

**SPECIAL MEETING OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
12 OCTOBER 2009**

ROAD SAFETY

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of the report is to inform Members of the actions that the Council carry out in order to improve the standard of road safety, with particular reference to pedestrian training activities for Primary aged children.

Summary

2. The report provides an overview of why we put so much effort into reducing road traffic casualties, a brief overview of what measures we undertake, detail on the pedestrian training initiative and an assessment of what effect these activities have contributed to.

Recommendations

3. Members of the Scrutiny Committee are asked to note the content of the report.

**Cliff Brown
Director of Community Services**

Background Papers

Road Casualty Review 2008

Norma Sheppard : Extension 2717
cc

S17 Crime and Disorder	N/A
Health and Well Being	This supports the well being of all residents with specific reference to children and young people in the Borough and complies with the Every Child Matters agenda.
Sustainability	This report highlights the necessity of working in partnership with schools and their travel plan coordinators to embed road safety within school activities.
Diversity	Road Safety initiatives are offered to all children attending schools within the Borough.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	The road safety strategy is an integral part of the Local Transport Plan (2006-2011). National indicator 47 and 48 measure the Councils success in reducing the overall number and number of children killed or seriously injured as the result of a road traffic collision. Road safety initiatives are funded from a mixture of Local Transport Plan, Council revenue and external grants.
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Links to themes on healthier safer and greener Darlington
Efficiency	The number of casualties arising from road traffic casualties has reduced considerably over recent years which demonstrates that activities represent value for money.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

Background

4. The Government has set national casualty reduction targets over recent decades to reduce the occurrence and severity of road traffic casualties. The Government set out their current road casualties targets in *Tomorrows Roads Safer for Everyone*, their road safety strategy. The current targets require a 40% reduction in the overall number of people killed or seriously injured and a 50% reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured by 2010, when compared to a baseline average from 1994-98. These are demanding targets that a significant number of Councils will fail to meet. These targets form the basis for National Indicators 47 and 48 which we are required to monitor annually.
5. In addition, the Council have a have a duty under the Road Traffic Act 1988 to carry out studies into accidents arising out of the use of vehicles on roads within our area and must, in the light of those studies, take such measures as appear to be appropriate to prevent such accidents.

Road Safety in Darlington

6. Darlington has a good road safety record, particularly in terms of child safety. In 2008 there were 275 injury producing accidents resulting in 380 casualties. This comprised 346 slight injury accidents, 32 serious injury accidents and two fatalities. Child casualties accounted for 47 of the overall number of casualties which approximates to just 12% of the total. Casualty numbers overall and child casualties in particular are in decline. It is particularly pleasing to note that there have been no accidents resulting in a child being seriously injured or killed in the past 18 months. Figure 1 below illustrates the decline in casualties overall. Figure 2 illustrates the decline in child casualties.

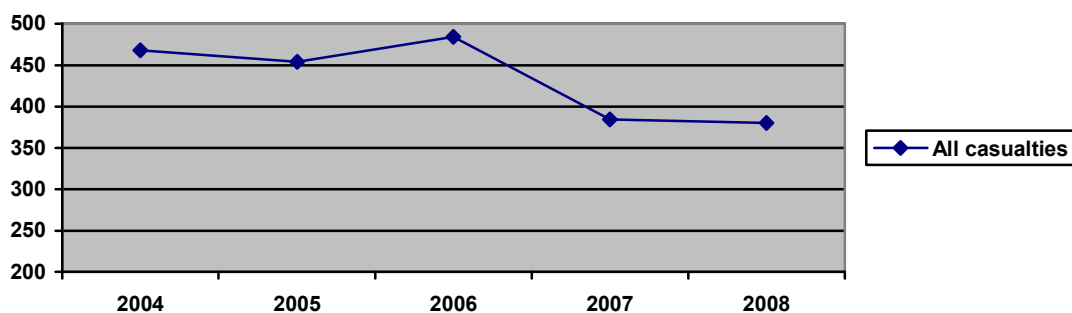


Figure 1

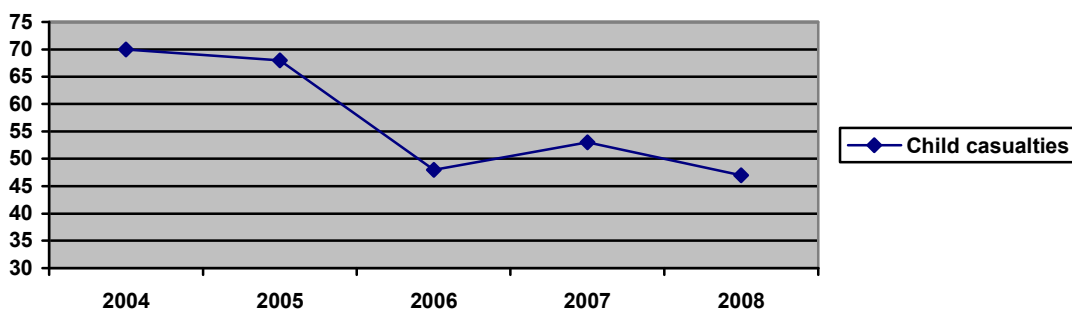


Figure 2

7. These results have been produced by a range of measures generally known as the three 'E's, namely Engineering, Education and Enforcement. The Council is principally involved in engineering and education activities with the Police carrying out enforcement activities such as issuing tickets for speeding, poor driving, unroadworthy vehicles, drink driving etc. A summary of the Council's engineering and education activities is provided below before going in to detail on the pedestrian training programme.

Road Safety Engineering

8. The Council carry out a range of road safety engineering schemes each year. The Local Transport Plan provides funding for a number of different types of road safety interventions. We target local safety schemes at locations with a proven poor accident record. We also introduce 20mph zones to manage speeds in residential areas, particularly where there is a poor accident record. We have of course introduced a number of controlled crossing points to enable pedestrians, and in a number of cases cyclists, to cross our busiest roads.
9. The Local Transport Plan also supports a number of initiatives that are directed specifically at children. School 20 mph zones and safer routes to school schemes are designed to make the journey to school safer and the use of school keep clear markings helps to protect the school gate from dangerous and obstructive parking.

Road Safety Education

10. A full time Road Safety Officer has been working since 2000. The main work of the road safety officer covers Education Training and Publicity, which is often referred to as ETP. Quite often children will act on the spur of the moment and in consequence this means it will be difficult to eradicate **all** child casualties so a comprehensive ETP package is needed to prevent as many children as possible becoming hurt in incidents which may be preventable. Throughout the year young people are offered appropriate help via schools or colleges to develop road safety awareness. Although the road safety team works on various campaigns and presentations, such as cycle helmet assemblies, poetry days, "Be Safe Be Seen" campaigns, the bulk of road safety work undertaken in primary schools is involved with comprehensive pedestrian and cyclist training programmes. In Darlington all primary schools take part in pedestrian training and all but two schools (which have no appropriate site) are offered the national Bikeability cyclist training. This report will focus on the pedestrian training programme.

Pedestrian Training History

11. Pedestrian training programmes are a relatively new concept introduced to address an educational need emerging from modern lifestyles. A few decades ago when car ownership was lower, and public transport was more widely available, parents used to walk with their children to and from school and on other short journeys. Consequently children used to receive pedestrian training every day of their lives. These days parents often travel with children to school and other venues in a car and do not realise their child has only had the opportunity to learn about road safety behaviour from a driver's point of view and therefore lack what is commonly known as road sense. Pedestrian training aims to keep all children safe, from an early age, by filling the gap in their knowledge and skills and to provide a good basis on which to build cycle training and ultimately young driver training. Darlington launched our pedestrian training scheme in the autumn term of 2005.

Pedestrian Training Organisation

12. All children in Darlington are offered pedestrian training on a 1:1 (in years 1& 2) or 1:3 basis (in year 3) with a qualified instructor in each of their first three years in a primary school. Each year's training comprises sessions of 20 or 30 minutes spread over four consecutive weeks. At the end of each year's syllabus every child receives a certificate. The school also receives an annual certificate of participation.
13. All instructors are required to follow a set syllabus which includes vocabulary work, identifying safe places and crossing strategies. All lessons are of a practical nature using the roads and street furniture surrounding the school. The lessons are progressively structured so that by the end of the third year a child will have acquired the skills and knowledge to allow them to make independent decisions about crossing roads safely.

Participation Levels

14. From the initial pilot course involving twelve schools, pedestrian training has earned an excellent reputation and every primary school in the Borough participates in the training programme. Unfortunately the training is not mandatory and therefore we are only able to enrol children on the programme whose parents return a consent form. Despite this numbers from each school are increasing year on year and in many schools 100% of pupils have taken this training.
15. The following table shows the pedestrian training summary since commencing in November 2005:

Children Trained	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total Children Trained	No on School Roll	% Participation
School Year 2005/06	616	689	589	1,894	3,502	54%
School Year 2006/07	803	900	834	2,537	3,395	75%
School Year 2007/08	920	891	970	2,781	3,258	85%

16. During the school year 2007/08 29 schools out of 30 participated:
 - (a) 16 schools had 100% take-up.
 - (b) 5 schools had 90%+ take-up.
 - (c) 6 schools had 80%+ take-up.
 - (d) 1 School had 60%+ take-up.
 - (e) 1 school had less than 50% take-up.

Summary

17. Pedestrian training is an important element of the road safety ETP programme and has undoubtedly contributed to the good progress being made in reducing the number of our residents who are injured as the result of a road traffic accident.
18. The pedestrian training programme continues to have the support of schools and is appreciated by parents and children, which is reflected in the increasing participation rate.