

Claims of CCWEL works “devastating” Roseburn businesses

Businesses in Roseburn say the construction of the new cycle route called City Centre West East Link (CCWEL) has brought about a dramatic drop in sales.

Business owners are calling for the council to offer support as they say they are experiencing losses of up to 70 per cent by some of the 35+ businesses operating on Roseburn Terrace, where work on the first phase of the City Centre West East Link (CCWEL) began last month.

Traders say that the roadworks mean there are now no loading bays or parking spaces available on the road for customers and deliveries.

Businesses in the area complained this is already negatively impacting income – and matters were made even worse earlier this month when construction teams discovered asbestos in cellar roofs below the pavement.

This has reportedly led to an even greater reduction in footfall for retailers, hospitality, and other Roseburn Terrace traders, who are now pleading with the council for help.

The City of Edinburgh Council have made an assurance that there is no risk to public health posed by the asbestos,

however the discovery has sparked fears it could take weeks to fix, meaning those trading on the street will face difficulties for longer than the five months it was expected to last.

Roads officers have designated two temporary loading bays just off Roseburn Terrace to compensate for those lost outside the shops.

But businesses say double yellow lines since painted beside the spaces have caused further confusion, with delivery drivers and customers hesitant to park in case they are ticketed.

George Rendall, who owns the Arts Et Facts gallery on Roseburn Terrace, said business has fallen around 70 per cent due to the roadworks.

He reported recently having his “quietest week in 35 years of running the shop” – making just £44.

He said: “We knew it would be a bit of a struggle getting through this but we never realised it would be as bad as it’s turned out. This is comparing it with last year’s Covid problems, you’re probably 40 per cent down then and now we’re down again – you don’t need it.

“There’s one or two businesses that aren’t affected because there’s estate agents and things like that, it is mainly retail and the hairdressers are seeing the difference after a month now. Initially they didn’t because they’re all pre-booked.

He added: “We really need the council to become far more accommodating to us.

“We’ve asked a couple of things to be changed but nothing’s happened yet.

“You could move these barriers if they’re doing nothing on

these bits for weeks. They could be moved back so people could come and park. That could be done easily and yet they're not doing it."

John Lawson from PC Doctor, another business on the street that claims to have taken a hit, said he's "given up" trying to get help from the council.

"Businesses is down at least 50 per cent but it could be more than that. As soon as the work started and people realised there was no parking that's stopped most of my customers coming in," he added.

"[The Council] are not being fair, I don't understand why they have to close the whole street off. Some of the parts of the road where there are barriers up, there's nothing being done."

A cohort of business owners have asked to present a deputation to councillors at the full council meeting on Thursday when they will outline the various issues in a bid to get support.

Following a meeting of local traders last week, local ward councillor Scott Douglas will table a motion calling on Transport Convener Lesley Macinnes to meet with owners and operators of businesses on Roseburn Terrace to "discuss the adverse effect the recently started CCWEL works have had on their income".

The traders met with local councillors and council candidates to explain that they were missing supplies from delivery drivers who could not stop in the area due to double yellow lines. They also claimed that the trollies which were offered by the contractor for the last part of deliveries were not fit for purpose. The contractors have electric bikes for their employees but the traders said Balfour Beatty regularly have a van parked in one of the possible parking places.

Cllr Douglas, who is stepping down at next month's election, will also request officers look at the possibility of

a compensation scheme similar to the one launched to support Leith Walk traders impacted by work on the new Edinburgh Tram route. But it should be pointed out that the Tram to Newhaven works will be in place for much longer than those in Roseburn, and the compensation scheme was worked out ahead of time.

Councillor Douglas said: "The CCWEL works have been devastating for the businesses along Roseburn Terrace.

"Many have seen drastic drops in their income, and given the recent delays, they're worried they might not be able to survive the next few months.

"The measures taken by the council so far to help aren't anywhere near enough, and we need to look into giving financial support to those who are struggling.

"I'm hoping that by allowing them to appeal to the SNP/Labour administration directly we can see some action before it's too late.

"These businesses are vital to the local community in Roseburn and we can't afford to lose them."

Councillor Lesley Macinnes, Edinburgh City Council's Transport and Environment Convener, said: "We are well aware that a scheme of this scale is likely to have an impact on traders and residents, and have taken this into account as part of our planning for the project. We have continued to liaise with businesses and have introduced temporary loading and unloading areas for deliveries as well as minimising the work site wherever possible.

"We also want to continue to promote all that's on offer in the area and our open for business campaign incorporates paid social media, outdoor advertising and banners on works site barriers to attract people to Roseburn, as well as sharing all the active travel links available. There's more currently being developed as we progress with the works.

“There is no doubt this project, once complete, will be really positive for all those along the route, supporting safe travel by foot or bike into the city centre and a much improved environment for spending time. Of course, we do recognise the challenges faced by businesses along the route and to find out more about their concerns, I’ll be meeting project officers and local traders for a walkabout on-site tomorrow.”

The CCWEL route was [first planned ten years ago](#) but objections to the project led by some of the local traders led to the plans being delayed. SPOKES the cycle campaign group [explained](#): “First officially adopted as a Council objective in 2014 (see history below) and despite overall support in an initial consultation, CCWEL delivery suffered huge delays due to local objections fanned by a highly-seasoned campaigner, doubts by certain councillors and political groups, the Scottish Government’s labyrinthine rules on Traffic Orders, and a period of Council staff cutbacks. At times the project was under threat of being neutered into a ‘back of the houses’ route at Roseburn, or even scrapped and, due in large part to the delays, costs rose from £8m to £19m. The project is largely financed by Sustrans’s Scottish Government funding.”

by Donald Turvill, Local Democracy Reporter

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Transport Convener Lesley Macinnes with Active Travel Minister, Patrick Harvie break ground at City Centre West to East Link in Roseburn with Karen McGregor Portfolio Director for Sustrans and pupils from Roseburn Primary School L-R Maheer Zahir (10), Isla Kinnear (10) Molly Jamieson (11) and Sadie Walsh (11) PHOTO ©The Edinburgh Reporter