

Taxi fares in East Lothian to go up by 10 per cent this summer

Taxi fares in East Lothian will go up by 10 per cent this summer despite calls from operators for more than double the increase.

Councillors agreed to a call from taxi firms to boost the fares after they said increased National Insurance costs and a rise in the living wage had put increased pressure on them.

But while the operators suggested waiting times and journey fees go up by 25%, elected members decided on a lower rise with Councillor Jeremy Findlay saying the higher amount was 'too big a burden on rural communities'.

The meeting of the council's licensing sub committee was told that one objection to a fare increase had been lodged by someone representing Gifford and Bolton communities.

Taxi operators had asked for the initial charge to customers 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.

But while councillors agreed the initial 5.5% rise they reduced the additional increase to just 10%.

Licensing authorities are obliged to review taxi fares every 18 months and can opt to introduce an increase or keep them the same.

The new fares will come into place on June 30, after the proposals have been publicly advertised to give people a further chance to make representations.

The current cost of a five mile trip for two passengers with five minutes waiting time is 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