

Council 12 July, 2018

Short-Term Lettings

Labour Group to move:

Council notes:

- 1 Home-sharing services are often attractive to tourists and they provide direct income to host households. However, regulation has been slow to keep up with the growth in these services and the impact they have on both the housing market and on amenity issues for residents.
- 2 In Bath and North East Somerset, we are experiencing a housing crisis, yet at the same time properties are being removed from the private rental market as the earnings from short-term lettings can prove irresistible to landlords.
- 3 The difficulty in obtaining accurate figures around short-term lettings as there is no requirement to notify the Council of an intention to use a property in this way.
- 4 A report by Tom Copley (London Assembly Member) highlights recent changes to legislation allowing the short-term letting of whole residential properties for up to 90 days in a calendar year in London but that the report also identifies a need for additional measures to enable London authorities to investigate and effectively enforce the new legislation.
- 5 The B&NES Visitor Accommodation Study which this Council has commissioned to help provide evidence for the Local Plan includes considering the extent of and growth in short-term holiday lets and the implications and problems of short-term lets in relation to, for example, both the housing stock and the operation of other forms of visitor accommodation.
- 6 The Leader of Council has written to the Minister asking for a new use class to be introduced for short-term lets so that they are differentiated from dwelling houses.
- 7 The owners of properties used for short-term lets for up to 140 days per year are liable for council tax.

Council believes that:

- 8 There is a need to find effective solutions which allow legitimate home-sharing to continue while at the same time addressing the widespread concern about the growing professionalised sector.
- 9 Bath and North East Somerset should be able to benefit from a change in legislation in the way that London has and that, at the same time, the lessons should be learnt from the London experience with additional measures and resources to support enforcement of any new law.

Council agrees therefore to ask the Leader of Council to:

- 10 Write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government asking for:
 - a. A change in the law around short-term lets, limiting the short-term letting of whole residential properties to 90 days in a calendar year;
 - b. Other legislative measures such as a change to the use classes order, to make short-term holiday lets its own specific use class;

- c. The resources and tools needed to ensure that the costs of implementing any new legislation do not fall on Council taxpayers and to enable effective enforcement including, but not limited to, the introduction of a requirement that short-term lettings hosts must register with the local authority and that home-sharing platforms must share details of property owners suspected of breaching any new requirements; and
 - d. Support with the creation of an ombudsman by the home-sharing platforms paid for by the industry to address home-sharing fraud, help with enforcement, resolve disputes and investigate complaints.
- 11** Write to Housing Associations asking them to remind their tenants that they must not sub-let their homes.