

# Section A – Introduction, Background and Research

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

In 2005, the staff of the Community and Enterprise Directorate, Clare County Council, supported and stimulated the participation of the Traveller community in developing the county's first inter-agency Traveller strategy<sup>1</sup>. This Strategy aimed to co-ordinate the activities of service agencies and their 34 FT equivalent staff<sup>2</sup> (Appendix 1) with a view to: strengthening their cultural integrity; developing their self-governance capacity; enhancing the quality of their lives; and ensuring cohesive service delivery. The delivery structure involved a Steering Group and four Implementation Groups (Appendix 2). The Implementation Groups (IGs) had responsibility for actions in relation to Employment and Enterprise (17), Accommodation (23), Health and Well-being (12), and Education (30). Ninety actions were delivered with sixteen agencies taking the lead. The lead agencies were supported by another seven agencies and by members of the Traveller community. A Traveller Forum aimed to deliver a further 8 actions. The role of the Steering Group was to address blockages and report to the National Inter-Departmental High-level Group on Traveller Issues<sup>3</sup>. The day-to-day implementation of the strategy was co-ordinated by the Community and Enterprise Directorate, Clare County Council.

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<sup>1</sup> "Strategy for the Co-ordination of Public Services to the Traveller community". Hereafter referred to as 'The Strategy'. Copies available from: Traveller Strategy Co-ordinator, Community & Enterprise, Clare County Council, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.

<sup>2</sup> The number of personnel, in terms of full time equivalents that are involved in the agencies on issues relating to the Traveller community is also shown in Appendix 1.

<sup>3</sup> The High Level Group is chaired by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and comprises members of the Senior Officials' Group on Social Inclusion and other senior public servants with key responsibility for the delivery of Traveller specific services. The Group has explored best practice with a view to

In 2009, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform asked all County Development Boards (CDBs) to review their Traveller strategies and prioritise a small number of actions that both responded to the most pressing issues facing travellers and that involved greater interagency co-operation. Specifically, new strategies were asked to focus on: educational completion; progress from training to employment; family support; linking to the work of the Local Drug Task Force; active involvement of Traveller representatives on IGs; the alignment of accommodation provision and its management with other services; and the resolution of conflict where it had arisen. These were clearly challenging areas of work that called for specific expertise and high-level inter-agency and inter-community collaboration.

## **1.2 Predominant social and cultural attitudes of settled community towards the Traveller community**

The Strategy for 2010 - 2013 is set in the current cultural, social and demographic circumstances of the Traveller community and draws on the strengths of the previous strategy while, at the same time, addressing its weaknesses.

## **1.3 Growing polarisation of attitudes towards the Traveller Community**

The most recent study of attitudes towards the Travelling community<sup>4</sup> indicated that 40% of those surveyed would 'marry or welcome as a family member' a person from the Traveller community. This compared with only 14% twenty years previously. However, almost 20% would only 'have a member of the traveller community as a visitor to Ireland' or 'would debar/deport them from Ireland', in other words would 'deny citizenship' to this 'native minority'. This compared with 10% twenty years previously. These findings indicate, "there is an increasing polarisation of attitudes...with growing support at both ends of the behavioural-tendency continuum" (ibid. p.33). This type of polarisation, as was seen in Northern Ireland, is consistent with the 'cycle of emancipation' when minorities become more assertive about their rights. The existence of 40% who are favourably disposed makes the task of 'equitable integration' in an 'integrated pluralist' society more feasible while the existence of 20%, who are willing to 'deny citizenship' suggests the likelihood of negative inter-community conflict.

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addressing the social exclusion which Travellers may experience. The first meeting of the HLG took place on 7 December, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> McGréil, M and Rhatigan, F (2010). "Emancipation of the Travelling People". NUI Maynooth: Dept. Sociology

This dynamic indicates some of the opportunities and challenges facing the Strategy for 2010 - 2013.

#### **1.4 Un-acceptance is attributed to the Travellers' way of life rather than the conditions that give rise to it**

It is also informative that 60% of those who would not 'marry or welcome a member of the Traveller community as a family member', offered as reasons (rationalisations) 'the Travellers' way of life' (64%), 'their social un-acceptance' (18%), and 'their culture' (10%). In other words, almost 50% of the dominant population attributed responsibility for the 'poverty-based' and 'poverty-driven' behaviour of the traveller community, to the Traveller community itself. They did not attribute responsibility to the broader social conditions, such as an inability to promote and develop 'an integrated, pluralist' society, namely, actions which were largely outside the control of the traveller community.

#### **1.5 Traveller culture perceived in more polarised cultural terms**

The dramatic increase from 2% (1988) to 10% (2008) of those who offered 'Traveller culture' as a reason for not accepting them 'into the family' may be due to a number of factors. It may reflect the growing impact of cultural assertiveness by the Traveller community. In addition, it may reflect an increasing polarisation of cultural values. The recent 'Celtic tiger' period emphasised the value of permanent settlement (home ownership), individualism, meritocracy<sup>5</sup>, litigation, labour force participation, late family formation, exogamy<sup>6</sup> and formal socialisation (pre-schooling and schooling). These values contrast sharply with the emphasis in the Traveller community's on nomadism, collectivism (the extended family), patriarchy, physical strength, family labour, early family formation, endogamy<sup>7</sup>, and informal socialisation within the extended family and wider traveller community. The process of 'fusing' these cultural differences in a form on 'integrated pluralism' is the greatest challenge to successfully implementing the Strategy 2010-2013 and necessitates both local and national action.

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<sup>5</sup> Social position and social status is achieved as a result of individual merit

<sup>6</sup> The practice of marrying outside one's extended family, group, community or social group.

<sup>7</sup> The practice of marrying within one's extended family, group, community or social group.

## **1.6 Explaining contrary levels of acceptance in low-educated and unskilled/semi-skilled groups**

It was also noticeable that the average degree of acceptance (40%) 'into the family' differed little across age cohorts, sex, or marital status. Only in the case of separated/divorced was acceptance as low as 28%. However, and contrary to findings in relation to many other minorities, the highest acceptance (52%) was reported by those that would appear to be in the lower socio-economic classes (with 'primary education or less'). This evidence was somewhat at odds with the finding that lowest acceptance (30%) was reported by those in 'unskilled/semiskilled' occupations and by those residing in the most socio-economically disadvantaged region (BMW). Three factors may have led to these divergent findings. Firstly, low education does not equate strongly with low occupational or low class status. Low education is predominantly a feature of older rural dwellers who are mainly farmers. Farming is not an occupation included in the 'unskilled/semiskilled' category. Neither is farming included in the lower classes as it is assigned on the basis of farm sizes. Medium farm sizes (50 –100 acres) qualify farmers as 'middle class' contrary to the low income such farms generate. Secondly, older people, who correlate more clearly with low education, displayed a higher than average level of acceptance (44%). This is consistent with the observation that older generations valued Traveller culture more highly. Thirdly, ethnic conflict is often explained as arising from competition with other socio-economically disadvantaged people for low-paid employment and social services (eg. housing, welfare, education, health). However, such conflict is rarely experienced with the Traveller community as their high unemployment rate (75%) suggests that they were not particularly effective in acquiring jobs and since most social services (education, accommodation and health) have been provided with varying degree of segregation, thus limiting direct contact and awareness. If social and labour market segregation was the explanation for higher than expected acceptance, the likelihood of conflict increases as policies of integration and increased workforce participation are pursued. This has implications for the Strategy 2010-2013.

## **2 Recent social and demographic changes**

### **2.1 Traveller numbers and decline in annual average after 18 years**

As set out in Table 1<sup>8</sup>, 665 members of the Traveller community were recorded in Clare in 2006. This indicated a decline of 42 (-6%) over the period '02-'06. With 54% of the population (354) less than 18 years of age (twice the county rate) and 33% under 10 years of age, the age profile of the Traveller community was very young. Based on the annual average of 14 people in the 10-25 age cohort, the maximum annual family formation was 7. It was noticeable that the annual average numbers in the different age cohorts up to 25 years also declined between 2002 and 2006, suggesting a declining birth rate. It was difficult to explain the sudden decline in the annual average number in the 18-25 age cohort (11) compared to 10-18 age cohort (17). Often such trends were attributed in the settled community to educational pull factors, where people left the county to attend 3<sup>rd</sup> level education. However, these pull factors do not apply in the Traveller Community as its education-profile indicated 54% of those, whose education had ceased, left the education system with primary certificate or less (Table 2). Other pull factors must be at play, such as moving to urban settings, whether or not married.

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<sup>8</sup> All Tables are in Appendix 3

### **3 Employment and Enterprise**

#### **3.1 Low labour force participation**

The percentage of population over 15 years and 'at work', 'unemployed' or 'seeking first job' is described as the 'Labour force Participation Rate'. In 2006 the Traveller community's labour force participation rate in Clare, excluding those 'not stated' was 35% (see Table 4), which was much lower than the 68% rate for the county as a whole. This may be explained by the facts that among those aged 15 years and over, there were 47 students (13%), 74 engaged in home duties (21%) and 29 unable to work (8%). These were more than twice the average for the county as a whole.

#### **3.2 Poor income prospects and High Unemployment**

When the high unemployment rate (73%) among the Traveller community (Table 4) is considered in conjunction with the high percentage (54%) of people with primary education or less (Table 2), it is difficult to see how members of the Traveller community could achieve the average industrial wage, which would be a minimum requirement to sustain their above-average sized family.

#### **3.3 Few enterprise opportunities**

Of the 143 unemployed members of the Traveller community, the Clare Traveller Enterprise and Employment Company works with almost 100 to access employment and developing enterprise opportunities and supports. Of these, 65 (66%) have Primary education or less (Table 5), which is similar to the CSO percentage. Consequently, it is clear that the Company is working with a representative cohort of the unemployed, who have very poor employment and earning prospects. Sixteen members of the Traveller community have gained employment or set up their own enterprises and a further eighty have availed of training, advice and support. As a result, almost 33% of the adult Traveller community has been in contact with enterprise thinking and their awareness of what enterprise entails, in terms of skills and discipline, has greatly increased and is being informally transmitted to the younger generation. However, there are few market opportunities for the various enterprises in which members of the Traveller community are skilled, although the feasibility of exploiting existing

equine business opportunities (eg's horse sales, horse training, stabling, farriery and related crafts) has been completed and some opportunities have been identified.

## **4 Accommodation**

### **4.1 Early family formation, large family size and urban location**

At the national level<sup>9</sup>, the Traveller community displayed relatively early family formation with 26% and 70% respectively, of the 15-24 and 25-34 year cohort married. The comparable percentages for the overall population of Clare were 2% and 40%. In addition, among the Traveller community in Clare relatively large family sizes were reported with 61% (321) living in households of six persons or more (Table 3) compared with 9% for the general population of the county. In 2006, 525 (79%) of the total Traveller population of the county (665) lived in 107 permanent households and the remainder in temporary facilities (Table 1). Of the total Traveller population (665), 512 (77%) lived in Ennis and surrounds (Table 7).

### **4.2 Current and future provision of accommodation**

The Local Traveller Accommodation Programme for County Clare 2009-2013 (TAP) noted that the Traveller Community lived in 124 permanent households and 13 temporary bays (caravans/mobiles) (Table 8). Of the permanent households: 50 (40%) were renting from the Local Authority; 29 (23%) lived in tenant purchase and shared ownership; 32 (26%) lived in Group Housing Schemes, with 13 others in voluntary, owned and RAS. The TAP also identified 81 families in need of accommodation and predicted a further 35 family formations<sup>10</sup> over the period 2009-2013. Of those identified as currently needing accommodation, 56 were renting privately, 23 were living in temporary accommodation and 2 were availing of Rent Allowance Supplement (RAS). It was envisaged that 85 (73%) units would be located in Ennis and surrounds, which was in line with the current distribution (77%). It was also envisaged that 71 (61%) and 36 (31%) respectively, would be accommodated in Local Authority Housing and Group Housing.

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<sup>9</sup> The CSO was unable to supply figures at county level for reasons of confidentiality

<sup>10</sup> Traveller Accommodation for County Clare 2009-2013

### **4.3 Challenges to certain accommodation schemes**

Despite moving to permanent accommodation, a significant number of families, particularly those living in Group Housing Schemes experienced a diminished quality of life as a result of illegal, unauthorised and anti-social behaviour. The loss of two houses through arson decreased the Local Authority's stock and the surrender of homes increased the level of vacancies and made re-letting more difficult. In addition some of those, who surrendered their homes, were unable to find alternative accommodation and resorted to temporary accommodation. In light of experience to-date in some Group Housing Schemes, it is recommended to explore opportunities for more integrated, inclusive and quality outcomes.

## **5 Health and well-being**

The information in this section is based on the All Ireland Traveller Health Study (AITHS 2010)<sup>11</sup> and the Clare Traveller Health needs assessment<sup>12</sup> carried out by the Clare Primary Health Care Programme in 2008. While it is difficult to draw comparisons between a large-scale study of over 8,000 Travellers and a local study of 80 persons, there are some interesting similarities.

### **5.1 Profile of health in the traveller community nationally and in Clare**

The AITHS (2010) data indicates that there are approximately 36,224 Travellers living in the Republic of Ireland with an average family size of four. The health status of Travellers remains poor when compared to the settled community.

- Traveller men live on average 15 years less than the population in general
- Traveller women live on average 11 years less than settled women
- Infant mortality rates amongst Travellers are three and a half times the national average.

The main causes of death in the Traveller Community are heart disease and stroke (25%) cancer (19%) and lung disease (13%). Travellers rated their health in a positive manner in

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<sup>11</sup> Department of Health and Children & University College Dublin (2010) *All Ireland Traveller Health Study, Summary of Findings*, Dublin: Hawkins House

<sup>12</sup> Clare Traveller Health Needs Assessment (2008) carried out by the Clare Primary Health Care Programme, unpublished document.



that the majority of Traveller Adults considered that their health was excellent (22.6%) or very good (27.8%), but when the AITHS used a more specific measure of health such as estimating the number of days that ill health had an impact, the Traveller population appeared in poorer health than comparable populations. The AITHS (2010) found that 52% of Travellers were current smokers in comparison to the Clare study where rates of smoking were 75%. With regard to diet the AITHS found that 56% of Traveller Adults consumed butter at least most days and 45% consumed daily fruit or vegetables. The Clare Needs Assessment found a high level of daily consumption of cakes/sweets/fizzy drinks/oils/butter at 85% and consumption of fruit and vegetables at 91%

With regard to Traveller children, in the AITHS, 90% of children were reported to have no ongoing health problem, but for those children who had health problems, Asthma was the most common problem. Consequently, it is not surprising that there is a high incidence of medical card use.

96.9% of Travellers are registered with a GP and 92% have an up to date medical card. This would be consistent with Clare Needs Assessment (2008) where all respondents had medical cards. 75% of the AITHS Respondents had visited their GP at least once in the previous year, similar to the Clare Needs assessment.

25% of Traveller Women according to the AITHS, have participated in breast screening in comparison to 13% of the general Public and 23% have had cervical screening compared to 12% of the general public. However both the AITHS and the Clare Needs Assessment found very low rates of breastfeeding.

The barriers to accessing services that Traveller perceived (AITHS) were

- Waiting lists (63%)
- Embarrassment (48%)
- Lack of Information (37%)

It is worth noting that 25% of Travellers in the AITHS received health information from Primary Health Care for Travellers Projects, 14.3% from Traveller Organisations and 28% from a Public Health Nurse. There are 40 Primary Health Care Projects across the country employing Travellers as Peer Health Workers. Many of them are funded and managed by interagency partnerships and collaborations.

## **5.2 Impact of a fragmented culture on general well-being**

A number of cultural factors impinge negatively on the overall quality of life of the traveller community. For example, the struggle to make the transition from nomadism leads to conflicted and diverse identities, which were experienced at a personal, family and community level. These conflicted identities are most often expressed angrily in the form of self-harm, intra and inter-family feuding. As the traditional escape route of 'movin on' is no longer readily available, it is difficult to cope with the discriminatory, prejudicial and often racist practices and language of the dominant community. This diminished quality of life is reflected in: unclear personal and collective identities (declining influence of the father, lack of both co-operation and solidarity); poor physical and mental health (addiction and suicide<sup>13</sup>); poor intra-family relationships (family violence); poor inter-family relationships (feuding,); poor neighbourly relationships (anti-social behaviour and criminal/unauthorised activity).

## **6 Education**

### **6.1 Profile of education in the traveller community**

In 2006, 54% (358) of all travellers stated that they were still in education. This is largely due to their young population and to a high rate (12%) of students aged 15-24, compared to 7% in the general population. Of those who stated that their education had ceased, 54% had primary or less compared with 10% for the general population. It is worth noting that only 10% had upper secondary or more (Table 2). This education profile suggested very limited employment potential. Consequently, the traveller community exerts little pressure on the lower end of the labour market and this may partly explain the lack of negative sentiment towards them among the lower social classes.

## **7 Vision for strategy 2010-2013**

Following the consultation process it was agreed that "by 2013, the Clare Traveller Community will experience greater inclusion and integration".

By way of delivering on this vision it was agreed:

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<sup>13</sup> Suicide was predominantly a male phenomenon and rates were five times that of the settled population – "Suicide among the Irish Traveller Community 2000-2006" (2008) M. R. Walker: Wicklow Co. Council

- that all agencies and participating members of the Traveller community would collaborate in a committed, resourced and coherent inter-agency approach that delivered a limited number of actions.
- that members of the Traveller community would develop a strong organisation that benefited its members, strengthened Traveller identity, promoted integration, projected a positive image of their community, fostered intra and inter-family relationships, advocated on their behalf and represented them as the case arose.

By way of measuring the achievement of this vision it was agreed that the Traveller community would experience:

- improved outcomes in the areas of education, accommodation, employment and physical / mental well-being.
- increased openness to their participation in planning and delivering services
- less discrimination and a more positive image in the wider society

It was also agreed that the actions, by means of which the objectives of each IG would be achieved, would be stated in terms of quantifiable performance indicators.

## 8 Appendices

### 8.1 Appendix 1 estimated full time staff and equivalents working with the traveller community in the various agencies

Education:	St Josephs Traveller Training Centre (8FTE), Delivering Equality in Schools (DEIS), Home School Liaison, National Association for Training Clubs, Visiting Teacher	(13.5)	Community Centres, Homework
Clare County Council:	Housing Staff, Caretakers, Social Work, Traveller Accommodation Programme	(4.5)	
HSE:	1 (Public Health Nurse) and 1 (Community Development worker For Traveller Health Nurse)	(2)	
Ennis Gardai:	Community Gardai and General	(4)	
FÁS:	Clare Traveller Enterprise & Employment Co Ltd and FAS General	(2.5)	
Clarecare:	Traveller Support Worker and General	(1.5)	
Ennis Town Council:	Housing & Social Services	(1)	
Ennis CDP and FRCs:	Primary Health Care Programme Coordinator (1) and 4 Community Health Workers are (4x1/3=1.33) =	(2.33)	
Clare Youth Service		(1)	
County Childcare Committee		(0.25)	

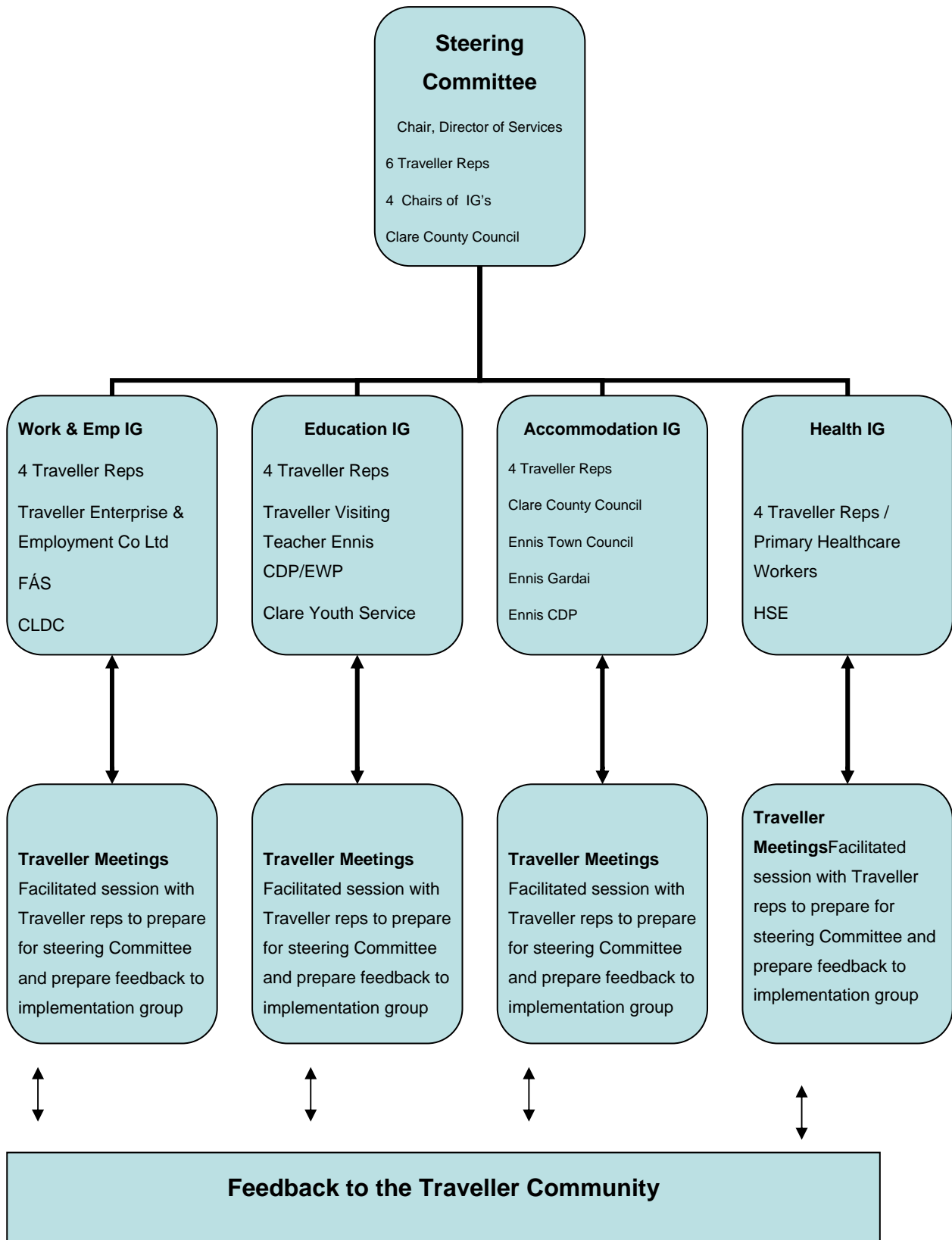
St Vincent de Paul (0.25)

MABS (0.25)

Strategy Co-ordinator (1)

Total Full Time Equivalentents 34 Approx.

## 8.2 Appendix 2 structure for delivery of strategy 2005 -2009



## Appendix 3

**Table 1 Age profile of Traveller Community 2002, 2006**

	0-9 Yrs.	10-17 Yrs.	18-24 Yrs.	25-34 Yrs.	35-44 Yrs	45-59 Yrs.	60+ Yrs.	Total Persons
Annual Ave '06	21.7	17.1	11.3	10	6.6	3		
Total Persons '06	217	137	79	100	66	44	22	665
% Total '06	33%	21%	12%	15%	10%	7%	3%	
Annual Ave '02	23.3	21	13	9.1	7.2	2.4		

Source: CSO Census Population 2006 (Special Request)

**Table 2 Education profile of those who stated that their Education had ceased**

	Education Status	% Total stating Ed. ceased (2840)
No Formal education	39	14%
Primary	114	40%
L/Secondary	51	18%
H/Secondary	9	3%
H/Sec and Vocational	3	1%
Non-Degree	1	0.3%
Primary Degree	1	0.3%
Post-Grad Dip	1	0.3%
Did not state qualification	65	
Total stating education ceased	284	

Total stating that in education	358	As % of all (665)	= 54%
Total not stating whether education ceased	23		
Overall Total	665		

Source: CSO Census Population 2006 (Special Request)

**Table 3 Number of persons Living in different Household sizes**

	<b>1 Person Household</b>	<b>2 Person Household</b>	<b>3 Person Household</b>	<b>4 Person Household</b>	<b>5 Person Household</b>	<b>6 Person Household</b>	<b>7 Person Household</b>	<b>8 Persons + Household</b>	<b>Total</b>
Persons	14	26	33	60	65	60	63	198	525
Houses	14	13	11	15	13	10	9	22	107
Of all persons	3%	5%	6%	11%	12%	11%	12%	38%	

Source: CSO Census Population 2006 (Special Request)



**Table 4. Employment and Unemployment Status of Traveller Community 15+**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>At Work</b>	<b>U/E</b>	<b>Labour force (At Work+U/E)</b>	<b>U/E Rate</b>	<b>Student</b>	<b>Home Duties, Retired, Disabled</b>	<b>Not Stated</b>
15-24	18	52	70	74%	42	16	19
25-44	27	77	104	74%	2	59	25
45+	8	14	22	64%	3	40	8
Overall	53	143	196	73%	47	115	52
Total 15+ (Labour force, Students, Home Duties)						358	

Source: CSO Census Population 2006 (Special Request)

**Table 5 Individuals Working with Traveller Enterprise Officer by education profile**

<b>Primary and less</b>	<b>Lower Sec</b>	<b>Upper Sec</b>	<b>3rd. Diploma</b>	<b>3rd. Degree</b>	<b>Dip Post Grad</b>	<b>Total Persons</b>
65	16	16	1	0	0	98
66%	16%	16%	0%	0%	0%	

Source: Clare Traveller Enterprise and Employment Co., 2009

**Table 6 Households where a member is working with Traveller Enterprise Officer by location and number**

	<b>Clarecastle</b>	<b>Ennis Environs</b>	<b>Ennis Town</b>	<b>Ennistymon</b>	<b>Shannon</b>	<b>Others</b>	<b>Total</b>
Houses	8	3	20	7	10	1	49

Source: Special Communication Traveller Enterprise and Employment Office

**Table 7 Clare Traveller Community by ED**

<b>Electoral District</b>			
Ennis No. 1 Urban	64		
Ennis No. 2 Urban	113		
Ennis Rural	234		
Clareabbey	53		
Doora	48		
Sub-Total Ennis and Surrounds	512		
Ennistymon		68	
Shannon		33	
Ruan		9	
Inagh		7	
Corrofin		4	
Others in 1s and 2s		32	
Sub-Total outside Ennis and Surrounds		153	
Overall Total			665

Source: CSO Census Population 2006

**Table 8 Location of Clare Traveller accommodation by type**

Location	L/A Rent	L/A Tenant Purchase	Shared Owner	Group Housing <sup>14</sup> (No. Houses)	Own Resource	Affordable (Pt V)	Rent Allowance	Vol. Housing	Bays <sup>15</sup> (No. Bays)	Tot
Ennis and Surrounds	36	18	8	23 in 6 Sites	4	1	2	5	7 in 2 Sites	104
Shannon	5	2		3 in 1 Site				1	6 in 1 Site	17
Ennistymon				6 in 1 Site						6
N/Mkt/F	1									1
Ruan	2									2
Kilfenora	1									1
Corofin			1							1
M/Malbay	1									1
Kildysart	1									1
S/M/Bridge	3									3
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>137</b>

Source: Clare Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009-2013

<sup>14</sup> Group Housing consists of a number of houses for extended or related families

<sup>15</sup> Bays provide cooking and washing facilities and accompanying Caravans/Mobile Homes for sleeping