

Four city landlords lose appeals on short term lets

by Joseph Anderson Local Democracy Reporter

Edinburgh councillors are celebrating victory for the capital's 'hollowed out' communities after four Grassmarket landlords lost their appeals against a council crackdown on short term lets.

The owners of four properties within 68B Grassmarket, in between Bill Baber Knitwear and the Grassmarket Premier store, were served with enforcement notices in February 2020 after council officers were tipped off by neighbours.

The three owners, Stoil Ivanov, of St Marys Street, Edinburgh, Katherine Laing, of Pitlessie Road, Ladybank, and one other owner, who owns two of the properties in question; appealed the enforcement notice to the Scottish Government's Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA).

However, DPEA reporters, acting on behalf of Scottish Ministers, have thrown the appeals out, and sided with The City of Edinburgh Council.

Convener of the council's planning committee, Neil Gardiner, said: "It's very encouraging to see the reporter so strongly

supporting our position on these four properties and it's good news that they won't be lost as residences for our citizens in the future.

"This is so important as short term lets have reduced the city's housing stock, hollowed out communities and caused numerous issues for residents such as noise and other anti-social behaviour.

"This time last year we welcomed the Scottish Government announcement that our call for a new regulatory scheme had been successful.

"Since then they have carried out a consultation and subject to Parliament approval new legislation will be brought in by the government on April 1 this year.

"This is very welcome as it will improve the lives of many of our residents throughout the city.

Portobello and Craigmillar councillor, and Vice-Convener of the planning committee, Maureen Child, said: "As well as having a regulatory scheme in place, we're also looking forward to using the legislation to control the number of short term lets in the city as properties being let out in these areas would automatically require to have 'change of use' planning permission in place.

"Also, when people apply for a licence we can ask for evidence that they have that permission.

"This is something we're very keen to do and our 'Choices' consultation for our next local development plan – 'City Plan 2030' – showed overwhelming support for control zones."

The owners of the properties now have one month to cease using the properties as short term lets.

One owner, whose name was redacted by the DPEA, also launched a claim for expenses against the council, claiming the

allegedly erroneous planning enforcement notice unfairly cost them money.

The DPEA reporter also dismissed the claim, along with the owner's appeal against the enforcement notice.

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