

## **Road Safety Partnership**

### **Chairman's Report**

**January 2023**

#### **Introduction**

The Road Safety Partnership was created in 2019 as an operational group, reporting to the Road Safety Strategic Group, chaired by the Chief Executive of the Department of Home Affairs (DHA).

The Partnership brings together representatives of stakeholders including the DESC, DOI, Isle of Man Fire & Rescue, Manx Care, Public Health, the Constabulary and the Island Road Safety Team. The group meets every 2 months and evaluates progress against the agreed strategy, tactical options, risks and opportunities.

The strategy focuses on the "Safe System Approach": Safe Speeds, Safe People, Safe Roads & Safe Vehicles. It sets ambitious targets to reduce both the number and the severity of collisions.

#### **Strategic Objectives**

The 2019 Road Safety Strategy sets ambitious casualty reduction targets in comparison to a 3 year baseline average calculated on casualty figures from 1st January 2015 to 31st December 2017.

Rolling averages are used because in statistical terms the datasets being utilised are relatively small, and trends over time can be extrapolated from aggregated data with greater confidence.

Key objectives are:

- 40% reduction in the annual number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions
- 15% reduction in the annual number of road users sustaining slight injuries in road traffic collisions
- 30% reduction in the annual number of non-motorised vulnerable road users who are injured (all severities) in road traffic collisions
- 40% reduction in the annual number of powered-two-wheeler road users who are injured (all severities) in road traffic collisions
- 20% increase in the number of non-motorised vulnerable road users who say they feel safe using our roads

#### **Data Comparison – Collision & Casualty Statistics**

The table below, contains comparative data relating to traffic collisions and consequent injuries for the period 2015-22. It is immediately obvious that there is a very large drop in the number of recorded

collisions between 2018 and 2019 data. This follows from a change in the recording of damage-only accidents connected to the introduction of the more comprehensive Stats 19 data set.

Figures for 2018 and earlier years include damage-only collisions, figures after 2019 exclude them. This brings the Isle of Man into line with UK recording practice and facilitates geographic comparisons. However, it also means that some comparisons over time must be approached with caution.

Another complexity follows from the introduction of the Stats 19 recording system. The older IMAAP data set was accident-based. It categorised the severity of *traffic accidents* according to the most seriously injured casualty. The Stats 19 data set is casualty-based, however. This leads to a discrepancy in the recording of multiple casualty collisions.

Year	Total Number of Collisions	Total Number of Vehicles involved	FATAL	SERIOUS	SLIGHT
2015	913	1564	5	50	183
2016	1008	1711	7	48	204
2017	903	1511	3	39	175
2018	818	1409	7	43	178
2019	180	267	3	52	175
2020	116	174	1	21	119
2021	167	277	4	39	168
2022	190	299	4	55	166

The COVID 19 emergency had a significant impact on road traffic over an extended period. Public health restrictions during the “lockdown” period led directly to a substantial reduction in all journeys over the period. An Island-wide 40mph speed limit was also in place for an extended period.

Another key result was the cancellation of Motorsport events. The significance of this step for accident and casualty data was huge. Since 1993, 89 of 216 fatal road traffic accidents took place during either the TT period or the MGP. 673 of 1690 serious injury accidents took place during the same period. If we focus specifically on vulnerable road users, the picture is still clearer. The two weeks of the TT period witnessed 48% of all accidents involving two-wheeled vehicles.

The combined effect of the alterations to recording practices in 2019, and the two-year suspension of motorsport which followed, is therefore to render temporal comparisons against the intended baseline for the years 2015-17 problematic.

The Strategic Group may wish to review whether, in assessing progress against agreed objectives, it would be better to exclude the data from the years without motorsport events (2020 & 2021).

## **General Enforcement Data**

### 1) Drug Driving

During 2022 new legislation enabled IOMC to begin to tackle the problem of drug driving. Reliable information on the scale of this problem, or its connection to road casualties has not previously been available because of the absence of legal powers to undertake effective testing.

There remain some gaps in this area. Current legislation sets an expectation that drivers involved in injury accidents will be breathalysed. There is no equivalent requirement for drug testing, though current statistics suggest the offence is four times more prevalent. Where seriously injured drivers are transported by air ambulance to trauma centres off-island it is also impossible to verify whether drugs had a causal role in the accident, however strongly that may be suspected on circumstantial grounds. It is likely, therefore, that emerging statistics will substantially under-estimate the role of drug intoxication as a cause of serious and fatal injury.

In the calendar year 2022-23, 117 people failed roadside drug-wipe tests administered on reasonable suspicion of an offence. 66 people were charged with drug-drive offences, including two repeat offenders. 51 cases remain under investigation (principally awaiting forensic results).

There is a gross disproportion in the gender profile of offenders. 62 of the persons charged are male; 4 are female. Offenders are also predominantly young drivers:

<b>AGE GROUP</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>
<b>16 -20</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>21-25</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>26-30</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>31-35</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>36-40</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>41-45</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>46-50</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>50+</b>	<b>1</b>

It is potentially highly relevant that the profile of drug drivers closely aligns with the profile of drivers involved in single-vehicle accidents: disproportionately males under 30. This strongly suggests a causal link.

Looking ahead, tackling drug driving is undoubtedly a key priority. Enforcement activity, however, entails significant additional forensic costs for which no budget provision has been made. The Courts have adopted the stance that the bulk of these forensic costs (principally the processing of blood samples) will not be recovered through prosecution cost awards. There is no scope within the IOMC budget to absorb the projected ongoing cost.

### 2) Other Roads Policing Enforcement Activity

The Roads Policing Unit follows an intelligence-led approach to target enforcement activity around the drivers who present the greatest risk of harm to other road users, and the locations known to present an inherent hazard or situational risk. The team is supported in this approach by Mr Smith,

the new Road Safety Manager, who is continuing to develop intelligence products around accident patterns to inform patrol activity. His analytical work factors in both seasonal trends and the risk to specific groups of road users.

During 2022 ten drivers were charged or summonsed in relation to the offence of dangerous driving. In relation to the offence of careless or inconsiderate driving, 26 offenders were charged/summonsed to court; 148 received fixed penalty notices; 49 received a police caution; 3 were sent on an approved diversionary scheme; and 2 were dealt with through a community resolution process.

A further 46 suspects were charged with drink driving offences. Three more cases, stemming from arrests made during 2022 remain under investigation at the time of writing.

### **The Return Of Motorsport Events**

The past year witnessed the return of both the TT festival and the Isle of Man Grand Prix after a two-year interval. Despite some personnel changes, institutional memory around the management of the events was strong and the partnership rose to the challenge effectively with a range of approaches to maximise road safety during the event. These ranged from safety messaging to outreach schemes and crowd engagement. Temporary speed limits were put in place in a targeted way, informed by past collision patterns, and enforced pro-actively by the Constabulary.

<b>TT Road Traffic Collisions: Headline collision and casualty statistics</b>								
<b><u>ANNUAL DATA</u></b>								
<b><u>Personal Injury Collisions</u></b>								
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2022	3 year average 2017-2019	5 year average 2015-2019
Fatal collisions	3	3	1	1	2	0	1.33	2.0
Serious collisions	18	13	14	19	12	15	15.0	15.2
Slight collisions	23	38	22	19	13	16	18.0	23.0
<b>Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) collisions</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>17.2</b>
<b>Total injury collisions</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>34.3</b>	<b>40.2</b>
<b><u>Casualties (annual data)</u></b>								
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2022	3 year average 2017-2019	5 year average 2015-2019
Fatal	3	3	1	1	2	0	1.33	2.00
Serious	24	18	14	21	14	15	16.3	18.2
Slight	32	40	25	20	14	19	19.7	26.2
<b>KSI casualties</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17.7</b>	<b>20.2</b>
<b>Total injured casualties</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>37.3</b>	<b>46.4</b>

Although a number of deaths occurred during racing, there were no fatal traffic collisions on the island during the TT festival and the number of serious & slight injury collisions was below the historic average.

### **Road Safety Action Plan Objectives**

The Isle of Man Road Safety Strategy is a ten year plan based on a Safe System approach encompassing the following key strands:

- Safe roads
- Safe people
- Safe vehicles
- Safe speeds
- Post collision response

Seventy (70) actions were set as part of the original plan and defined as short (2yr), medium (3-5yr) or long (5-10yr) term. A further 21 were added following public consultation.

The substantial majority of the “short term” actions are now either complete or in progress; most medium term actions have commenced, and a minority are complete; most of the long term actions are yet to commence.

It is important to note that several important sections of the plan are shown completed in their entirety. These include the actions in Section 15 relating to speed limits. However, key strategic decisions remain to be addressed in this area around the potential implementation of a national speed limit, either on a permanent basis or limited to the motorsport period.

Similarly, in relation to the “safer vehicles” element of the programme, further progress is contingent on strategic decisions as to whether the tangible links between vehicle defects and traffic collisions justifies compulsory vehicle testing or similar regulations.

The Department of Infrastructure has undertaken important scoping work around the concept of graduated driving licenses. As implemented in various overseas jurisdictions, GDLs impose a variety of restrictions on less experienced (mainly younger) drivers. There is statistical evidence of the potential to reduce road casualties but implementation would entail political decisions balancing different aspects of the public interest.

The DOI also continues the “IRAP” modelling work, which will identify the potential of road improvements to reduce, or mitigate the seriousness, of collisions around the network. This work complements ongoing analytical work by the Road Safety Manager around collision patterns and repeat locations. It is likely, however, that some of the sites where engineering work might most significantly reduce future casualties will form part of the TT course.

### **Looking Ahead**

The future of transport presents both opportunities and risks in relation to road safety. The proportion of electrical vehicles on Isle of Man roads is likely to increase significantly over the years ahead. As this transition takes place, the Partnership will gather data to inform policy formulation.

One area of particular concern is the emergence of the “e-scooter” as a form of road transport and the electrification of many bicycles. These new technologies are potentially attractive to policy makers concerned with environmental objectives around carbon fuel emissions.

The UK Department for Transport has now published the result of its own “e-scooter” trials. Key points were:

- “E-scooter” users were predominantly males under 35.
- The casualty rate per mile for e-scooter users was three times higher than for cyclists.
- The casualty rate per mile also greatly exceeds walking & public transport.
- “E-scooter” journeys mainly replaced active travel methods (walking & cycling).

- There is an increased hazard to pedestrians from “E-scooter” collisions on pavements.

If weight is given to the DfT study, the legalised use of “E-scooters” on roads in the Isle of Man would almost certainly impact adversely on general casualty reduction targets. As both electric scooters and electrically assisted bicycles would fall within the “powered two wheeler” category, any steps to permit widespread use on roads in the Isle of Man would probably render the casualty reduction target in that area unachievable.

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February 25<sup>th</sup> 2023