

Wightman offers his suggestions for law change on short term lets

Scottish Green MSP Andy Wightman, whose Homes First campaign aims to regulate the rapid growth of the short-term letting sector, today publishes examples of legislative change to show how he believes The Scottish Government could help local councils tackle the problem.

✖ Wightman's campaign claims that the growth in commercial short-term lets is out of control in Edinburgh, and of increasing concern across Scotland.

Today the MSP puts forward examples of Statutory Instruments which the government could enact under existing powers to provide councils with the tools they need to regulate.

He suggests that one option would be to create a new "Use Class Order" in the planning system so that local councils can classify residential property being used for commercial holidays or short breaks as short-term lets.

Another of his suggestions is to amend The Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 to give local authorities the power to introduce a licensing scheme to regulate the operation of short-term lets.

A proposal for how such powers could be used has also been published showing how home-sharing and commercial activity could be regulated via a simple set of rules set out in a flowchart.

Andy Wightman, Housing spokesperson for the Scottish Greens and MSP for Lothian, said: "These examples of legislation are intended to generate wider discussion about a situation that

is clearly causing distress in communities such as Edinburgh. Until now, there have been no substantial proposals beyond Airbnb suggesting it could set its own 156 day limit on its website.

“It seems reasonable to me that if someone rents out a room or their home for less than one month a year and it remains their main residence there should be no requirement for them to apply for either planning consent or a licence from the council but where there is a clear commercial activity, a change of use must be applied for and a licence sought.

“Scottish Ministers still don’t seem to get the difference between a person letting out a spare room or flat while they go away on holiday and an investor buying property for the intention of running a commercial business. Local councils need the power to regulate this sector to prevent further erosion of communities and loss of housing.”

To find out more about Homes First [click here.](#)