

Report to the Planning and Urban Form Strategic Policy Committee – June 2021

Update on Short Term Letting Enforcement Activity in Q1 and 2 2021 Item No.4 on the Agenda

Government restrictions imposed due to the Covid 19 pandemic have significantly affected the tourism industry as a whole, which include a restriction on travel, both locally and internationally. In relation to the short-term letting sector specifically, industry data has shown an increase of rental properties in Dublin City being placed with advertisers offering long term rental conditions.

There is a continued increase in the numbers of properties to let in the city for medium to long term lets over the last few months. The largest short term letting platform, Airbnb is currently advertising approximately 4,000 properties where the entire property is available for short term use, however some of these advertisements have been modified to reflect a minimum stay of 14 nights, taking them out of the short term letting definition under the regulations.

This is to be expected given that at the moment there is little to no tourist activity worldwide as a result of the Covid -19 pandemic. It is therefore understandable that anybody who may have been previously operating short term letting that was legal or illegal in nature are looking at other markets to earn an income on their properties.

Earlier in the year site inspections had ceased in response to the Government restrictions and required safety measures relating to the Covid -19 pandemic, however we continued to carry out desktop analysis and research. Staff were reviewing available information from relevant online platforms, collating and cross checking information from a range of data sources.

Advertisements published on online platforms relating to short term lettings are not considered a planning breach of the short term letting regulations. An advertisement may indicate that an unauthorised use may have been carried out, is being carried out, may be carried out or may have ceased as the case maybe, however it is the investigation / inspection process, which will determine the planning status of the property.

Currently with properties under investigation we are carrying out site inspections to verify the status of properties.

We have received a positive response from the letters that issued requiring confirmation on the current status of the property in terms of its tenure and what the intentions of the landlord/owner are for the next 18 months.

Should a property owner inform us that the property is now rented on a long-term lease or indeed placed for sale on the open market, and that short-term letting is no longer occurring, we are requesting documentation to support such a claim, i.e. a copy of the lease and supporting that, valid utility bills or other such documents with the name and address of the tenant proving long term residency. From the responses received to date we have found that properties have reverted back into long term use.

Where properties have been put on the market for sale we require documentary evidence of instruction from the vendors agent and a declaration from the property owner regarding the usage status of the property. Inspections will then follow to verify all information received.

The effect from the Covid -19 pandemic on the short term letting market in the long term is still unknown and will depend on many factors including the roll out of the vaccines, how long the pandemic will last and the appetite that the public will have for international travel following the lifting of restrictions across the world and the use of short term letting properties as part of a tourist market in the future.

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