



10 Middle Rank
Bradford on Avon
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Cllr Roger Symonds Cabinet Member for Transport
Bath and North East Somerset Council
The Guildhall
High Street
Bath BA1 5AW

24th April 2012

Dear Councillor Symonds,

Cleveland Bridge Restriction

We, members of Bradford On Avon Lorry Watch, are writing to express our deep concern over the announcement that Bath And North East Somerset Council intends to impose an 18 tonnes weight restriction between the A36 Bathwick Street and the A36 Beckford Road (known as Cleveland Bridge).

Bradford On Avon Lorry watch is a group of volunteers who mount a watch on the Town Bridge in the centre of Bradford On Avon which carries the A363 over the river Avon. The Lorry Watch is made up of more than 60 Bradford on Avon residents who, with the approval and co-operation of Bradford On Avon Town Council and the Trading Standards Department of Wiltshire Council, mount a continuous watch on the Town Bridge every weekday-all day and report details of all vehicles crossing the bridge which exceed the bridge's official, 18 tonnes weight limit. Lorry Watch members undertake this task purely out of concern for the well-being of their town and of their fellow citizens and because they are acutely aware of the serious problems which traffic, and especially **large vehicles**, cause both to the historic fabric of the town.

Bradford On Avon has a serious traffic problem. Already pollution levels due to traffic in the town centre are well in excess of national guidelines. Large, heavy vehicles attempting to drive through its narrow streets greatly exacerbate this problem, not only on account of the pollution which they generate, but on account of the excessive congestion which they create in the town. Large, heavy vehicles damage the historic fabric of the town through the vibration which they cause. Large vehicles are a source of particular danger to pedestrians. In the months since the Lorry Watch was instituted at least two pedestrians walking across the Town Bridge have been injured by vehicles.

The Lorry Watch was started out of people's deep concern over the problem caused by large vehicles using the centre of the town and in the hope that, by reporting offenders the number of large vehicles coming through the town might be reduced. Since Lorry Watch began, last October, the number of overweight lorries crossing the Town Bridge has been halved, at the time of this letter nearly 900 lorries have been reported being in contravention of the lorry

ban. You can imagine the alarm and distress caused among Lorry Watch volunteers and the very large number of other residents of Bradford On Avon who have supported the Lorry Watch, when we learned from Bath and North East Somerset Council that it intends to impose an 18 tonnes weight limit on the A36 Cleveland Bridge in Bath, and the effect that that this is likely to produce on the number of large lorries that will choose to come through Bradford On Avon on the A363 in order to rejoin the A36 without crossing Cleveland Bridge. Our dismay was greatly increased when we learned that, by implementing this weight restriction by means of an “experimental weight restriction”, BANES appears to be seeking to avoid the usual requirements for a thorough prior consultation with concerned parties and neighbouring local authorities which are likely to be affected and avoid the need to provide robust evidence or modelling in support of the order. We understand that the Highways Agency and neighbouring local authorities have opposed the restriction. We further understand that the restriction is being imposed *in spite of EU directive 89/460/EC* .

We are not convinced by your authority’s suggestions as to the routes likely to be followed by drivers of HGV’s when they find that Cleveland Bridge is closed to them. The chances of them opting to go round through Bristol, or diverting to the A350 or the B3105 through Trowbridge or Holt and the outskirts of Melksham seem very slight, because each of those routes adds considerable mileage and time to their journeys. It seems to us very likely that a large proportion of HGV drivers who find that they are prevented from using the A36 at Cleveland Bridge will take the shortest and most convenient route *through the middle of Bradford on Avon*. This will undo all the progress that we Bradford On Avon Lorry Watch volunteers have made in reducing the number of heavy lorries and level of traffic congestion and pollution in our town. It will have an adverse impact on the health and safety of people living and working in Bradford. It will make the town a less convenient and pleasant place in which to work, shop or spend leisure time. Bradford’s economy is heavily dependent on tourism and visitors already comment adversely on the volume and congestion of traffic. Reducing the damage caused to the town’s economy by heavy traffic has been one of our goals in volunteering to mount the Lorry Watch. Now, by imposing this new restriction on the A36 Cleveland Bridge, starting in June just as the visitor season reaches its peak, you are likely to negate all our hours of watching and reporting through the worst of the winter weather.

We urge you most earnestly to urgently reconsider the planned 18 tonne weight restriction on the A36 Cleveland Bridge at least until there has been a proper chance for a thorough consultation with all interested parties, proper surveys have been conducted and a thoroughly researched and considered set of alternative routes and provisions has been drawn up.

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Ridout

Bradford On Avon Lorry Watch Coordinator