

Finance & Resources Committee will examine reduction in income during the pandemic

The council's Finance & Resources Committee meets on Thursday to examine the council's position two years after the pandemic began.

Councillors will hear that there was a reduction of £8 million in parking charges gathered by the council's third party operator during the pandemic.

Fewer cars on the streets of the capital since the first lockdown was imposed in March 2020 led to a significant reduction in income from parking tickets, permits, impounded vehicle costs and bus lane penalties.

Lost parking revenue makes up £8m of a total £39 million financial hit which the council had due to the Covid-19 crisis, which was accounted for in last year's budget.

Figures published online by the council show that in 2020/21, in the first year of the pandemic, there were 92,758 fewer parking tickets issued in Edinburgh than the previous year, resulting in a loss of over £3 million.

In addition, 18,094 fewer bus lane camera notices were issued – a third less than in 2019/2020 – leading to a reduction in income of £280,613.

Meanwhile, on-street parking income dropped by more than £11 million, permit income by £5,000 and impound income by

£10,640. It is in this area – income from parking – that the council has been impacted most. But the report to be discussed on Thursday states that parking income has “levelled off in recent weeks”. The weekly revenue in the past two months averages about £0.85 million less than it was before the pandemic. Last week’s Transport and Environment Committee heard that there are “signs of recovery” in the council’s parking income which will be “closely monitored”.

There was a reduction in council tenants’ rent of £5 million, the absence of a dividend from Lothian Buses of an anticipated £6 million and an additional £5 million was spent tackling homelessness in the city.

Edinburgh Leisure, which has recorded sales down by around £20 million during the pandemic, received £3 million in 2020/21, whilst £1 million was spent supporting the council’s other external organisations, £1 million on procuring personal protective equipment (PPE) and £7 million on other areas of increased expenditure, or reduced income linked to the pandemic such as support payments for businesses and additional waste and cleaning staff.

by Donald Turvill, Local Democracy Reporter

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