

Workplace Parking Levy will not be introduced in Edinburgh until after the election

Charges for workplace parking will not be introduced in Edinburgh before May's local election, the council's transport convener has confirmed.

From next month, The Scottish Government will give all local authorities the power to enforce workplace parking levies (WPL).

Under the scheme, which has already been rolled out successfully in Nottingham where more than £60 million has been raised for the council to use on transport projects since 2012, drivers who want to park at work would have to pay an annual fee to park.

The local authority can charge companies an annual fee for every parking space provided for employees. This fee could amount to hundreds of pounds each year if the cost is not covered by the employer. In Nottingham the cost is £428 per year or just under £10 per week based on 50 working weeks in the year. It can only be charged to companies who offer more than 10 parking spaces, and it is up to the individual employer whether they pass on the charge to their employees.

It is argued that WPLs encourage more people to cycle, walk

and use public transport to get to work, while reducing pollution and congestion on the roads. This aligns with Edinburgh council's own city mobility plan.

Critics say it taxes businesses and workers at a time when food prices, energy bills and national insurance are all rising, while unfairly burdening people who live long distances from work and have no access to public transport.

The introduction of WPLs is included in Edinburgh Council's "2030 City Plan" and council leader Adam McVey said it is something currently being explored, adding that he' has spoken to councillors in England "who have implemented the policy successfully and used it to fund additional mass transit investment".

Depute council leader Cammy Day has backed the scheme being put in place in the capital, despite Labour dropping its support at a national level.

Conservative councillor Graham Hutchison pressed the council's Transport Convener Lesley Macinnes on the matter, asking her at Thursday's council meeting to confirm if the proposed levy will apply to all workplace parking within the city.

Cllr Macinnes said: "This regulation was laid before The Scottish Parliament in January 2022 and will come into force in March 2022.

"There are no plans to progress the WPL business case this side of the election and timelines for further consideration of the WPL will need to be agreed with the new administration."

Councillor Hutchison also asked the depute leader if he is still supportive of workplace parking charges in Edinburgh "in contradiction to his party's stance".

Councillor Day replied: "I remain supportive of the WPL as agreed in our Manifesto."

Questioned if this is the stance of the Labour group on the council, Cllr Day said: "WPL was in our last manifesto and will be considered for inclusion in the manifesto for the forthcoming council elections."

Conservative group leader Iain Whyte accused the Transport Convener of making people "pay to park near their home whether they like it or not".

And he asked council leader Adam McVey what he thinks is an "appropriate charge" that should be levied on individuals "who can't otherwise get to work without a car".

Cllr McVey responded by stressing the policy is about addressing climate change. He said: "This is about the sustainability and future of our city. I know that the Conservatives are trying to work with colleagues within their groups that are sceptical about climate change and other things. We are not, we absolutely recognise it is an issue we have to face into, and aside from the climate change issue which I know the Conservatives are trying to play to a different gallery on, this is fundamentally about this city and how it works and how it works better.

"We cannot sustain with an increase in population and a still continuing trajectory increased population, the same number of people driving in private cars. The road space will not cope with it and to suggest otherwise, I'm sorry is just misleading people.

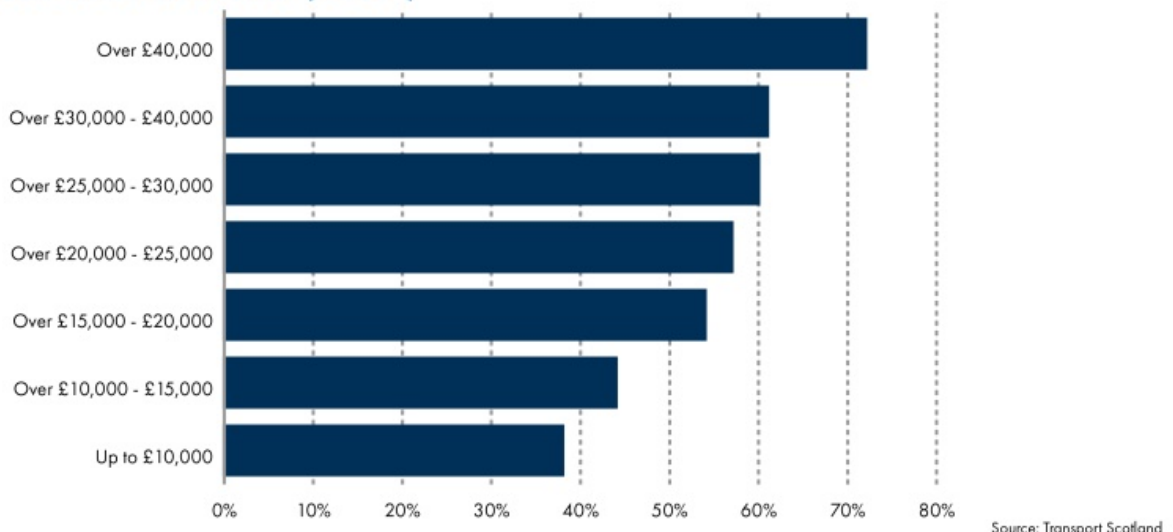
"We need to come up with more sustainable high-quality public transport options as well as active travel options to best use the space we have to help people get around, and businesses have a crucial role in that to make sure they are encouraging people within their own employment to get to work as sustainably as possible.

“Of course there will always be people that need to drive for a variety of reasons and nobody is suggesting otherwise.”

The Scottish Parliament conducted research which showed that Edinburgh could have as many as 39,000 parking spaces liable for the WPL. But a [BBC report](#) states that eight out of 10 employers in Nottingham require employees to pay the WPL. Assuming the same proportion of Edinburgh employers might require employees to pay, and that parking spaces are evenly distributed between employers, then the WPL would be paid by 31,200 Edinburgh employees.

Transport Scotland analysed whether the WPL would fall as a greater burden on lower income families, but its own 2017 statistics show that the higher a household's net income, the more likely it is that employed adults in the household will drive to work.

Proportion of employed adults who drive to work by household income (2017)



by Donald Turvill, Local Democracy Reporter

The Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS) is a public service news agency: funded by the BBC, provided by the local news sector, and used by qualifying partners. Local Democracy Reporters cover top-tier local authorities and other public service organisations.