

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE - 17 DECEMBER 2002

ROAD SAFETY IN EAST AYRSHIRE

Report by the Director of Development Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to inform the Committee of the latest trend in road casualties in East Ayrshire.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** In 1987, the Government set a national target of reducing road casualties by one third by the year 2000, compared with the average number of casualties during the baseline years between 1981 and 1985.

- 2.2** In September, 1996, the Development Services Committee gave its approval for the preparation of a Road Safety Plan for East Ayrshire. The plan includes a strategy for achieving the national casualty reduction target. Accident analysis forms a key element of the strategy, and is intended to provide a means of: -

- Identifying and targeting high risk locations in the road network and high risk user groups;
- Allowing limited manpower and financial resources to be used where they are most needed;
- Monitoring the performance of accident remedial measures; and
- Monitoring accident trends against the national target.

- 2.3** The last report to the Committee on the 20 January 2000 detailed the trend in road casualties up to the end of December 1998. This report details an update on those figures up until December 2001, the most recent full year of data available.

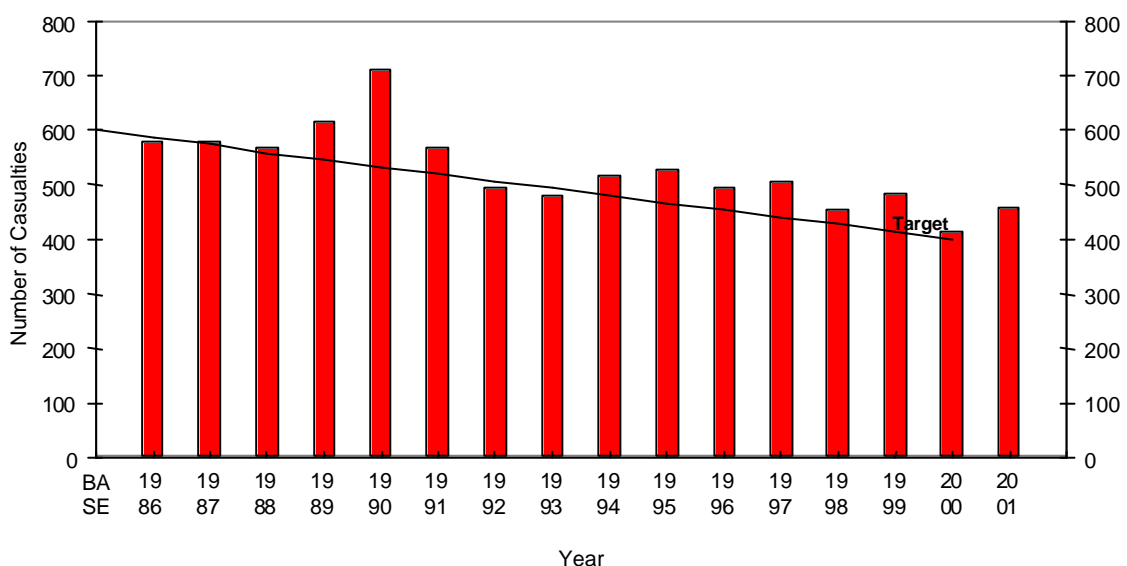
3 ACCIDENT STATISTICS

3.1 2001 is the latest full year for which accident data is available.

3.2 Figure 1 shows the total number of road casualties each year compared with the average during the base-line years (1981-85) and the casualty reduction target for 2000. In 2001, there were 460 casualties in East Ayrshire, 142 fewer than in 1981-85, representing a reduction of 24%.

In Scotland as a whole, there has been a 25% reduction in casualties over the same period.

Figure 1 Casualties Per Year



3.3 Table 1 summarises the severity of casualties in the base-line years and in the seven years since 1995. While fatal and serious accidents have fallen by 47% since 1981-85, slight casualties have decreased by only 12%. In Scotland as a whole, there has been a 49% reduction in fatal casualties, 57% in serious casualties and 9% in slight casualties.

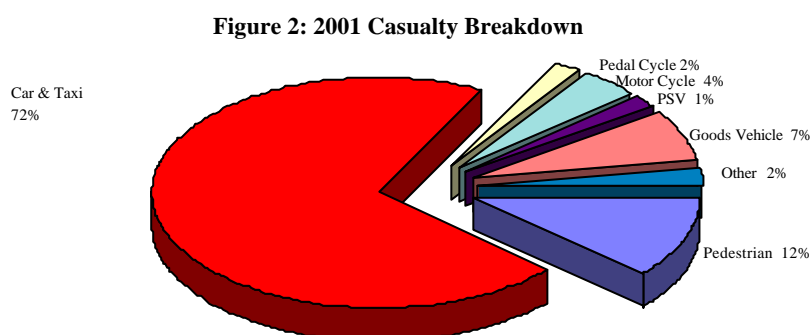
Table 1

	1981/85	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Fatal	19	18	16	7	7	6	6	15
Serious	174	139	122	121	113	118	83	87
Slight	407	374	359	367	336	358	326	358
Total	600	531	497	495	456	482	415	460

Notwithstanding the overall improvement in road safety in East Ayrshire since the early 1980's, fatal and serious injuries continued to account for a high proportion (22%) of all casualties in 2001. Nationally, the corresponding figure was 19%.

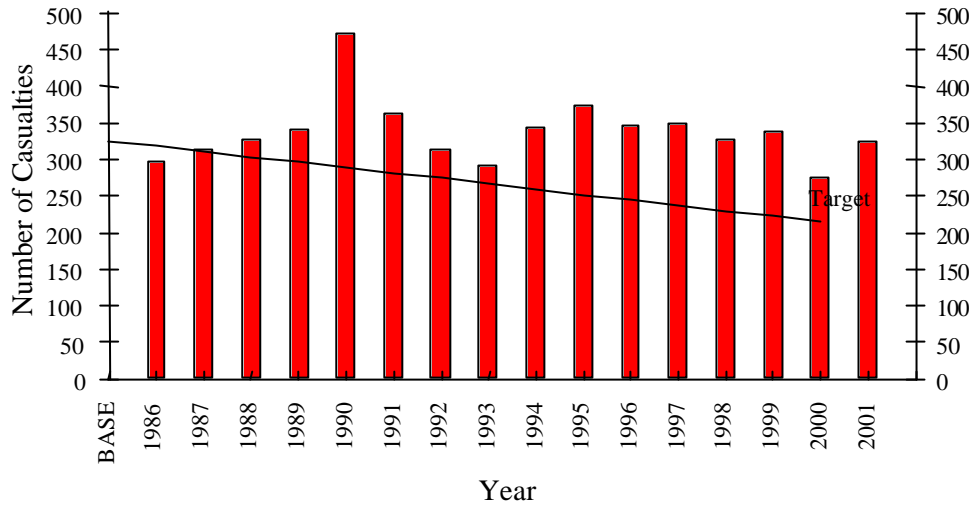
4 CASUALTIES BY ROAD USER GROUP.

4.1 The number of casualties in the various road user groups have been considered in order to identify those people who are most at risk ; figure 2. The figure shows that car and taxi occupants and pedestrians are the most vulnerable groups.



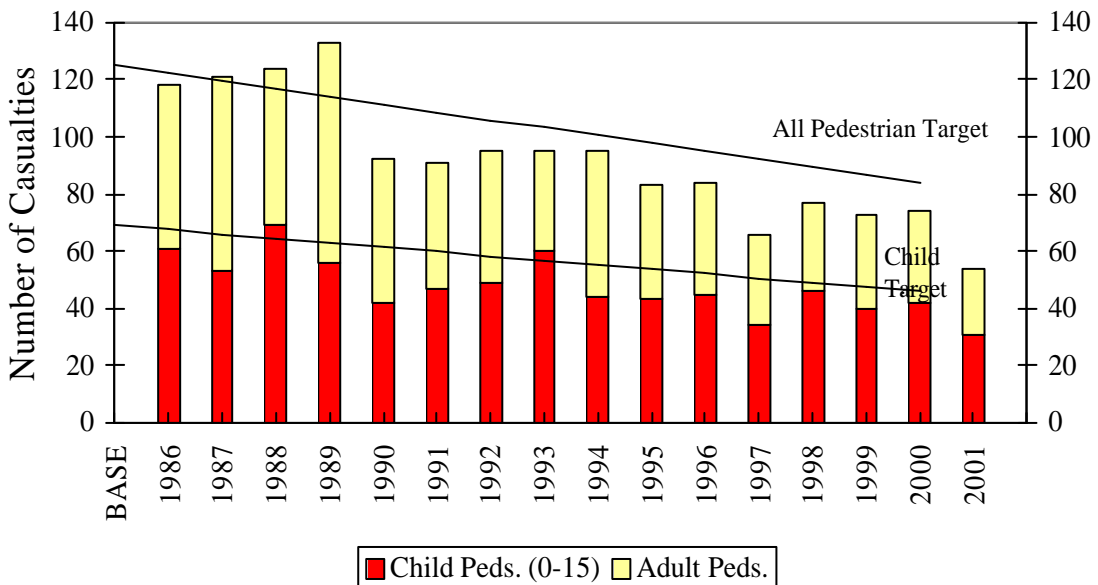
4.2 In 2001, car occupants (both passengers and drivers) accounted for 325 casualties (72% of the total for the year); fig.3.

Figure 3: Car User Casualties



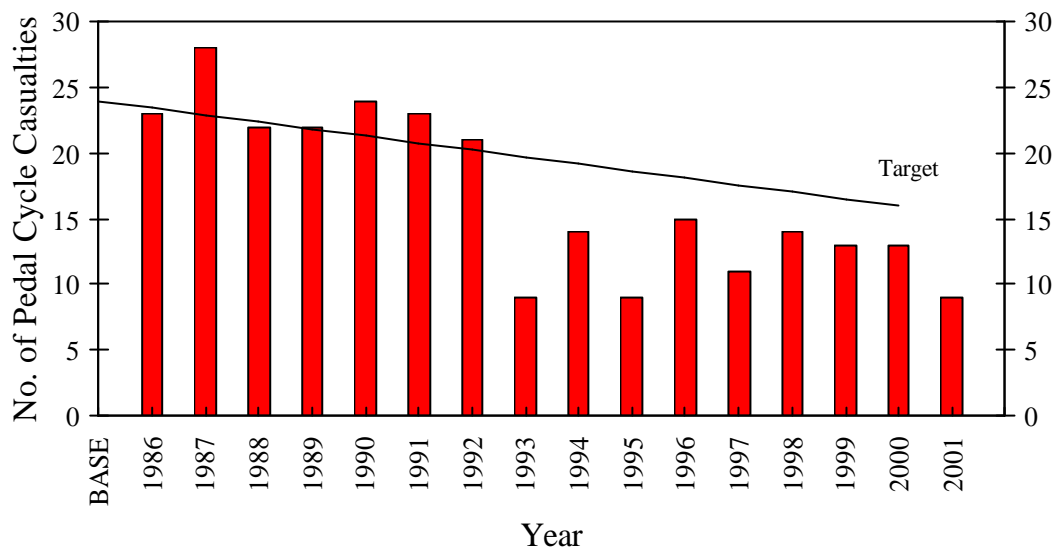
- 4.3 Pedestrians accounted for 54 casualties in 2001(12% of the total) compared with an average of 125 per year between 1981-85. Child pedestrians (up to 15 years of age) accounted for 23 casualties compared with 69 in the base line years.
- 4.4 The 2000 casualty figures for all pedestrians and child pedestrians attained the targets set for the year 2000; figure 4, as did the figures for 2001.

Figure 4: Pedestrian Casualties



- 4.5 Nine pedal cyclists were injured in 2001. Figure 5 shows that the target for the year 2000 was achieved.

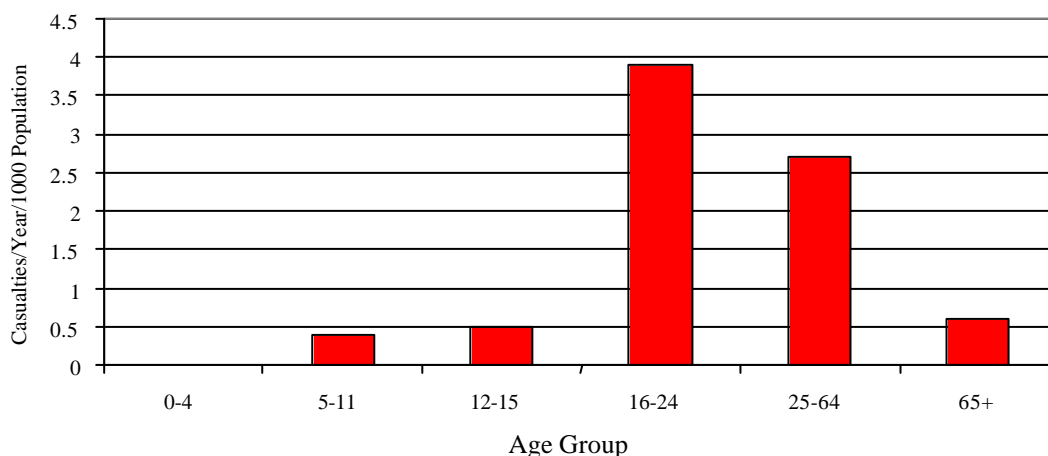
Figure 5: Pedal Cycle Casualties



5 CASUALTIES BY AGE AND MODE

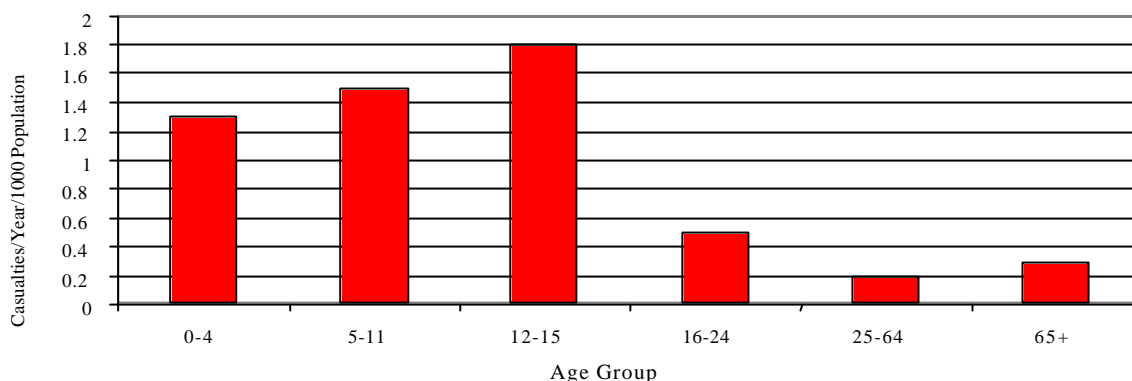
- 5.1 The number of casualties by age group and mode in 2001 have been considered to identify the road users who are most at risk.
- 5.2 Figure 6 shows the risk of injury to drivers and riders (cyclists, motor cyclists, car, bus and lorry drivers). Car drivers make up the majority of casualties in this group. Whilst all adults are vulnerable, the figure shows that young drivers in the 16-24 age range are fifty per cent more likely to be injured in an accident than 25 to 64 year olds.

Figure 6: Driver/Rider Casualties by Age Group



5.3 Figure 7 shows the risk of injury to pedestrians, for different age ranges in the year 2001. School age children are the most vulnerable pedestrians, with the 5-11 and 12-15 age ranges exposed to risks some 7.5 and 9 times greater than adults in the 25-64 range. Older people are less vulnerable than children and young adults, but are at a higher risk than adults in the 24-64 age range.

Figure 7: Pedestrian Casualties by Age Group



6 SPEED RELATED CASUALTIES

6.1 Speeding and the use of inappropriate speed for the road conditions are major causes of accidents and road casualties. Table 2 shows the primary causations (as indicated in the police accident records) that are likely to be associated with excessive speed. In 2001, these causes accounted for 43% of all road casualties.

Table 2 Primary Causations

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Primary Causations						
Excessive speed (in excess of speed limit)	6	6	10	7	8	6
Excessive speed (w.r.t. prevailing g conditions)	5	4	0	4	8	0
Lost control on right hand bend	36	25	36	34	14	25
Lost control on left hand bend	27	43	42	41	20	41
Lost control	30	41	42	23	38	35
Failed to maintain a safe distance	53	75	55	66	70	78
Overtaking improperly	16	28	30	27	28	12
TOTAL	173	222	215	202	186	197

7. ACCIDENT COSTS

- 7.1 The government publishes annual estimates of the costs of road casualties. The costs vary according to the severity of the injuries sustained and in East Ayrshire the costs exceeded £33 million in 2001; table 3.

Table 3

		2001	2001
Casualty	Cost	Casualties	Costs
Fatal	£1,194,240	15	£17,913,600
Serious	£134,190	87	£11,674,530
Slight	£10,350	358	£3,705,300
2001 East Ayrshire Total Casualty Costs			£33,293,430

- 7.2 The high costs of fatal and serious accidents reflects the priority which society attaches to the lost output and personal costs experienced by the people involved in such accidents as well as police, medical and damage to property costs.

8 SUMMARY

- 8.1 The analysis of accident data for East Ayrshire in 2001 has identified a number of issues:-

- (i) car occupants account for more than 70% of all injuries
- (ii) young drivers and riders of motor vehicles are more likely to be injured than other motorists
- (iii) speed accounts for almost a half of all casualties
- (iv) pedestrians account for 12% of all casualties
- (v) 30% of pedestrian accidents result in death or serious injury
- (vi) children of school age are more likely to be hurt crossing the road than adults
- (vii) the cost of road traffic accidents in East Ayrshire in 2001 was over £33 million.

- 8.2 In 2001 there was a significant increase in the number of fatalities compared with the years in the late 1990's. Slight injuries also rose by almost 10% when compared with the figures in 2000.

- 8.3 A significant proportion of the casualties occurred on rural, single carriageway roads subject to the national speed limit of 60 mph. Accidents on these roads

accounted for 12 fatalities out of a total of 15; 44 serious injuries out of a total of 87 and 194 slight injuries out of a total of 358.

8.4 Between January and July 2002, the most up to date information available, there were 245 casualties on the roads in East Ayrshire: 7 fatal, 51 serious and 187 slight. During the same 7 month period in 2001 there were 259 casualties: 6 fatal, 56 serious and 197 slight. Regretably 4 further fatalities occurred during November: these occurred on the A719, A76(T) and the B7037 Galston to Sorn road.

9 2010 TARGETS

9.1 The government has set new targets for 2010, as follows:

- ◆ a reduction in fatal and serious casualties of 40 per cent on the average of 1994 to 1998, viz. 140. The target for East Ayrshire is therefore 84.
- ◆ A reduction in fatal and serious casualties of 50 per cent for child casualties on the average of 1994 to 1998, viz. 28. The target is therefore 14.

9.2 These targets will be challenging to achieve, as many casualties in East Ayrshire are associated with excessive speed and occur on rural single carriageway roads. It is likely that co-ordinated programmes of Education, Engineering and Enforcement (in conjunction with Strathclyde Police) will be required to address these issues. A significant increase in the Road Safety Capital Budget (currently £120,000 per year) would be required to implement rural route action plans comprising low cost accident and remedial measures to address the serious accident problems which are occurring on the rural roads. Such measures were implemented on the A77(T) between Fenwick and Malletsheugh during the 1990's and led to significantly reduced casualty levels. A previous report to the Committee also indicated that the cost of installing a central barrier on the A71 where there have recently been fatal accidents involving crossovers would be £750,000.

10 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report

11 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Section 39 of the Road Traffic Act, 1988 requires Local Authorities to:-

- prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety; and
- carry out accident studies.

12 RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (a) note the latest road casualty trends in East Ayrshire; and
- (b) note that a further report will be prepared for the Committee when further statistics become available.

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10 December 2002
SC/KO/KH**

List of Background Papers

Nil

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