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## Regional Planning Governance & Legislation

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18 March 2025

Dear Denise

### **Update Request: Letter to Angus Kerr re Second Homes and short term lets Nov 2022**

Thank you for your email of 25 February 2025 with attached correspondence concerning second homes and short term lets.

The Council will be aware that 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”. Councils affected by these matters can consider the demand for second homes and short-term holiday lettings when assessing local housing need for their LDPs. A number of councils have taken this opportunity to bring forward bespoke local policies to address these issues.

Belfast City Council (BCC) adopted its Plan Strategy in May 2023 and this includes Policy TLC 3 which relates to development for overnight visitor accommodation and

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Policy HOU 13 entitled Short term accommodation and sets out criteria for which proposals for short term let accommodation must meet. BCC has recognised the importance of providing greater choice for visitors to Belfast whilst also recognising that the supply of conventional housing in the council's plan area cannot be compromised. For this reason, BCC has also included Monitoring Indicator 40 within this Development Plan Document (DPD) to monitor the number and location of short term let properties, which provides a trigger when there is more than a 10% increase in the number of short term lets within any Housing Management Areas (HMAs).

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council will also be aware that in December 2024 the Department issued the formal Direction documents to Derry City and Strabane District Council (DCSDC). The draft Plan Strategy (dPS) includes Policy TOU 2 which relates to tourism development in settlements and Policy TOU 4 which relates to development of hotels, guest houses, B&Bs and Tourist Hostels in the Countryside. The LDP dPS has been found to be 'sound' subject to PAC Recommended Amendments and DfI Modifications. MOD 43 and MOD 44 directed the Council to modify policy wording of Policy TOU 4 alongside the justification and amplification wording under both Policies TOU 2 and TOU 4. This modification requests that a definition/information on short term let accommodation (urban and rural) is provided within Appendix 2 of the DPD. DCSDC will also be monitoring short-term-let tourist accommodation development, and it will be reviewed over the period of the LDP.

To date, the local development plan policies appear to be providing a means to address the issue of second homes at a local level.

With respect to your council area, I note the Department's letter dated 25 November 2022 advised that this issue requires full consideration through a policy development process and public consultation and that any changes to legislation will require Ministerial approval. I appreciate this remains an area of concern within your council, however, due to ongoing competing priority commitments, there are no immediate proposals to bring forward options for legislative change at this time. Nevertheless, the Department is conscious of this issue and would hope to be in a position where policy development may commence in the future, subject to resources.

In addition to this, I can advise that early discussions, comprising a cross departmental group (DfC, DfI & DfE) has very recently commenced. Broadly, the purpose of this group is to provide an informed understanding of nature and scale of second homes across Northern Ireland and to assess the effects of second homes on the housing market and the sustainability of local communities and services. As this progresses, the Department would be happy to provide you with further information in due course.

I trust this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

  

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**ROSEMARY DALY**  
Director