

From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure
LIZ KIMMINS MLA

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Barry, a chara,

POLICY PROHIBITING KEY LOCKBOXES ASSOCIATED WITH SHORT-TERM HOLIDAY LETS

Thank you for your letter of 4 August 2026 to the Executive Office regarding Belfast City Council's Notice of Motion on key lock boxes associated with short-term holiday lets. I have been asked to respond on matters within my department's remit.

I note that the motion, adopted by Belfast City Council on 1 July 2026, calls for a policy prohibiting lockboxes from being installed on any property, wall, railing, fence or street furniture other than the dwelling to which they relate, together with enforcement action and removal where necessary. I recognise the Council's concerns about the increasing number of lockboxes in some parts of Belfast and their potential impact on the appearance of the public realm and residential amenity.

My department's responsibilities include management of the public road network and associated infrastructure, as well as planning control. Where lockboxes are attached to infrastructure owned or managed by the Department, any action would need to be considered in light of the relevant statutory powers, road safety, maintenance and liability implications, and the proportionality of any enforcement response.

The adoption of a Notice of Motion does not, in itself, create new enforcement powers or legal prohibitions. Any enforcement action must be supported by appropriate legislation and carried out in accordance with administrative law principles.

The Department is not currently aware of any specific legislative provision in the north that generally prohibits lockboxes associated with short-term holiday lets. Furthermore, the presence of a lockbox does not necessarily indicate unlawful activity, and such devices may serve legitimate purposes, including providing access for carers, healthcare professionals and family members. Responsibility for wider policy issues relating to short-term holiday accommodation extends beyond this department and includes local councils, the Department for the Economy and Tourism NI.

I will keep this matter under review and would welcome continued engagement with Belfast City Council should specific issues arise concerning infrastructure owned or managed by the Department.

Is mise le meas,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liz Kimmins', with a stylized flourish at the end.

LIZ KIMMINS MLA
Minister for Infrastructure