

From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure
JOHN O'DOWD MLA

Ms Louise McLornan
Legal and Civic Services Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast BT1 5GS

democraticservices@belfastcity.co.uk

James House
Gasworks Business Park
2-4 Cromac Avenue
Belfast
BT7 2JA
Telephone: (028) 9054 0105
Email: Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Your reference: LM260424
Our reference: COR-1326-2024
20th May 2024

Dear Ms McLornan

AIR BNBS AND OTHER SHORT TERM LETS

Thank you for your letter dated 26 April 2024. Minister O'Dowd has asked me to respond on his behalf.

You refer to the importance of an appropriate model being in place for the management of short term lets, given their impact on communities, not least in terms of affordability of buying or renting property. You may be aware that TourismNI runs a certification scheme under the Tourism (NI) Order 1992 whereby it inspects tourist accommodation to ensure that they meet with the minimum standards outlined in the Order. However, TourismNI has no powers to cap or limit the numbers of properties which can be certified or to regulate the cost of the accommodation. Rent regulation is a specific responsibility of DfC under Section 7 of the Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, and DfC also has overall responsibility for housing policy including the provision of decent, affordable and sustainable homes.

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035 and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) support the creation of balanced communities and, in relation to housing, the policy approach is to facilitate an adequate and available supply of quality housing to meet the needs of everyone. The SPPS states that local development plans (LDPs) prepared by councils should “zone land or include policy, as appropriate, to reflect the local need resulting from the demand for second homes”.

Council Local Development Plans (LDPs) are the main vehicle for housing delivery by assessing future housing land requirements and managing housing growth to achieve sustainable patterns of residential development. This process allows councils to address local housing issues within their communities. Ultimately, councils have the

important responsibility for setting a vision for the long-term future development of their areas through the preparation of LDPs. In doing so councils have the flexibility to bring forward bespoke approaches to dealing with any local issues which affect their communities.

You will be aware that currently the requirement for planning permission, set out in the Planning Act (NI) 2011 is dependent upon the extent to which the use and character of a property is changed and the degree to which it impacts on its surroundings. Each application is therefore determined on its own merits, having regard to the local development plan, regional policy, and all other material considerations, and that the relevance and weight to be given to all material considerations is a matter for the planning authority. Therefore, decision makers will take account of the relevant provisions of regional strategic planning policy and guidance including the SPPS and Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7: Quality Residential Environments.

I hope that this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely



EMMA STOCKMAN
Private Secretary to the Minister