

REPORT: Environment and Urban Renewal
Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 21 November 2012

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Policy & Resources

PORTFOLIO: Transportation

SUBJECT: Annual Road Traffic Collision & Casualty Report.

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To report road traffic collision and casualty numbers within the Borough in the year 2011 and to recommend a continuance of road traffic collision reduction work.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 **It is recommended that:**

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

2. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

2.1 The report attached as Appendix 'A' sets out full details of the numbers of traffic collisions and casualties in the year 2011, and compares these figures with those for previous years. These results are exceptionally good. The report also gives details of casualty trends locally against national figures and highlights concerns regarding the resources available to continue road safety work in the future.

2.2 In summary during 2011:

- There were 278 road traffic collisions involving personal injury in Halton, this being the lowest number in over 20 years. These incidents produced 422 casualties;
- 35 of the casualties were classed as serious, and there were 5 deaths, giving a total of 40 killed or seriously injured (KSI) which is the lowest in over 20 years;
- The child serious injury (CKSI) total of 7 is one more than in 2010, but unlike 2010 when one child died on our roads, there were no child fatalities in 2011 and this number is in line with the trend for gradual on-going reductions year to year;
- The number of people of all ages being slightly (SLI) injured fell from 423 in 2010 to 382;

- 2.3 Overall, the results confirm the success of our casualty reduction work, supported via revenue funds and the Local Transport Plan with targeted enforcement and local road safety education, training, publicity and traffic management initiatives undertaken independently and jointly with partner organisations
- 2.4 Halton's slight reduction in the local KSI total in 2011 bucks the national trend which saw the first annual increase (2%) in the number of people KSI in road accidents since 2003. Following the Coalition Government decision to cut road safety funding and abandon national casualty reduction targets, this reversal is a departure from a long-term national trend of decreasing road casualties
- 2.5 The Department for Transport 2011 comprehensive annual report on road casualties is available at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/news/press-releases/dft-press-20120927a>

4.0 TARGETS

- 4.1 Over the ten years leading up to 2010, there were nationally set targets for road casualty reduction work which Halton met and comfortably surpassed, as reported in last year's Annual Road Traffic Collision & Casualty Report to the Board in November 2011. Across the various targets, Halton was one of the most successful authorities and in March 2012, as one of the highest achievers, the authority hosted a visit from members of the Parliamentary Transport Select Committee. Their purpose was to explore how Halton had managed to achieve so much over the target period.
- 4.2 In 2010, the ten year casualty reduction targets set in 2000 expired. Although 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. Rather, the new government published its Strategic Framework for Road Safety in May 2011 based on what the government describes as the "key principles" of localism, the "Big Society", non-regulatory approaches and deficit reduction. The Coalition Government aims to maintain on-going reductions in casualty numbers, whilst tackling specific issues such as those of cyclists and children from deprived areas.
- 4.3 Within the Government's 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.
- 4.4 The Coalition Government's "Strategic Framework for Road Safety" is available at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/strategic-framework-for-road-safety/>

5.0 FUNDING CUTS

- 5.1 Since April 2011, Halton has suffered the loss of annual Government funded capital and revenue Road Safety grants of £75k and £396k respectively. This has resulted in a halving of the number of Road Safety Officers in Halton and loss of funding for a wide range of projects and initiatives. The cuts have also meant

Halton no longer provides any financial contribution to the local safety camera partnership (see below).

5.2 Whilst Halton's 2011 casualty figures are exceptionally good, the fear remains that these cuts will at some point have an impact on our ability to continue achieving year on year reductions, despite the best efforts to maximise resources through running initiatives jointly with our neighbours from Warrington Borough Council and other partner organisations such as Cheshire Police and Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service (CFRS) – organisations which in turn have had resources removed, most especially recently CFRS, which is facing cuts requiring a re-focussing of its core activities.

5.3 Nationally, Coalition Government budget cuts affecting road safety work may already be starting to impact on casualty levels, although in its annual casualty report (see para 3.5 above) the Department for Transport seeks to offer alternative reasons for the disappointing yearly casualty figures in 2011.

6.0 CHESHIRE ROAD SAFETY GROUP

6.1 In 2011, the loss of the Road Safety grant saw Cheshire Road Safety Group (CRSG) being formed to replace the former Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership (CSRPP). Its purpose is to operate the Cheshire East, Cheshire West & Chester, Halton and Warrington safety cameras. Due to the level of cuts it has experienced, Halton is unable to contribute financially to the Group but continues to participate in joint safety initiatives locally. The Speed Awareness Courses, are being expanded to include other moving traffic offences, and drivers can be referred to these instead of receiving a fine and penalty points; the courses are now being run by Cheshire Police. However, as a non-contributing partner, Halton does not get a share of any surplus revenue that may come from the Speed Awareness Courses. The other partners who do share the surpluses have however, decided to use them to fund the replacement of wet film cameras with digitalised ones, which in itself is an expensive operation.

6.2 Since April 2011, the fixed safety camera sites within Halton have not been operated by Cheshire Police. The CRSG is faced with having to replace its outmoded wet film equipment with digital cameras and new housings and a review of all existing camera sites is underway to establish which will be retained and which are no longer justified. Halton is actively engaged in this process, but the future of many of our safety camera sites is in considerable doubt as most of them lack the necessary recent accident history to warrant retention.

7.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

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

7.2 There are no other direct social inclusion, sustainability, value for money, legal or crime and disorder implications resulting from this report

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES.

8.1 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.

8.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

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

8.3 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.

8.4 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.

8.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

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

9.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES.

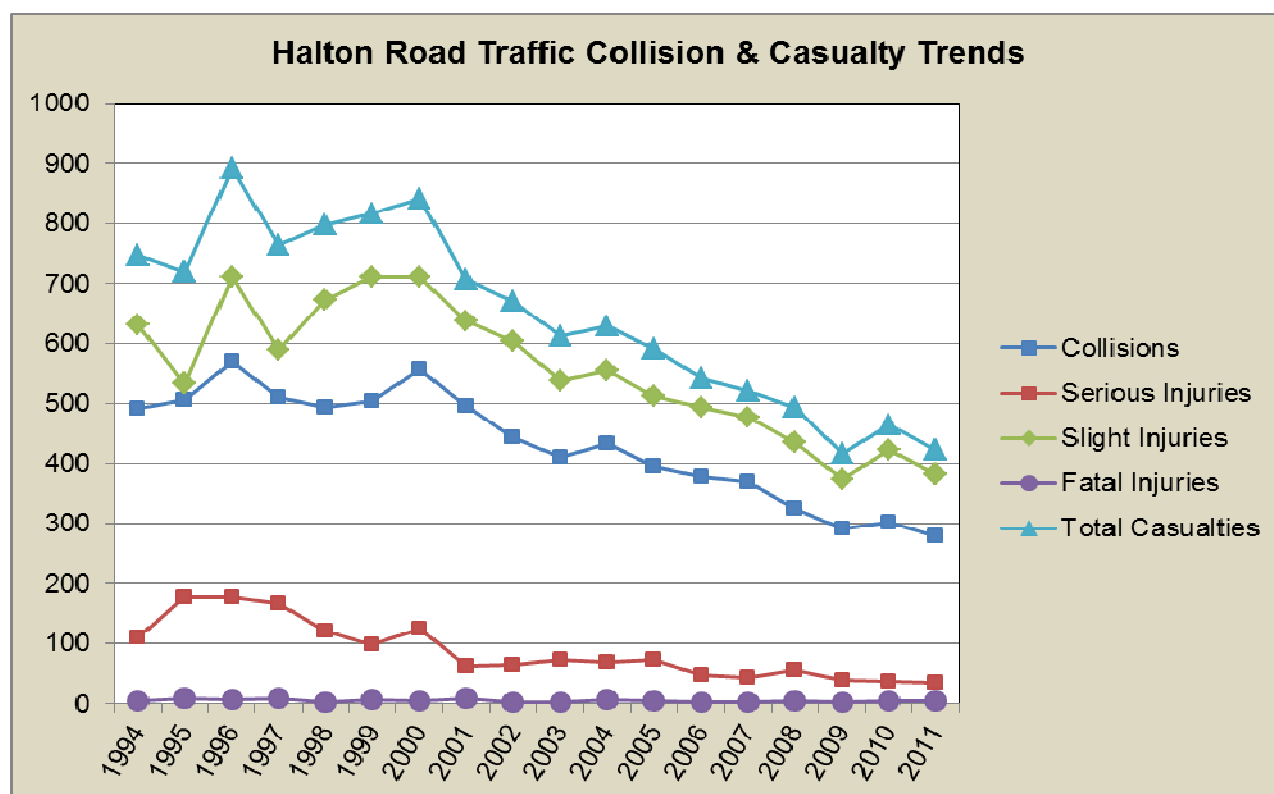
9.1 There are no direct equality and diversity issues associated with this report.

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 The Annual Road Traffic Collision & Casualty Report to the E&UR PPB considered on 23 November 2011

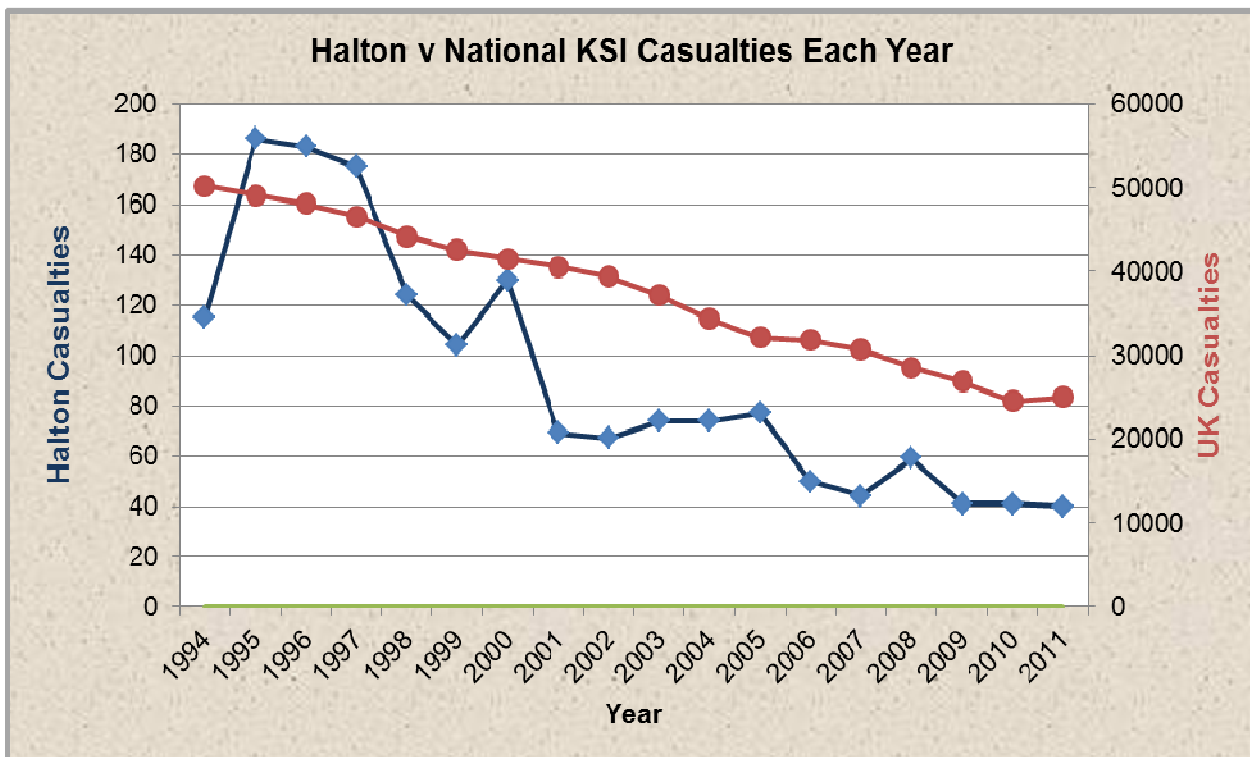
Halton 2011 Traffic Collisions Review

2011 saw a decrease in the number of road traffic accidents and casualties in Halton relative to the previous year and the general levels were in line with the overall trend for progressive, if fluctuating, reductions stretching back over a decade. Accidents and most particularly, serious injuries are now at their lowest level in over twenty years.



Year	Collisions	Deaths	Serious Injuries	Slight Injuries	Total Casualties
1994	491	5	110	631	746
1995	506	8	178	534	720
1996	569	6	177	710	893
1997	511	8	167	589	764
1998	493	3	121	673	797
1999	504	6	98	712	816
2000	558	4	126	712	842
2001	497	8	61	637	706
2002	444	3	64	603	670
2003	409	2	72	538	612
2004	432	6	68	555	629
2005	394	4	73	513	590
2006	377	2	48	493	543
2007	370	2	42	477	521
2008	326	4	55	435	494
2009	291	2	39	374	415
2010	303	4	37	423	464
2011	278	5	35	382	422

Killed & Seriously Injured, All Ages (KSI) (Local Indicator)

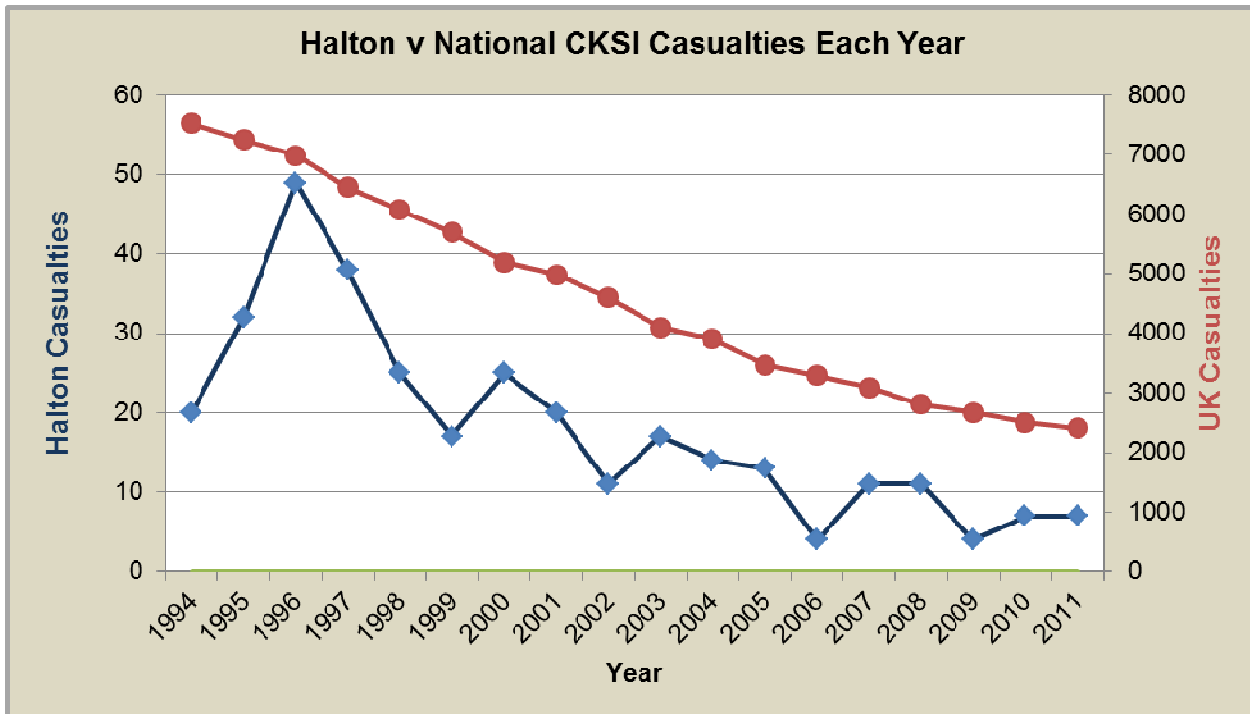
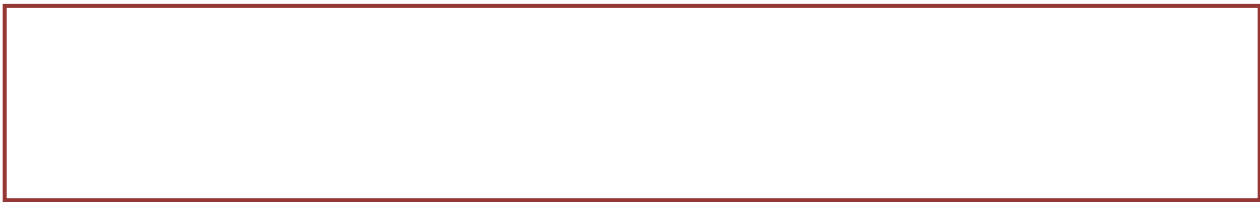


It is interesting to note that the national KSI total increased by 2% in 2011, the first increase in over twenty years coming in the immediate aftermath of the road safety funding cuts implemented by the coalition government.

As the annual KSI numbers fall in Halton, so the total becomes more vulnerable to fluctuations from year to year caused by the intermittent occurrence of rare, but not unknown, accidents in which several people are seriously injured simultaneously. However the distribution of KSI casualties over different modes of travel displays established downward trends for motorcyclists, pedestrians and car users, though no real pattern for cyclists:

Mode	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Motorcycle	12	14	12	10	7
Pedestrians	14	11	10	13	10
Cyclists	3	7	3	3	6
Car Users	12	26	16	13	13

Children (Under 16's) Killed & Seriously Injured (CKSI) (Local Indicator)



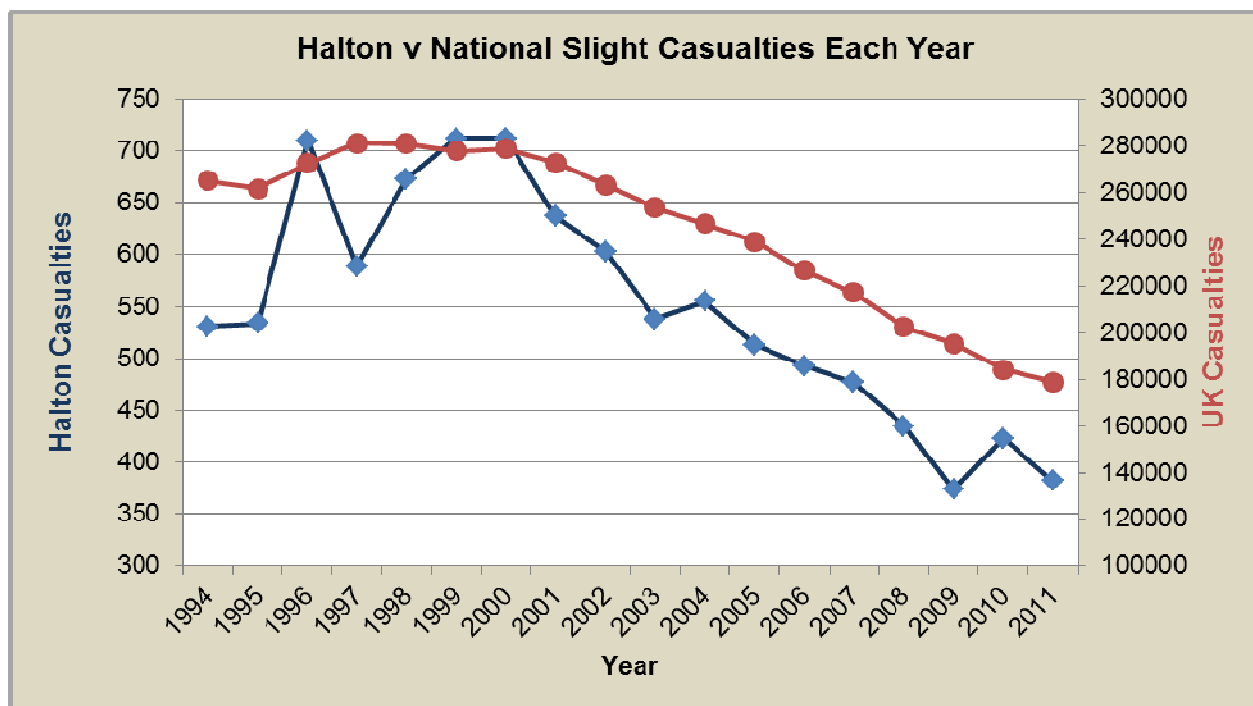
Nationally, the rate of reduction of child fatalities & serious injuries has been slackening in recent years and given this trend and the large scale reductions in the level of road safety education work that is now possible due to funding cuts. It is reasonable to envisage a time soon when CKSI casualties could increase, as has already happened with (all age) KSI numbers.

The majority of CKSI casualties nationally (66%) are pedestrians, and the same is true in Halton: of the seven CKSI casualties locally in 2011, six were pedestrians and the other one a cyclist. It is now four years since a child was seriously injured as a passenger in a car in Halton.

Road Safety education work with children relies heavily on direct contact, mainly in the classroom, and this involvement is an area of contact that has been most severely affected by cuts in the numbers of road safety officers resulting from the Coalition Government austerity measures.

Intensive work with children can affect their behaviour on the roads for the rest of their lifetime, and falling levels of involvement could be storing up problems for future years.

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



The large reductions in SLI casualties in recent years have not been evenly distributed across the various modes of travel, with most of the reductions being in the car user category:

SLIGHT CASUALTIES					
Mode	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Motorcycle	25	16	17	18	25
Pedestrians	31	31	31	28	34
Cyclists	22	23	24	22	21
Total without car users	78	70	72	68	80
Car users only	338	296	264	296	243

Value of Prevention

The Department for Transport published the average value of prevention of reported road accidents, in 2011. In built-up areas these figures are £1.87 million for a fatal accident and £215,223 for a serious collision. Lastly there is a figure of £22,587 for slight damage incidents. These figures include the costs for loss of output, medical and other emergency service costs, and finally human costs. They are essentially the costs (both local and national) to the community of them happening. Converting these to Halton, the total value of prevention of the 2011 total of 5 fatal, 33 serious and 240 slight accidents was £21.8 million (note this does not mean that Halton would save this amount of money if it did not have any road traffic accidents).

Strategic Framework for Road Safety

The Strategic Framework for Road Safety published by the Coalition Government in May 2011 set out a proposed outcomes framework designed to help government, local organisations and citizens to monitor any progress towards improving road safety and decreasing the number of fatalities and seriously injured casualties. This identified six key indicators which relate to road deaths which were intended to measure the key outcomes of the strategy at a national level. However, the DfT, recognising that at a local level the number of road deaths is small and subject to fluctuation, instead opted for a set of three indicators based not just on deaths and serious injuries and proposed use of the following as key indicators:

- Number of KSI casualties
- Rate of KSI per million people
- Rate of KSI per billion vehicle miles

Data for these three key indicators is available via the DfT., allowing performance in Halton to be compared to neighbouring authorities, using the 2005-09 average figures as a base.

Number of KSI casualties:

	2005-09 average	2010	2011	2011 change over 2010	2011 change over 2005-09 base average
Cheshire East	284	245	242	-1%	-15%
Cheshire West & Chester	238	185	228	23%	-4%
Halton	54	41	40	-2%	-26%
Knowsley	58	55	41	-25%	-29%
Liverpool	218	229	195	-15%	-11%
Manchester	222	166	174	5%	-21%
St. Helens	65	45	73	62%	12%
Warrington	104	103	107	4%	2%

Whilst at present Halton may appear to be comfortably placed under this new measurement regime, as a small area with very low annual KSI totals we are particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in our reported performance. For example, should one car full of people be involved in a serious accident that generated five serious injuries, this would cause a 10% degradation in our annual performance figure. The reality is that the year to year KSI performance fluctuations that this authority has experienced in the past and that similarly afflict our neighbours (NB. Cheshire West & Chester and St. Helens figures above) seriously undermine the validity of this method of comparison which is an unreasonable yardstick to use, particularly for the smaller, and to date very successful authority.

As has been pointed out to the DfT in the course of earlier consultation exercises, those authorities that achieved the highest rates of casualty reduction under the previous government's 2000-2010 Road Safety Strategy are now in a very weak position to achieve further reductions and they will compare badly with others that achieved little up

to 2010. It is the view of officers that the basis of the new Key Outcomes indicators is therefore flawed.

It is difficult to see how Halton can perform well under this new Framework, especially given the degree to which the authority has been penalised by removal of the road safety grant funding and reduction in the number of road safety staff. These concerns have been formally expressed to the DfT.