

# **Council leader calls for action at Sheriffhall roundabout**

**A six year delay to planned upgrades at Sheriffhall roundabout has left Midlothian residents and businesses 'bearing the brunt' of daily congestion and delays, the Scottish Transport Secretary has been told.**

Midlothian Council leader Kelly Parry has written to Fiona Hyslop MSP expressing her frustration at the lack of action over the 'vital junction' and a proposed flyover.

In her letter she says traffic problems at the roundabout impacts on "not only our local economy but regionally in this major transport artery through to the rest of Scotland".

She says: "Our residents, businesses, and visitors are bearing the brunt of these delays in daily commutes for those who rely on this vital junction, and it is imperative that progress is made soon as the situation is becoming untenable, with traffic issues worsening, contributing to inefficiencies in the region's transport network.

"Additionally, the projected costs have escalated beyond the original budget, placing further strain on this critical infrastructure upgrade."

The 'flyover' at Sheriffhall would separate local traffic from motorway traffic, cutting peak journey times on the A720, and is a flagship project of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Regional Deal.

It was signed in 2018 to deliver £1.3bn investment from the UK and Scottish Governments as well as the region's six councils and other organisations.

Plans were approved in 2021 but soon derailed by a wave of objections, as climate campaigners warned the changes would generate more traffic at a time Transport Scotland wants to see a 20 per cent reduction in car kilometres by the end of the decade, while the significant roadworks would involve "immense carbon emissions".

Councillor Parry acknowledges concern over emissions in her letter but says continued delays are having an impact on public confidence.

Calling on the Scottish Government to commit to the project being carried out she says: "The pressing need for better traffic flow and safety at Sheriffhall cannot be overlooked. Addressing these challenges will improve both local growth and national prosperity.

"I urge the Scottish Government to prioritise this project and provide a clear timeline for its commencement. A commitment to action is essential to restore public confidence in the delivery of this vital improvement for Midlothian and beyond."

Following the Public Local Inquiry which was held in early-2023 to consider objections received to the proposed scheme, the independent Reporter is now giving detailed consideration to all evidence before making recommendations to the Scottish Ministers.

The price has escalated from £120 million in the deal to

around an estimated £300 million.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter