

20% parking charge hike agreed by council

Edinburgh Council has backed a 20 per cent hike for on-street parking charges.

Money raised by the additional income will be used to freeze some costs to residents, including those for adult burial charges and day care for the elderly and disabled.

SNP and Green councillors – who proposed the higher increase, against a 16% rise tabled by the Labour administration – said it would help to ‘alleviate the impact of poverty and reflect the true cost of driving in our city’.

However the city’s transport leader warned that the rise may not actually raise as much income as predicted – as it could deter people from parking in the city – and admitted Edinburgh was “hooked” on parking income.

Changes to parking charges will take effect from April 3.

The cost of parking in the city centre (George St, St Andrew Square, Charlotte Square, Queen St, Market St, Cockburn St) will be lifted from £5.60 per hour to £6.70.

In Stafford St and Melville St area, Morrison St to Shandwick Place and the Old Town including East Market St, the rate will increase from £4.90 to £5.90.

The West End (Palmerston Place area), Moray Place, South Side/Nicolson St, Tollcross/Fountainbridge and Heriot Row will see hourly parking fees rise from £4.10 to £4.90.

In the New Town – Northumberland St to St Stephen St and Royal Crescent – motorists will have to pay a new rate of £4.40 an hour, up from £3.70.

South Queensferry will also have charges hiked by 20% – jumping from £0.90 to £1.10.

Meanwhile in Bruntsfield, Sciennes, St Leonard's, Dumbiedykes, Stockbridge and Dean, on-street parking charges will go up from £3.10 to £3.40 – a lower increase of 9.68%.

And the cost of parking permits for residents will increase by between 11 and 15 per cent.

The move is expected to generate £800,000 on top of the estimated £1.19m going to the council's coffers from revised fees and charges.

The additional cash will be used to freeze rates for services including adult burials, garden aid and day care for the elderly and adults with learning or physical disabilities.

Extra income generated from parking will also halt price increases for audio and film rentals and photocopying in libraries, as well as the community alarms and telecare service which gives vulnerable residents quick access to social care support.

In addition a library fine "amnesty period" will be created with £71k to "dismantle potential barriers to continued access for adults and children" and £100k will go towards a fund for "community-led cultural projects".

Transport and environment convener Cllr Scott Arthur took to twitter after the decision, and said: " Any rise in parking charges will reduce the level of use (not always a bad thing). The SNP/Greens are hoping that whilst demand will fall, total income will rise.

"I think they got this wrong. Labour estimated the limit was

16%, and beyond that income would start to fall... and Edinburgh is hooked on parking income.”

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter

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Transport Convener Cllr Scott Arthur