

By: Nick Chard, Cabinet Member, Environment, Highways & Waste

To: Environment, Highways & Waste Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Subject: Delivering Road Safety Service into the future

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This paper identifies alternative proposal to the current approach and seeks views from Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider these changes as we continue to strive to reduce road crash casualties.

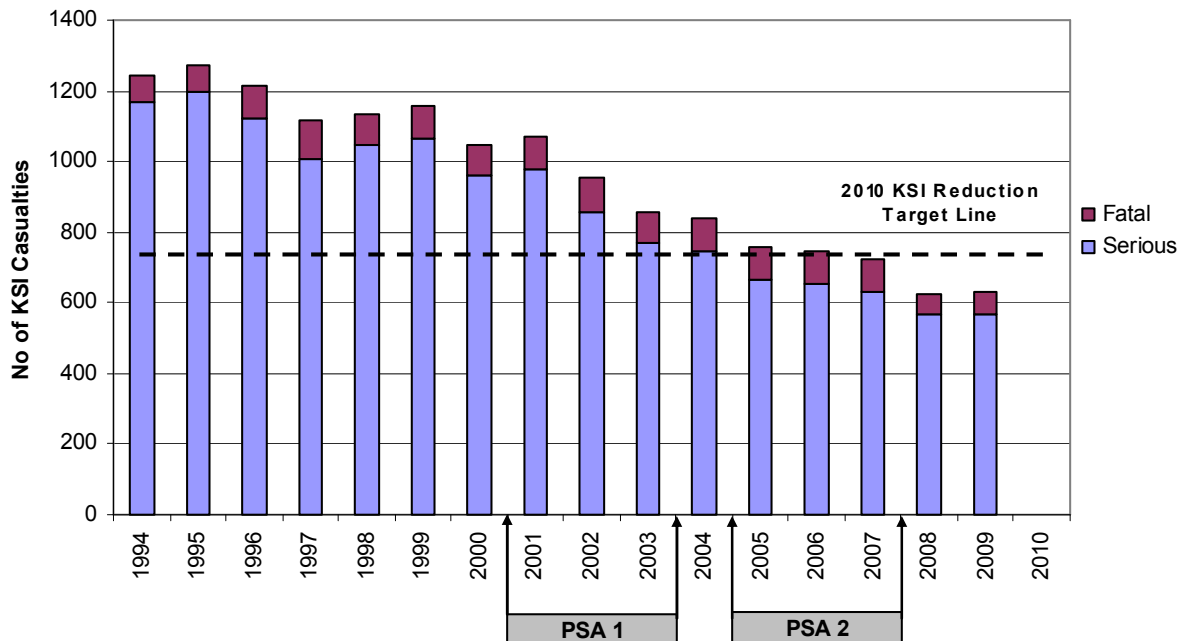
1. Introduction

Kent Highway Services has the primary objective of ensuring that safety is at the heart of managing the highway asset. Road Safety has a single purpose, 'to contribute to life in Kent, by reducing the number of people killed and injured on Kent's roads'. Government has set local authorities targets to reduce the numbers of those Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI's), Kent County Council has monitored through the 2010 targets and now through corporate Core Monitoring.

Reductions of those killed or seriously injured have been made and Government targets have been exceeded. In Kent the 1994-98 baseline figure stood at 1196 KSI's and the 2010 target was set as 718 KSI's. At the end of 2009 the KSI figure was 629 KSI's representing a 47% reduction. The chart below shows the casualty reduction progress made since 2000.

Overall casualty reductions across Kent can be seen on the following graph;

KSI's on Kent (KCC and HA exc Medway) roads 1994-2009



Whilst Government targets have been exceeded it remains that further reductions need to be achieved.

Through Kent Highway Services, Road Safety has four key activities that have played a part in casualty reduction – these are the four “E’s”

- Education through awareness and training
- Encouragement through publicity campaigns
- Engineering, through making changes to the Highway Network that control or influence road user behaviour
- Enforcement, through the Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership

The contribution to casualty reduction at the Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership (KMSCP) is attributed to the number of KSI's being reduced from an annual average of 142 down to 41 (the annual average of 2007 to 2009). The Casualty Reduction groups (CaRe) and KMSCP, partners of these two bodies are Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue, KCC, Medway Council, Highways Agency and HM Court Services – partners aim to continue working together to make a positive impact for Kent.

2. Statutory Duty for Kent County Council

Kent County Council has a statutory duty under the Road Traffic Act 1988 to:

- carry out studies into the cause of accidents on the roads in their area
- take appropriate measures to prevent accidents

These measures must include:

- distribution of road safety information and advice
- provision of practical training for road users
- use of measures for controlling and assisting the movement of traffic on all roads
- use of appropriate measures for reducing the risk of accidents when constructing new roads

Whilst future budget provision is to be determined, KHS Road Safety remains committed to deliver the highest possible outcome of financial return through the reduction of casualties on Kent roads. It is estimated by the Department for Transport that each fatality costs society in the region of £1.6m and each serious injury around £189k.

3. Future financing of Road Safety

In the past the Road Safety operations have been funded by reward and area based grants. KCC's contribution for the current financial year is £970k. Current levels of Road Safety resource grant have been reduced to £1.6m; this has been primarily used to fund the Safety Camera Partnership which costs £1.2m, the remainder funds education, training and publicity programmes.

The comprehensive spending review has removed all ring fencing of area based grants. It remains for KCC to decide how Road Safety should be financed. In anticipation of the spending review ACPO has recommended to the Department for Transport that a revised operating and financing model be introduced, it is anticipated that this operating model creates a sustainable Safety Partnership, presently this has not been fully modelled in Kent.

This critical factor should be considered as future proposals are discussed.

4. Key proposals for discussion to create a sustainable service

Kent has a successful casualty reduction partnership that could evolve to form a more holistic approach to better inform and influence Road Safety priorities and policies. It is proposed to bring the Health Service to the Road Safety Board (described in the benefits paper, *Rationale for establishing working relations between Kent County Council and the health economy in Kent*)

It is proposed and documented in “*An Operational Review of the Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership*” to create a new operating model which leads more offenders to being referred to driver improvement rather than fixed penalties. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the Department of Transport are considering these changes, this is likely to change the stewardship of the Safety Partnership away from KCC to Kent Police, detailed decisions are due in the coming months.

Governance and operational working mechanisms will be established to create a more holistic solution through the four “E’s” enabling:

- Development of cross cutting policy opportunities and recommendations, and providing insight into the impacts upon casualty reduction
- Discussion around areas of public concern such as wider speed enforcement and perception of safety
- Better understanding of crash data and broader intelligence to inform casualty reduction strategies at individual and collective agency levels
- Improved common understanding that reducing casualties not only serves society on a human level but also relieves financial pressure upon individual partners

Further consideration will be given to determine how the existing Road Safety Team should be best positioned in the future. This will be determined through the Future Highways Programme led by the Director of Kent Highway Services.

5. Recommendations

Members support the recommendations made in this paper.

6. Background documents

- An Operational Review of the Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership
- Rationale for establishing working relations between Kent County Council and the health economy in Kent

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