

## **Freedom of Information Response: Quantitative Housing Impact of Edinburgh Short-Term Let Planning Control Area**

This briefing summarises the findings of a Freedom of Information (FOI) request submitted to the City of Edinburgh Council regarding the quantitative housing impacts of its Short-Term Let Planning Control Area. The Council has confirmed that it holds **no evidence** that the policy has delivered measurable benefits in relation to housing supply, affordability, or market outcomes. This briefing places those findings alongside independent housing market data showing **rising prices and rents in Edinburgh and the wider region**, illustrating a stark contrast between stated policy goals and real outcomes.

### **Background**

The Planning Control Area was introduced with the purported objective of improving housing availability and affordability by limiting short-term letting. This represented a significant shift in planning regulation with potential consequences for homeowners, small businesses and the local tourism economy. Given its disruptive nature, it is reasonable to expect clear evidence demonstrating its effectiveness.

On 5 January 2026, ASSC submitted an FOI request seeking quantitative evidence of housing impacts. The Council's formal response confirms that it does not hold any relevant data, outcome analysis, impact assessments or reviews demonstrating that the policy has achieved its objectives.

### **Key Findings from the FOI Response**

#### **1. No data showing housing benefits**

The Council confirmed that it holds no quantitative data or analysis demonstrating any material benefit arising from the Planning Control Area in respect of:

- Overall housing availability
- Affordable housing supply
- Average property sale prices
- Average private rental prices

This constitutes a formal Section 17 notice under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 confirming that no such information is held.

#### **2. No evaluation or monitoring of effectiveness**

The Council also confirmed it holds no internal or external evaluations, reviews or monitoring reports assessing whether the Planning Control Area has delivered its stated housing outcomes. There is no assessment of causation or correlation between the designation and observed housing changes.

#### **3. Reliance on broad statistics, not localised analysis**

For empty homes and second homes data, the Council referred to generic Scottish Government

housing statistics at local authority level rather than providing targeted analysis specific to the designated Planning Control Area.

## Independent Housing Market Data - Rising Costs

### House prices remain elevated and rising

- Independent market data shows that the average selling price of property in Edinburgh, the Lothians, Fife and the Borders was **£296,479 in October–December 2025**, up **4.1 per cent** year-on-year.
- Official Registers of Scotland and HM Land Registry data show that the **average house price in the City of Edinburgh was approximately £296,878 in November 2025**, up **5.7 per cent** on the previous year.

These figures demonstrate continued upward pressure on property prices, not the downward or stabilising trend that might be expected if housing supply were materially improving.

### Private rents remain high

- Official Scottish Government statistics show that average monthly rents for **two-bedroom private sector properties in the Lothian region were £1,356 in the year to end September 2025**, one of the highest in Scotland.
- Scotland-wide data indicates that average private sector rents for two-bedroom properties rose to **£921 per month** in the year to end September 2025, up **3.1 per cent** on the previous year.

These figures underscore ongoing cost pressure for private tenants and do not evidence any substantial improvement in affordability.

## Conclusion

The absence of any measurable evidence that the Planning Control Area has delivered its stated housing objectives, when juxtaposed with real world trends showing continued increases in house prices and rents, highlights a significant policy failure.

Edinburgh's experience demonstrates that a major regulatory intervention can be introduced and enforced without baseline metrics, outcome monitoring or demonstrable impact, yet still carry substantial consequences for small businesses and local economies.

This failure should give pause to councils elsewhere, including Highland and island authorities, that are considering similar Planning Control Areas without a sound evidence base.

## Sources

### House Prices

- ESPC House Price Report Q4 2025: Average selling price in Edinburgh, the Lothians, Fife and the Borders **£296,479**, +4.1% year-on-year: <https://espc.com/news/post/house-price-report>
- UK House Price Index Scotland (City of Edinburgh average ~£296,878, +5.7% year-on-year): <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-house-price-index-for-november-2025/uk-house-price-index-scotland-november-2025>

### Private Rents

- Scottish Government Private Sector Rent Statistics 2010–2025: Lothian average two-bedroom rent **£1,356** (year to end Sept 2025): <https://www.gov.scot/publications/private-sector-rent-statistics-scotland-2010-to-2025/pages/2-bedroom-properties/>
- Scottish Government Private Sector Rent Statistics 2010–2025: Scotland average two-bedroom rents **£921** (year to end Sept 2025): <https://www.gov.scot/publications/private-sector-rent-statistics-scotland-2010-to-2025/>

**3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026**