

# **Backlog of short term let applications raising “serious questions”**

**The City of Edinburgh Council’s planning department has a backlog of more than 1,600 short-term let applications, leading to “serious questions” over whether the facility is adequately resourced.**

New figures have revealed the extent of pressures on the city’s planning service following the introduction of new regulations for second homes which owners want to use as holiday lets.

The numbers show that at the end of March a total of 2,546 short-term let (STL) applications had been lodged since 2018, with 880 of these granted, refused or withdrawn so far – leaving 1,666 which are yet to be issued with a decision. More than two-thirds of the backlog is made up of requests for certificates of lawfulness.

Previously the council said this route was only available to those who could prove their property had been used as an STL for more than 10 years.

However, after a judicial review last year found the authority could no longer demand ‘change of use’ applications for all other holiday lets, an increasing number of landlords have sought lawful certificates in a bid to avoid the full planning

permission process – and just one in three have been approved, of those determined so far.

Cllr Chas Booth, Edinburgh Greens' spokesperson on planning, said: "I'm extremely concerned that more than 8 of every 10 applications for an STL certificate of lawfulness have not yet been determined by the council.

"It's important that these applications are processed swiftly and fairly, not just for the applicants, who deserve a clear decision, but also for neighbours and communities who might be impacted by some of these applications.

"This raises serious questions about whether the council has sufficient resources, and enough planning officers, to cope with the number of STL applications."

Fiona Campbell, CEO of trade body the Association of Scotland's Self-Caterers (ASSC), said: "Industry repeatedly warned about the resource implications for local authorities stemming from short-term let regulations.

"The status quo is a lose-lose situation for all concerned as planning departments are overwhelmed while small business owners face crippling uncertainty.

"Taking a proactive approach to address these challenges, the ASSC has presented legally sound and mutually beneficial policy solutions to City of Edinburgh Council.

"This would help enable a sustainable future for the remaining self-catering businesses in the capital and reduce the administrative burden for the Council.

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter



02/10/2023 PHOTO Alan Simpson Applications for short term let licenses advertised in doorways on the Royal Mile Edinburgh.