

Road Accident Casualties in Bath and North East Somerset

Report to Planning, Transport & Environment Panel 16th July 2013

Background

B&NES maintain a record of all accidents involving injury which are reported to the Police. It is a legal requirement for accidents involving injury to be reported to the Police, however, it is accepted that some accidents go unreported, especially those involving a single vehicle. Collision – only accidents, which involve no injury, are not reported, therefore no records of collision-only accidents are held.

Most accidents are generally caused by conflicting movements between vehicles, or between vehicles and pedestrians. For this reason, accidents occur more frequently where traffic flows are higher (i.e. on major roads) and at junctions, where there are frequent conflicting movements. In B&NES 49% of accidents occur on 'A' roads and 7% on 'B' roads. (A plan will be exhibited at PDS illustrating this.)

Single vehicle accidents constitute a small proportion of all accidents, and occur due to driver error, adverse weather, road geometry, etc. or a combination of these factors.

Accidents and casualties are defined by 3 categories:

1. Killed
2. Serious (detained in hospital as an in-patient, OR where the casualty has suffered fractures, concussion, internal injuries, burns, cuts, etc.)
3. Slight (minor injuries including whiplash, bruising or minor cuts, or slight shock, requiring roadside assistance.)

When reporting data it is normal to focus on casualties, rather than the accidents. As many accidents will involve more than one casualty, total casualty figures are always higher than total accident figures.

Fatal accidents are thankfully very rare in B&NES, however 6 occur on average every year. They normally occur at random locations, and a large proportion are due to errors on the part of the casualty. Should more than one fatal accident occur in the same location, the local road network will be investigated and improvements made if required.

Because fatal accidents are rare, they are not considered statistically significant by the Department for Transport. When reporting casualties fatal and serious casualties are grouped to form 'Killed and Seriously Injured' (KSI), therefore casualties are normally reported as KSI, Slight and Total. Interestingly, around 75% of KSI casualties are male, a proportion reflected in other West of England casualty rates. Vehicle speeds in rural areas are higher than in urban areas, therefore rural collisions are more likely to result in severe injuries.

Headline Data

1. Over the period 2005 – 2012, all casualties in B&NES have dropped from 705 to 437, a reduction of 38%

KSIs have dropped from 71 to 33 (54%)

Slights have dropped from 634 to 404 (36%)

Details are shown in Appendix 1

2. Casualties are also categorised by road user groups. The figures for 2012 are as follows:

	KSI	Slight	Total	% of all Casualties	Severity Index
Pedestrians	9	61	70	16	13%
Cyclists	4	39	43	10	9%
2-Wheeled Motor Vehicles	5	44	49	11	8%
Car & Taxi Occupants	13	236	249	57	5%
Other	2	24	26	6	8%

‘Severity Index’ indicates the proportion of KSI casualties within the total. Typically the severity index is higher for pedestrians, cyclists and motor cyclists as they are more likely to be hurt in a collision than the occupants of four wheeled motor vehicles. For this reason they are known as ‘Vulnerable Road Users’

Reducing accidents and casualties

Reducing accidents and casualties is tackled in 3 ways, namely, Engineering; Education, Training and Publicity (ETP); and Enforcement.

- a) Engineering: accident records of sites with a large number of accidents are studied, to establish if there are any frequently occurring causatory factors. If there are, engineering measures are used to remove or nullify these factors. Example: at a junction, vehicles turning right repeatedly collide with vehicles coming from the opposite direction. Solution: introduce a mini-roundabout to make right turning safer.
- b) Education, Training and Publicity: This approach works as a demographic basis, i.e. if casualty records show a lot of young moped riders are involved in collisions, suitable training is arranged as advertised through motorcycle shops and driving test centres.

- c) Enforcement: generally this is speed limit enforcement carried out by the Police mobile camera unit, although the Police also carry out seasonal drink/ driving enforcement and will prosecute for various other offences. Speed enforcement can be effective in casualty reduction in association with a speed limit specifically lowered to address a speed-related accident record.

Accident Concentration List

All local authorities have a 'league table' of sites which have the greatest concentrations of accidents. The latest version for B&NES is shown in Appendix 2. To be added to the list, a site must have a record of 5 or more injury accidents in a 3 year period, within a circle of 40m diameter.

The B&NES list is very short compared with neighbouring authorities. This is clearly a good thing and reflects this authority's excellent record in accident reduction. However, accident remedial work is based on identifying and eradicating repetitive causatory factors, and this is most easily done at sites with a large number of accidents. The B&NES accident concentration sites do not display large numbers of accidents, therefore it is not always simple to design remedial measures.

Highways Agency Roads

B&NES casualty figures include those occurring on Highways Agency Roads, even though the Council has no jurisdiction over these roads. On average, 34 casualties per year (7% of the B&NES total) occur on HA roads, split equally between the A36 and A46. The HA's local agent Atkins-Skanska, are responsible for addressing accident problems on the Trunk Road network. They are currently investigating accident clusters at Hartley Bends on the A46, and the Branch Road/A36 junction at Hinton Charterhouse.