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（1）Headline scale

The directly affected stock is the short-let supply held by professional landlords, under the opposition’s mandatory registration and higher Council Tax measures. Based on our analysis of Airbnb data, we estimate that units held by professional landlords account for 66.39% of the market by unit count.

The directly affected stock is the short-let supply held by professional landlords, under the opposition’s mandatory registration and higher Council Tax measures. Based on our Airbnb-focused analysis, we estimate ~62,000 units would be directly captured—over half and close to two-thirds of the market by unit count.

（2）Why these properties

More specifically: professional-landlord properties (~62,000+ units) would face mandatory registration and a higher Council Tax rate, while roughly 33,000 private/shared-room listings (~35% of the market) would be exempt—a built-in political shield for residents letting spare rooms. In scale terms, London had ~3.79m dwellings (2023), so 62,000 is ~1.6% of total stock—but impacts are geographically concentrated. ONS shows Westminster had the UK’s highest short-let guest nights in 2024 (~3.9m), indicating the burden lands disproportionately in central boroughs.

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4

1.Politicians – Mayor

Pros

1)Reclaims the narrative: "housing first, fairness, rules." Classifying whole-home STRs as a commercial activity and enforcing registration/tax aligns with London's existing intent: enable small-scale home sharing, but deter commercial-scale conversion of homes into quasi-hotels.

2)Politically defensible targeting. STR pressure is concentrated in a small number of central authorities (e.g., Westminster topping UK guest nights in 2024), making this easier to sell as focused action rather than a citywide blanket penalty.

3)If paired with data-sharing and ring-fenced enforcement funding, the Mayor can "deliver" rather than just posture. Registration strengthens the city's leverage over platform cooperation, which research flags as crucial to enforcement.

Cons

1)The opposition gains first-mover advantage. If the Mayor adopts late or defensively, it can be framed as reactive—"they spotted it first; you followed."

2)Electoral blowback from occasional whole-home hosts. Even with protections for spare-room sharing, treating whole-home STRs as commercial can trigger a "you're taxing my holiday" narrative among middle-income voters who occasionally rent out their main home.

3)The biggest political risk is implementation failure. Registration/licensing regimes can be administratively heavy; Scotland's experience shows processing backlogs and enforcement capacity can become the bottleneck, which opponents will weaponise.

2.People

A) Professional hosts

Pros

1)Compliance can become an advantage. Clear registration can increase trust signals for "legal" listings; some demand may shift toward compliant operators, potentially supporting higher-quality, higher-yield segments.

2)Reduces unfair competition. It raises costs for non-compliant multi-listing operators, benefiting those investing in quality and safety.

Cons

Margins shrink; incentives to exit or evade rise. Operators may switch to medium-term letting, move to harder-to-police channels, or even keep units empty/sell—so housing may not cleanly return to long-term rental.

B) Tenants / long-term renters

Pros

Potential gains in long-term supply and neighbourhood stability. If whole-home STRs become less attractive, some units may return to longer tenancies; nuisance and churn may fall in high-pressure areas.

Cons

1)No guarantee of meaningful “return-to-rent.” Evidence suggests regulation can curb professionalisation and whole-home listings, but broader housing-market benefits can be modest and depend heavily on platform cooperation and enforcement.

2)Short-stay substitution costs. People who rely on short stays (family visits, temporary work, medical visits) may face fewer compliant options and higher prices.

C) Ordinary landlords / casual hosts

Pros

Clear, popular framing: “Spare-room sharing is supported; whole-home letting is a business.” This matches London’s 90-night intent—enable small-scale income, deter commercial conversion.

Cons

1)Collateral damage at the margins. Households relying on occasional whole-home letting to cover mortgages or bills could lose a key income stream if whole-home STRs are treated uniformly as commercial.

2)Risk of underground markets. Higher compliance costs can push activity into less visible channels, weakening consumer protections and local control.

3city

Pros

1)Cleaner policy instrument: Treating whole-home STRs as commercial can shift enforcement away from counting nights toward clearer classification and registration .

2)A politically defensible revenue stream—if ring-fenced—can fund enforcement, neighbourhood services, or affordable housing, improving legitimacy.

3)Avoids “flattening” London’s housing governance into a one-size-fits-all platform template. Research on London highlights platforms’ preference for transferable “model legislation”; London’s uniquely tight housing context argues for locally adapted rules backed by data and capacity.

Cons

1)Implementation burden and cost. Registration/licensing requires systems, processing, inspections, and ongoing enforcement; Scotland illustrates that “hard rules” don’t automatically translate into smooth delivery.

2)Stricter registration and higher tax treatment can raise entry barriers for new or smaller short-let platforms and new operating models, potentially stifling platform innovation and reducing market dynamism, which may in turn weaken London's attractiveness for some visitor segments and for compliant platform supply. This risk is consistent with findings that P2P rental markets are fluid and highly adaptive, and that over-regulation can stifle innovation.

3)Potential drag on visitor economy and "policy evasion by adaptation." Tighter rules can shrink compliant supply and shift demand; platforms/operators often adapt quickly (medium-term lets, multi-platforming, grey channels), so housing-supply gains may be smaller than advertised.

4)Governance boundary issues. STR regulation cuts across planning, tax, data and platform accountability; national-level debates (e.g., use class options) can create friction or gaps for a London-only approach.

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5

This story can be reframed—but only after drawing a clear red line: any commercial short-letting of scarce public housing assets (e.g., council-owned stock) is unacceptable and must face enforcement. At the same time, we should avoid collapsing the narrative into "rich hoarders versus everyone else." The individual at the centre of the story looks closer to a middle-income professional under severe housing cost pressure: trying to stay in London while carrying mortgage and living-cost risk. That lets us pivot the debate from moral outrage to targeted governance: protect public housing and enforce rules, without stigmatising ordinary households.

The positive social mobility frame is "home-sharing as a ladder to stay in London," backed by why the city struggles to retain young people. The London Assembly reports low-income 25–29 year-olds spend 77% of wages on housing in London (vs 33% outside London), and only 26% of young Londoners own with a mortgage (vs 36% outside London). It even captures the sentiment: "It feels we cannot live in the city we grew up in." In that context, regulated, small-scale STR income—especially spare-room sharing or occasional primary-home letting—can be a cashflow buffer. Research on monetised network hospitality finds hosts commonly use earnings to offset housing costs, while hosting can also create social interaction benefits.

On housing opportunity and the city, platforms can be framed as lowering barriers: households can monetise under-used space with minimal extra capital. But platforms also amplify displacement when whole-home STRs become professionalised at scale. The Mayor's constructive position is "opportunity with guardrails": protect genuine home sharing, and treat whole-home STRs as a business via registration/classification/tax within London's 90-night framework. Anchor this in the London Growth Plan's Inclusive Talent Strategy—keeping London "attractive for the best talent in the world." Finally, be candid: boroughs warn of a £264m council housing budget squeeze, so over-complex systems risk failure and may raise entry barriers that stifle innovation and reduce city dynamism.

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