

Over 4,000 electric vehicle charger fines issued

More than 4,000 fines have been handed to drivers in Edinburgh who have exceeded the maximum stay in electric vehicle charging bays.

The city council has issued an average of 462 overstay penalties every month since charges were introduced last May, figures showed.

Transport convener Scott Arthur said he was keen to raise awareness about the maximum stay rules and even explore the possibility of sending notifications to driver's phones when their time is almost up.

It comes as electric vehicle (EV) charging tariffs have been put up in the capital, with the authority increasing hourly rates by up to 80 per cent to keep up with the cost of electricity.

Anyone who leaves their vehicle parked in an EV bay beyond the permitted stay period, which varies depending on the charging speed, is slapped with a £30 fine.

A freedom of information request revealed that 4,625 have been issued in less than a year, working out at around 14 a day. The data showed that more than a quarter of these (1,794) were in December and January whereas just 191 overstay fines were recorded over the same period over August and September.

Currently the maximum stay for a 'standard' EV charger (7kW) is 12 hours. Previously costing 25p per kilowatt hour (kWh), revised charges introduced at the weekend have increased this to 45p under new tariffs agreed by the transport committee in March.

Vehicles are allowed to remain parked in 'fast' charging bays (22kW) for up to three hours and the rate has risen from 30p to 50p per kWh. Overstay penalties have also been lifted at fast EV points between the hours of 11pm and 8am.

The maximum stay at 'rapid' EV chargers (50kW) has been increased from 30 minutes to an hour, with the price of using them jumping from 35p to 55p per kWh.

The council said the price increases, which were given final approval by the finance committee last week, were necessary to "cover the operating costs in the face of recent increases to the cost of electricity".

Cllr Arthur said: "Our maximum stay periods are set to make sure as many people as possible can benefit from the city's network of electric vehicle chargers.

"We have listened to users, however, and have agreed that the charging periods for most of our chargers can be extended from the 1 May to better meet their needs.

"Indeed, overnight overstay penalties on our 22kW fast chargers will be removed completely. In addition to this, we are planning a significant expansion in the network to help ensure it better meets future demand.

"I would encourage users to make sure they're aware of the maximum stay for the charger they're using, which is displayed at charging points. I'm also keen to work with Charge Place Scotland to see their app notifying users when they're about to outstay their charging period."

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter

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Councillor Scott Arthur, Transport Convener