

City centre traffic plans are paused due to lack of cash

Plans to stop through traffic from accessing key Edinburgh city centre routes have been hit with delays just three months after they were approved.

Council officers hoped the changes which will see vehicles banned from entering the North and South Bridges corridor and The Mound introduced as soon as next Easter, however it is now expected these plans will not be in place until at least a year after that in 2026.

Transport Convener Scott Arthur blamed the setback on a lack of Scottish Government funding needed for the project.

He said “uncertainty” around funding had a “significant impact on delivery timescales”.

The road closures – part of the council’s wider [City Centre Transformation](#) plan – were approved by councillors in February and are central to the local authority’s goal to cut car kilometres driven in the city by 30 per cent and reach net zero emissions, both by 2030.

A proposed trial closure of the Cowgate and Lawnmarket will go ahead as planned later this year however, although it has not yet been decided whether the Cowgate will become one-way or will be fully closed to through traffic.

Cllr Arthur said he had hoped to see these restrictions introduced in time for the summer festivals, but it was now

likely to be later than that.

He said: "A lot of design work has to go into the wider project for the city centre, and in particular understanding how traffic is going to react to some of the changes and really in particular protecting the movement of public transport and making sure pedestrians and others are safe as they move through the city centre.

"So there's a lot of work to do, it's not just as simple as putting planters in.

"I think my preference would be for that complete closure [of the Cowgate] and I think that's what the committee is expecting.

"But we have to be realistic and if the data we get back, both in terms of traffic modelling and also input from businesses. If it's suggesting we can't do that in one step and initially maybe we look at a one-way closure then that might be what we have to accept.

"The problem with making streets one-way though is I think often you end up with faster vehicles because they know nothing's coming in the opposite direction. So we might have to look at measures along the right to ensure everyone's safe.

"We've got a huge ambition for the city, but the funding we need from the Scottish Government is just not aligning to it."

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter