

Response to Cllr John Hale

I'd like to thank Councillor Hale for his question.

He is right to highlight the importance of road safety. It is sadly a reality that in Hertfordshire, like most counties, you are statistically several times more likely to die on the roads than to die from homicide.

Compared to pre-Covid figures for 2019, KSI data in Hertfordshire is broadly flat over a five year period but lower compared to ten years ago. That suggests there is more work to be done to reduce KSIs in Hertfordshire.

Police officers attending a collision will make a professional judgement about contributory factors. Where they are recorded, the largest proportion were deemed to be driver or rider error.

Young people are particularly impacted, with 17% of KSIs in Hertfordshire being aged 16-24, who make up 9% of the population.

Last month, I met with our collaborated Roads Policing Unit and went out with officers on a late shift to see the work they do first hand. Their work is impressive, dealing with dangerous driving and criminality on our major roads network and compliment the work our neighbourhood policing teams do on local roads.

And, just last night, I joined intervention officers in North Herts for a late shift and we ended up at the scene of a single vehicle collision on a rural road which, thankfully did not result in injuries, but which could on another day have been very serious. I thank the police officers and firefighters who attended that incident last night, as they do up and down the county every day of the week.

Throughout the year, police officers carry out proactive activity to check for unsafe vehicles, deal with speeding and dangerous driving and undertake operations to tackle drink and drug driving.

As you will be aware, my predecessor implemented a number of educational projects aimed at targeting speed in areas of high community concern but which are not designated a KSI site, which would receive static or mobile enforcement activity. These schemes are predominantly DriveSafe and the PCC Road Safety Camera Vans.

That work is funded from the Road Safety Fund and I am currently reviewing this work to ensure that it is financially sustainable given there is no money topping up this fund at present, and is correctly focused to have the greatest impact.

I am very interested in the pilot of automated speed monitoring systems and looking at how we can do more in Hertfordshire with these. In addition, I am currently exploring a pilot project that will target anti-social driving and car meets with illegally modified vehicles that relates to the cohort that appear the most prevalent victims of KSIs. I hope to be able to make announcements about this soon.

In those rare occasions when a Hertfordshire resident is killed or seriously injured on our roads, I fund open-ended support to victims and immediate family members through the Road Safety Trust who complement the support initially provided by police Family Liaison Officers.

Every person killed or seriously injured on the roads is a tragedy for that person and their family. I am committed to playing my part as part of Hertfordshire's partnership work, including through the development of a new county-wide Road Safety Strategy which is underway. And everyone using Hertfordshire's roads has a responsibility to take their safety and the safety of other road users and pedestrians seriously by taking care, not driving while drunk or on drugs, wearing a seatbelt, keeping to the speed limit and not using a mobile phone.