

REPORT TO: Environment and Urban Renewal
Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 2nd December 2020

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director - Enterprise, Community &
Resources

PORTFOLIO: Transportation

SUBJECT: Road Safety Report

WARD(S) Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To report on the Department for Transports annual update on road traffic collision and casualty numbers.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

1) The overall progress on casualty reduction over the past decade be noted; and

2) The road safety programme for 2021 be supported (paragraph 4.4 – 4.7).

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The latest figures (2019) for Halton can be summarised as follows:

- There were 183 road traffic collisions involving personal injury in Halton, 14 fewer than the year before, and a continuation of the overall general downward trend. These incidents resulted in 239 casualties, a 3% increase on the 2018 figures;
- A total of 31 killed or seriously injured (KSI) remains relatively low when compared to 10 years ago (41 in 2010). The figure for 2018 was 30;
- 28 of the casualties were classed as serious, with 3 fatalities (an increase of 1 compared to 2018)
- A total of 2 child serious injury (CKSI) representing a decrease of 66% (compared to 6 in 2018).
- The numbers of people of all ages being slightly injured (SLI) was 208 (202 in 2018).

- A total of 23 collisions occurred on Mersey Gateway controlled roads, resulting in a total of 28 casualties, slightly higher than in 2018.
 - Halton still remains on course to achieve its performance targets.
- 3.2 Appendix A sets out the numbers of traffic collisions and casualties in 2019, together with comparisons of figures for previous years.
- 3.3 Of those killed or seriously injured, the number of adults increased by 5, but the numbers of child casualties decreased by 4. Generally, low numbers of KSI are recorded annually in Halton, and actual numbers recorded do fluctuate from year to year. A 5-year rolling average for casualty numbers is a better statistic to indicate relative performance, and both adult and child KSIs showed a downward trend.
- 3.4 Overall, a dramatic reduction in casualty numbers has been achieved in recent years, with Halton recognised as one of the best performing, both regionally and nationally. Encouragingly, both collision numbers and Child KSIs are at an all-time low and the long-term trends for all casualty types are generally downward.
- 3.5 **National Position**
Nationally, road casualties decreased by 5% in 2019, as set out in the Department for Transport 2019 Comprehensive Annual Report on Road Casualties available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904698/rcgb-provisional-results-2019.pdf
- 3.6 The Department for Transport (DfT) still advises that comparisons with previous years' figures should be interpreted carefully and advise that the 2019 casualty numbers are still provisional. Changes to how the Police record collisions and delays in processing information caused by the ongoing pandemic have resulted in delays in confirming the data. However, the casualty numbers for Halton and other Local Authorities within the Cheshire Constabulary have been rigorously checked and validated.
- 3.7 The Government's 'Strategic Framework for Road Safety' (May 2011) has an outcomes framework for measuring progress on road casualty reductions. The framework seeks to deliver reductions through encouraging best practice amongst local authorities, and comparing local progress with national trends. Overall, a central KSI reduction forecast of 40% by 2020 (based on a 2005-09 base average) is identified as an outcome, and Halton is well on course to achieve this reduction.
- 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 and Halton's Local Transport Plan 3 (2011 – 2025). Halton continues to participate in the Merseyside and Cheshire Road Safety

Partnerships to share best practice and collaborate beyond administrative boundaries.

4.2 The Runcorn delinking works, Widnes Loop and Silver Jubilee Bridge closure have temporarily changed traffic flows and this, together with proposed changes to road layouts as part of proposed developments in Widnes and Runcorn town centres, has made it difficult to determine where best to target the casualty reduction strategy. As a result of this, special attention has been given to improving road safety infrastructure around schools, as well as continuing our effective road safety education campaigns. This approach has led to the significant reduction in child casualty numbers in 2019.

4.3 A summary of road safety schemes undertaken in 2019 / 2020 is as follows:

- Reconfiguration of Prescott Road / Hough Green Road roundabout to improve lane discipline and reduce side-swipe collisions
- Improvements to pedestrian crossing points at Weston Village Primary School
- Area Forum funded traffic calming works on a section of Page Lane, Widnes recognising the change in character of the road from industrial to residential
- Public bridleway and signage / road markings improvements on Baileys Lane, Hale Village, following closure of Dungeon Lane as part of wider Liverpool John Lennon Airport development
- Installation of a Cheshire Road Safety Group mobile camera site and associated safety camera signage
- Improvements to pedestrian crossing points in Windmill Hill and Norton North
- New section of footway at Hale Road, Halebank

Halton's 2021 Programme

4.4 This programme covers road traffic collision reduction schemes, road safety education, training, and publicity.

4.5 Whilst the ongoing major works have made identifying appropriate sites for road safety engineering works more difficult, there are still a number of locations where significant improvements can be achieved. In addition to larger scale works, a number of small-scale engineering schemes have been devised to improve safety and accessibility for pedestrians and other vulnerable road users (particularly around schools). Given the need for social distancing as a result of the pandemic and the shift towards cycling and walking, this work has an even greater priority. The Council will continue to liaise closely with Cheshire Police to targeted speed enforcement. The use of the speed indicator device signs continues to be an effective means of gathering information on speeding issues, given that they record the speed of every vehicle approaching them. Following exhaustive traffic and collision analysis, one site has been identified in Halton for the next phase of the Cheshire Road Safety Group red light / speed on green camera programme, although the ongoing coronavirus pandemic has meant that works have been delayed.

4.6 Planned works for 2020/2021 include:

- Improved pedestrian crossing facilities at Halton Lea, Runcorn
- Review of all school sites to ensure road layouts are appropriate, given the ongoing issues related to the Covid19 pandemic
- Improvements to side-junction layouts on Liverpool Road, Widnes following concerns raised regarding poor visibility
- Improvements to pedestrian crossing points at Dykin Road / Moorfield Road roundabout.
- Reconfiguration of road markings as part of wider improvement scheme on southern section of Ditchfield Road, Widnes.
- Major changes to route signage through Runcorn town centre following Runcorn de-linking works and associated changes to traffic flows

4.7 The Road Safety team will continue to engage with a number of different road users through an extensive programme of education, training and publicity. As well as running the Junior Safety Officer scheme in almost every school in the Borough, Halton once again hosted Crucial Crew with a number of agencies, both internal and external to Halton, where approximately 900 Year 5 children attended the awareness scheme promoting personal safety. Furthermore, in 2021, the Road Safety Team will be delivering additional education, training and publicity initiatives including Drink Drive campaigns, business driver safety initiatives, cycle training, Child Safety Week and the 'Show you care park elsewhere' campaign to tackle congestion and safety issues at school start / finish times. This is in addition to managing the popular School Crossing Patrol service.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct financial implication resulting from the publication of these latest figures.

5.2 Since 2011, capital and revenue grants allocated for road safety have been reduced. Correspondingly, this has reduced the resources available for road safety schemes, education, training and publicity. The road safety programme is now highly prioritised against where the largest benefits in terms of accident prevention can be achieved.

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 this priority. However, improving road safety does encourage people to access opportunities for work, especially via sustainable travel means.

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 Reductions in local government funding may impact on road safety resources and the interventions available for road safety and road collision reduction measures.

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 Previous reports on this topic have been provided to the Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board on: 13 November 2019; 27 February 2019; 15 November 2017; and 16 November 2016.

Appendix A

Halton 2019 Traffic Collisions Review

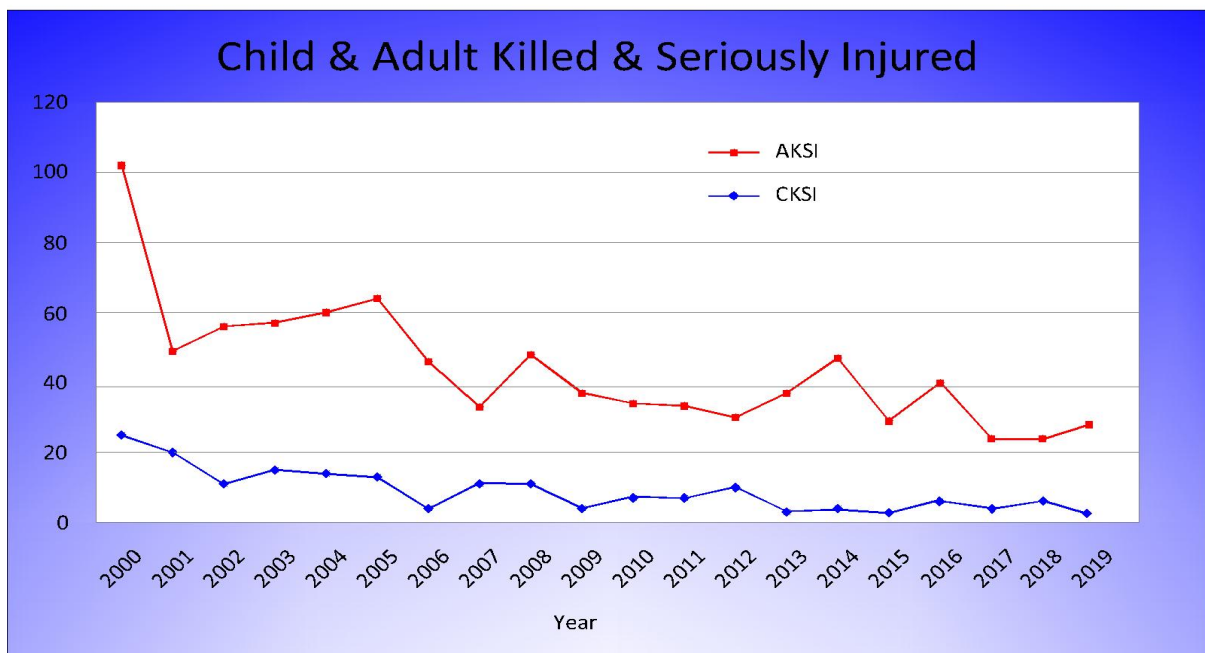
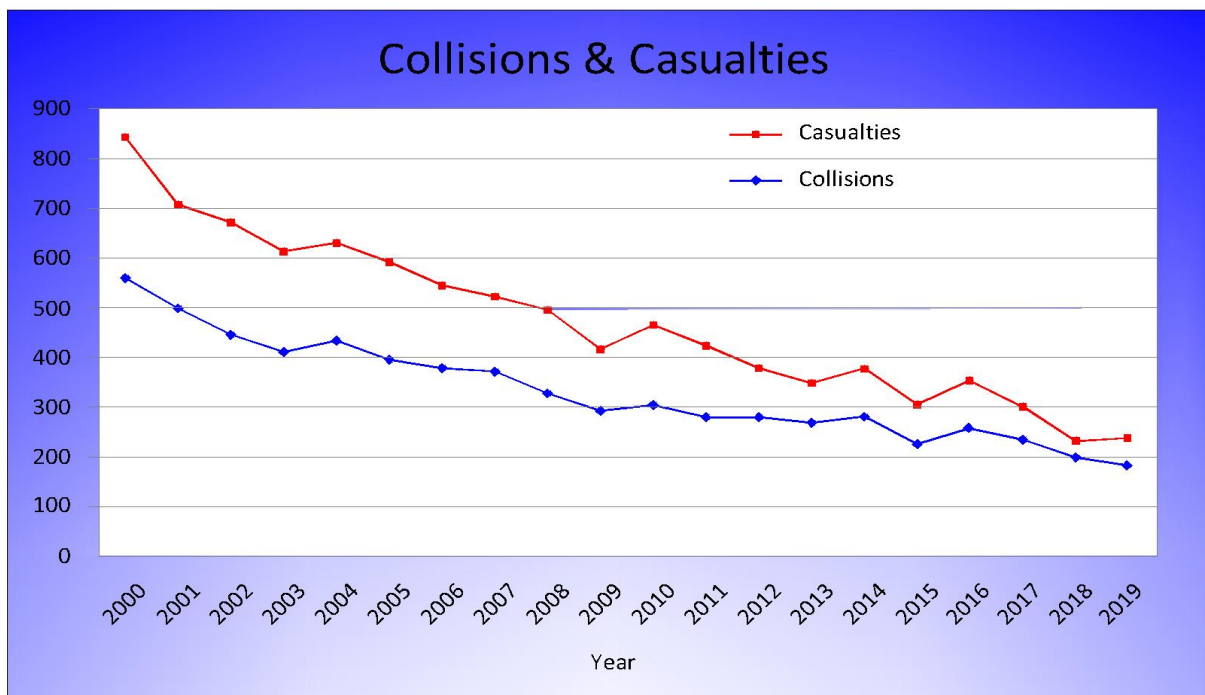
2019 saw a slight increase in the number of road traffic casualties in Halton, following two years of significant reductions in numbers. Encouragingly however, the number of collisions was just 183, a record low, and just 2 children were seriously injured last year, a 66% reduction from 2018.

All accidents that were reported to Cheshire Police, occurred within Halton’s adopted highway network, involved at least one motor vehicle, horse rider or cyclist, and where at least one person was injured, are included in this review. Collisions that occur on private land (or driveways) and car parks are not included in the statistics. Likewise, accidents that do not result in personal injuries are also excluded.

The increase in numbers was across both the slight injury category (SLI) and the adults killed or seriously injured (AKSI) category, although it should be noted that unusually just 5 collisions resulted in 22 casualties across both categories. In 2018, no single collision resulted in more than 3 casualties.

Year	Collisions	All casualties	Adult Deaths / Serious Injuries (AKSIs)	Child Deaths / Serious Injuries (CKSIs)	Slight Injuries All Ages (SLI)
2000	558	842	105	25	712
2001	497	706	49	20	637
2002	444	670	56	11	603
2003	409	612	57	17	538
2004	432	629	60	14	555
2005	394	590	64	13	513
2006	377	543	46	4	493
2007	370	521	33	11	477
2008	326	494	48	11	435
2009	291	415	37	4	374
2010	303	464	34	7	423
2011	278	422	33	7	382
2012	278	377	30	10	337
2013	267	347	37	3	307
2014	279	376	47	4	325
2015	224	304	30	2	272
2016	258	354	40	6	308
2017	243	303	24	4	275
2018	197	232	24	6	202
2019	183	239	29	2	208

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



2019 saw a slight increase in the number of all-age casualties killed or seriously injured (KSI) in Halton, to a total of 31. Sadly, three people lost their lives on Halton's roads in 2018, however this number of fatalities is very small, especially when compared with historic data.

As in previous years, the DfT once again 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.

Given the low numbers involved leading to greater volatility in statistical analysis, it is more advantageous to use a rolling average, taken over a number of years. The five year rolling average (PPTLI 6) dropped from 37.4 to 33.4, a significant decline. KSI totals have been relatively static in recent years and influencing factors such as the new Mersey Gateway Bridge and associated road system being outside Council control, reductions in budgets, and changes to the Police serious injury reporting system, all do constrain options for further intervention.

Children (U16s) Killed and Seriously Injured (CKSI) (*Local Indicator PPTLI7*)

In 2019, 2 children were killed or seriously injured in Halton, a decrease from 6 in 2018. Due to the numbers being low and the unpredictability of collisions, this annual total will vary year on year. The five year rolling CKSI average (PPTLI 7) has also decreased and is now 4.0, compared with 4.4, last year. Reductions in child casualty numbers are very encouraging and is a consequence of the continued focus on schools for road safety engineering and education.

Slight, All-Age Casualties (SLI) (*Local Indicator PPTLI8*)

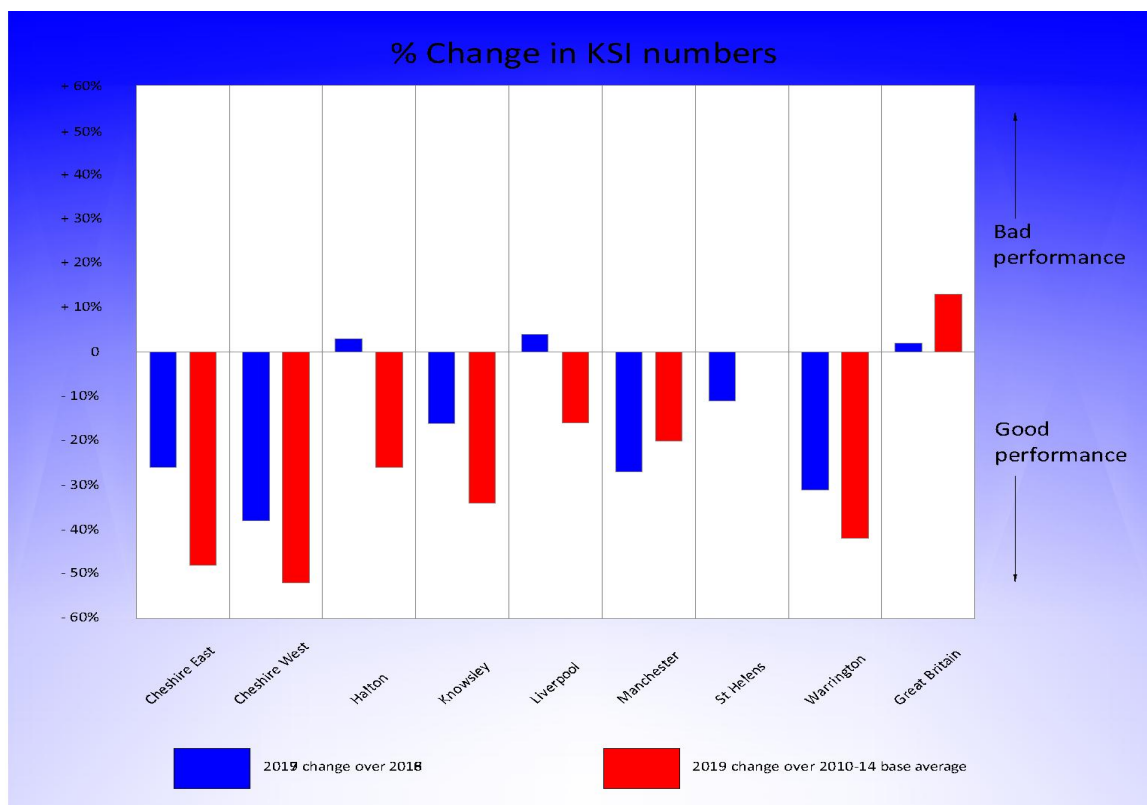
In 2019 there was a 3% increase in people slightly injured in Halton, disappointing following last year's impressive 10% reduction.

Halton does not compare favourably with the situation nationally, where a 5% reduction has been achieved.

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 relating to road deaths. These were intended to measure the key outcomes of the strategy. 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 be compared:

KSI	2010-2014 average	2018	2019	2019 change over 2018	2019 change over 2010-14 average
Cheshire East	232	163	120	-26%	-48%
Cheshire West & Chester	191	148	92	-38%	-52%
Halton	42	30	31	+3%	-26%
Knowsley	56	44	37	-16%	-34%
Liverpool	225	183	190	+4%	-16%
Manchester	172	188	137	-27%	-20%
St Helens	66	74	66	-11%	-
Warrington	96	81	56	-31%	-42%
GB	24,456	27,295	27,723	+2%	+13%



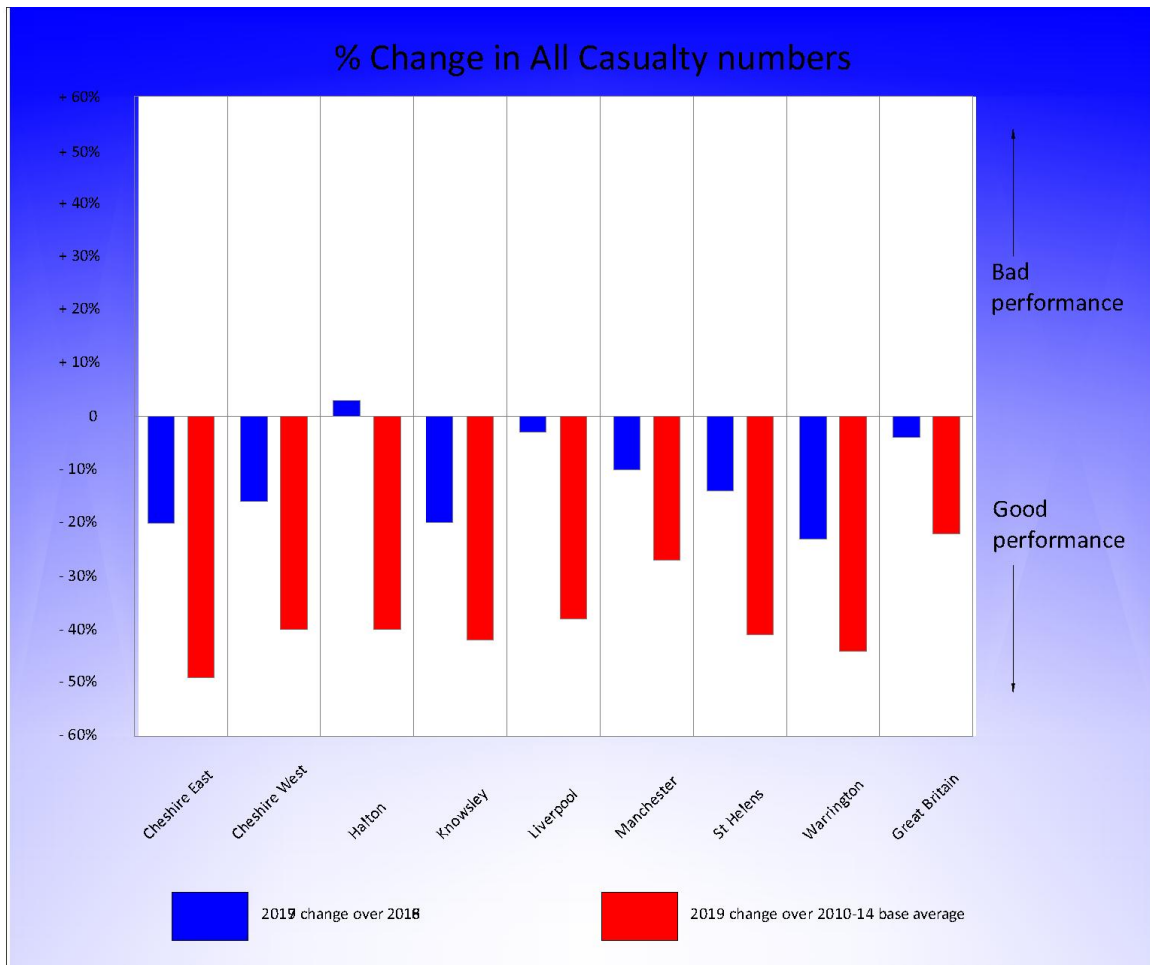
Looking at neighbouring local authorities with regards to KSI casualties, the longer-term trend, both regionally and nationally, is that Halton is one of the better performing Local Authorities. However, it must be noted that given the ongoing changes to the reporting systems used by Police Forces since 2016, it is difficult to gauge the success of casualty reduction strategies of Local Authorities from different Police Constabulary areas.

Within Cheshire, whilst the reporting methods for road traffic collisions have not been subjected to the same level of systemic change as other Police Forces, there have been minor modifications in recent years, making it difficult to determine how effective, or otherwise, the casualty reduction strategy has been. As with the Merseyside Police area, 2019 has seen disparities between Local Authorities in the Cheshire Constabulary area, with only Halton seeing a rise in KSI casualty numbers.

Given the recent changes and lack of uniformity in the reporting systems for KSIs, examining the numbers for all casualties gives a better indication of the relative performance for different Local Authorities within the region. In the last year there has been a small increase in casualties (7), despite collisions falling to an all time low. However, relative to the 2010-2014 base average, Halton is still one of the best performers.

As stated previously, given the very small numbers involved, Halton's KSI casualty figures are prone to wide percentage variations, year on year. 2017 saw a dramatic decrease in numbers that, at the time, was difficult to explain. Conversely, whilst both 2019 and 2018 saw our figures rise slightly, the 5-year rolling average continues to fall and the numbers are historically low.

All casualties	2010-2014 Average	2018	2019	2019 change over 2018	2019 change over 2010-14 average
Cheshire East	1495	950	762	-20%	-49%
Cheshire West & Chester	1222	881	739	-16%	-40%
Halton	397	232	239	+3%	-40%
Knowsley	450	328	262	-20%	-42%
Liverpool	1849	1178	1141	-3%	-38%
Manchester	1645	1339	1206	-10%	-27%
St Helens	480	331	285	-14%	-41%
Warrington	821	590	457	-23%	-44%
GB	196,133	160,378	153,315	-4%	-22%



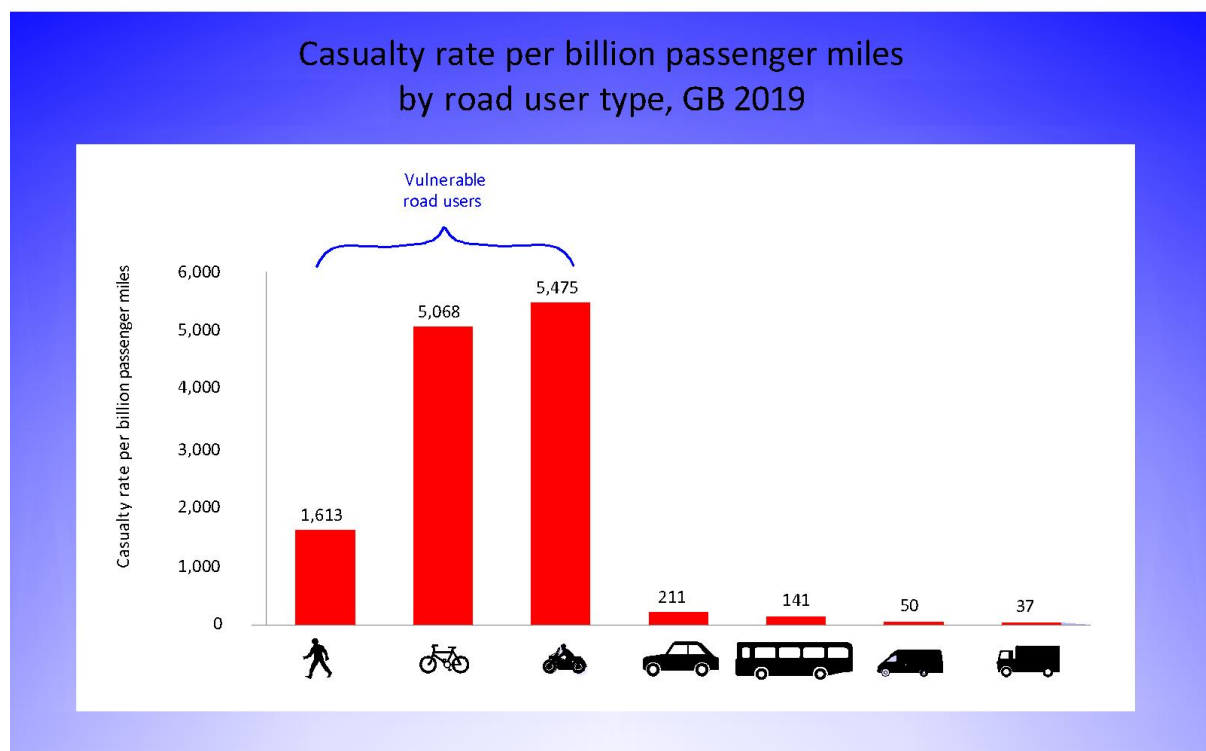
The reasons behind the rise in casualty numbers can be difficult to determine. The number of collisions actually fell by 8% to a record low of 183, but Halton was perhaps unlucky in having a number of collisions that each resulted in more than three casualties, a trend not experienced in 2018. The number of collisions and casualties increased on the Mersey Gateway Bridge and associated Merseylink roads, which are outside the Council's highway network for management purposes. It is important to state that this new road network is undoubtedly a lot safer than the one it replaced.

Ongoing changes to the strategic highway network within Halton have made it difficult to know where best to target resources as part of a casualty reduction strategy. Collisions normally occur on the most congested routes and busiest junctions, and as such, the majority of local safety scheme engineering works are focused there. However, with the temporary closure of the Silver Jubilee Bridge, and works large-scale works associated with the Widnes Loop and Runcorn de-linking, traffic flows across the Borough have been in a state of flux for a number of years. This makes it difficult to determine where best to undertake works, given that road closures / openings will move traffic, and consequently collisions, elsewhere in future years.

Resources have been targeted at schemes where we are certain there will be no significant changes to traffic flows in subsequent years. Much work has been done to improve the road networks near schools by making them more pedestrian friendly. Small-scale initiatives have been undertaken at a number of schools in the past few years and this has contributed to the significant decline in the number of children killed or seriously injured last year.

In 2011 the Government targeted a reduction of 40% in KSIs by 2020, relative to the baseline 2005-09 figures, something Halton is well on course to achieving and surpassing. Looking at recent collision data from Cheshire Police it appears that since the start of the pandemic in the U.K., like traffic flows, casualty numbers have fallen significantly, despite evidence that traffic speeds have increased.

However, the pandemic has caused a modal shift in transport use, as less and less people use relatively safe public transport in favour of walking and cycling, both categorised as vulnerable types of road users:



How this will impact on Halton's ability to co-ordinate an effective casualty reduction programme in future years will be interesting to see. Care must be taken when implementing the Department for Transport's policy to reallocate road space to cyclists and pedestrians to ensure this is done safely.