

WRITTEN QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 44

1) Question from Councillor Wright to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

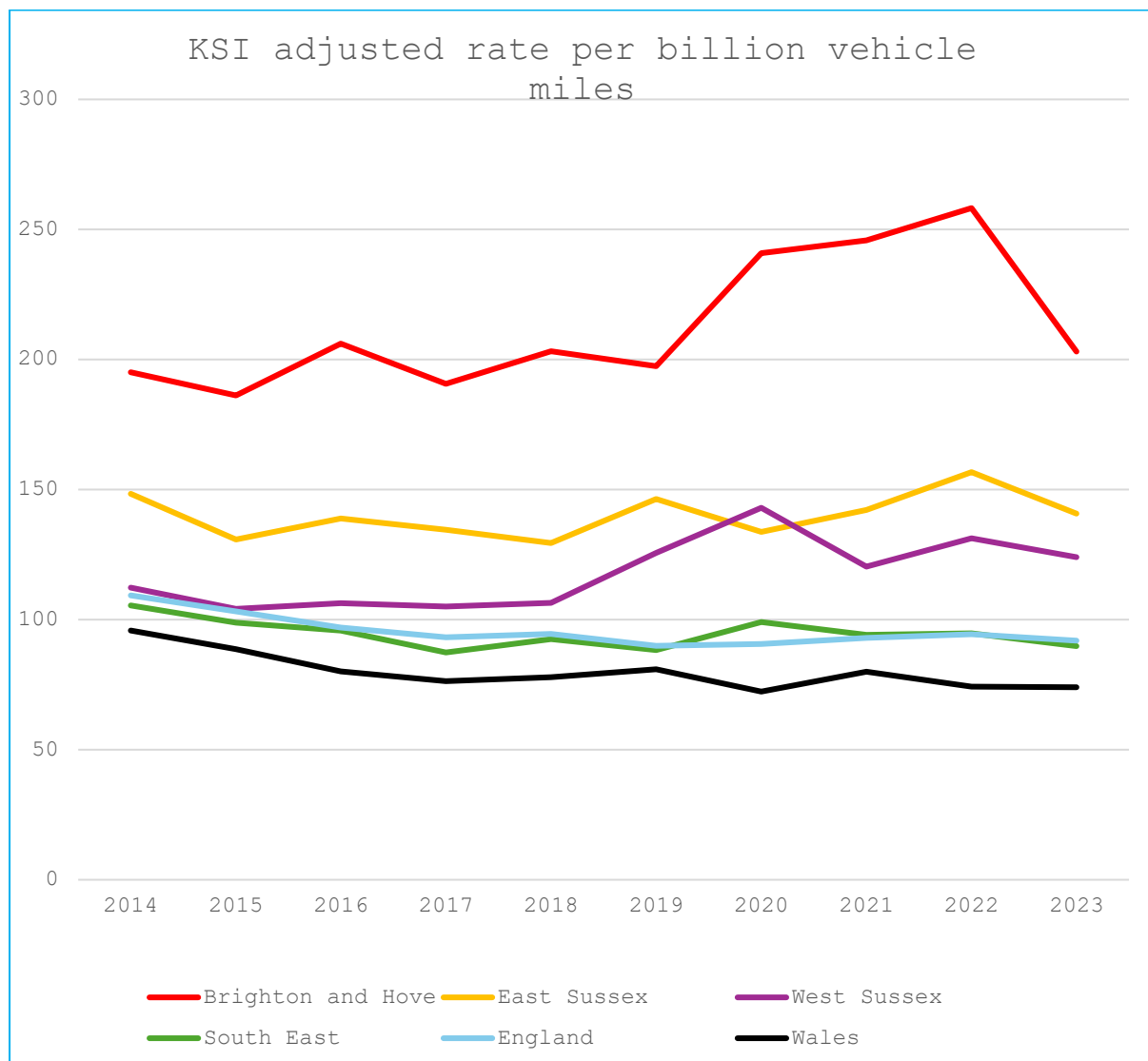
Can you please provide the annual data for the Killed & Seriously Injured (KSIs) casualty rate per billion miles travelled in East Sussex over the last decade. Then compare it to the baseline average for England and Wales (and Southeast) over time, to see if there have been any changes compared to other councils. "

"This would be similar to the data in:

<https://performance.westsussex.gov.uk/stories/s/41-Killed-and-seriously-injured-casualties-per-bil/sjp5-2pt3/>"

Answer by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Please find below the data for Sussex, South East England, England and Wales.



We are aware that the proportion of people Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) on roads in East Sussex is higher than the average rate for England. However, in

common with East Sussex the majority of County Councils in England over this period had a KSI rate higher than the England average.

For the three year period 2021-2023 the average rate of KSIs for England was 93 per billion vehicle miles, compared to a rate of 236 in Brighton and Hove, 147 for East Sussex and 125 for West Sussex.

It should however be noted that whilst East Sussex has historically had a higher level of KSIs than many other areas, it is difficult to make direct comparisons with other areas due to both methods of data collection and recording across police forces, and the differences in road networks and infrastructure. East Sussex has no motorways, and limited dual carriageways, and we know that statistically these are the safest roads. In addition, in 2019 a new national data reporting system CRASH was introduced which means that data is not directly comparable with previous years.

2) Question from Councillor Wright to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Statistics are now available for the first full year after the default speed limit in Wales reduced to 20mph (sign only). In that year, around 100 fewer people were killed or seriously injured on roads with 20mph and 30mph road speed limits than in the 12 months a year before. The number of casualties on 20mph and 30mph roads was 28% lower than in the prior year (Ref LTT 908 3 02 25).

Do these statistics make DfT Circular 01/2013 on local speed limits and ESCC PS05/02 policy in regard to 20 mph no longer fit for purpose and if so, what does ESCC intend doing about it.

Answer by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

East Sussex County Council (ESCC) supports 20mph speed limits where appropriate. Adopted Policy PS05/02 does not prevent the implementation of 20mph speed limits and allows for signed only 20mph zones or speed limits to be considered where they are likely to be self-enforcing. An effective and self-enforcing 20mph speed limit can be achieved with signs alone on roads where the mean (average) speed of traffic is below 24mph. This policy aligns to DfT guidance on setting local speed limits.

When considering how ESCC assesses and prioritises road safety concerns including requests for lower speed limits, it is important to consider not only the Local Speed Limit Policy PS05/02 but also the wider policy and operational context. This includes ESCC's Local Transport Plan, and the processes and criteria followed when setting the annual Capital Programme for Local Transport Improvements, and the Annual Casualty Reduction, Community Focused Road Safety and Speed Management Programmes.

The Council has a finite amount of funding to develop local transport improvements, and we need to ensure that we target our resources towards those schemes which will be of greatest benefit to our local communities.

Earlier this year the Scrutiny Speed limit Review Board considered examples of the approach taken to 20mph speed limits by Oxfordshire, Cornwall, Surrey, and Buckinghamshire councils and the Welsh Government. The Board noted that those that have prioritised the roll out of 20mph speed limits and zones have allocated significant additional funding to enable this. For example, Cornwall have invested £4million and Oxfordshire £8million. In Wales, £34m was allocated to implement the default signed only 20mph policy, with a further £5m allocated last year to reverse some of the 20mph limits.

Within East Sussex, requests for lower speed limits or traffic calming schemes are funded from the Capital Programme of local transport Improvements, which has an annual budget of £3m. Schemes funded from this budget historically have been assessed against their contribution towards delivering the Local Transport Plan (LTP3).

With the adoption of LTP4 by the Council in October 2024, and the emphasis on vision led planning for people and places in the Strategy, officers are developing a revised scheme assessment and prioritisation process to reflect the objectives and priorities set out in our new Local Transport Plan.

Nationally, KSI statistics are considered over a 3 year period rather than 1 year, due to annual fluctuations. Whilst initial reports of reduced KSIs in Wales are encouraging, it is too soon to fully understand the impact of the 20mph scheme here. Three years' worth of casualty and speed data would allow a more accurate assessment, and we will keep a close eye on this to help us better understand where signed only 20mph limits can be most effective.

3) Question from Councillor Wright to the Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change

The Capital Programme budget for the year is £104.7m, net expenditure for the year is projected to be £91.3m. After applying a slippage factor to reflect likely slippage based on a risk assessment of historic levels of actual expenditure the net forecast expenditure after applying this risk factor is £84.6m. (Ref: Council Monitoring Report – Q3 2024/25). The net forecast expenditure after applying the risk factor is therefore 19% below budget.

Does this 19% reduction indicate a failure in ability to implement planned capital projects at ESCC?

Plus, bearing in mind that project costs increase substantially when the capital budget is not spent in a timely way, what actions are ESCC taking to make sure that capital budgets for the year and for years going forward are spent as scheduled? Is

there a timeline to get net expenditure and net forecast expenditure back on budget in the future?

Answer by the Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change

The Council, through the Capital Board, looks to implement capital projects in line with planned timescales. In support of this, capital projects have detailed plans and timeframes in place with resources allocated against them.

However, given the complex nature of these projects there are often factors outside of the Council's control which are above and beyond what could reasonably be anticipated at the outset. Examples include inherent challenges in securing materials and the supply chain, weather constraints, and the time taken to secure planning or permissions from third parties where this is necessary.

Whilst this can result in the slippage of project work to later periods, the capital programme budget available to those projects remains the same, and in this way the Council is able to control costs. In circumstances where prices have risen in the period beyond what could have been reasonably anticipated at the outset, those projects are 'value engineered' to ensure that they remain within the same budget envelope wherever possible.

4) Question from Councillor Wright to the Leader

How much money has ESCC spent on External Consultants for each of the last three years split by each of the Directorates, Adult Social Care and Health, Business Services, Chief Executive's Office, Children's Services, Communities Economy and Transport, Governance Services and in total.

Response by the Leader

The term "consultant" can be interpreted in a variety of ways, and whilst we seek a consistent approach, there is likely to be a range of interpretations across departments. For example, this can include employing short term agency staff, programme managers for specific projects and experts brought in for specific knowledge (e.g. Inner Circle Consulting's work on the future options for County Hall).

SAP has a code for consultants and across revenue and capital though there is a caveat to these numbers as they are reliant on the interpretation of "consultant". The following expenditure has been coded to "consultants":

Directorate	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 to 10.03.25
Adult Social Care & Health	621	971	679	2,028
Business Services / Orbis	2,763	5,129	6,334	3,491
Children's Services	2,135	1,624	2,872	6,751
Communities, Economy & Transport	4,050	5,354	5,535	3,839
Governance Services	59	45	23	33
Total	9,629	13,123	15,444	16,142