

Public Document Pack

**Democratic Services Section
Legal and Civic Services Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**

15th November, 2024

MEETING OF LICENSING COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

In addition to those matters previously notified to you, the following item(s) will also be considered at the meeting to be held at 5.15 pm on Wednesday, 20th November, 2024.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN WALSH

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

3. Non-Delegated Matters

- (a) Airbnbs and Short Term Let Accommodation (Pages 1 - 8)

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Subject:	Airbnbs and Short term let accommodation
Date:	20 November 2024
Reporting Officer:	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control, ext. 2300
Contact Officer:	Stephen Hewitt, Building Control Manager, ext. 2435

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To consider the responses from the Department for the Economy and Tourism Northern Ireland to recent correspondence from the Committee regarding the regulation of short term lets, such as Airbnbs, in Northern Ireland.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the contents of the responses received from DfE and Tourism NI.
3.0	Main report

3.1	At the Licensing Committee meeting on 20 March 2024, the Committee agreed to write to the NI Executive regarding the regulation of short term lets, such as Airbnbs, in Northern Ireland. The Committee considered the responses to this letter at its meeting in August 2024. At that meeting, the Committee expressed its disappointment in the responses and reiterated their concerns on the impact of Airbnbs such as Anti-Social behaviour experienced by residents, rises in property prices and rent costs.
3.2	Subsequently, the Committee agreed to write to the Department for the Economy and Tourism NI to reiterate the need for legislation and highlight the impact and concerns raised by the Committee, and request that the Council be involved in the Tourism NI review that had been outlined in the correspondence. This letter was issued in September and is included at Appendix 1.
3.3	Responses were received from the Department for the Economy on the 24 September (Appendix 2) and Tourism NI on 4 October (Appendix 3).
3.4	Both letters make reference to engagement with the Council through the Development Plan Working Group. The next meeting of the working group is scheduled on the 12 December 2024. The meeting will be attended by the Acting Planning Manager (Plans and Policy). Officers working on the Local Development Plan are aware of the issues raised by Members of the Committee and will ensure that these views are represented at the working group meeting.
	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
3.5	There are currently no financial or resource implications as a result of this report.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.6	There are no issues associated with this report.
4.0	<u>Appendices</u> Appendix 1 letter to DfE and Tourism NI September 2024 Appendix 2 letter from DfE September 2024 Appendix 3 letter from Tourism NI October 2024

Legal and Civic Services Department



Democratic Services Section

Your reference

Being dealt with by Ms Eilish McGoldrick

Our reference EMcG/JT – LIC. 21.08.24

Email

Date 19th September, 2024

Deirdre Hargey MLA
Minister for the Economy

Dear Minister Hargey,

At its meeting in August, Belfast City Council's Licensing Committee considered the responses from the Department for the Economy (DfE), the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and the Department for Communities (DfC) to recent correspondence from the Committee regarding the regulation of short term lets, such as Airbnbs, in Northern Ireland.

The Council's correspondence highlighted the importance of ensuring that an appropriate model is in place for the management of short term lets. It also acknowledged the Council's responsibilities and powers under the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, however, the Committee believed that the necessary regulation of short term lets would go beyond the assessment of acceptability of such uses in land use terms (copies of the report and associated correspondence are available under Item 6.a) [here](#)).

The response from DfE sets out that due to significant growth in the number of self-catering properties certified by Tourism NI, they will shortly be carrying out a review of the role of the certification of visitor accommodation.

During discussion, at its meeting in August, the Committee expressed its disappointment in the responses and reiterated their concerns on the impact of Airbnbs such as Anti-Social behaviour experienced by residents, rises in property prices and rent costs. It was suggested that the Council was limited in enforcement as it could only currently apply to individual properties and legislation was required to cap the numbers of short term lets in areas to sustain communities. It was also suggested that planned regulation of this accommodation was

required to protect the integrity of neighbourhoods and well-being of residents, visitors and legitimate operators.

Subsequently, the Committee agreed to write to the Department for the Economy and Tourism NI to reiterate the need for legislation and highlight the impact and concerns raised by the Committee, and request that the Council be involved in the Tourism NI review that had been outlined in the correspondence.

I look forward to receiving your response on the matters raised.

Yours sincerely



Eilish McGoldrick
Democratic Services and Governance Coordinator

**From the Office of the Minister
CONOR MURPHY MLA**



Department for the

Economy

An Roinn

Geilleagair

www.economy-ni.gov.uk

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Our ref: COR-1566-2024

Date: 24 SEPTEMBER 2024

Eilish a chara

REGULATION OF SHORT-TERM LETS

Thank you for your email of 19 September 2024 requesting that Belfast City Council be involved in Tourism NI's external review of its tourism accommodation certification scheme.

As part of this review, a meeting took place with the Development Plan Working Group, representing all 11 Councils, to explore some of the issues. Further engagement between officials from Tourism NI and the Planning Department of Belfast City Council is scheduled to take place shortly.

The review is due to be completed by the end of 2024. Once the report is received, officials in my Department will consider the policy implications and advise on any next steps.

Is mise le meas

**CONOR MURPHY MLA
Minister for the Economy**



Ms Eilish McGoldrick
Democratic Services and Governance Coordinator
Belfast City Council

Via email: mcgoldricke@belfastcity.gov.uk

4 October 2024

Dear Ms McGoldrick,

Regulation of Short-Term Holiday Lets

Thank you for your email of 19 September 2024 requesting that Belfast City Council be involved in the external review of the certification scheme for visitor accommodation operated by Tourism NI.

Council will have now received a response from Minister Murphy. To confirm, consultation with the Development Plan Working Group, with representation from the planning departments of all 11 Councils across NI, has been undertaken as part of the review. It is expected that the review will conclude by the end of 2024 with any policy recommendations considered by DfE officials and advice provided to the Minister. In the meantime, Tourism NI continues to exercise the powers set out in the Tourism (Northern Ireland) Order 1992.

I also wanted to highlight that Tourism NI has a data sharing agreement in place with Council which assists both organisations to fulfil their statutory obligations, including enforcement. In order to deepen collaborative working, Tourism NI's Quality and Standards Team recently met with BCC Planning colleagues. This engagement enabled understanding to be enhanced of the Local Development Plan and the processes involved in securing planning permission for property use as a short-term let.

Tourism Northern Ireland,
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Corporate website:
tourismni.com

Consumer website:
discovernorthernireland.com

Tourism Northern Ireland is
an Equal Opportunities Employer

Tourism Northern Ireland
(Tourism NI) is the trading name of
The Northern Ireland Tourist Board

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Chairman: Ellvena Graham OBE
Chief Executive: John McGrillen

Tourism NI has the power to revoke a proprietor's certificate to provide visitor accommodation where the criteria and standards set out in the 1992 Order are not being met. Other aspects of regulatory compliance which are outside of the scope of Tourism NI's powers such as planning and building control permissions, fire safety certification, and food safety and hygiene, may be discussed by Tourism NI during the certification process and the proprietor advised of their responsibilities.

I recognise that this is an evolving area of policy in other destinations. The Department for the Economy will be in a position to advise further on their position in due course, following the completion of the review.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. McGrillen', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

John McGrillen
Chief Executive