

Council decide against compensating Roseburn traders for “loss of business”

Traders who say their income has dropped since roadworks began outside their shops have lost a bid for financial support from the council.

Business owners on Roseburn Terrace, Edinburgh, report losses of up to 70% since work began on the first phase of the City Centre West East Link (CCWEL) cycleway just last month.

But a call for a business support scheme to be set up similar to one established for traders affected by the Tram to Newhaven works on Leith Walk was rejected at a meeting of The City of Edinburgh Council with coalition councillors claiming their hands were tied.

A virtual meeting of the council heard from a delegation of Roseburn Terrace traders who said they have been left fighting for survival since parking spaces and loading bays were blocked off by the roadworks.

George Rendall, owner of Art et Facts, told the meeting that in the six weeks since the work began traders have had a 40% to 70% fall in income.

He said: “One week in February I made £44 in a week. We do not want to set a precedent, but these are unprecedented times. We have just had two years of Covid which we just scraped

through.

“It is unacceptable the businesses we will lose because of this work.”

Traders told councillors that the effect of the works to create the beginning of the cycle route across the city to Leith which have been in the pipeline for more than seven years, had been made worse by the discovery of asbestos in the area which means works will take longer to complete.

And they warned that they were in danger of losing valuable local shops leaving Roseburn as a cycle route to Edinburgh airport with no services on it.

Cathy Purves who runs upcycling store Ruby Rose on the street, said while she supported cycleways they could not come at the expense of shops.

She said: “Roseburn Terrace is not just a road out to the airport, we are serving a local community.”

Cllr Scott Douglas brought a motion to council asking members to agree to look into setting up a compensation scheme for those businesses who have been adversely affected by the works, following a meeting with local traders in his Ward last week.

He told the meeting: “They (the traders) did not choose to have this work on their doorstep and it is certainly not their fault asbestos has been that will delay works.”

However Cllr Lesley McInnes, on behalf of the coalition, told the meeting the council was not able to provide such a scheme.

She said: “As a roads authority we have no responsibility to provide financial compensation around roadworks.”

She said the situation in Leith where businesses had been given access to a support scheme was “unique”.

She said: "I have immense sympathy with the traders of Roseburn Terrace but our hands are tied."

The coalition instead proposed an amendment to ask council officers to look into any additional support it can offer businesses and continue to provide support and promotional help.

by Marie Sharp, Local Democracy Reporter

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