

REPORT TO: Environment and Urban Renewal
Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 16 February 2022

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director - Enterprise, Community &
Resources

PORTFOLIO: Transportation

SUBJECT: Annual Road Traffic Collision & Casualty Report

WARD(S) Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To report on the latest road traffic collision and casualty numbers within the Borough.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

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

2) the programme of road traffic collision reduction schemes, road safety education, training, and publicity be endorsed.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The latest figures (2020) for Halton show a sharp decline in casualty numbers following last year's slight increase. A summary of the data is as follows:

- There were 159 road traffic collisions involving personal injury within Halton, 24 fewer than the year before and a continuation of the long term downward trend. These incidents resulted in 181 casualties, a 27% decrease on the 2019 figures;
- A total of 22 killed or seriously injured (KSI) is significantly lower than the figures for 2019 (31) and continues the long-term downwards trend.
- 21 of the casualties were classed as serious, with 1 fatality (a decrease of 2 compared to 2019).
- A total of 4 child serious injury (CKSI) represents an unwelcome increase of 100% (compared to 4 in 2019), but given these numbers are so small they are prone to wild statistical fluctuations.
- There was a substantial decrease in the number of people of all ages being slightly injured (SLI), with casualty numbers down to 159 (a 24% reduction from 208 in 2019).

- A total of 8 collisions occurred on Mersey Gateway controlled roads, resulting in 8 casualties, a significant decrease on 2019's figures (23 collisions, 28 casualties). This is probably the starkest indication as to how much traffic levels reduced (particularly at peak hours) during the initial Covid19 lockdowns.
- Halton has achieved its 2020 performance targets, as set by the DfT.

3.2 Appendix A sets out the numbers of traffic collisions and casualties in 2020, together with comparisons of figures for previous years. There is a considerable reduction in the number of people slightly injured (SLI), as compared to 2019 with the numbers killed or seriously injured (KSI) also decreasing by a similar margin.

3.3 Of those killed or seriously injured, the number of adults decreased by 11 but the numbers of child casualties increased by 2. However due to the low numbers recorded annually in Halton, this number does fluctuate from year to year. A 5-year rolling average for casualty numbers is a more effective way to judge relative performance, and whilst Adult KSIs continued its downward trend, Child KSIs showed a marginal increase.

3.4 Overall, given that that the country was in lockdown for large parts of 2020, the number of road traffic collisions was always going to fall, as traffic on our roads fell to levels not seen for many decades. However, when judging Halton's 2020 road traffic collision record in comparison with neighbouring Authorities in Cheshire or the Liverpool City Region, our reduction in casualty numbers compare very favourably.

3.5 **National Position**

Nationally, road casualties decreased by 25% in 2020, as set out in the Department for Transport 2020 Comprehensive Annual Report on Road Casualties available via:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2020/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2020>

3.6 The Department for Transport (DfT) still advises that comparisons with previous years' figures should be interpreted carefully and advise that the 2020 sharp decline in casualty numbers, whilst very welcome, corresponded with a 21% decrease in road traffic.

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. However, although other specific targets have not been set, Halton is well on course to achieve this reduction with ease.

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 completion of the Runcorn delinking works and Widnes Loop, together with the Silver Jubilee Bridge re-opening, reconfigured traffic flows through the Borough somewhat in 2020, and this, together with the dramatic fall in traffic flows associated with the Covid19 lockdowns, has made it difficult to determine where best to target the casualty reduction strategy. Also, with a noticeable modal shift towards walking and cycling, special attention has been given to improving road safety infrastructure around schools, as well as cycling and pedestrian routes linking key areas of economic activity.

4.3 Halton's 2021 Programme

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

- 4.4 Whilst traffic flows remain below what is considered normal and the shift towards home-working has made identifying appropriate sites for road safety engineering works more difficult (especially at traditionally busy commuter routes), 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 ongoing need for social distancing as a result of the pandemic and the shift away from public transport to cycling and walking, this work has an even greater priority. The Council will continue to liaise with Cheshire Police with regards 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. Halton is currently working closely with the -Cheshire Road Safety Group to move forward a proposed red light / speed on green camera site, although the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and focus on average speed cameras has meant that works continue to be delayed.
- 4.5 The Road Safety team continues 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, they also deliver cycle training and the 'Stepping Out' pedestrian safety scheme for primary school children. The 'Show you care, park elsewhere' scheme to reduce congestion and promote road safety outside schools was delivered at eight different hotspots and safer cycling for local businesses and anti-drink driving campaigns at local colleges were delivered. This is in addition to managing the popular School Crossing Patrol service. New for 2021 was the 'Summer Road Safety Activities' at Upton and

Castlefields Community Centres. Funded by Central Government to target areas of high deprivation they were held 4 days per week during the summer and were judged a great success. Indeed, uptake was that good, additional days were put on during school half terms.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

5.2 Funding for casualty reduction work is derived from a number of sources. Since 2011, capital and revenue grants allocated for Road Safety have been reduced. This has led to a reduction in road safety education, training and publicity together with staff resources. This means that the road safety programme must now be prioritised to where the largest potential accident savings 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 It is possible that reductions in road safety resources may impact on road safety and associated road collision statistics.

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 Report to Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board on 18 November 2020.

Report to Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board on 13 November 2019

Report to Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board on 27 February 2019;

Report to Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board on 15 November 2017.

Halton 2020 Traffic Collisions Review

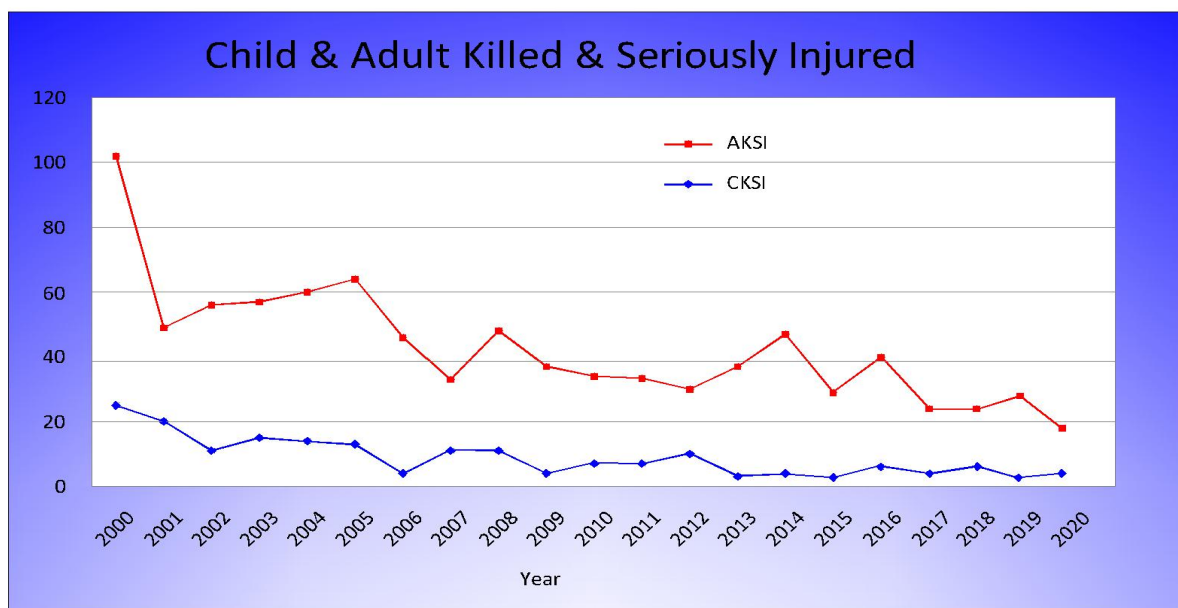
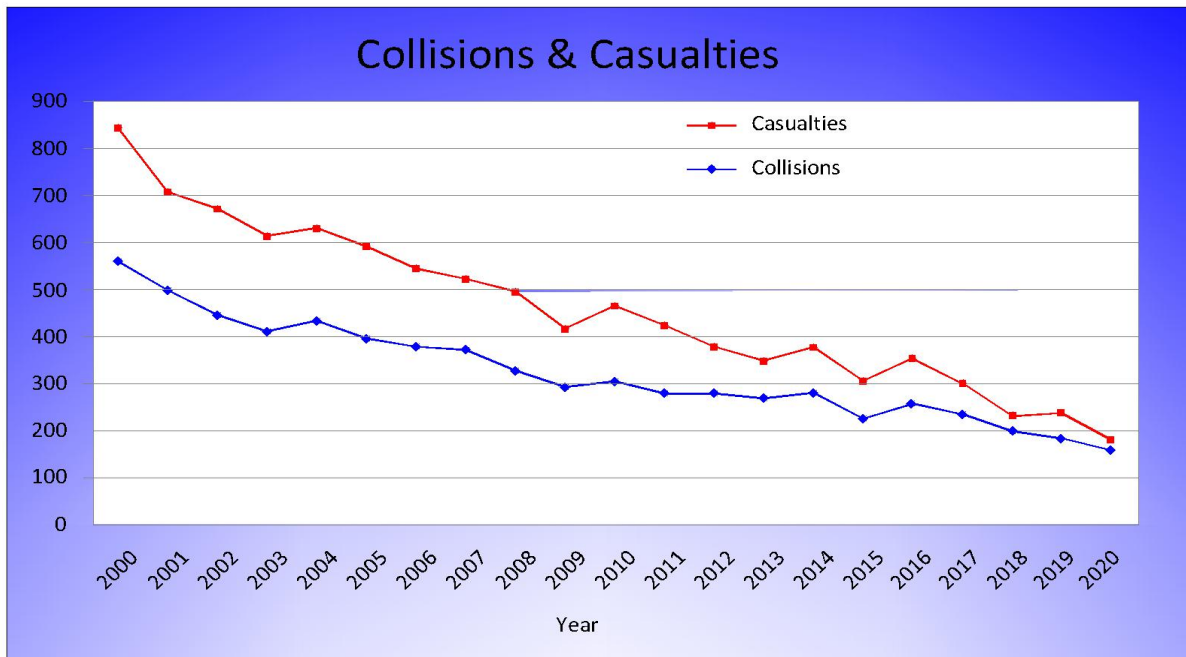
2020 saw a dramatic fall in the number of road traffic casualties in Halton, following last year's slight rise in numbers. This compared favourably with figures, both nationally and regionally. Equally encouragingly was the fall in the number of collisions to just 159, a record low. On a less happy note the number of children seriously injured on our roads last year increased by 2.

All accidents that were reported to Cheshire Police and which occurred within the adopted highway in Halton involving 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 decrease in casualty numbers in Halton were in both the slight injury category (SLI) and the killed or seriously injured (KSI) categories. Although much of this decline in casualty numbers can be attributed to the dramatic fall in traffic flows associated with the Covid19 lockdowns and increase in working from home, Halton's performance was still impressive.

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
2020	159	181	18	4	159

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



2020 saw a dramatic decrease in the number of all-age casualties killed or seriously injured (KSI) in Halton, to a total of 22. Sadly, one person lost their life on Halton's roads in 2020, a fall from three, the year previously.

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. Encouragingly, Halton, in comparison with other Authorities within the Cheshire Constabulary area was one of the better performing Local Authorities, in comparison with 2019 when we were the worst.

Given the small numbers involved and their inherent volatility, it is more advantageous to use a rolling average, taken over a number of years. The five year rolling average (PPTLI 6) actually dropped from 33.4 to 31.4, a significant decline. KSI totals have plateaued 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 have meant that opportunities to drive improvements are limited. It remains to be seen if 2020's figures are the start of a new downward movement in casualty numbers or a temporary blip associated with the extraordinary events surrounding the Covid19 pandemic.

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

In 2020, 4 children were killed or seriously injured in Halton, an increase from 2 in 2019. Due to the numbers being so low, this annual total is traditionally very prone to variations, year on year. The five year rolling CKSI average (PPLTI 7) has also increased and is now 4.4, compared with 4.0, last year. Increases in child casualty numbers are never welcome and there is a renewed focus on schools for road safety engineering and education. On a positive note, there was a 29% reduction in children slightly injured in Halton.

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

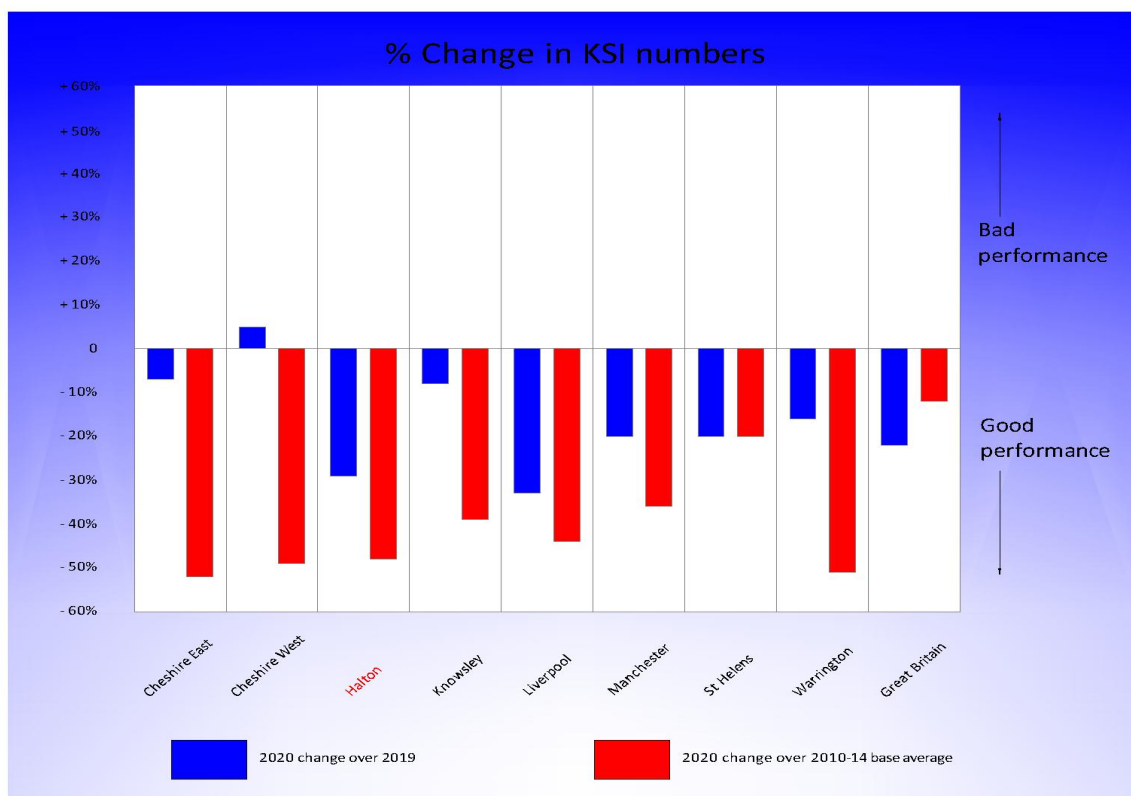
In 2020 there was a 24% decrease in people of all ages slightly injured in Halton.

As a consequence of much lower traffic levels, most Authorities also achieved significant reductions in slight casualty numbers, but Halton appears to have performed better than most.

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, 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	2010-2014 average	2019	2020	2020 change over 2019	2020 change over 2010-14 average
Cheshire East	232	120	112	-7%	-52%
Cheshire West & Chester	191	92	97	+5%	-49%
Halton	42	31	22	-29%	-48%
Knowsley	56	37	34	-8%	-39%
Liverpool	225	190	127	-33%	-44%
Manchester	172	137	110	-20%	-36%
St Helens	66	66	53	-20%	-20%
Warrington	96	56	47	-16%	-51%
GB	24,456	27,723	21,562	-22%	-12%



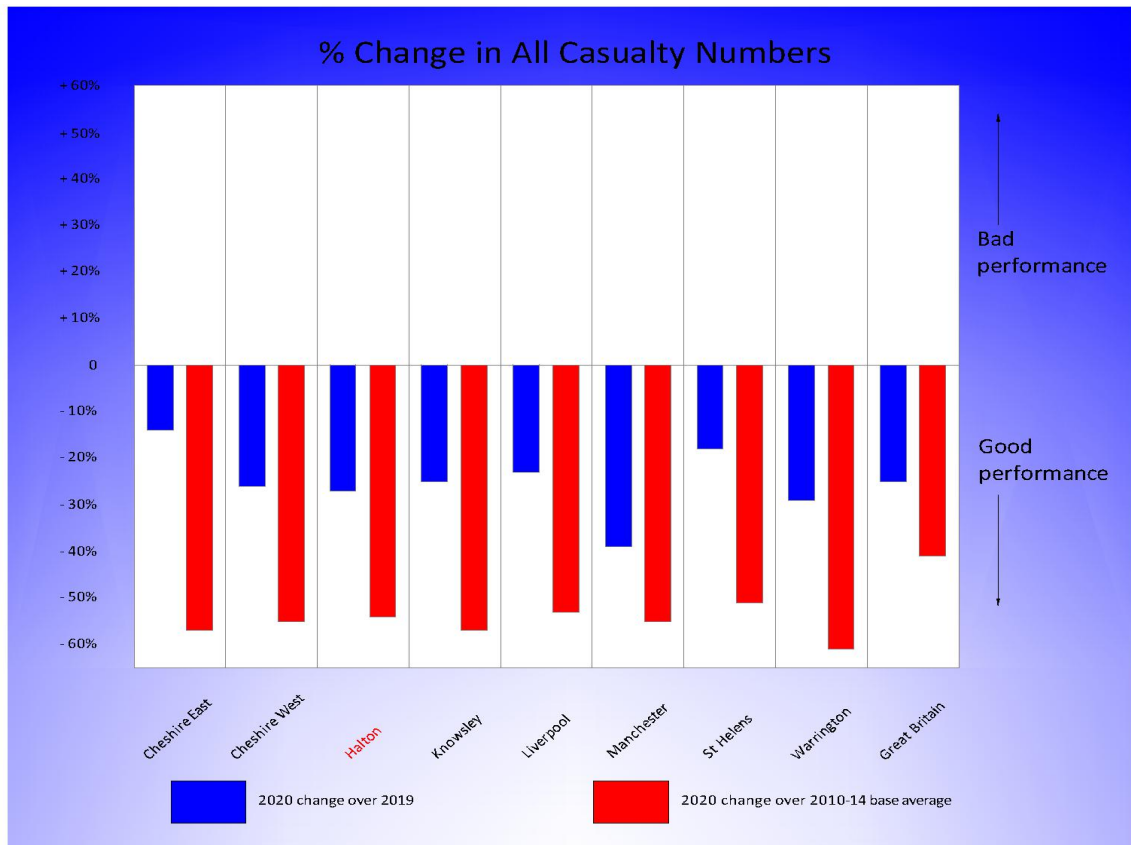
Looking at neighbouring Local Authorities, it is clear that with regards to KSI casualties, Halton is one of the most effective areas in the region in 2020. Longer-term trends paint a similar picture, and both regionally and nationally, Halton is one of the better performing Local Authorities. However, it must be noted that the ongoing changes to the reporting systems used by Police Forces since 2016 have stalled somewhat during the pandemic, making it easier to gauge the success of casualty reduction strategies of Local Authorities from different Police Constabulary areas in the past 12 months. As such, with no changes to collision reporting in any Police Constabularies last year, the collision data for 2020 is directly comparable with that of the previous year.

Looking at the table below it is apparent that Halton's performance in reducing road traffic casualty numbers is better than most of our neighbouring Local Authorities in the previous 12 months. However, relative to the 2010-2014 base average, Halton is about average, but it must be remembered that between 2000 and 2009 we were one of the top performing Local Authorities, both regionally and nationally.

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, in 2020 there was a 29% reduction in KSIs of all ages. Our 5-year rolling average continues its steady decline.

Looking beyond the pandemic and traffic increasing to normal levels, it is difficult to imagine casualty numbers, particularly KSIs, falling much further, especially as we've seen an 83% fall in KSI casualties in the past 20 years. It might be that keeping casualty numbers at a low level, whilst traffic levels increase, will be judged a success.

All casualties	2010-2014 average	2019	2020	2020 change over 2019	2020 change over 2010-14 average
Cheshire East	1495	751	645	-14%	-57%
Cheshire West & Chester	1222	743	550	-26%	-55%
Halton	397	249	181	-27%	-54%
Knowsley	450	259	194	-25%	-57%
Liverpool	1849	1143	876	-23%	-53%
Manchester	1645	1209	735	-39%	-55%
St Helens	480	285	235	-18%	-51%
Warrington	821	454	323	-29%	-61%
GB	196,133	153,158	115,584	-25%	-41%



The reasons behind the sharp fall in casualty numbers are not difficult to determine. With the lockdowns and exponential increase in working from home traffic levels decreased dramatically, particularly during the spring and summer of 2020. With so much less traffic on our roads, especially during traditional peak hours, this had a positive impact on road safety. The number of casualties on the Mersey Gateway Bridge and associated Merseylink roads decreased by a staggering 71%, which illustrates just how much commuter traffic levels fell in 2020.

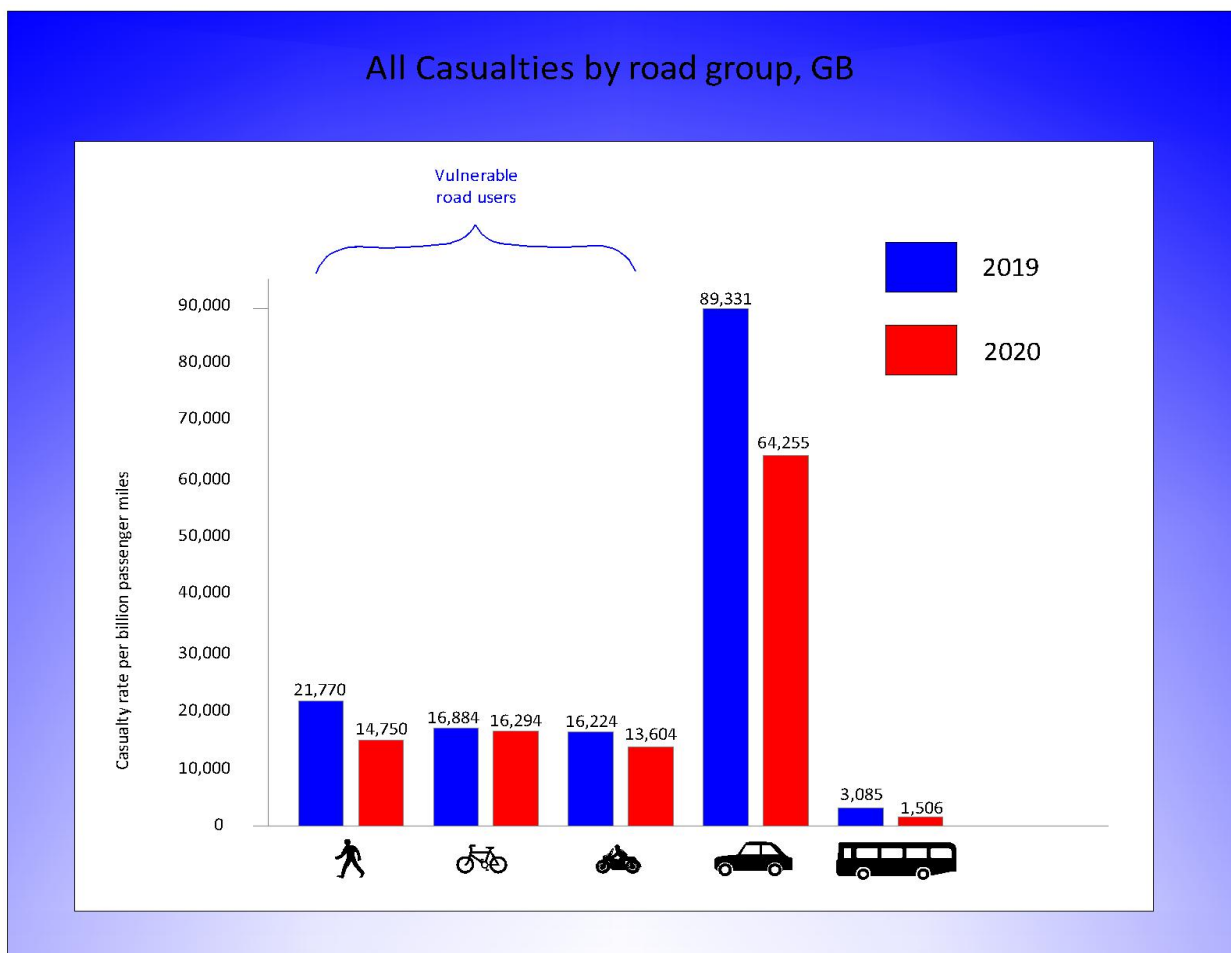
The changes to the strategic highway network within Halton were complete in 2020, but the collapse in traffic levels on these roads continued to make it difficult to know where best to target resources as part of a casualty reduction strategy. Collisions normally occur on the most congested routes and busiest junctions, and as such, the majority of local safety scheme engineering works are focused here. However, although the Silver Jubilee Bridge opened and large-scale works associated with the Widnes Loop and Runcorn de-linking were complete, traffic flows across the Borough continue to be in a state of flux. This makes it difficult to determine where best to undertake accident remedial works, with a certain amount of educated guesswork required as a lot of traffic modelling is no longer relevant.

Quite rightly, resources have been targeted at schemes where we are certain there will be no significant changes to traffic flows in subsequent years. Much continues to be done to improve the road networks near schools, relieving congestion and making them more pedestrian friendly. However, many of the problems experienced here can be blamed on poor

driver behaviour and it is a very difficult task trying to educate drivers and re-inforce positive behaviour.

In 2011 the Government has targeted a reduction of 40% in KSIs by 2020, relative to the baseline 2005-09 figures, something Halton has achieved and surpassed with ease. Indeed, Halton has managed a 62% reduction during this period. Looking forwards, I am unaware of any new road casualty reduction targets set by U.K. Government, although in 2020, the Government spoke at the World Health Organisation's Road Safety 2020 conference in Stockholm, supporting the global target of "50 by 30" in the UN road safety declaration (a 50% reduction in road traffic deaths and injuries by 2030). However no announcement has been made regarding the adoption of these targets.

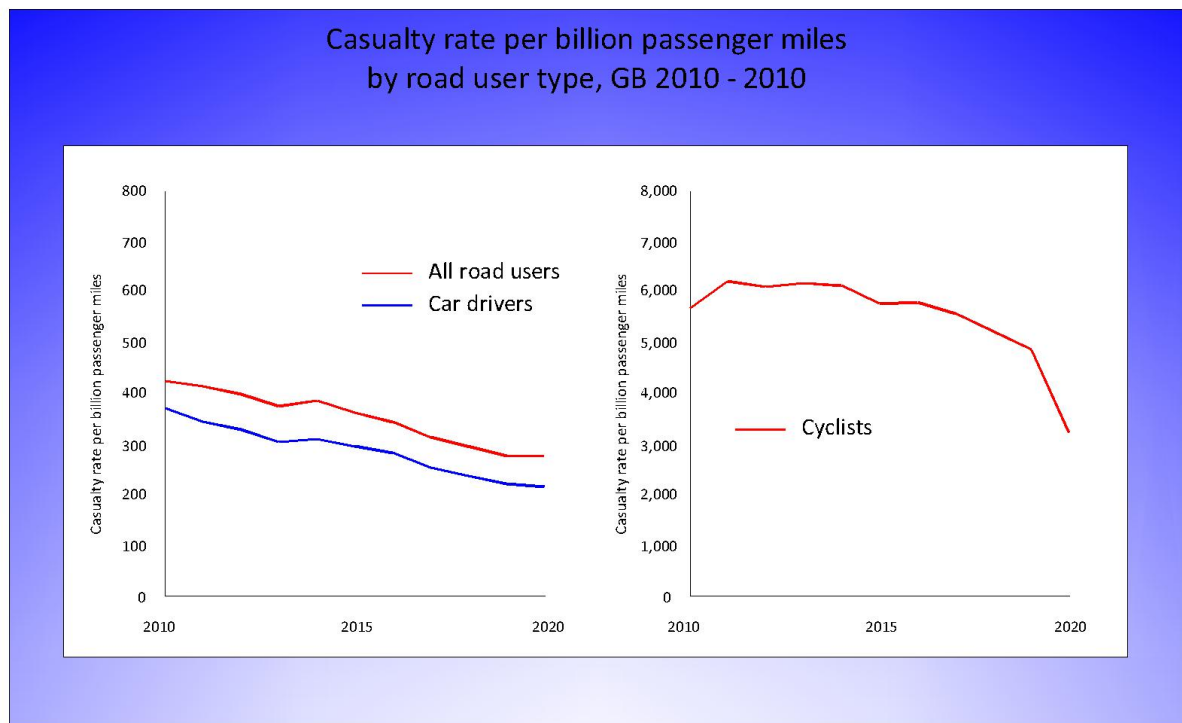
It is very noticeable that the ongoing pandemic has caused a modal shift in transport use, as less and less people use relatively safe public transport in favour of walking and cycling, both categorised as vulnerable types of road users:



Looking at casualty numbers for all types of road users it is noticeable that there were massive reductions in both the car user / passenger and bus passenger groups, whilst the number of cyclists injured on our roads remained constant. However, when looking at the casualty rate per billion passenger miles it is noticeable that there was a dramatic, and very welcome, fall

for

cyclists.



In 2020 the DfT provided funding for Local Authorities to implement cycling and walking initiatives. Whilst some of the schemes received a mixed response from the public, many proved popular with cyclists and as well as enhancing safety they appear to have attracted new cyclists on to our roads. Since then there has been a new emphasis on building a cycle network that links residential areas with town centres and employment areas, as well as new leisure routes.

From a road safety perspective it will be increasingly difficult to achieve a reduction in casualty number future years whilst promoting a growth in use of cycling, traditionally one of the most vulnerable road groups, with a very high casualty rate. There is a demand to provide cycling provision in all new highway design and undoubtedly there will be a tension between providing an efficient road network for motor vehicles and a safe environment for an increasingly high level of cycle usage. It will be interesting to see if the right balance can be found.