# Brighton and Hove council to consider zoning and tax reforms amid Airbnb housing crisis



Brighton and Hove City Council is set to revisit the growing concern over short-term holiday lets, commonly associated with platforms like Airbnb, as discussions intensify regarding the implications for housing availability and community integrity. The council's Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee has highlighted how the surge in such rentals is impacting local residents, emphasising the urgent need for regulatory measures.

Short-term lets have proliferated dramatically in the city, with estimates suggesting that between 2,000 and 6,000 homes are currently listed as holiday accommodations. This trend has contributed to a significant reduction in the availability of residential properties, exacerbating an already challenging housing crisis. Green councillor Ollie Sykes voiced concerns during a recent committee meeting, emphasising that the option of renting homes in Brighton and Hove has become nearly obsolete for residents. He stated, “Basically, there is nowhere to rent in Brighton and Hove any more. It’s all Airbnb, which is absolutely crazy.”

Moreover, the influx of visitors and short-term tenants has placed additional pressure on local services. A report revealed that these properties produce more waste than regular homes, leading to inefficiencies in rubbish and recycling collections. With short-term lets frequently avoiding business rates—an obligation that only applies to properties classified as businesses—the council is also calling for potential tax loopholes to be closed.

The issue has drawn parallels with other cities facing similar challenges. For example, the council has discussed measures employed in places such as Blackpool, where specific zones for holiday lets have been established. By creating designated areas for short-term rentals, the goal is to mitigate their impact on the housing market while still accommodating tourism. This proposal aligns with the ongoing development of Brighton and Hove’s new City Plan, which could formalise such zoning rules.

Meanwhile, debates around the economic contributions of platforms like Airbnb are ongoing. An Airbnb spokesperson noted that their guests constitute a small fraction of total visitors and contribute significantly to the local economy. However, critics point out that these claims do not address the fundamental housing scarcity faced by local families, which has resulted in some residents being priced out of key areas. Green councillor Ellen McLeay echoed these sentiments, highlighting that short-term lets can create “ghost neighbourhoods” devoid of permanent residents.

The council's commitment to improving housing conditions extends beyond just regulating short-term rentals. In response to the burgeoning private rented sector, new licensing schemes targeting smaller Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are set to be introduced. These initiatives aim to enhance living standards and ensure responsible management of rental properties, thus furthering the council’s goals of addressing housing affordability and availability.

Amidst these discussions, there are calls from advocacy groups for broader reforms, such as the introduction of an "Airbnb levy" or a tourism tax. Such proposals aim to generate funds for building new homes and bolstering community infrastructure, ensuring a more balanced approach to development and rental accommodation in the city.

As the council prepares to deliberate on these pressing issues in the upcoming cabinet meeting, the trajectory of Brighton and Hove’s housing landscape remains a topic of significant public interest. The decisions made in the coming months could have lasting implications for both the local community and the burgeoning tourism sector, as well as the delicate balance between maintaining vibrant neighbourhoods and supporting a thriving economy.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1-2, 4, 5
2. Paragraphs 2, 4, 6
3. Paragraphs 3, 5
4. Paragraph 5
5. Paragraphs 4, 6
6. Paragraphs 4, 6
7. Paragraph 3

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25182843.council-cut-amount-airbnbs-brighton/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cljy790w1e6o> - In July 2024, Brighton and Hove City Council discussed the regulation of short-term holiday lets, such as Airbnbs, due to concerns about housing availability and affordability. Green councillor Ellen McLeay highlighted that families were being 'priced out' of the city centre, and short-term lets were creating 'ghost neighbourhoods'. An Airbnb spokesperson responded, stating that their guests accounted for a low proportion of total visitors and contributed significantly to the local economy. The spokesperson also noted that housing supply and affordability challenges were primarily driven by a lack of new homes being built. The council unanimously agreed to further investigate the saturation of Airbnbs and consider potential regulations. ([bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cljy790w1e6o?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c2q0rq5wx3ko> - In July 2024, Brighton and Hove City Council introduced a new scheme aimed at improving rental property conditions for smaller Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). The city-wide additional licensing scheme, effective from July 1, 2024, targets HMOs of two or more storeys with three or four occupiers. The initiative seeks to enhance property conditions and management standards in the city's expanding private rented housing sector. A selective licensing scheme for certain private rented homes in specific wards is also set to begin in September 2024. ([bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c2q0rq5wx3ko?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/news/2025/proposal-council-owned-housing-company> - In February 2025, Brighton and Hove City Council proposed establishing a new council-owned housing company as part of the 2025/26 budget plans. The company aims to improve the quality and manage the cost of temporary accommodation homes in the city. With over 1,900 households in temporary accommodation as of December 2024, the council seeks to reduce reliance on private sector providers and enhance the quality of housing for those in need. The proposal is part of the council's broader strategy to prevent homelessness and meet housing demand. ([brighton-hove.gov.uk](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/news/2025/proposal-council-owned-housing-company?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-sussex-61863788> - In July 2021, Brighton and Hove councillors voted in favor of exploring a ban on new-build second homes and holiday lets in certain areas of the city. A report to the council's Tourism, Equalities, Communities and Culture Committee found that over 3,000 properties could currently be used exclusively as short-term holiday lets. Councillors expressed concerns that large numbers of holiday lets and second homes were contributing to rising property prices and pricing local workers out of the city. The proposed 'principal residence policy' would apply only to new-builds. ([bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-sussex-61863788?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://housingcoalition.co.uk/airbnb-mega-hosts-worsen-housing-crisis-for-key-workers-and-council-tenants-in-brighton-as-investment-properties-leave-them-in-dire-need-of-temporary-and-affordable-accommodation-with-emphasis-on/> - The Brighton and Hove Housing Coalition highlights the impact of 'mega-wealthy Airbnb companies' on the city's housing crisis. The coalition points out that entire home rentals on Airbnb constitute a significant portion of listings in areas like the Pavilion and Hove constituencies. They argue that the proliferation of such listings exacerbates the housing shortage, making it challenging for key workers and council tenants to find affordable accommodation. The coalition advocates for measures like an Airbnb levy or tourism tax to generate funds for building new homes and improving community services. ([housingcoalition.co.uk](https://housingcoalition.co.uk/airbnb-mega-hosts-worsen-housing-crisis-for-key-workers-and-council-tenants-in-brighton-as-investment-properties-leave-them-in-dire-need-of-temporary-and-affordable-accommodation-with-emphasis-on/?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://arxiv.org/abs/1903.11205> - A 2019 study titled 'Airbnb's disruption of the housing structure in London' examines the impact of Airbnb on London's housing market. The research found that Airbnb rentals are negatively correlated with the diversity of dwelling types and are positively associated with areas that have a high proportion of privately rented properties. The study suggests that Airbnb listings can detract more than 1.4% of the housing supply into short-term rentals, with some neighborhoods experiencing up to 20% of housing being converted into short-term rentals. The findings have implications for policies related to the 'sharing' economy and housing structure. ([arxiv.org](https://arxiv.org/abs/1903.11205?utm_source=openai))