2020 ANNUAL CASUALTY REPORT AND ROADSAFE STRATEGY REVIEW

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report to the Board the analysis of the casualty data for 2020 and the 5-year trend data, alongside a summary of elements to consider within the forthcoming review and update of the RoadSafe Strategy (due 2022).

ACTION RECOMMENDED

It is recommended that the Board:

1. Note the findings of the analysis and highlight any further areas for investigation.
2. Encourage partners to work together to develop the road safe strategy to 2032.

Summary

The information contained in the 2020 Casualty Report contains the headline figures within the following areas;

- 2020 Casualty Figures, by severity, district, casualty age and vehicle type
- Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) trends and collision locations
- 2016 – 2020 Casualty Trends
- 2016 – 2020 Cycle Casualty Trends
- 2016 – 2020 Pedestrian Casualty Trends
- 2016 – 2020 Motorcycle Casualty Trends
- 2016 – 2020 65+ Casualty Trends
- 2016 – 2020 Driver 1 65+ Trends
- 2016 – 2020 Driver1 24- Trends

Overview

- During the various COVID-19 travel restrictions in 2020, traffic flows across Suffolk were reduced significantly compared with equivalent data for 2019. The decreased traffic also resulted in fewer road traffic collisions and casualties.

- This reduction occurred across all casualty severity categories (slight, serious, and fatal) and resulted in reductions to all casualty types (cycling, pedestrian, powered 2-wheeler, 65+ age group, and casualties from driver 1 65 and over and 24 and under).[i]

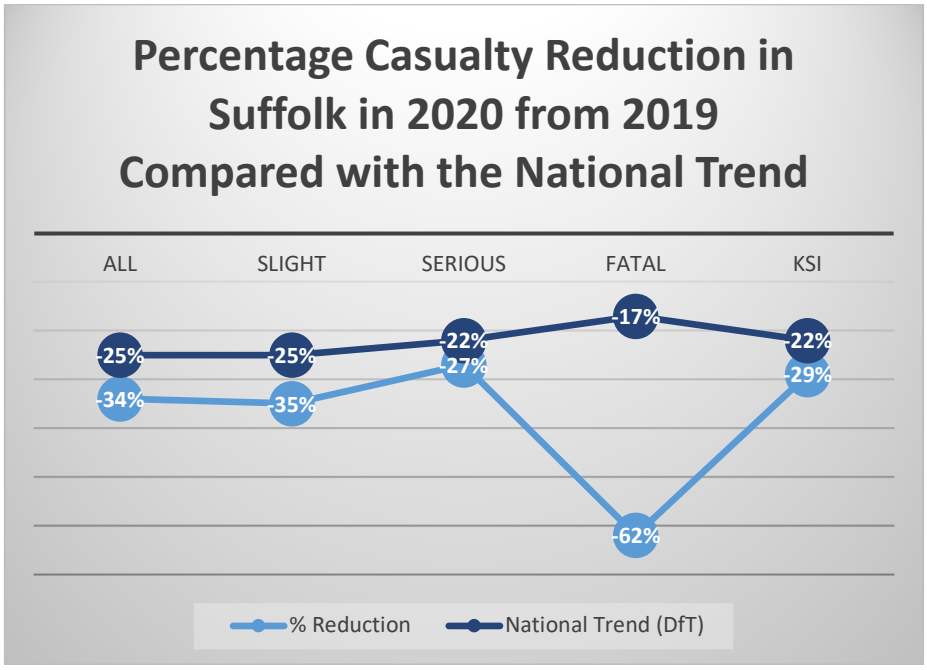
- It is acknowledged that figures for 2020 are likely to represent an anomaly in comparison to recent and historic trends.

- Unlike previous years, there appears to be no significant disparity in the figures published by the Police and those held by the Council. Officers have been working hard to ensure that any apparent inaccuracies have been corrected during the year, in particular errors in plotting and collisions not occurring on the public highway network.

Analysis

- Figures for 2020 represent a 34% reduction in casualties from 2019, with 62% fewer fatalities, 27% fewer serious casualties and 25% fewer slight casualties:

Casualties	Year		% Reduction	National Trend (DfT)
	2019	2020		
All road traffic (billion vehicle miles)	4.36	3.44	-21%	-21%
All	1929	1269	-34%	-25%
Slight	1548	999	-35%	-25%
Serious	355	260	-27%	-22%
Fatal	26	10	-62%	-17%
KSI	**381**	**270**	**-29%**	**-22%**



- The above figures show the difference in casualty rates for Suffolk between 2020 and 2019 compared with the National trend. It is pertinent to note that the percentage reduction in vehicle miles directly aligns with the national trend (2020-2019) yet the reductions in casualty rates for Suffolk were much improved (above that of the national trend), particularly in relation to the reduction in fatalities.

- The significant reduction in casualties witnessed in 2020 is likely to be an anomaly as traffic conditions and travel behaviour were significantly impacted

by travel restrictions enforced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and 2021 figures to date are more broadly consistent with previous years.

- It is considered noteworthy that the proportion of casualty severity types has remained in line with 2019 figures, and is consistent with the national averages for 2020:

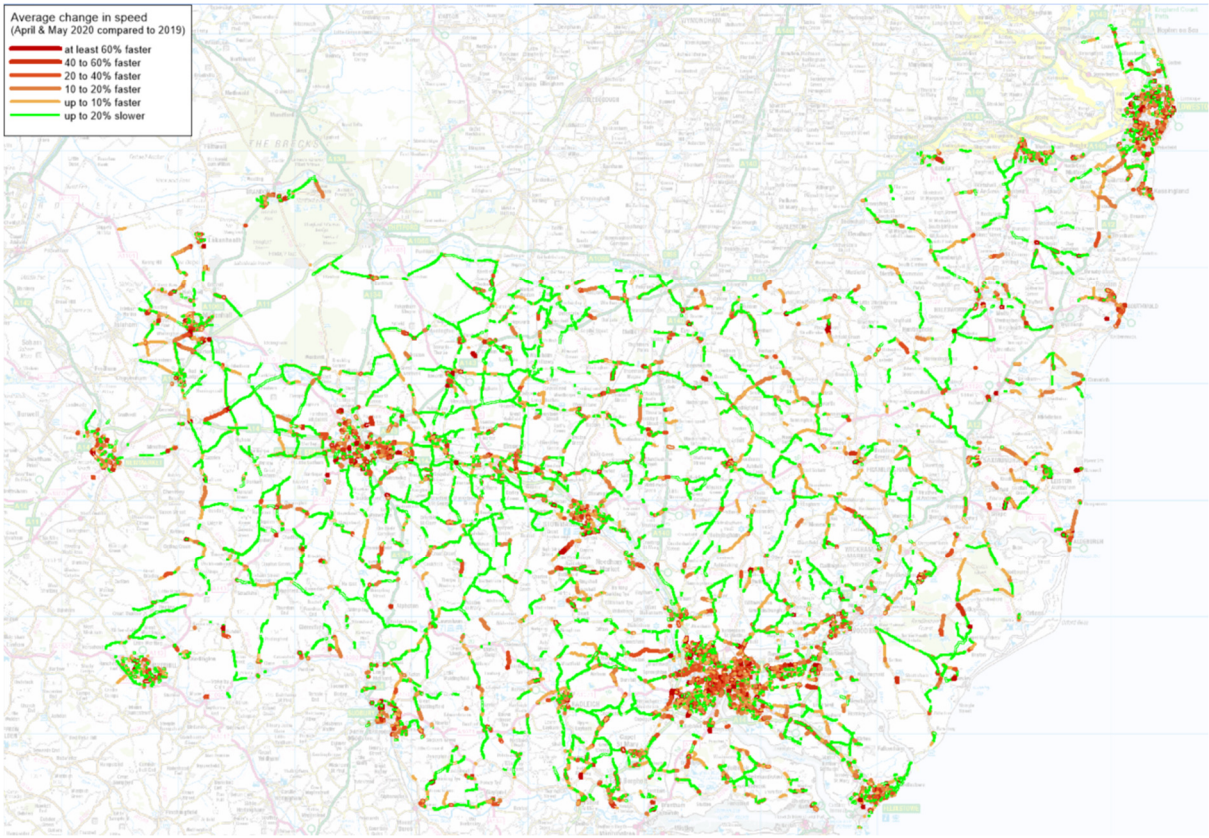
Casualties	Proportion by Year		National % Severity for 2020 (DfT)
	2019	2020	
All	1929	1269	-
Slight	80% (1548)	79% (999)	80%
Serious	18% (355)	20% (260)	19%
Fatal	1% (26)	1% (10)	1%
KSI	**20% (381)**	**21% (270)**	**20%**

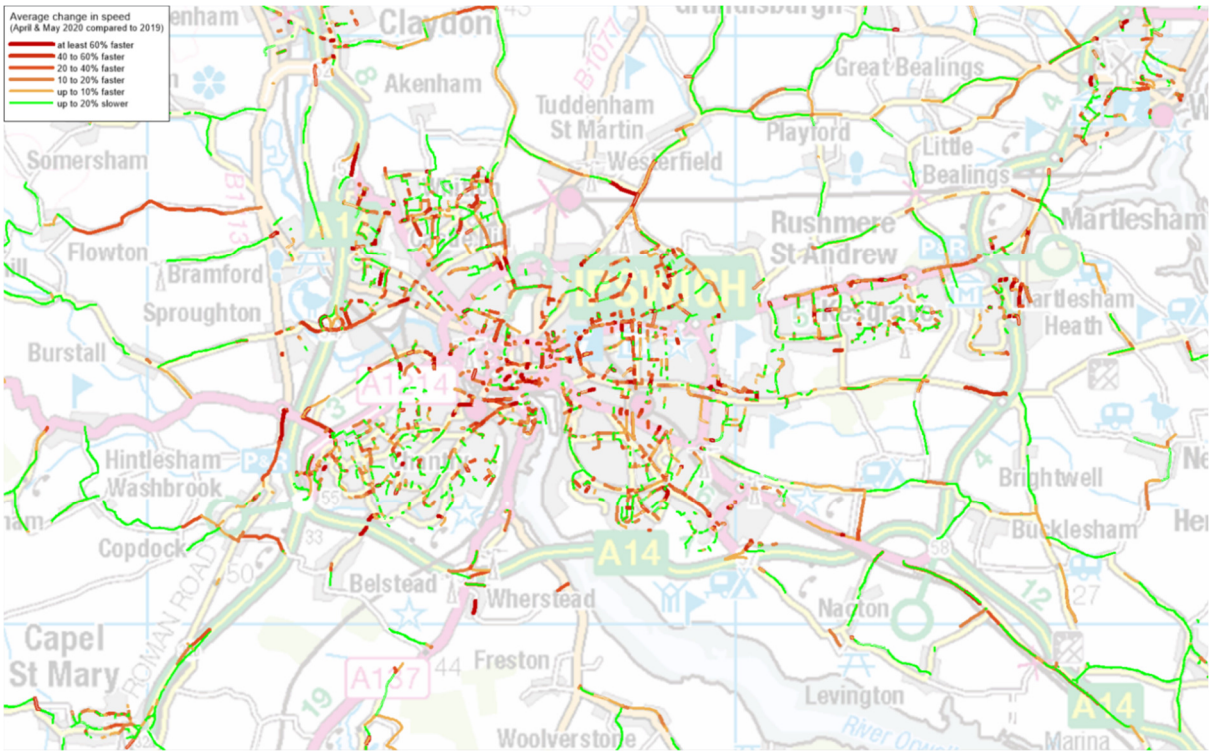
- The proportion of vulnerable road user casualties rose by 4% over equivalent 2019 figures and by 5% over the 4-year trend 2016-2019 as depicted by the table below:

Proportion of Vulnerable Road User Casualties	4-year AVG. (2016-19)	2019	2020
Total Casualties	2,042	1929	1269
Vulnerable Road Users	1565	1501	1041
	77%	**78%**	**82%**

- This is likely, in part, as a result of travel restrictions and changes to travel behaviour brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, which witnessed a decrease in vehicular traffic and increases to both walking and cycling.

- During this period, traffic speeds often increased, particularly in urban areas that were otherwise prone to congestion especially at peak times, which may have been a contributing factor but there is insufficient data to fully assess this. The below graphics show GPS data for April and May 2020 compared to the same period in 2019 (pre lockdown). Green represents a slight decrease in speed, whilst the orange and reds indicate an increase in speed.





- The below table depicts the reduction in casualties per vulnerable user group in 2020 over equivalent 2019 figures and against the average for the previous 4-years (2016-2019). Furthermore, this has been proportioned against the total number of casualties for each time period to determine the percentage change for each vulnerable user group casualty rate in 2020:

Casualties	Year			% Reduction from 2019	% Reduction from 4-yr AVG
	4-yr AVG (2016-19)	2019	2020		
All	2,042	1,929	1,269	-34%	-38%
Cycle	**194**	**182**	**167**	**-8%**	**-14%**
P2W	187	169	111	-34%	-41%
Pedestrian	183	165	132	-20%	-28%
65+	278	281	190	-32%	-32%
Driver1 65+	292	291	195	-33%	-33%
Driver1 24-	431	413	246	-40%	-43%
Casualties	**Proportion of Total**			**% Diff from 2019**	**% Diff from 4-yr AVG**
	4-yr AVG (2016-19)	**2019**	**2020**		
Cycle	**10%**	**9%**	**13%**	**4%**	**3%**
P2W	9%	9%	9%	0%	0%
Pedestrian	9%	9%	10%	1%	1%
65+	14%	15%	15%	0%	1%
Driver1 65+	14%	15%	15%	0%	1%
Driver1 24-	**21%**	**21%**	**19%**	**-3%**	**-2%**

- It is evident from the above that the proportion of cycle casualties increased by 4% over equivalent 2019 figures, whilst the proportion of Driver 1 24 and under casualties reduced by 3% for the same period.

- This is likely a result of the changes to travel behaviours and impact of travel restrictions during the various lockdowns in 2020, which witnessed an increase in cycling activity. Figures for 2020 also evidence younger drivers overall being at a lower risk than previously, and this could be due to a number of contributing factors including quieter roads, less congestion, reduced opportunities to learn to drive and take driving tests.

Comparison with National statistics and similar Authorities:

<u>Highway Authority Network Classification System (HANCS)</u>

- It is not always appropriate to compare an authority solely against its neighbours, especially when the authority has unique characteristics in terms of socio-demographic composition and/or road network. As such, figures for Suffolk have been compared with highway authorities determined most similar using RSA's Highway Authority Network Classification System (HANCS). HANCS groups Highway Authorities together based on the density of their road network in order to facilitate meaningful comparisons of road risk with Suffolk being categorised in sub-group D8 'Sparsely Networked Rural Authorities'. The following Highway Authorities have been selected for comparison using this system:
  - Dorset County Council

- Essex County Council
- Gloucestershire County Council
- Kent County Council
- Northamptonshire County Council
- Warwickshire County Council
- Worcestershire County Council

- The below table compares Suffolk figures for 2020 by casualty rate per billion vehicle miles with each of the above authorities, and against figures for Great Britain (as published by DfT):

Region	Casualty Type			
	All	Fatal	Serious	Slight
Great Britain	405	5	77	322
Suffolk	369	3	76	290
Dorset	384	7	100	277
Essex	339	5	63	271
Gloucestershire	268	7	75	186
Kent	501	5	87	409
Northamptonshire	233	4	67	161
Warwickshire	245	3	49	193
Worcestershire	260	4	44	212

- It is evident from the data that figures for Suffolk are generally in line with comparable authorities as determined by HANCS and below those for Great Britain for the same period, with Suffolk sharing the lowest proportional fatality rate in casualties per billion vehicle miles travelled in 2020.

Suffolk Roadsafe Strategy Review

The current Suffolk Roadsafe strategy is due to be updated in 2022 for the period to 2032 (it was last reviewed in 2018) and it would be of benefit to begin discussions on the preferred approach amongst our partners. A few points to consider are listed below:

- Nationally, the DfT are reviewing a new road safety strategy (potentially adopting a vision zero approach 2);
- Opportunities to review and learn from work of our neighbouring and comparable authorities:
  - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Vision Zero Partnership:
  - Safer Essex Roads Partnership:
  - Kent County Council Vision Zero
- The impact of the COVID-19 and the road to Covid recovery;
- The impact and potential rise of micro-mobility and changes to legislation;
- Population changes (projections of aging population in Suffolk – impact of older drivers and vulnerable road users – links to research as commissioned by National Highways (formerly Highways England));
- Projections of electric vehicle (EV) take up – EVs tend to have faster acceleration, and are quieter at slower speeds (particularly relevant in more

urban environs) – may pose impact to road awareness particularly during transition to market saturation or to vulnerable road users);

- Work from home potential – changes to peak demand / peoples' ability to travel at different times of the day;
- Future of freight – HGV driver shortage may result in increased inexperience drivers on the road (reduced training) could lead to increase in incidents, also may impact on public perception; and
- What predictive modelling approaches have been tried in the past? What are their respective strengths and weaknesses? (RedOptima trial possibility? Also, Essex university could potentially assist in research with this)

[1] All reductions are significant at a 95% confidence level apart from the reduction in cycling casualties, which fell inside of the 95% confidence limit. This means that the observed reduction in cycling casualties cannot be determined as statistically significant at the 95% confidence level and should therefore be treated with this caveat in mind.

2 Safe System/Vision Zero has a long-term goal for a road traffic system which is eventually free from death and serious injury. It involves an important paradigm shift from trying to prevent all collisions to preventing death and mitigating serious injury in road traffic collisions, a problem which is largely preventable based on current knowledge. It is backed up by interim quantitative targets to reduce numbers of deaths and serious injuries usually over a 10-year period. In Safe System, there is also focus on targeting intermediate outcomes that are causally related to death and serious injury e.g., average speeds, seat belt use, sober driving, the safety quality of roads and vehicles and emergency medical system response.