

Roseburn shops may be offered compensation

Cash-strapped Edinburgh businesses experiencing dwindling footfall due to the construction of a new cycling route could be offered compensation by the city council, as some warned they could be soon forced to shut up shop for good.

Traders on Roseburn Terrace made a fresh plea to councillors this week after calls for a financial support package were rejected in March, when it was reported income had fallen by up to 70 per cent since roadworks commenced in February.

Now they said things are 'worse than the pandemic'.

One small business owner revealed he has had to borrow money as a result of a drop in passing trade, whilst a local café which has been open for 30 years added it could face closure if compensation is not made available.

The City Centre to West East Link (CCWEL) project is creating a new cycle corridor from Roseburn to Leith Walk via the city centre.

As well as customer numbers being impacted by the loss of parking and loading bays, and roadworks restricting access to shops, the work has faced multiple delays following the discovery of asbestos in the pavement and other structural concerns.

Traders also took aim at contractors for “poor management” of the project.

They addressed councillors on Thursday as a motion to consider a compensation scheme for impacted businesses was debated in the chamber.

The motion read:

“Council:

1) Notes that the Council Leader recently met with the owners and operators of businesses on Roseburn Terrace and heard about the negative impact that the ongoing CCWEL works had on their operations;

2) Further notes that many businesses have seen a sharp decrease in their takings throughout the programme of works and recognises the legitimate concerns that the resumption of construction activity will damage takings even further in the run up to the vital festive period;

3) Believes that these businesses represent the heart 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;

4) Recognises that infrastructure projects that take a significant period of time to complete often have a more acute impact on business than roadworks generally;

5) 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;

6) 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.”



Niall Menzies, Roseburn Shoe Repair, Roseburn. Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com

Niall Menzies, owner of Roseburn Shoe Repairs, said: “When people don’t shop, we struggle – and we’ve been struggling since spring.

“One of the shopkeepers said this was worse than lockdown. One month in and work stopped over possible asbestos at the Roseburn Bar. It took four weeks to get someone in to say the amount was so small work shouldn’t have stopped in the first place.”

Mr Menzies, who said he has had to borrow money “to keep us going”, described the work as ‘ill-timed and non-essential’.

“I don’t want to borrow more,” he added. “We need help.”

“Work stopped for July and August and we started to see an increase. The day the barriers went up two Mondays ago we took in £26, that was our worst week since lockdown.

“With work on the south side we lost £4,000. I fear now the

barriers are up on our side I'll lose more.

"These are not roadworks, roadworks are a nuisance and they need to be done, they last a few weeks and then things are back to normal. This is taking a whole year for improvement which ironically could see a street of empty shops."



Eva Papadaki and Umit Celik, Roseburn Cafe, Roseburn. Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com

Eva Papadaki who runs Roseburn Café said: "The constant difficulties we have to deal with seem to have no end and we have no more resources to keep us alive."

She accused contractors Balfour Beatty of "poor management" of the project, which she said "could drive us out of business".

"It is how they've handled it, it is negligence," she said.

"Who is with our side? You have to acknowledge that this is not our fault. Edinburgh Council is supposed to support local businesses. This coffee shop is functioning over 30 years successfully."



Art et Facts, Roseburn. Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam
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George Rendall from the Art Et Facts gallery added: "At every

turn there's been an obstacle with huge impacts for traders.

"We have had to endure many delays over concerns over structural soundness, asbestos, lack of workmen during the first part of the project.

"Work has recently commenced on the north side of Roseburn Terrace and already businesses have had inconvenience caused by flooding to the basements.

"For so many businesses to be in trouble after such a small part of the project has been implemented, it has to be accepted that your project hasn't been managed effectively."

Cllr Euan Davidson, the Liberal Democrat representative for the area tabled the motion calling on officials to "look into the possibility of setting up a compensation scheme".

It was agreed by councillors that funding for any such scheme "is made clear and that no other projects should lose funding as a result".

"If funding is being reallocated from existing budgets, affected work streams and projects should be explicitly identified," an addendum from the SNP group read.

Cllr Davidson said: "Takings are substantially down as so many of these businesses rely on passing traffic to the extent that we're facing the loss of successful businesses that survived the pandemic.

"These businesses are the lifeblood of Roseburn. All we're asking for is support to carry our community through this tricky transition while the project is completed.

"There's clearly a different impact when we're talking about these large scale infrastructure projects that last for months and even years."

Councillors agreed to the motion to look into the possibility

of setting up a compensation scheme for businesses adversely affected by the work.

This is not the first time that a possible compensation scheme for these traders has been raised. The [council decided against it](#) when they discussed it in March.

by Donald Turvill, Local Democracy Reporter

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