

**SOMERSET COUNCIL (B3191 CLEEVE HILL, WATCHET)
(PARISH OF WATCHET) (PROHIBITION OF MOTOR VEHICLES) ORDER 2025**

Determination Report:

<i>Executive Portfolio Holder:</i>	Cllr Richard Wilkins, Lead Member for Transport & Waste Services
<i>Division and Local Members:</i>	Councillor Hugh Davies Hugh.Davies@somerset.gov.uk Councillor Rosemary Woods Rosemary.Woods@somerset.gov.uk
<i>Lead Officer:</i>	Katherine Tyson - Traffic Engineer
<i>Author:</i>	Gary Warren - Service Manager – Traffic Engineering, Events and TROs
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1. Summary

Somerset Council initially closed the B3191 at Cleeve Hill on 12 January 2023 following reported cliff movement and the results of a geotechnical survey. The road is situated high on the cliffs on the coastline between Watchet and Blue Anchor. Due to its proximity to the cliff and regular land slippage, sensors had been installed to pick up movement alert the Highways Team.

More detailed inspections following January 2023 revealed further movement was inevitable and it will be impossible to safely reopen the road without major intervention.

However, the route can be used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

The road has been closed to the public using a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO). This is normal practice as a first course of action and while further investigations are carried out.

The current TTRO is not a legally defensible mechanism for the current road closure and could be challenged as has been highlighted to the Council.

The road cannot be opened because it is not safe to do so, therefore a Permanent TRO (PTRO) is the only legally defensible mechanism to enable the current road closure to continue. The route can still be used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

It is important to stress that a PTRO can be revoked if circumstances change at a later date – e.g. if funding is identified for proposals to support a reopening or replacement of either road.

Key points:

- The B3191 at Cleeve Hill closed on 12 January 2023 following cliff movement and the results of a Geotechnical survey. Detailed inspections revealed further movement was inevitable and it would be impossible to reopen the road safely.
- It would not be possible to reopen the road without major intervention or an alternative route, both of which would be multi-million-pound schemes.
- The government confirmed that no funding for such schemes would be available at this time. Somerset Council will continue to try to identify potential funding streams with the support of the local MP and other stakeholders.
- Following the closure and public engagement Somerset Council worked with local stakeholders and signed an agreement with the newly formed Watchet Task Force to unlock £30,000 of funding to promote the town and help boost visitor numbers. The money was also used to fund a long-term review of the design of the town.
- In addition, new permanent signage was installed across Watchet to provide information about accessing communities, including improved and updated brown signs for the Blue Anchor area.
- The Council's Highways team also liaised with surrounding parishes, which felt the inevitable traffic impacts of the closure and undertook several measures including HGV signage, additional 30 mph markings, speed indicator devices (SIDs).
- We have obtained a recent inspection of the town bridge which is the responsibility of WSR to maintain but are assured that it is in suitable condition to continue to carry the levels of traffic that arise from the ongoing closure of the B3191.
- A permanent order closing a road can be revoked if circumstances change later.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the **SOMERSET COUNCIL (B3191 CLEEVE HILL, WATCHET) (PARISH OF WATCHET) (PROHIBITION OF MOTOR VEHICLES) ORDER 2025** be approved.

3.0 Proposed Traffic Regulation Orders

- 3.1 The Traffic Regulation Order was advertised in the West Somerset Free Press on 23rd May 2025. As part of this process all the statutory consultees, local Councillors and the Town/Parish Councils were also consulted. Site notices were also placed on site and made available on the Somerset Council webpage
- 3.2 During the consultation period, a total of 9 (nine) objections were received including a combined objection from the Town Clerks of Watchet, Williton, Carhampton and Old Cleeve, WACET and an objection petition with 1089 signatures. All received an acknowledgement and will be advised of the outcome of the order once determined.

The Police, emergency services, and other statutory consultees support the all the proposals.

- 3.3 Copies of the objections, including objections from the Clerks of Watchet, Williton, Carhampton and Old Cleeve; WACET and an objection petition available for inspection at the Authors Department. The specific objections, supporting content and points contained within each letter has been analysed and salient points detailed below with the background on the proposals, objection and the response where appropriate: -

Primary Objection reasons from remaining objections include:

- This road forms a key part of the highway's infrastructure in West Somerset. It serves to connect Watchet with Old Cleeve but also provides access to and from several large caravanning and camping sites
- The ongoing effect of the closure of the B3191 is having a major effect on the economy of Watchet
- The cost to the local economy and the inconvenience in terms of hours lost in delays, the logistics of coping with delivering goods to and from Minehead as well as the negative effects on tourism surely justify re - routing the road at Cleeve Hill
- The fact that we now only have one road into the town, over a 150-year-old bridge
- This road forms a key part of the highway's infrastructure in West Somerset. It serves to connect Watchet with Old Cleeve but also provides access to and from several large caravanning and camping sites.
- The B3191 is crucial if the A39 it is closed for maintenance, an accident or as experienced in recent years flooding.
- We request that a costed business plan is drawn up and included in the Peninsula Transport Strategic Investment Plan as a priority before this action is taken.

Response: Refer to section 1. In summary, the authority recognises the local concern surrounding this proposal, unfortunately, the reopening is not possible due to the continued safety risk to the public and the lack of available funding for the likely high cost of any recommended works need. A permanent order closing the road can be revoked if circumstances change at a later date.

It is therefore **recommended to proceed as advertised** with the proposal.

4.0 Resolution of Objection

4.1 Following receipt of the written objections during the statutory consultation period, an acknowledgement was sent. They will be advised of the outcome of the order once determined.

Either potential decision (i.e. to implement the permanent TRO or not implement the permanent TRO) would not have a material impact on the issues raised through the consultation; therefore, on balance the Council considers that implementing the correct legal mechanism for the ongoing closure is the appropriate course of action.

For the reasons above it is recommended to **proceed** with the proposal.

4.2

The objection received during the consultation period have been given due consideration and I hereby confirm that the scheme **SOMERSET COUNCIL (B3191 CLEEVE HILL, WATCHET) (PARISH OF WATCHET) (PROHIBITION OF MOTOR VEHICLES) ORDER 2025** be approved.

I authorise sealing of the Traffic Regulation Order

Signed



Mike O'Dowd - Jones
Service Director Infrastructure and Transport, Somerset Council

Decision Record:

Date: 10 October

2025

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Traffic Regulation Order, Notice and Schedule
Appendix 2 - Plan showing proposal

Background Papers:

Objection letters and responses (available for inspection at County Hall – contact author)

Appendix 1. Traffic Regulation Order, Notice and Schedule

SOMERSET COUNCIL
(B3191 CLEEVE HILL, WATCHET)
(PARISH OF WATCHET)
(PROHIBITION OF MOTOR VEHICLES)
ORDER 2025

NOTICE is hereby given that Somerset Council proposes to make the above Order in pursuance of the provisions of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as amended, the effect of which is to introduce a prohibition of motor vehicles, as specified in the Schedule below.

There will be an exemption in the order for emergency service vehicles and any motor vehicles being used in connection with any building operation, demolition in or adjacent to that road, the removal of any obstruction to traffic, the maintenance, improvement or reconstruction of any of the lengths of road so referred, or the laying, erection, alteration or repair in or near to any of the said lengths of road of any sewer, or of any main pipe or apparatus for the supply of gas, water or electricity.

The provisions of any other orders are hereby revoked but only as far as they are affected by the restrictions of this Order.

A copy of the draft Order, the maps showing the lengths of road affected and the Statement of Reasons for proposing to make the Order may be inspected online at www.somerset.gov.uk/TRO.

Any person wishing to make representations or to object to the proposed Order should send a statement in writing of their representations or objection and state the grounds on which it is made to Somerset Council, via email to TROinbox@somerset.gov.uk quoting Reference No. KT06032025 and received no later than 21 days from the publication of this notice.

The names and addresses of anyone writing may be made available for public inspection and will be included in a report that may be published on the Somerset Council website, unless the individuals concerned state, in writing, their objection to their names and addresses being made so available or being included in the publication.

Duncan Sharkey
Chief Executive
Dated: xxxxxx 2025

SCHEDULE
Prohibition of Motor Vehicles

B3191 Cleeve Hill, Watchet	from a point 5 metres west of the junction with Saxon Close in a westerly direction for a distance of 220 metres
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STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR PROPOSING TO MAKE THE ORDER

For avoiding danger to persons or other traffic using the road or any other road or for preventing the likelihood of any such danger arising.

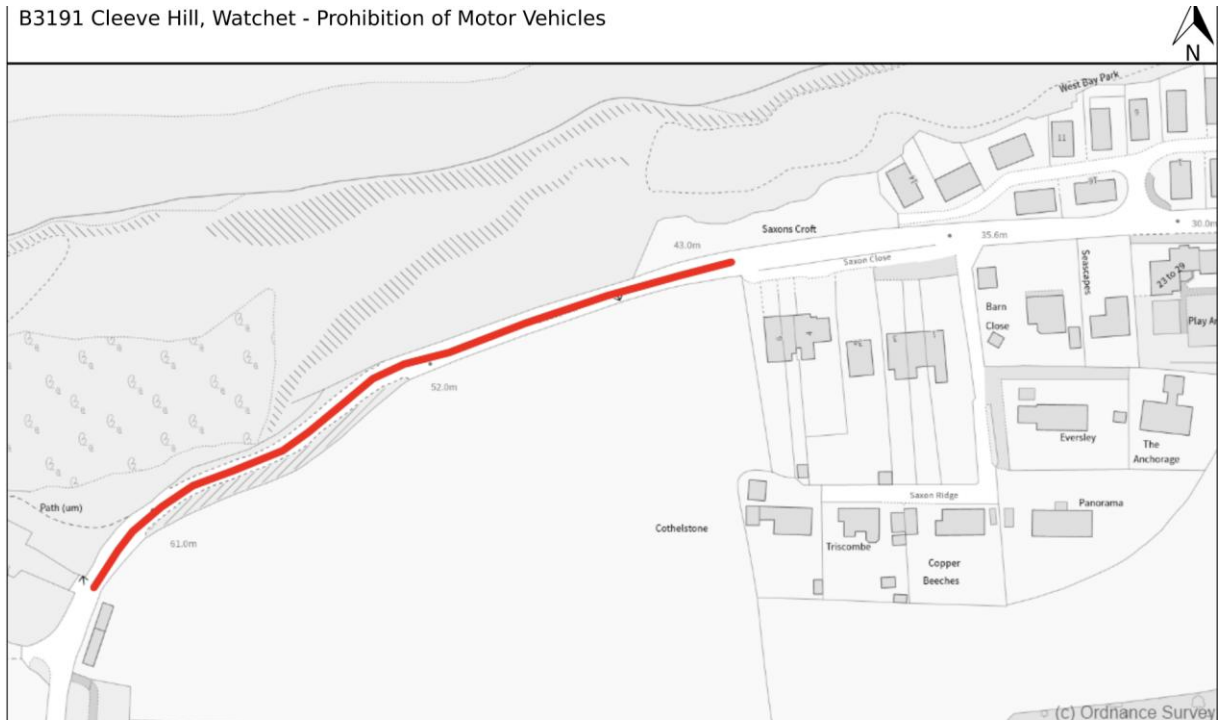
SOMERSET COUNCIL
(B3191 CLEEVE HILL, WATCHET)
(PARISH OF WATCHET)
(PROHIBITION OF MOTOR VEHICLES)
ORDER 2025

SOMERSET COUNCIL in exercise of its powers under Sections 1, 2, and 4 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (hereinafter referred to as “the Act of 1984”) and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the Chief Officer of Police in accordance with Part III of Schedule 9 to the Act of 1984, hereby makes the following Order: -

1. This Order shall come into force on the xxth day of xxxxxxx 2025 and may be cited as “Somerset Council B3191 Cleeve Hill, Watchet) (Parish of Watchet) (Prohibition of Motor Vehicles) Order 2025”.
2. The provisions of any other Orders are hereby revoked but only in so far as they are affected by the restrictions imposed by this Order.
3. Except as provided in Article 4 of this Order, no person shall cause any motor vehicle to enter, proceed or wait on the road specified in the Schedule to this Order.
4. Nothing in Article 3 of this Order shall apply so as to prevent:-
 - a) any person from causing any motor vehicle to proceed in the length of road referred to in the Schedule to this order in that Article if the vehicle is being used in connection with any building operation or demolition in or adjacent to that road, the removal of any obstruction to traffic, the maintenance, improvement or reconstruction of any of the lengths of road so referred, or the laying, erection, alteration or repair in or near to any of the said lengths of road of any sewer, or of any main pipe or apparatus for the supply of gas, water or electricity or of any apparatus as defined in Paragraph 1 (1) of the Telecommunication Code contained in Schedule 2 to the Telecommunications Act, 1984.
 - b) the vehicle, if it cannot conveniently be used for such purpose in any other road to be used in the service of a local authority, the Environment Agency, a water undertaker or sewerage undertaker in pursuance of certain statutory powers or duties.
 - c) vehicles falling within regulation 3(1), 3(2), 3(3) and 3(4) of the Road Traffic Exemptions (Special Forces) (Variation and Amendment) Regulations 2011(a) when used in accordance with regulation 3(5) of those Regulations.
 - d) emergency vehicles in pursuance of their duties from proceeding in the length of road specified in the schedule to this Order.

Appendix 2. Plan showing proposal

B3191 Cleeve Hill, Watchet - Prohibition of Motor Vehicles



**Somerset
Council**

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Council
County Hall
Taunton
TA1 4DY
0300 123 2224

Scale:1:1240
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