

Notes on updated Portsmouth 20mph area accidents and casualties.

1/ In their March 2010 Report WS Atkins record that PCC had been planning gradual implementation of more expensive 20mph zones with traffic calming and enforcement, until three deaths triggered a "something must be seen to be done" knee-jerk reaction and implementation of the "signs only" scheme in clear breach of DfT advice and widespread understanding by police forces that little, if anything, would be achieved. Indeed, PCC confirmed in a briefing note that no research had been done to try to establish potential benefits - and that casualty reduction was not an objective!

2/ The Atkins reports on the first year's results showed separate figures for K, SI and KSI, in tables 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4. but strangely only for the combined figures KSI in the March 2010 Report for 2 years. As so much of this March 2010 report is identical to the September 2009 report it must have been prepared by updating the earlier one, and it is therefore clear that someone made a conscious decision to hide the K (fatality) figures. For now, the new table has to show separate K and SI figures for the first year, so the totals may differ from the combined KSI figures for the two year period.

3/ It is known that over the two years KSI rose significantly in the area, but it is impossible to tell from the report whether fatalities changed. I am currently appealing a DfT refusal to allow PCC to give me all the figures under my Freedom of Information request.

4/ All Portsmouth data is taken from the two Atkins reports, PCC's conference presentation and national data from the DfT's annual "Main Results" publication.

5/ My previous analysis was typed in Word, but I have prepared the new one in Excel spreadsheet form, the more easily to handle the many parameters and do some of the arithmetic, and also to remove less important data to provide a less complex format.

6/ My previous table comparing first year results, based on data provide in the Sept 2009 Atkins report, wrongly assume that all areas shared the same first year of April 2008 to March 2009. In fact the start dates, both for the first and the two-year results varied from June 2007 onwards to December 2007 onwards. I point this out in the interests of clarity but note that neither this nor the slight mismatch between PCC periods and national period will make a significant difference to the results, not least because traffic levels at that time were changing by only 1% pa either way.

7/ My updated comparison shows results for the 2 years where the second year's data is available, but for the first year only for K and SI, until the DfT give way and supply the information.

8/ Atkins and PCC chose to interpret the 12% fall in traffic volume within the 20mph area in the first year, the 3% fall in the cordon roads and 1% nationally as implying that the traffic migration from the area that PCC had both anticipated but indeed intended, did not occur. This reasoning is specious because:

a/ the assumption implicit in this interpretation was that it traffic would have migrated only to nearby roads - but the greater falls on the cordon roads than nationally might well mean that drivers avoided not just the 20mph area but also the cordon roads nearby and indeed Portsmouth altogether.

b/ It is not possible to identify and therefore not possible to monitor the other roads to which drivers might have diverted.

c/ Traffic diverting from low volume slow roads to higher volume faster roads would show up on those faster roads as a smaller % change of a larger number. Hence comparing percentages without weighting for volume is not only invalid but indicative of at least a degree of statistical incompetence.

9/ There is no separate cyclist, motorcyclist or car/taxi casualty data in the Atkins reports, just data for the numbers of cycles, motorcycles and cars/taxis involved. This data is however shown and identified as such, on the basis that it is probably unusual for more than one cycle or motorcycle casualty to be involved in any one accident. Similarly the changes of casualties are likely to be similar to those for vehicle numbers.

10/ Some data such as child casualties is included in more than one group i.e. Child and Pedestrian.

11/ Atkins and PCC compare casualty data for the first year of the scheme (2008/9)(Column 2) with the average figures for the preceding 3 years without adjusting for the 12% fall in traffic (recorded in those sectors where it was measured and assumed here for all). It is **seriously misleading to claim casualty reduction without adjusting for the fall in traffic**, and especially to persist in doing so after this and other flaws of analysis were brought to the Council's attention early in 2010.

12/ National data shows that traffic volume records rose by 1% from 2005 to 2006, but fell by 1% in each successive year. Atkins and PCC have not (it seems) adjusted accident or casualty data for these trend changes either in the “before” period 2005/6/7, or afterwards. However the small differences due to such trend changes cannot be significant in the overall results so I have this time not made those adjustments either.

13/ It is reasonable to assume that the 12% fall traffic volume in the 20mph area, when national trend fell only 1% comprised the same 1% trend fall plus an 11% one-off (but sustained) fall due to traffic diversion and perhaps other minor factors. The comparison that adjusts for traffic volume changes therefore scales down the national figures by that 11%.

14/ Motor cycle traffic however fell by 8% in 2008 ??????????????/. So the 2008 data (Column 10) for that group has been adjusted upwards by 8% for 2008 but downwards by 1% for 2007

11/ Cycle traffic however rose nationally by 12% in 2008 so data for that group (Column 10) has been adjusted downwards by 1% for 2007 and another 12% for 2008.

12/ Column 4 gives the % changes in the 20mph zone, allowing for the 12% traffic fall. Of the 28 figures shown, 16 in Red show INCREASES but only 12 in Blue show reductions.

13/ Column 11 shows the equivalent % changes in national data every single one of the results, in Blue shows a REDUCTION.

14/ Column 12 repeats Column 4 for convenience, Column 13 shows the % reduction in Portsmouth less national % reduction. Of the 24 figures shown, 22, in Red, show WORSE results (comparing like with like as accurately as the available data allows) in Portsmouth’s 20mph zone than nationally.

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