

**SHORT TERM LETS**  
**RESIDENTS WORKSHOP**  
**NOTE OF MEETING ON 9 MARCH 2021**

**Attendees**

Thirteen attendees representing a mixture of urban and rural locations, including Edinburgh, Glasgow, Ayr and Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, and Community Land Scotland.

**Scottish Government officials:**

- Andrew Mott, More Homes (chair)
- David Manderson, More Homes
- Rachael Gearie, More Homes

**Summary**

**Update from Scottish Government**

1. The Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning had withdrawn the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 (Licensing of Short-term Lets) Order 2021. The Scottish Government's intention, subject to the outcome of the election, was to re-lay the Order in June and keep to the timetable for implementation already set out.
2. More information could be found in the Minister's letter to the Local Government and Communities Committee of 18 February 2021: [Short-term lets: letter from Housing Minister to Committee - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/short-term-lets-letter-from-housing-minister-to-committee)
3. This new approach would allow the Scottish Government to provide the draft guidance on the licensing scheme alongside the re-laid Order. It would also provide further time to make any other adjustments needed to the Order following further stakeholder engagement through the working group and in discussion with residents and communities.

*Stakeholder Working Group*

4. The working group was principally comprised of industry and local authority representatives to get the guidance aimed at hosts and operators and local authorities right. There were many aspects of the process that would be important to work through in detail with industry and local authority representatives that were not directly relevant to resident and community groups.
5. The working group papers were published on the [Scottish Government website](https://www.gov.scot/scottish-government-website). The work of the group would be open and transparent.

6. The Scottish Government understood that certain parts of the process would be important to residents and communities. The Scottish Government wanted to engage with residents in parallel with the working group to ensure resident and community interests were taken into account.
7. Comments and questions were invited from participants.

### Points made by attendees

#### *Working group*

8. A number of attendees were concerned about the lack of community representation on the working group. Community groups wanted to help get the guidance right so that objections and complaints were rarely necessary. Residents also wanted to understand the perspectives of self-caterers and B&B owners. It was suggested that one rural and one urban representative join the working group.

#### *Planning issues*

9. One person noted that, in their block, around 15% of properties were being rented out by absentee landlords on Airbnb without planning permission. Although residents had objected, the local authority had not deemed the changes to be a material change of use and was unwilling to take planning enforcement action.
10. One person was concerned about the interaction of licensing with planning. In the case that a licence was granted before (or without) planning permission, this might be perceived as implicit approval for planning permission. They were concerned that, outwith control areas, there was no requirement for an applicant to have planning permission before applying for a licence. A suggestion was made that simplified planning zones were used to manage areas without any issues, to make clear that a planning application was not required in these areas; this would mitigate concerns about local authority workload.
11. One person wanted assurance that control areas would allow a local authority to limit the number of short-term lets in tenement buildings, specifically within a single tenement stair.
12. One person commented that housing was a human right and opposed the hollowing out of neighbourhoods with fewer and fewer dwellings available for local residents. They suggested that, where a dwelling changed from residential use, it should always require planning permission, irrespective of whether it was in a control area or not.
13. One person expressed concern that, within the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, it appeared to be easier to get permission to build tourist accommodation than to build a home to live in. They noted a problem with

absentee landlords where money earned from short-term lets was not earned by local people and so left the local economy.

14. One person raised an issue with planning enforcement in Edinburgh, whereby the peculiarities of tenement flat numbering had apparently been a stumbling block.

#### *Other points*

15. One person raised the issue of the impact of short-term lets on housing availability and affordability. The guidance needed to facilitate local authorities in designating control areas.
16. Another person raised wider community impacts, including the impact on residents' mental health with short-term let guests being unpredictable and temporary neighbours.
17. Several people were concerned about breaches of the COVID-19 regulations and guidance and a lack of enforcement.
18. One person raised concerns that local authorities would not have the staff or financial resources to take the licensing scheme forward.
19. One person suggested that it was too easy to let a whole property on Airbnb, and that the revenue far outweighed any potential costs. A number of people noted that short-term lets or B&Bs where the owner was sharing their own home and hosting did not raise noise or nuisance issues; nor did they take away homes from residential use.

#### Conclusion

20. Scottish Government thanked participants for their time. Officials would consider the points made, including around stakeholder working group membership. However, officials noted that there was value in hearing from a wide range of community and resident interests, reflecting people's diverse circumstances and experience, which would be difficult to represent at the working group.
21. The second (identical) workshop on 11 March was noted. The current plan was for a subsequent community and residents' workshop to be held in May.

**Scottish Government  
10 March 2021**