

Environment Committee, Thursday, 24 July 2014
Members' Item: Borough Road Safety Strategy
Brief from Traffic and Development (Rē)

Barnet has historically had a higher number of road traffic casualties than most other boroughs and this will be, at least in part, because it is also one of the most populous boroughs with road length and total traffic miles close to the highest in London. (Second largest borough in London in terms of its population; second highest level of traffic in terms of vehicle distance travelled and the third highest total road length including the highest length of Transport for London (TfL) roads¹).

Nevertheless in the 10 years to 2010 the reduction in traffic casualties on borough roads against the 1994-08 average was 51% for casualties killed or seriously injured (KSI) and 27% for slightly injured casualties. In both cases this was a little less than the average London-wide reduction.

For the period to 2020 the borough's Local Implementation Plan targets are:

- for Killed & Seriously Injured (KSI) casualties a 33% reduction by 2020 against the 2004-08 average; and
- for total casualties a 10% reduction by 2020 against the 2004-08 average.

Currently the KSI target is on track and the total casualty indicator is well ahead of the target.

Safe Streets for London (SSfL) the London Mayor's Road Safety Action Plan was published last summer and includes a 40% reduction in KSI casualties by 2020 compared with the 2005-09 average for London as a whole. This is more stretching than the equivalent borough long-term target although it does not automatically apply at individual borough level.

SSfL highlights the risk to specific vulnerable road users – pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists travelling on London's roads. KSI casualties amongst these groups now account for four in five of those killed or seriously injured on London's roads. In Barnet vulnerable road users do not make up quite such a high proportion of the total number of KSI casualties – but do account for around two thirds.

SSfL included commitments to publish Motorcycle, Pedestrian and cycle Safety Action Plans and since then the Motorcycle Safety Action Plan has been published and the draft Pedestrian Safety Action Plan and Cycling Safety Action Plan have been produced for consultation. An officer response was provided to the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan and the Cycle Safety Action Plan response is included on the agenda for the meeting.

¹ Around a quarter of casualties in the borough occur on, or at junctions with, TfL roads (A1, A41, A406). Performance in addressing casualties on the TfL and borough networks are reasonably comparable.

There is a wealth of quantitative data available regarding the locations of personal injury accidents reported to the police. This is the data generally used by road safety officers and engineers to monitor the locations and types of incident occurring to allow effective safety schemes and campaigns to be planned.

This data is derived from the "Stats19" reports of injury accidents made to the police and is collated by Transport for London and provided to boroughs. TfL also produce a range of reports including ranking of accident locations. Recent analyses have included identification of locations with higher levels of vulnerable road user casualties. The borough can also carry out its own analyses including cluster analysis that identifies locations with a high number of incidents generally or incidents with particular characteristics.

The data relates to injury accidents only, not near misses or 'damage only' incidents. Although these incidents may be of concern, injury accidents are more consistently reported and are probably a better tool for addressing casualties. Resident requests often highlight road safety concerns and these are generally cross checked against accident records before considering action. Sometimes locations are perceived as unsafe when in fact the accident risk is low compared with other similar locations that might be treated more effectively with the limited resources available.

Information from residents regarding accident hotspots is very likely to be subjective, and would not be a substitute for an objective identification from the available accident data.

As well as providing targets for casualty reduction in the borough, Barnet's Local Implementation Plan also identifies an objective of 'making travel safer and more attractive' and makes general provision for road safety education, training and publicity and for road safety engineering schemes as means of delivering this.

Cabinet agreed in March this year the recommendations arising from the 20mph Zones Task and Finish Group that included updating the Council's Road Safety Plan to include a clear policy position on 20 mph zones and limits, and for this to be delivered within 12 months from the date of reporting to Cabinet (i.e. by March 2015).

A wider reaching rewrite of the borough road safety plan is probably appropriate in order to meaningfully address the inclusion of the 20mph zone policy and would be warranted (the last formal version dates from 2004). However there is a conflict between the timeframes of the current member's item and the timeframes identified in the March 2014 20mph zone decision.