

# 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