

Thousands brought in by just three parking wardens in Midlothian

by Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter

Three parking wardens introduced in Midlothian in April last year issued nearly 5,500 parking fines by the end of the year. The local authority raked in just over £133,000 in income from the new penalties in their first eight months.

It compared to neighbouring local authority East Lothian, which has had the charges in place for more than two years and charged over £325,000 in penalty notices with less than twice the number of tickets.

Officials at Midlothian expect the income generated from their parking notices to increase in the following years as the initial set-up and administration costs come down.

In Stirling, where the fines were introduced in May 2017, income more than doubled in its second year from £144,491 in 2017 to £388,820 in 2018.

The figures were revealed in a report by comparison website Confused.com, however, they are openly published on Midlothian Council's website where a monthly update is given.

A survey by the website revealed nearly three out of four motorists who challenge their fines are successful, paying less or nothing, but two-thirds do not appeal.

It has created a checklist for motorists who want to appeal after finding nearly half of all drivers in the UK have at one point been issued with a parking ticket.

Confused.com said many motorists cited confusing information about how to appeal and claims the process is difficult as reasons many were put off challenging.

Midlothian Council introduced decriminalised parking last year, with three private parking wardens sent out onto the streets to patrol.

Fines are £60 and can rise to £90 if not paid within 14 days.

Amanda Stretton, motoring editor at Confused.com, said there were concerns about the high number of appeals which are successful across the UK, where local authorities last year took income of £326million from penalty notices.

She said: "We're helping people fight unfair fines and navigate through the chaotic appeal process.

"Our challenge checklist should help motorists decide whether to appeal a fine, and guide them through the process.

"With the cost of motoring ever increasing, we shouldn't be forking out even more money to pay unfair fines."

The Confused.com checklist is available at www.confused.com/car-insurance/fight-unfair-fines