

18 June 2015

Agenda Item: 5

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR, HIGHWAYS

CYCLE ACCIDENTS IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide information about Road Accidents involving Cyclists in Nottinghamshire.

Background

2. The report "Nottinghamshire Cycling Strategy Plan" was presented at Transport and Highways Committee on 19th March 2015. At this meeting it was requested that a further report be submitted with more information about Road Injury Accidents involving cyclists.

County Cycle Accident Statistics

3. Since the 19th March 2014 Transport and Highways Committee, reported injury accident statistics for the complete calendar year 2014 have been released and an updated summary for 2010 to 2014 inclusive is shown in below.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Fatal	2	2	6	2	2	14
Serious	41	54	51	55	44	245
(KSI)	(43)	(56)	(57)	(57)	(46)	(259)
Slight	158	157	151	141	187	794
Total	201	213	208	198	233	1053

Reported Road Injury Accidents where a Cyclist was Injured
County of Nottinghamshire including Trunk Roads 2010 – 2014 inclusive

4. The total number of reported injury accidents involving cycles in 2014 shows a rise over those in 2013. However in the Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) classification, cycle accidents in Nottinghamshire reduced in 2014 compared to previous years, the rise in overall numbers in 2014 is a reflection of the rise in slight injury accidents.

Comparison with National Statistics

5. The national road accident statistics for 2014 have not yet been published so a direct comparison with Nottinghamshire's latest figures cannot be made. Over a longer term there is a rising trend apparent in cycle accidents across the country.
6. The numbers of cyclists Killed or Seriously Injured in Great Britain declined steadily from the mid-1980s but in the last decade this has levelled off, and recently

increased slightly. By comparison, the number of Pedestrians Killed or Seriously Injured has continued to fall and was at a record low in 2013. Appendix 1 shows a graph of the numbers of Killed or Seriously Injured casualties in these two vulnerable road user groups in Great Britain.

7. The Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport and Safety (an All-Party Parliamentary Group) has recently published an interim report entitled "Road Safety Since 2010". The final version of the report will be published later in 2015, when national accident data for the complete calendar year 2014 is compiled. The interim report contains the following provisional analysis of accident figures for Great Britain:

"By 2013 the number of deaths for all major road user groups had fallen significantly since the 2005–9 average. This was most pronounced for car occupants. In 2010 there were significant reductions for all groups except pedal cyclists. Since 2010 the trend has been more mixed – generally downward for all groups but relatively small changes for some.

Looking at KSIs however (...) the percentage reductions since the baseline period for vulnerable road users (pedestrians, pedal cyclists and motorcyclists) are much lower than for deaths only. Indeed, the number of pedal cyclists reported seriously injured has increased by 30% (which is partially attributable to a large increase in cycling). The 2014 figures appear worse still."

8. It is clear that there is a concern at a national level that cycle accidents are no longer declining as fast as they were. This may partly be reflecting the fact that cycling has been increasing in popularity in recent years, leading to a rise in the number of cycle accidents by an increase in exposure. In Nottinghamshire the decline in cycle accidents has also slowed, although in contrast to the national statistics the KSI figures for the County have actually reduced between 2013 and 2014.

Fatal Accidents 2010 - 2014

9. Information about the Fatal Cycle Accidents in the period is shown in Appendix 2. Over this period there are 2 Fatal accidents per year, except for 2012 when there were 6. There appears no obvious reason for the 'spike' in 2012, of the 6 two occurred on the A1 (Trunk Road, and not under County Council control). Examination of the remaining 4 records in 2012 shows no pattern that would link them and thus explain the rise in numbers.
10. There is a mixture of urban, and semi-rural locations. Many involve the cyclist entering a road, either from the footway or from a minor road. Tragically a number of fatally injured cyclists were teenagers. Three cyclists were using pedestrian facilities to cross the road.

General Trends in Nottinghamshire Cycle Accidents 2010 - 2014

11. As would be expected, the reported injury cycle accidents in Nottinghamshire are predominantly concentrated in urban and semi-urban areas, reflecting the greater use of cycles for commuting and short local trips.
12. Notable concentrations are also seen to occur:
 - At peak times, coinciding with commuter travel.

- In 30 mph speed limits, reflecting where most people cycle.
- On a dry road surface, in fine weather and in daylight. This will reflect the preferences of cyclists to ride in good conditions, rather than some inherent danger in this combination of conditions. The ratio of wet to dry road cycle accidents is lower (i.e. fewer wet) than the general ratio found in statistics for all types of road accidents.
- At give way type junctions. This partly reflects the vast number of such junctions, but also the fact that the interactions rely on human judgement.

Reducing Accidents

Site Specific Methods

13. The main method of reducing accidents involves in depth, site specific, studies using information from police accident records. This method is used by the County Council's Accident Investigation Unit and most other highway authorities.
14. Although road accidents have far reaching and often tragic consequences, in relation to the number of trips and manoeuvres that occur in a typical day, they are very rare. They are also largely unpredictable events, typically involving many factors in combination. As a Highway Authority, trying to implement an improvement to prevent an individual accident which has yet to occur somewhere on the network is an almost impossible task.
15. For this reason a site specific method based on the study of reported accident records is used. Using the accident information obtained from the original Police reports, clusters of similar accidents are identified, using sophisticated software in the first instance to sift through the extensive database.
16. Further in-depth analysis of the accident reports attempts to find common factors in the clusters, which can be used to predict future similar accidents at a particular location. This in turn can lead to remedial treatments to prevent further similar accidents occurring, this may include signing, white lining, junction improvements etc. As well as sites such as junctions, short lengths or routes can also be identified. Excellent results have been achieved by this method, which have contributed to the overall reduction in road accident casualties witnessed over the last 25 years. Improvements to reduce cycle accidents at specific sites are regularly identified.
17. Road accident data is continually scoured for patterns and clusters, and cycle accidents are included as a specific element of these searches. The latest cycle accident data is being examined as part of this process. If suitable improvement schemes can be devised, they will be considered for the next casualty reduction scheme programme.
18. Notwithstanding the above, the relatively isolated nature of cycle accidents means that the majority are not clustered at specific locations. However it may be the case that similar types of accidents re-occur, albeit at different locations. For example recently it has been noted that a proportion of cycle accidents involve a cyclist entering the carriageway from the footway. Where such issues are identified they are factored into training and education efforts.

Cycle Training

19. Safety is a key element in all effective cycle training. Highway Safety has its own team of nationally accredited Cycle Trainers, who are able to offer cost effective cycle training to schools across the whole County. The instruction follows the national standard 'Bikeability' cycle training scheme for school pupils. Having accredited and independently assessed trainers currently attracts national funding for this work, greatly reducing the costs of delivery. The training is a mixture of school based instruction and guided on-road experience, with increasing levels of complexity:
20. Level 1 helps new riders to control their bike before they move on to developing on-road skills at Level 2. Level 2 training is aimed at children in Years 5 or 6, before they leave primary school. Several years ago Nottinghamshire began to pioneer more advanced real-world training, aimed at pupils making the transition between junior and senior schools. Training includes more challenging routes, complex junctions, and journey planning specific to individual schools. This "Level 2+" training was a response to increasing levels of teenage cyclists accidents at that time. Although a direct link is difficult to establish, cycle accident casualties in the age range 11-15 years have been falling in the County in more recent times. Elements of this more challenging training have now begun to feature in national cycle training programmes.

In the financial year 2014/2015 the number of children receiving cycle training was as follows:

Level 1	4114
Level 2	2673
Level 2+	295

21. Highway Safety have also recently acquired a number of 'Balance Bikes' for giving younger children an introduction to cycling. This not only supports the aims of Nottinghamshire's Cycling Strategy by encouraging cycling, but allows the safety messages to reach children at an early stage.
22. Nationally, providing effective cycle training to adults has proved challenging. The main difficulty, in contrast to a school setting, is gathering enough trainees together in one place to make the provision cost effective. In 2013 Highway Safety staff offered sessions for adult cyclists based at five locations around the County. Considerable efforts were made to publicise the events, and incentives such as vouchers for cycle equipment were offered. Although the feedback from the attendees was very positive, the number of people who actually came forward and attended the sessions was disappointingly small. Compared to the numbers of people reached through education and training in schools, the project was not sustainable.

Education

23. Highway Safety teams provide road safety education to schools across Nottinghamshire. In 2013/2014 over 15,000 children and young people received road safety education, at both Primary and Secondary ages, and beyond.

24. Cycle specific messages are often included in these more general road safety education packages. By this means it is possible, for example, to reach teenagers who may feel that cycle training is not appropriate for their age group. Road safety education is intended not only to prevent people being involved in accidents whilst they are young, but to provide lifelong skills to carry into adulthood, helping to foster road safety awareness throughout the community.
25. The County's road safety education packages are frequently tailored to address issues identified in accident studies, or as a result of local concerns. Recently for example this has included specific messages concerning distraction (for example headphones mobile phones etc.) for both pedestrians and cyclists. Currently, education highlighting cycle specific issues arising from the NET project is being delivered in schools near the new tram routes.

Conclusion

26. To reinforce the County Council's commitment to the recently approved development of a Cycling Strategy/Delivery Plan, the County Council will continue to record and monitor cycling accidents on its road network. Detailed studies of accident data will play a key role in informing and shaping efforts to reduce cycle accident casualties, through engineering, education and cycle training.

Recommendation

That Committee notes the contents of the report.

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments

None – Report for information only

Financial Comments

None – Report for information only

Background Papers

Transport and Highways Committee Report 19th March 2015

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All