

Over 800 wrongly issued bus lane fines already paid

Hundreds of bus lane fines wrongly issued in Edinburgh have already been paid, the council has admitted, as it confirmed refunds are being processed.

It comes after the Local Democracy Reporting Service revealed drivers were incorrectly charged over 1,000 times earlier this summer due to a 28-day gap between the expiration of old traffic orders and the implementation of new ones.

The blunder means the council has to hand back up to £88k it collected ticketing motorists for using the bus lane on Lanark Road over the four week period. The exact total is not known as data is unavailable on how many paid within 14 days, which halves the penalty to £50.

New figures show 884 had already been paid by the time the error was spotted, while 114 were open, eight had been cancelled and six were written off.

Transport officials said for those who had paid they were “working on a process for issuing refunds for all payments”.

This will be an “automatic, fully auditable process which will not require the customer to contact us,” they added.

Local Conservative councillor Jason Rust, who called for the fines to be quashed last month, said he’d been contacted by “numerous residents who were erroneously fined”.

He said: "I am pleased that the council is taking action to quash the tickets."

Meanwhile the newly-appointed transport committee convener, Labour councillor Stephen Jenkinson, apologised for "any inconvenience caused".

He said: "We're currently investigating this matter but I'd like to assure residents that anyone who has received a fine in error will either have it cancelled or be reimbursed."

However Cllr Rust said the episode highlighted a "wider issue" around continued use of experimental traffic regulation orders (ETROs).

He also complained there was a "complete lack of evidence basis" for Lanark Road's inclusion in a '7-7-7' bus lane trial from next year. This will see some operate from 7am to 7pm, seven days a week, increased from only peak times on weekdays, as part of efforts to improve the reliability of buses across the city.

The short bus lane, located west bound between Spylaw Bank Road and the Gillespie Crossroads, was introduced in 2022.

A traffic order which allows the authority to enforce the regulations expired on May 20 but was not replaced until June 17. As a result the authority had no legal basis to issue fines.

As of last month, the council had collected £124,130 since a camera to catch drivers flouting the rules at the spot was set up in May.

By Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter