



Nick Gargan QPM,
Chief Constable,
Avon and Somerset Constabulary,
PO.Box 37, Valley Road,
Portishead, BS20 8QJ

Dear Chief Constable,

Re : The Police Response to Incidents in Gloucester Road Involving Cyclists

I write to express the Bristol Cycling Campaign's concern at the apparent lack of police action in investigating and prosecuting road traffic offences involving injury to cyclists on the Gloucester Road.

Gloucester Road is one of the six worst roads in Bristol in terms of incidents involving injury to cyclists. There were 60 such incidents between September 2009 and September 2012 with the large majority (80%) resulting from the, to us, all too familiar causes – vehicles cutting across, pulling out in front or running into the back of cyclists, motorists opening doors without looking etc., i.e. drivers not exercising due care and attention. The recorded incidents all resulted in the cyclist needing hospital treatment although, fortunately, only in one case as an in-patient.

We looked in more detail at 25 of these incidents. These were all ones which appeared, according to your officers' own reports, to be due to the lack of care and attention of the driver and where a site visit showed no possible mitigating factors for the motorist's behaviour. In only 2 of the 25 incidents were drivers charged with dangerous driving and in a further 1 case a fixed penalty notice was issued. Put another way, in 88% of cases where there appeared to be evidence of the driver being responsible for the incident and injury to a cyclist no action was taken.

Various reasons have been put forward by your officers for this inaction. Firstly, that there were no independent witnesses. Given the incidents all took place on one of Bristol's busiest shopping streets it is difficult to believe that obtaining witnesses to the incidents could have been so difficult. Secondly, that in many incidents "no offence had been committed". This finding would seem to directly contradict the narrative on the police's own incident reports. Thirdly, that since the cutting of the police's accident unit, individual officers have taken on responsibility for prosecutions and cases tend to languish at the bottom of busy in-trays.

We continue to be concerned at the unacceptably high number of cycling injuries and fatalities in Bristol. We note that Police and Crime Commissioner Sue Mountstevens has pledged her support for the CTC (the national cycling charity) Road Justice campaign aimed at ensuring the proper investigation and prosecution of road traffic collisions. It would appear to us, from our investigations, that the Road Justice campaign's recommendations are not being implemented in Bristol. As a result our police force is not challenging dangerous driving and this has consequences for us and other road users. We would be grateful if you would look into these incidents, list attached, and inform us of your findings and the action that you propose to take to tackle this issue. We would welcome the opportunity to meet you to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely,
Martin Tweddell
Chair, Bristol Cycling Campaign
chair@bristolcyclingcampaign.org.uk

cc.. Ms Sue Mountstevens, Police & Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset.

Incident reports referred to:

101007724
090911295
101008446
111107615
101007618
101007187
111102541
121203520
111105256
111107662
101005128
111100936
091003481
121202138
111107616
101007949
090911215
111107504
090911777
111106838
111105106
121202798
111105442
111107255
111104922