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Concerns over homes being rented for short-term stays

The use of private homes as short-term visitor accommodation is to be investigated by the Southland District Council.

Resource management committee members decided yesterday to refer the issue to Council lawyer Barry Slowley for a legal perspective on whether the District Plan should be changed to cover this issue, whether there were other alternatives, or whether any action was appropriate.

Council's Resource Management Manager Bruce Halligan told the committee that Council's investigations were undertaken after concerns were expressed by commercial accommodation providers who operated motels and hotels in the District about homes being rented out for short-term stays.

"These persons have expressed concern that they pay significant compliance costs and commercial rates, while the homeowners have none of these costs," Mr Halligan said.

The short-term renting out of homes is not a new thing but with many homes now being advertised on internet sites such as Trade Me, it is much more public than it used to be, he said.

Mr Halligan had researched the approaches of a range of tourist centres, including Queenstown, to this issue in his report.

Committee members said the issue could involve significant costs to ratepayers so before making a decision on whether any action was appropriate, a legal opinion was needed as to whether a District Plan response was suitable and also whether there were other legal mechanisms which Council could use.

Mr Halligan said it was likely the committee would consider this issue again in late March.

ENDS

For further information please contact:

Bruce Halligan
Resource Management Manager
Southland District Council
PO Box 903, Invercargill

Ph (0800) 732 732
Fax (0800) 732 329