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Short-Term Lets:

Rural and coastal communities need investment, employment opportunities and in many cases, tourism industries in order to thrive. Short-term lets can undoubtedly bring benefits to local economies, catering to the needs of tourists and others who require short-term accommodation, but I believe these benefits should continually be weighed against the impact on local people. It is important to find a balance, but the current experiences of rural and coastal communities suggest the balance is not right.

My worry is that there are too many short-term lets and second homes in some areas, which is having a direct impact on the affordability and availability of homes. This is forcing many local people to leave, which in turn, means that those who manage to stay are faced with reduced local services and amenities such as schools and buses.

According to research from Generation Rent, the growth in holiday lets and second homes almost cancelled out the supply of new homes in some parts of the country between 2019 to 2022, making it harder for councils to accommodate their local populations affordably. Analysis from CPRE, the countryside charity, also found that rural housing supply is disappearing and waiting lists for social homes are increasing year-on-year.

I welcome plans to introduce a licensing scheme, but I do not believe registration alone will be enough. Given the challenges faced by local communities, I believe there is a strong case for local authorities to be given the powers they need to regulate the number of short-term lets and manage their day-to-day impact. I recognise that any such reforms should be introduced carefully, to ensure local economies can continue to enjoy the benefits of short-term lets.

As constituents may know, the Government ran a consultation earlier this year on planning measures that would allow local authorities to control any future increase in the number of short-term lets in their area. It said it will publish its response in due course.

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