

Ariane Burgess MSP,
Convener
Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee

By email to: localgov.committee@parliament.scot

31 October 2023

Dear Convener,

I write to advise you about the format and timing of work planned for 2024 on the implementation of short-term let licensing.

My letter to the LGHPC of 28 June 2023 outlined how we have engaged with stakeholders during 2022 and 2023. This has provided opportunities to consider implementation matters and to work with stakeholders to understand, and where appropriate, resolve concerns. I am committed to an ongoing iterative process to monitor delivery and to identify solutions to any operational challenges, as well as what emerging good practice looks like.

We will not amend the types (home-sharing, home letting and secondary letting), the definition or the core principles of licensing (mandatory and additional conditions, public scrutiny and opportunity to object). We will also not change the delegation of powers to licensing authorities to administer local licensing schemes. These were core principles which the Committee and Parliament recognised as being integral to the original legislation, and many thousands of hosts have already applied to the scheme.

There is understandably interest in how many hosts/operators have applied for a licence. Licensing authorities maintain public registers with this information and we publish quarterly official statistics about short-term let licensing applications too. [Short Term Lets Licensing Statistics Scotland to 31 March 2023](#) The publication covering the period up to 30 September 2023 is expected to be published in early 2024. While the data licensing will provide us with can be used to inform wider tourism strategy work, we are still in a transitional period whilst applications are processed and unless a critical issue is identified our intention is not to assess the wider health of tourism through the lens of licensing, as factors that may affect the sector are complex and varied.

The scope of the 2024 update will therefore be to:

- report and reflect on initial short-term let licence application levels across Scotland, in the context of estimates recorded in the independent research undertaken in 2019;
- consider current operational processes; and

- identify operational improvements, where appropriate, and update previously published impact assessments with actual data in place of estimated information, where available.

We will shortly gather feedback and sense check the information we already hold from licensing authorities and stakeholders, including the STL Industry Advisory Group (IAG) via Visit Scotland, as well as communities impacted by the presence of STL accommodation. We will also work with Heads of Planning Scotland (HOPS) to gather additional data on applications for planning permission and certificates of lawful use or development (CLUDs) related to short-term lets.

I will write to the Committee again by the end of January 2024 to advise you of progress with this work.

Yours sincerely,

PAUL MCLENNAN