

Taxi fares in East Lothian could rise by up to 25%

Taxi fares in East Lothian could rise by up to 25% as operators say the increased National Insurance costs and a rise in the living wage has increase pressure on them.

East Lothian licensing chiefs are set to review the current fares at a meeting next week and have been asked to consider introducing higher charges.

Taxi operators have asked for the initial charge to rise by over 5% from £3.60 to £3.80 with waiting time and journey fees going up by 25% from 24p to 30p and 48p to 60p at Christmas.

Ian Torrance, on behalf of Torrance Taxis, put forward the proposed new tariffs saying costs for operators have increased/

Speaking on behalf of himself and AC Taxis, Mr Torrance said the proposed increase was being put forward "taking into account all additional cost such as living wage increase, National Insurance increase, no doubt an increase in taxi tests, taxi licence for which we pay for also, medical stress tests when required at a cost of £500."

He added: "Replacement of vehicles are now costing an additional £20,000."

A report to next week's licensing sub committee says any additional fees will come into effect at the end of July, but

reminds members they do not have to agree to raise the fees at all.

It also compares the current fees to neighbouring local authorities finding only Edinburgh charges more for journeys. The cost of a five mile trip for two passengers with five minutes waiting time was estimated at £18.96 in East Lothian. In Edinburgh it costs £20.03 while Midlothian taxi cost £17, West Lothian £14.40 and Scottish Borders £15.60.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter