

Coronavirus – is Edinburgh to go to Level 3?

by Joseph Anderson Local Democracy Reporter

Edinburgh is set for ‘Level three’ of The Scottish Government’s coronavirus restrictions, according to a leaked report.

Level three of the tier system announced in the strategic framework last week, would mean alcohol sales both indoors and outdoors will not be permitted, although some restaurants may be able to open under strict conditions.

Tomorrow, The Scottish Government will discuss and agree which areas will subject to the new coronavirus ‘tier’ system in a parliamentary debate.

Ahead of this, the Chief Executive of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), has written to council leaders, giving them a strong indication of what tier of restrictions their authorities will be subject to.

The confidential letter reads: “I hope it will be helpful if I set out the approach being taken to these decisions. The starting point is the measures currently in place. These are broadly equivalent to Level 3 in the central belt, and Level 2 elsewhere.

“Changes from these levels, whether up or down, need to be justified by the data, supported by public health advice and

consistent with the Scottish Government's Covid-19 Framework for Decision-Making.

"Because of the severity of the impact of the measures in the highest level, Level 4, Ministers will only consider using it if necessary.

"The data currently indicate that level of concern for two areas: Level 4 is being considered for North and South Lanarkshire.

"There are, however, some signs in the latest data that the situation in those areas may be stabilising.

"Ministers will not reach a decision for these two areas until the latest possible point to ensure that they can take account of the fullest possible picture of the effect of measures already in place; but at this stage the use of Level 4 cannot be ruled out.

"If it was necessary, it would be used to avoid still greater harm, including many deaths.

"No changes are currently being considered in relation to other central belt areas. If that remains the case and is confirmed later this week, these areas would remain in Level 3 for the time being.

"There are some signs in the data of progress in the east of the central belt area, for example in Edinburgh and East Lothian, but some further consolidation of that progress is likely to be required before it would be safe, on public health grounds, to move them to Level 2.

"The data for Dundee City also gives cause for concern, with rising numbers of cases.

"Again, a final decision will be made on the basis of data becoming available in the next few days. Meantime, consideration is being given to moving Dundee City to Level 3

in the new framework, broadly equivalent to the measures currently in place in the central belt.

“Further consideration is also being given to the interaction between Dundee and neighbouring areas within the Tayside Health Board area.

“At this crucial stage in suppressing the virus, with higher case numbers, the winter approaching, and the introduction of a new strategic framework, the public health advice to Ministers is that it would not be safe to move any area straight to the lowest level, Level 0.”