



Subject:	Rent Controls - Department for Communities Response
Date:	5th September, 2025
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration & Development
Contact Officer:	Craig Mealey, Committee Services Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.	
Insert number <input type="text"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Information relating to any individual2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime 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/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To update Members on a response received from the Department for Communities in relation to rent controls.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the response received from the Department for Communities in relation to rent controls.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>At its meeting in February 2023, the City Growth and Regeneration Committee passed the following motion in relation to rent controls:</p> <p>Moved by Councillor Beattie, and Seconded by Councillor Duffy,</p> <p>“That the Committee notes the cost of privately renting a home in Belfast has risen significantly in recent years, making it increasingly unaffordable for many people, particularly those on low incomes and young families. The Committee: Wants to see costs for renters reduced; Acknowledges that legislation is required to protect renters from unfair rents, improve housing standards and end unfair letting fees; Recognises the introduction of rent controls is one way to help renters. Furthermore, the Executive needs to be back up and running and a Minister in place to progress this.”</p>
3.2	The Committee agreed to write to the Department for Communities Permanent Secretary and the Head of the Civil Service requesting engagement with the Council and other key stakeholders concerning rent controls in Belfast; and to support local community organisations and advocacy groups in their efforts to campaign for the introduction of rent controls and to ensure that the voices of renters and those affected by the housing affordability crisis were heard.
3.3	<p>In its response of March 2023, the Department for Communities advised that:</p> <p>“Section 7 of the Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 placed a duty on the Department to research and consult on the implications of a rent freeze or rent decrease and to lay a report before the Assembly. The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) was subsequently commissioned by the Department to research and consult on these implications and the ensuing Report was laid in the Assembly and published on the Department’s website. However, as already noted by your</p>

	Committee, any further action on these issues is subject to a decision by an incoming Minister. Moreover, bringing any rent controls into effect would require further secondary legislation and therefore a functioning Assembly.”
3.4	A further letter was sent on behalf of the Council in May 2025 to the Minister for Communities, Gordon Lyons MLA, regarding the actions outlined in the motion, including engagement with the Council and other key stakeholders in relation to rent controls in Belfast.
3.5	A response from the Department for Communities has now been received and is attached at Appendix 1 for the Committee’s consideration.
4.0	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
5.0	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
6.0	Appendices - Document Attached
	Appendix 1 – Department for Communities Response – Rent Controls