

Banner hung in Roseburn where traders warn they could be gone by Christmas due to CCWEL roadworks

Some of the businesses in Roseburn have agreed to hang a banner on a gable wall at Roseburn Cliff claiming that the council roadworks are “destroying” local shops, and pointing out that the council has refused them any financial support.

Anyone reading the banner is urged to ask their candidates in next week’s election where they stand.

The banner is accompanied by posters hung in some shop windows stating that locals should patronise the businesses – in spite of the roadworks outside which “could mean they will close by Christmas”.



The roadworks currently underway in Roseburn and other parts of the West End will connect Roseburn to Leith Walk through the city centre by way of Melville Street with a “safe and direct cycle route” giving more space to anyone walking, wheeling or cycling, as well as linking key transport interchanges, businesses, neighbourhoods and the existing off-road cycle network. The council has an aim of reducing carbon emissions in the city to net zero by 2030.

The new banner is the latest action in a recent campaign which has been recommended to traders by a local resident who claims to be a pro-cycling campaigner, but who by his previous objections caused significant delay to the City Centre West to East Link (CCWEL) project. The necessary Redetermination Order was referred to Scottish Ministers for final decision, meaning that the new road layout was delayed by two years while ministers approved the original council proposal. The entire project began in 2014, but the process has been quite

tortuous. The timeline and further details are laid out in full on the Spokes [website](#).

Even on Friday, the local resident, who is also a member of Murrayfield Community Council (but has no mandate to speak for the community council) maintained to The Edinburgh Reporter that the route is in the wrong place. The campaigner said: "I am also a cyclist who regularly uses the existing cycle route from Roseburn to Haymarket, the NCR1, which takes just two minutes longer than the proposed CCWEL and which takes us two-wheelers along far less polluted and more pleasant streets (by Balbirnie and the tram line)- and all at no cost to the public purse."

In answer to a query from The Edinburgh Reporter, Spokes the cycle campaign group said: "The existing cycle route via Balbirnie Place and Haymarket Yards is not just a significant detour, but it is positively dangerous because of the very narrow section of roadway between kerb and tramline in Haymarket Yards. We hear several reports of injuries there each year. One of the worst, last year, a cyclist (who regularly used that route and was aware of the dreadful design) went into the tramlines to avoid a pedestrian who walked out without looking. He was in hospital for five days with two broken arms, including a smashed left elbow requiring a plate and screw, two broken front teeth, and various other cuts and bruises."

Spokes, the cycling campaign group, detail some of the background to the project on their website: "First officially adopted as a

Council objective in 2014, 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 £8 million to £19 million. The project is largely financed by Sustrans's Scottish Government funding."

The statement continues: "The project is not perfect – we would have preferred a direct connection to and along Princes Street, wider protected sections and [other enhancements](#) – but is a massive step forward, being a substantial main-road space reallocation from car to active travel right in the city centre. Along with Meadows to George Street and the (admittedly flawed) Leith Walk routes there will be protected

cycle routes to and through the city centre from west, south and east.”

Details of the timeline of this major roads project can be found [here](#) on the Spokes website.

Local councillor Frank Ross said: "Having kept in regular contact with the Roseburn traders and Having received details of their reduction in business I fully understand how badly they are suffering.

"The Council's position that we cannot compensate everyone who is impacted by roadworks is correct. However the comparison with the Tramworks in Leith is more revealing. The cost for compensation to traders was included in the project costs and to date almost £300,000 has been paid out with some traders having received multiple payments. While it has been reported that this money will be repaid by Tram it is not separately identified within the business plan and as such cannot be verified.

"What is happening in Roseburn are not roadworks but part of a planned infrastructure investment programme. The question that has to be asked is why did Council officers build compensation costs for loss of business and disruption into one infrastructure project but not another where the impact is actually greater?"

COMPENSATION DEMANDS

The traders requested compensation from the council in a similar way to businesses on Leith Walk affected by the tramworks, but the most recent request was denied at a recent [Full Council](#) meeting which allowed a motion by local councillor, Scott Douglas, to be heard. The Transport Convener visited the traders the day before to hear their concerns, and several of

Local councillor Frank Ross said: "they addressed the council meeting virtually as a deputation. The motion requested that:

“Council:

Asks the Transport Convener to urgently set-up a meeting with the owners and operators of businesses on Roseburn Terrace to discuss the adverse effect the recently started CCWEL works have had on their income;

Notes that many businesses have seen a sharp decrease in their takings since the work began, with some shops reporting a 70% drop in just a week;

Believes that these businesses are a vital part of the Roseburn community, and that the council should do everything within its powers to make sure they are able to survive the disruption caused by these works;

Understands that measures undertaken to help these businesses so far have proven to be insufficient and that more needs to be done to support them;

As such agrees to look into the possibility of setting up a compensation scheme for those businesses who have been adversely affected by the works to ensure they continue to operate over the coming months that the roadworks are in place.”

In seconding Cllr Douglas’s motion, Conservative councillor, Joanna Mowat said that no-one could say that CCWEL had been “sprung upon us” due to its long gestation. But she said: “We should have had time to consider what the impact would be on these businesses who were vocal in their concerns and raised these at an early stage in the planning process.”

The council’s Transport and Environment Convener, Cllr Lesley Macinnes, said the council’s hands were tied as there is no statutory obligation to provide compensation to businesses affected by road schemes such as CCWEL, and that Trams to Newhaven was a unique case and the motion was denied.

The council has however launched a campaign #ChooseRoseburn to promote Roseburn and support local businesses.

The chair of Murrayfield Community Council, John Yellowlees, said: "Murrayfield Community Council has many times noted with regret the City Council's position that it is unable to pay compensation to the traders."

The local objector, who insists on maintaining anonymity, continued: "I think the whole CCWEL is costing around £18M- the Roseburn to Haymarket bit must be about £12M- is that correct? Think of how many potholes that £ would get filled. We could probably have Caithness slab on every pavement in the city for that amount of cash, something that I fear has escaped the notice of our comrades at Living Streets..."

A council spokesperson confirmed to The Edinburgh Reporter the correct figures and said: "The construction costs for the entire project are £12.9 million (the remainder of the £19.4m includes design, project management, utility diversions etc along the **entire** route) but the Roseburn section is significantly below £12 million." The council would not confirm the exact figure for commercial reasons.







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