

New model update

The latest on new bikes due out this year and beyond

PIAGGIO X2

IS this the world's first uncrashable bike? Maybe not quite, but Piaggio's soon-to-be-released X2 - seen in finished form in this spy picture - uses two front wheels to be certain you can't drop it. The firm has already demonstrated prototypes of the bike, showing how it leans like a conventional scooter, but with far more front-end grip. Expect to see an official announcement soon.



X2 leans like a scooter

APRILIA V4 FROM BIMOTA DB5 DESIGNER

AWARD-winning Italian designer Sergio Robbiano is designing Aprilia's new V4 superbike. But don't expect the V4 to look anything like the Bimota DB5, Robbiano reckons it will be the design antithesis to his last creation. "Aggressive simplicity" is the buzzword for the new project.



APRILIA'S new superbike is being designed by man responsible for this

NOSEJOB FOR HONDA MOTARD

HONDA'S XR250 Motard has been spruced up with a new nose and headlight. The bike - which has never been sold in the UK but has a strong following in Japan and parts of Europe - has had its old square light replaced with a neater unit similar to the one on the FMX650.



XR250 gets a facelift

INVESTIGATION

NEW SPEED

Authorities shown to be using minor accidents and even

BY STEVE FARRELL

SPEED camera authorities have been bending the rules on camera sites to put them where they want rather than where accidents have occurred most.

An exclusive MCN investigation has exposed flagrant abuses of a strict Government code on where cameras should be placed, including:

- Counting a minor accident on an off-road cycle track to help justify a fixed speed camera on a nearby major A-road.
- Placing cameras on roads nearby the most dangerous ones rather than actually on them.
- Placing cameras where they are likely to catch the most speeders rather than where most accidents have occurred.

The Department for Transport's Handbook of Rules and Guidance for the National Safety Camera Programme clearly states a site should be "a stretch of road" up to three miles long on which a minimum number of accidents must have occurred in three years. But our investigation has found camera authorities are loosely interpreting the rules so that accidents on other nearby roads are counted, and even interpreting 'length' to mean 'diameter', so that enormous circular sites can be created covering dozens of roads. That wouldn't seem so bad if they at least put the camera on the most dangerous road within the site - but our evidence shows they're not even doing that.

Now the RAC has called for an organisation to be set up to which all camera partnerships in England and Wales must be accountable for failures to follow rules.

Spokeswoman Sheila Rainger

said: "In Scotland there is an umbrella group of various interested bodies that oversees the activities of the partnerships, so they are accountable to that. We don't have that in England and Wales. There is no body to which concerns like this can be brought. That's something the Scots are doing that seems like a good idea."

We got our evidence by submitting an enquiry to every camera authority in the country under the Freedom of Information Act. We asked for maps of every camera site showing the location of the camera along with every accident that was cited in support of the application to Government to create the site.

So far we've only had a handful of responses but already our findings are shocking. The rest have until next week to respond under the Freedom of Information Act.

GOVERNMENT RULES ON SPEED CAMERA SITES

THE DfT's Handbook of Rules and Guidance for the National Safety Camera Programme for England and Wales for 2005/6 clearly states: "A site is defined as a stretch of road where safety camera enforcement takes place." The rules also state that a fixed camera site must be no more than one mile in length, while mobile camera sites must be no longer than three miles.

'There is no body to which concerns can be brought'

SHEILA RAINGER, RAC



HOW many of those injured were harmed on this road - or even on motorised vehicles?

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AROUND THE WORLD

AFGHANISTAN - According to reports from the Middle East, the Honda 125cc motorcycle has become the Taliban what the Humvee is to the American military. The off-road 125s are the ride of choice to carry out bombings and shootings and are being used to get in and out of key target areas undetected as they are easy to slip past road blocks. Now the province of Ghazni is banning unregistered bikes in a bid to put a stop to the attacks.

INDIA - 2000 workers at Hero Honda Motors, India's largest motorcycle maker, are striking for higher wages and permanent jobs. Production at the plant, near New Delhi, which makes about 6000 bikes a day, has been at a standstill since last week.

PHILIPPINES - Bank customers in Manila have been alerted against motorcycle-riding thieves who prey on people who have just stepped out of the bank after withdrawing cash. Last Tuesday thousands of bank notes were left scattered all over the street after police rumbled a gang of bike-mounted thieves mid-heist.

USA - Kawasaki USA has put this image (below) on advertising boards and in bike magazines all over the country, warning against over-enthusiastic use of the new ZZR1400's throttle. The advert states across the top: "The Ninja-14 is the most powerful motorcycle we've ever built... careful where you point that thing."



STEADY now...

CAMERA SCAM

a cycle track incident to justify Gatso sites

EXPOSED

CAMERA SITE 1

CAMERA AUTHORITY: AVON AND SOMERSET

LOCATION: BRISTOL
CAMERA TYPE: MOBILE

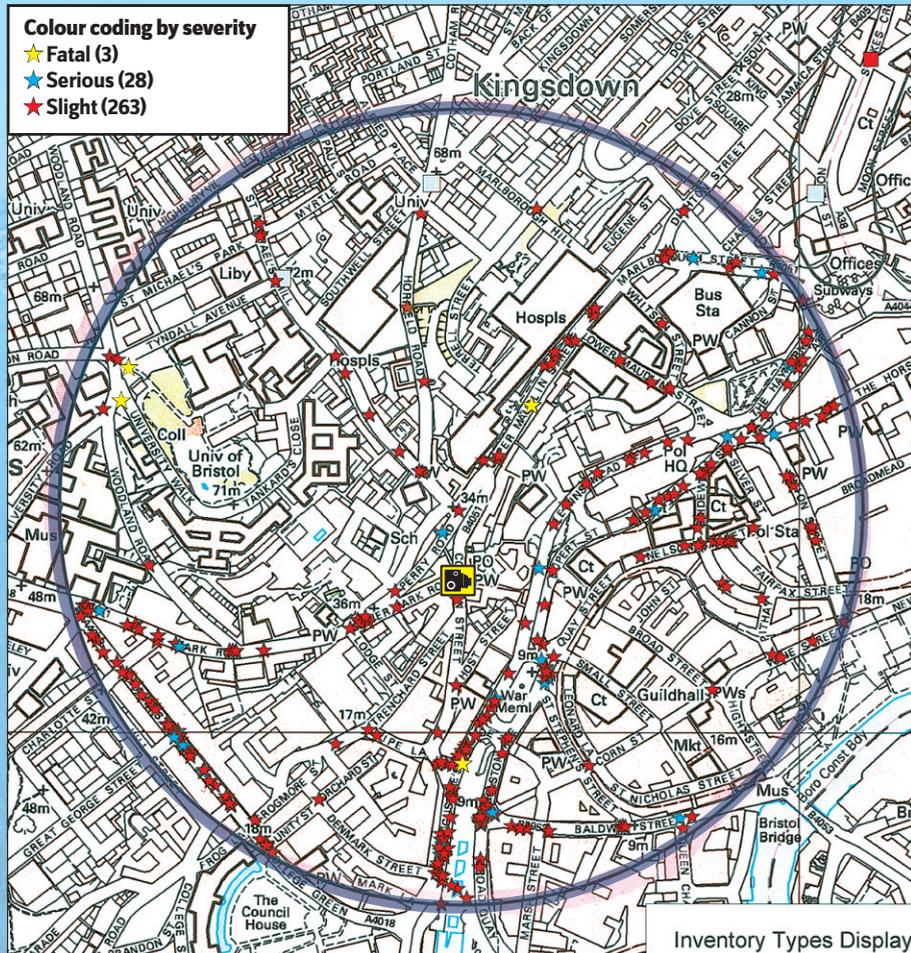
GOVERNMENT rules say a camera site should be 'a stretch of road', but this map of a site in Bristol shows it is round.

The map shows many accidents on roads to the south-west and north-east of the site near

Bristol's city centre. Yet the camera is in the middle, on a road where only three slight accidents have occurred in three years.

Dave Gollicker, spokesman for the partnership, claimed the rules may have changed since the site was created. He said: "The handbook is changed each year."

A DfT spokesman said: "Speed camera sites have always been defined as lengths of road."



CAMERA SITE 2

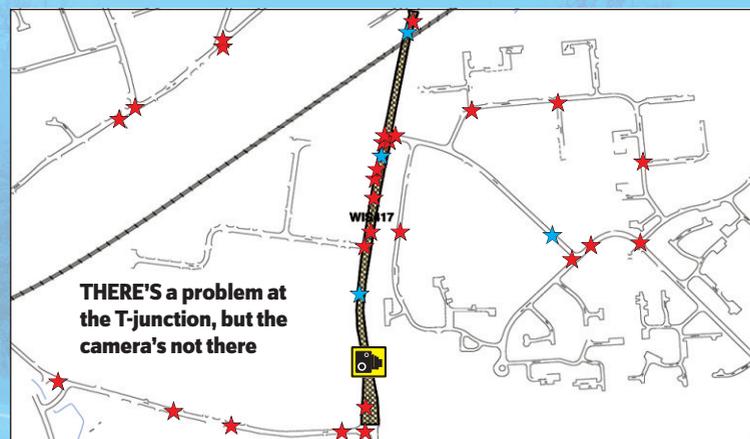
CAMERA AUTHORITY: GREATER MANCHESTER

LOCATION: A49 WARRINGTON ROAD, WIGAN
CAMERA TYPE: FIXED

THIS site map shows there's an accident problem at the T-junction about two-thirds of the way up the length of the site. Collisions are concentrated around

the junction. It suggests vehicles are pulling out into the path of oncoming traffic. Yet the camera is near the bottom of the site, where only one slight accident has occurred - but where traffic enters a single carriageway from a dual carriageway, and is more likely to be speeding.

No-one from the Greater Manchester partnership was available for comment.



CAMERA SITE 3

CAMERA AUTHORITY: HERTFORDSHIRE
LOCATION: A602 HITCHIN ROAD, STEVENAGE
CAMERA TYPE: FIXED

THIS camera is positioned on the A602, halfway along the length of the site. Look closely and you'll see the map shows the accident nearest the top of the site isn't actually on the A602 at all. Instead it's on a cycle track which runs alongside and passes under roads which feed the A602.

Claire Hall, spokeswoman for the partnership, said of the site: "In terms of it fitting the criteria, the DfT are happy."



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