

Council to support hospitality businesses in Edinburgh

Cafés and restaurants in Edinburgh with outside space will be assisted by the council to make the most of it when Covid-19 restrictions ease and when businesses can reopen on 26 April.

At that date six adults from three households can meet up.

The council will waive charges for outdoor seating areas for the whole summer, although businesses must have a permit to allow outdoor seating areas. Parts of George Street will be closed with kerbside parking suspended to allow businesses to use the space for outdoor guests.

Council Leader Adam McVey said: “It’s been an incredibly tough year for the hospitality sector so we’ve been listening carefully to what businesses need and doing whatever we can to help them recover as safely and sustainably as possible as things start to ease up restrictions-wise.

We’ve been working really closely with Essential Edinburgh and other businesses and organisations to develop these proposals to help traders make the most of outdoor space and safely cater to as many people as possible over the brighter spring and summer months.

It’s very important we strike the right balance, to make sure

we're not inadvertently making life more difficult for others. That's why it'll be key for Essential Edinburgh and other organisations to get the buy-in of affected businesses in the plans and discussions. That will ensure that interventions get as wide as possible support and benefit as many traders as possible.

Throughout this crisis we've been doing as much as we can to support businesses in the city centre and right across the city so that we can help Edinburgh build back better. This work with the hospitality sector is the latest strand of that work and we'll continue to work with all sectors to protect jobs and aid their recovery.

Depute Council Leader Cammy Day said: "After such a long time staying at home, people will be champing at the bit to get out into the warmer weather and meet up safely with their friends and family again as restrictions start to relax later this month. Last summer we waived tables and chairs permit fees to help restaurants and bars make the most of outdoor space so we want to give the sector the same lift this time round too.

"Attracting more people to these outdoor hospitality areas will also boost footfall for surrounding retail businesses as they reopen their doors. People will look forward to planning a trip into town or to their local high street for a bite to eat and a browse round the shops, giving a much longed-for lift to our local traders. Hospitality and retail are the lifeblood of our communities, supporting tens of thousands of jobs and the wider economy, so it's vital we help them get back on their feet as quickly as they can."

Roddy Smith, CEO of Essential Edinburgh who worked with the council to frame up the proposals, said: "We welcome the support that the Council are giving the city's hospitality businesses both in the provision of outdoor space and the waiving of costs. It is imperative that we maximise the space available to allow hospitality to operate effectively as we

adapt to the changing roadmap regulations. The Council has listened to the business community and is acting quickly, for which we are very appreciative.”

A Temporary Traffic Restriction Order will be required and permission may be granted around eight weeks after the application is made.

