

Taxi fares to rise by up to 20 per cent this year

Taxi fares in Edinburgh will increase by up to 20 per cent to keep up with inflation and the rising cost of running a vehicle, the council has confirmed.

Councillors have agreed to the price rise, which would also impact on private hire vehicles.

It comes after a review, carried out by consultants Jacobs on behalf of The City of Edinburgh Council, recommended raising the maximum fare cap in light of a 14.2% increase in inflation.

A report said engagement with local cab firms found that since the last review the running costs associated with operating a taxi had also “significantly increased”.

As a result, the maximum fare from Monday to Friday will rise by 20 per cent.

In practice, it means that the most a taxi driver will be able to charge for a two-mile journey in Edinburgh from 6am to 6pm on weekdays (tariff 1) will increase from £7 to £8.40.

The maximum fare for a two-mile trip from 6pm to 6am on weekdays (tariff 2) will rise from £8 to £9.60.

Meanwhile a 15 per cent increase has been applied to tariffs 3 and 4 which cover the Christmas and New Year period.

Tariff 3 is Monday to Friday 6am to 6pm over Christmas and New Year, and the increase means the maximum charge for a two mile journey will rise from £9.25 to £10.63.

Tariff 4 is operational all day on Christmas Day and New Year's Day, with the change meaning the maximum charge for two mile journey will rise from £11.75 to £13.50.

The changes were unanimously approved by the council's Regulatory Committee on Monday. The price increase is expected to come into force later this year, although no official date has yet been set.

A report for councillors said: "The second stage of the process requires that the proposed fare scale be advertised for a period of not less than one month, to allow for representations. Following this, a further report will be brought back to committee for consideration, and if appropriate, approval.

"The fare structure will have a direct impact on residents or visitors to the city using a taxi.

"If the taxi trade has a concern about the Council's decision on the new fare scales, taxi licence holders may appeal that decision individually or as a group, including any decision not to implement an increase in the fare scales."

Jacobs also recommended following consultation with the trade that card payment machines are made mandatory in all taxis, however the report noted the council does not have the power to do this.

It added: "It unclear whether the Council legally has the power to require the acceptance of card payments as a condition of licence and if committee decides to consider such a condition, then a full consultation process would be required prior to doing so, and also evidence for the need to impose such a condition."

by Donald Turvill

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