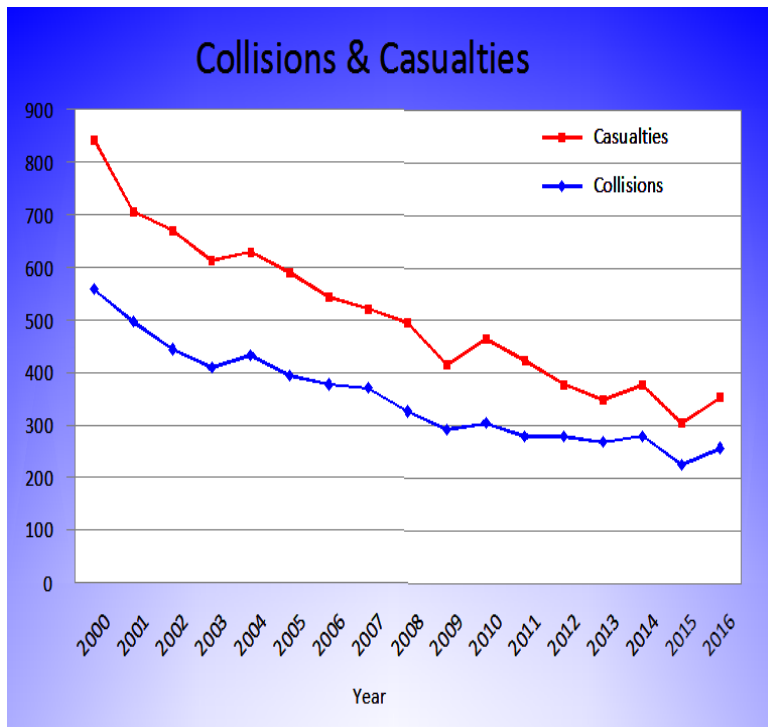
9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

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

Halton 2016 Traffic Collisions Review

Appendix A

After the dramatic decrease in the number of road traffic collisions and casualties in Halton in 2015, 2016 has seen an increase in both casualty numbers and collisions. Whilst it is regrettable that these figures both increased by around 15%, the five year rolling average, a more reliable indicator of performance given the statistically small numbers involved, continued a downward trend.

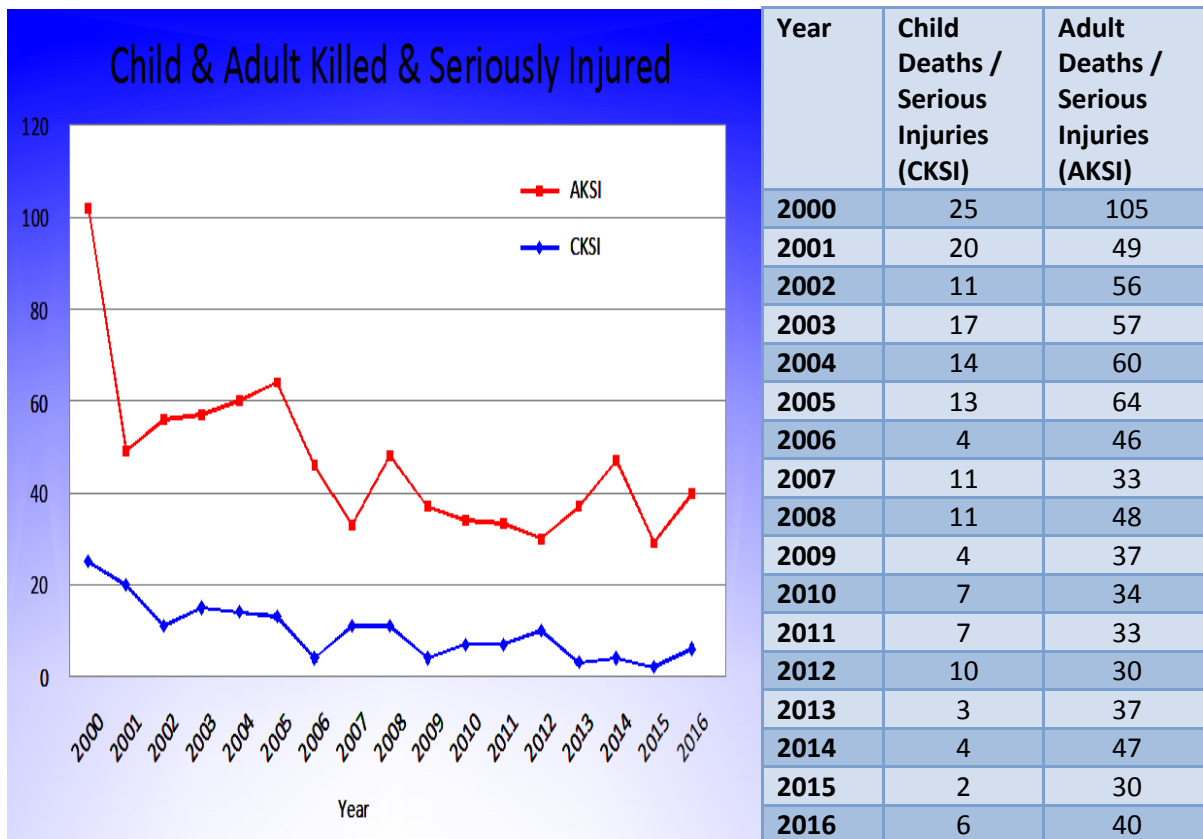


Year	Collisions	Casualties
2000	558	842
2001	497	706
2002	444	670
2003	409	612
2004	432	629
2005	394	590
2006	377	543
2007	370	521
2008	326	494
2009	291	415
2010	303	464
2011	278	422
2012	278	377
2013	267	347
2014	279	376
2015	224	304
2016	258	354

Increases were seen across all class of casualties – KSI, CKSI and SLI. It remains to be seen if these increases in casualty numbers are part of a wider trend, or more likely due to a combination of factors unique to Halton.

Nationally in 2016, there has been a 3% reduction in casualties whereas Halton has seen a 16% increase in casualty numbers. Whilst there is always a certain amount of volatility, given the small numbers involved, it is uncertain whether the increases seen in 2016 are a statistical blip or the start of an unwanted upward trend.

Consideration must be given to the impact of the Mersey Gateway works to casualty / collision numbers. 2016 saw more extensive road closures, junction re-modelling works and diversion routes, resulting in large amounts of traffic migrating onto minor roads. Indeed, looking at casualty locations, there were collisions occurring at junctions with no previous collision history, as increased traffic levels put additional and unwanted strain on the highway network.



Local Indicators

Killed and Seriously Injured, All Ages (KSI) (*Local Indicator PPTLI 6*)

2016 saw an increase in the number of all-age casualties killed or seriously injured (KSI) in Halton, to a total of 46. However, the DfT advises that comparisons with previous years' figures should be interpreted with caution, given that there have been changes in the systems used for severity reporting by police forces. Be that as it may, Halton, in comparison with other Authorities within the Cheshire Constabulary area is performing relatively poorly.

Whilst it is regrettable that one person lost their life on Halton's roads in 2016, this is a dramatic, and welcome, drop from 4 fatalities the previous year.

Other than last year, in recent times Halton has struggled to achieve reductions in KSI figures. As always, given the small numbers involved and their inherent volatility, it is always more advantageous to use a rolling average, taken over a number of years. The five year rolling average (PPTLI 6) grew slightly from 40.6 to 41.8 after decreasing last year. It remains to be seen whether the increase witnessed last year is part of a new and unwelcome upward trend or has been influenced by factors such as the Mersey Gateway works, reductions in staff and resources in Halton's Traffic Management and Road Safety Section and the changes to the police serious injury reporting system.

Children (u16s) Killed and Seriously Injured (CKSI) (*Local Indicator PPTLI 7*)

In 2016, 6 children were killed or seriously injured in Halton, an increase from 2 in 2015. Due to the numbers being so low, this annual total is traditionally very prone to variations, year on year. The five year rolling CSKI average (PPLTI 7) has fallen and is now 5.0, compared with 5.2 last year.

Slight, All-Age Casualties (SLI) (*Local Indicator PPTLI 8*)

In 2016 there was 13% increase in people slightly injured in Halton, in contrast to a 13% decrease the year before.

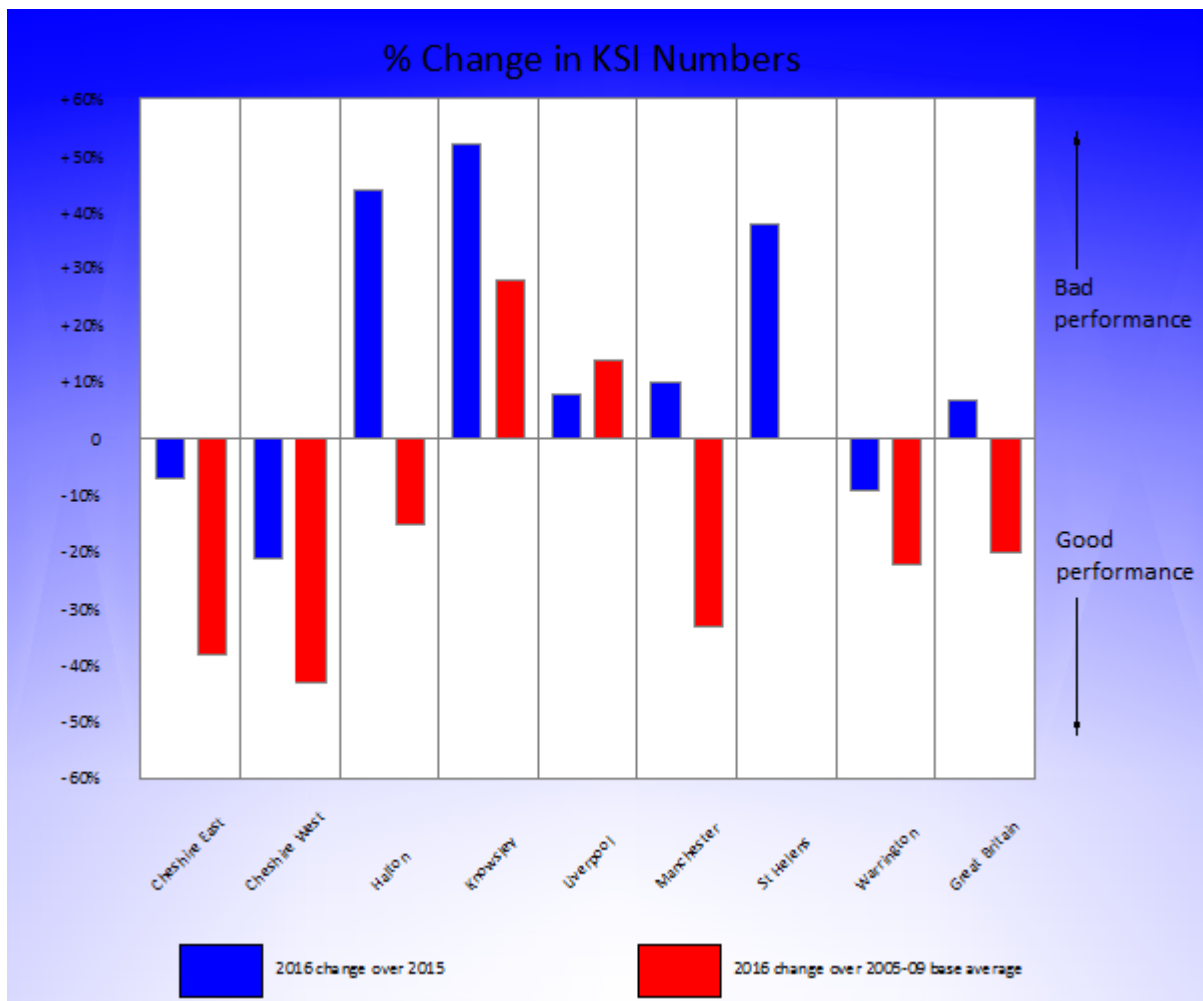
Halton compares unfavourably with the situation nationally, where a 4% reduction has been achieved.

Strategic Framework for Road Safety

In 2011 the Government set out a strategy for Road Safety that set out an outcomes framework designed to help Local Government, local organisations and citizens to monitor progress towards improving road safety and decreasing the number of fatalities and seriously injured casualties.

The framework included six key indicators which relate to road deaths. These were intended to measure the key outcomes of the strategy, but in Halton, given the low number of fatalities, and the consequent fluctuations, it was proposed to use KSI rates instead. Halton's performance in reducing KSI casualties, relative to our neighbours, can now be compared:

KSI	2005-2009 average	2015	2016	2016 change over 2015	2016 change over 2005-09 average
Cheshire East	284	189	176	-7%	-38%
Cheshire West & Chester	238	171	135	-21%	-43%
Halton	54	32	46	+44%	-15%
Knowsley	58	47	74	+57%	+28%
Liverpool	218	231	249	+8%	+14%
Manchester	222	134	148	+10%	-33%
St Helens	65	47	65	+38%	-
Warrington	104	89	81	-9%	-22%
GB	30,041	24,101	25,893	+7%	-20%



Looking at neighbouring Local Authorities it is clear that, with regards to KSI casualties, the worst performing areas are located in the Liverpool City Region. However, unlike in Halton; Liverpool, Knowsley and St Helens all achieved reductions in slight casualties. With this in mind it can be surmised that perhaps the changes in severity recording impacted greater within the Merseyside Police area.

As stated previously, given the very small numbers involved, Halton's casualty figures are prone to wide percentage variations, year on year. 2015 saw a dramatic reduction in casualty numbers that, at the time, was difficult to explain. Last year saw our figures rise to levels, more or less in keeping with previous years. It will be a number of years before we know if these higher than normal fluctuations in casualty numbers in recent years are a statistical blip or part of a new upward trend.

What should not be ignored is the impact of the Mersey Gateway works on collision and casualty numbers. In 2015, much of the Mersey Gateway works involved site clearance that needed basic temporary traffic management, such as lane closures. It was felt at the time that the resulting lower traffic speeds made a positive contribution to casualty reduction.

However, as the Mersey Gateway works intensified last year, we saw large sections of the strategic highway network being dug up, particularly in Runcorn. The necessary diversion

routes resulted in large amounts of traffic migrating onto local distributor roads and a consequent steep rise in collisions here. Looking at collision locations it is not difficult to see how this displacement has had a negative impact on road safety. Roads and junctions in areas like Astmoor and Halton Lea both saw significant spikes in collision numbers, an unwanted outcome not unconnected with their use as Mersey Gateway diversion routes.

Despite the ongoing reductions in staff and resources, Halton was still able to undertake a number of successful road safety initiatives, targeting a wide variety of at-risk road users in 2016. In addition, the Traffic Management Team installed a number of accident remedial schemes. However, it should be noted that the Mersey Gateway works restricted the options available for engineering interventions.

Casualty reduction informs much of the work undertaken by the Traffic Management Team. However, the recent Efficiency Review has had a major impact on staff resources and the ability of Halton to engage in larger scale education or engineering road safety interventions.

The next few years will tell whether after years of a downward trend, this year's increases in casualty numbers are the start of a new trend. A reduced Traffic Management and Road Safety Team, together with large sections of Halton's busiest roads being beyond our direct control, may compromise our ability to manage an effective casualty reduction programme in the future. Government has targeted a reduction of 40% in KSIs by 2020, relative to the baseline 2005-09 figures, something Halton may find difficult to achieve.