



Comhairle Contae an Chláir | Clare County Council

***Traveller Accommodation Programme
2014 – 2018***

1. Introduction

1.1 The Minister for Housing and Planning has directed relevant housing authorities to prepare and adopt a Traveller Accommodation Programme for the years 2014-2018, and to carry out an assessment of existing and projected housing needs for members of the Traveller Community, in accordance with the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998. The Act places statutory obligations on Clare County Council:

- To prepare and adopt a Traveller Accommodation Programme, subject to periodic review, to meet the existing and projected need of Travellers in the county.
- To provide for a public notification and consultation process in respect of the preparation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme including an opportunity to comment on a draft programme.
- To take reasonable steps to secure the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme in the county.

The Minister has specified 30th April, 2014 as the latest date by which the Traveller Accommodation Programme must be adopted. This will be the fourth such Programme since the commencement of the Act and at the Minister's direction this programme will be reviewed not later than 31st December 2016.

2. Policy

2.1 The Council's policy in relation to the provision of Traveller Accommodation is set out in the Clare County Development Plan 2011 – 2017 as follows:

Clare County Council recognises the specific requirements of providing accommodation for the Travelling community. It also recognises its role in empowering and facilitating the Travelling community so that it can provide for its own accommodation to a greater degree. The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 places a statutory obligation on Clare County Council to prepare and adopt a Traveller Accommodation Programme, subject to periodic review, to meet the existing and projected needs of the Traveller Community in the County. Clare County has provided housing for the Traveller community in a number of towns and villages throughout the County. The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009 – 2013, and any subsequent programme adopted by the Council, set out the need, location and type of accommodation.

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

- a) To zone land for Traveller accommodation in accordance with the Traveller Accommodation Programme,*
- b) To provide appropriate housing for the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009 – 2013 and any subsequent programme adopted by the Council.*

2.2 It is the Council's policy to provide non-transient Traveller specific accommodation only for the county's indigenous travelling community. For this purpose the Council will regard a Traveller household as indigenous where the household has been

permanently resident in the county for at least three years. All other housing options are available to the travelling community.

- 2.3 It is the Council's policy to provide accommodation appropriate to the needs of the Travelling Community in general and prospective tenants in particular. Design proposals will provide pleasant and functional accommodation in spaces that are aesthetically pleasing and facilitate community participation and development. All facilities provided under this Programme will comply with the standards contained in relevant guidelines and regulations.
- 2.4 The Council is considering the development of a Transient Caravan Park at a suitable site along the route of the Ennis Bypass to cater for members of the Traveller community passing through the county to stay for short periods by prior arrangement and subject to conditions. A charging structure reflecting the cost of provision and maintenance of the facilities there will apply.
- 2.5 It is the Council's policy to levy charges on tenants /occupants of Traveller Accommodation facilities. The scale of charges to be levied will be reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with the Council's Differential Rent Scheme. The rent calculated in respect of bays in permanent halting sites will be reduced by 50% to reflect the type of facility provided.
- 2.6 Nothing in this Programme shall prevent the Manager from exercising the powers conferred under Section 24 of Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 and Section 138(4) & (5) of the Local Government Act 2001 in an emergency situation.
- 2.7 In accordance with Children First National Guidance, Clare County Council has developed a Child Protection Policy and Procedures and is committed to their implementation. All staff delivering front line housing services have received appropriate training in this regard.

3. Assessment of Need

- 3.1 The Minister for Housing & Planning has directed that relevant housing authorities make an assessment of the accommodation needs of Travellers who are assessed under section 20 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 as being qualified for social housing support, including the need for sites. In making this assessment housing authorities are required to have regard to:
 - a) the estimate of the number of the number of Traveller families for whom accommodation will be required during the duration of the programme,
 - b) any summary of social housing assessments prepared under section 21(c) of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009,
 - c) the need for transient sites,
 - d) the views of the LTACC.

A comprehensive assessment of social housing needs took place in May 2013. In addition surveys were issued by post and in person to 220 Traveller households on record seeking data on current and prospective accommodation needs. This data, together with the 2011 Census Data and the 2013 Annual Count for the Traveller Community form the basis for this assessment for the years 2014 – 2018.

Table 1: Number of households provided with Permanent Accommodation

| Accommodation Type | Area | End 2013 | End 2008 |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Standard Local Authority Housing Rented | Ennis | 18 | 30 |
| | Clarecastle | 6 | 6 |
| | Shannon | 6 | 5 |
| | Newmarket-on- Fergus | 1 | 1 |
| | Ruan | 2 | 2 |
| | Corofin | 2 | |
| | Kilfenora | 1 | 1 |
| | Miltown Malbay | 2 | 1 |
| | Scariff | 1 | |
| | Sixmilebridge | 3 | 3 |
| | Kildysart | | 1 |
| | | 42 | 50 |
| Standard Local Authority Tenant Purchased | Ennis | 15 | 16 |
| | Ballygriffey | 1 | 1 |
| | Quin | 1 | 1 |
| | Shannon | | 2 |
| | | 17 | 20 |
| Shared Ownership Scheme | Ennis | 5 | 8 |
| | Corofin | 0 | 1 |
| | | 5 | 9 |
| Group Housing | Watery Road | 2 | 6 |
| | Ashline | 0 | 6 |
| | Ballymurtagh | 3 | 3 |
| | Ballymaley | 2 | 2 |
| | Beechpark | 0 | 3 |
| | Ballaghafadda | 6 | 6 |
| | Knockanean | 6 | |
| | Deerpark | 6 | 6 |
| | Glen North | 5 | |
| | Ballymacraven | 6 | |
| | | 36 | 32 |
| Bays in Group Schemes | Ballymurtagh | 6 | 6 |
| | Ballymaley | 4 | 4 |
| | Beechpark | 0 | 3 |
| | | 10 | 13 |
| Accommodation from own resources | Ennis | 6 | 4 |
| | Clarecastle | 2 | |
| | | 8 | 4 |
| Affordable Part V | Quin | 1 | 1 |
| RAS and Long Term Lease | Ennis | 2 | 2 |
| | Sixmilebridge | 1 | |
| | Ennis | 1 | |
| | | 4 | 2 |
| Voluntary Housing | Ennis | 1 | 5 |
| | Shannon | 1 | 1 |
| | | 2 | 6 |
| Total – all types, all areas | | 125 | 137 |

3.2 The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009 – 2013 was adopted by Clare County Council on 9th March 2009. The programme provided for the development of 4 permanent group housing schemes in Ennis & Environs. One such scheme, at Knockanean, was provided and in the light of difficulties occurring on other group housing schemes, an amendment to that Programme was adopted by the Council on 12th. November 2012. Resulting from that amendment, work on the other 3 sites was not commenced. It is proposed to carry forward one of these proposals – the group housing scheme at Ballaghboy to the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014 – 2018.

The 2009 – 2013 Programme also provided for 2 group housing schemes in Ennistymon & Environs, both were developed and occupied, at Ballymacraven and Glen North.

3.3 At end of 2013 the group housing schemes at Ashline and Beechpark lie completely vacant, having been the subject of repeated arson attacks to the extent that insurance cover no longer applies. In 2013 alone 4 houses were substantially damaged by fire. Proposals to refurbish this accommodation will be advanced during this programme, notwithstanding the daunting challenges of sourcing finance and securing conditions that will deliver sustainable redevelopment and occupation of the schemes.

Table 2: Families in need of Permanent Accommodation at end 2013

| Location | No. of Families |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Ennis & Environs | 74 |
| Kilrush | 0 |
| Ennistymon & Environs | 10 |
| Shannon & Environs | 10 |
| Scarriff & Killaloe | 0 |
| TOTAL | 94 |

3.4 It has been established from this census/assessment that 94 indigenous Traveller households are in need of permanent accommodation.

3.5 The 2011 Census indicates that the number of persons identifying themselves as Travellers in Co. Clare was 855, representing an increase of 190 persons on the 2006 census return. Cognisance was also taken of the projected Traveller population increase and to new household formations over the next five years. Extrapolation of national figures for the Traveller community would indicate that there are in the region of 135 single persons between the ages of 15 and 30, which could yield approx 40 family formations during the period 2014-2018.

Table 3: Accommodation required for 94 households assessed as being in existing need and the projected 40 new family formations (in brackets):

| Location | LA & AHB Direct provision | Group Housing | Leasing & RAS | Private Rented & HAP | Total |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Ennis & Environs | 8 (6) | 8 (2) | 8 (4) | 50 (18) | 74 (30) |
| Shannon & Environs | 2 (1) | 2 (1) | | 6 (1) | 10 (3) |
| Ennistymon & Environs | 2 (0) | 2 (2) | 2(1) | 4 (4) | 10 (7) |
| | | | | | |
| Existing need | 12 | 12 | 10 | 60 | 94 |
| Projected need | (7) | (5) | (5) | (23) | (40) |
| Overall total | 19 | 17 | 15 | 83 | 134 |

- 3.6 It is expected that most newly formed Traveller households will make suitable arrangements for their accommodation pending the provision of permanent accommodation.
- 3.7 The information gained from the assessment is dynamic and by its very nature ever changing. It is difficult to predict the actual level of household formations and the extent to which households formed from the indigenous population will immediately settle in the Council's functional area and their preference of accommodation option. Consequently the number of units and range of accommodation required will be regularly reviewed.

4. Accommodation Programme

4.1 Range of Accommodation

The provision of Traveller accommodation to date includes:

- Group Housing Schemes
- Group Housing with Permanent Serviced Sites
- A Permanent Serviced Site
- Voluntary Housing Schemes
- Private Rented
- RAS
- Local Authority Housing

The most recent assessment of social housing need and Traveller accommodation need indicates the preference for the following accommodation types:-

- (1) Local Authority Housing / Voluntary Housing
- (2) Private Rented / RAS
- (3) Group Housing Schemes

The standard housing approach provides for the inclusion of Travellers in main stream housing programmes. The Council's policy of considering qualifying Traveller households in the allocation of local Authority tenancies will continue.

The Council will accommodate Traveller households in local authority rented houses throughout the county, subject to the interests of proper estate management. To facilitate the ongoing integration of Traveller households into standard housing the Council will promote a programme for households wishing to transfer from Traveller specific accommodation to standard housing.

The fact that some Traveller families are in a position to and choose to provide their own accommodation is recognised. In this regard the Council will continue to keep Travellers advised of the accommodation options available.

It is government policy to promote the provision of accommodation through Voluntary Housing and the Rental Accommodation Scheme. Clare County Council is particularly anxious that these schemes be utilised for the provision of Traveller accommodation and the Council will provide assistance to voluntary bodies in order to achieve this objective.

4.2 Locations

Successive census and assessments of need undertaken by the Council continue to indicate that Travellers are located in three main centres in the County – Ennis, Ennistymon and Shannon. Survey work undertaken by the Council with regard to Travellers' preferences for accommodation types and location reflected the desire for accommodation units in Ennis and environs; Ennistymon and environs; and Shannon and environs. Notwithstanding this the Council has provided standard housing for Travellers in a number of towns and villages throughout the county. The urban areas have greater demand for, and a limited supply of, housing and on occasions a location outside of these will yield additional accommodation options.

4.3 Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018

The Traveller Accommodation Programme will be subject to periodic and statutory review in the context of existing pressures on housing supply and the evolving mechanism for delivering social housing support. Where a need is identified to carry out adaptations or additions to address the accommodation needs of a household the Council will work with the household and relevant agencies to provide an appropriate accommodation solution. Consultation with the Traveller Community needs new

stimulus and a fresh approach to be proactive in the implementation and monitoring of progress during this programme.

Based on current information and statistics available the accommodation required in the 2014 – 2018 Traveller Accommodation Programme is as follows:

4.4 Table 4 : Accommodation Required 2014-2018

| Location | LA & AHB Direct provision | Group Housing | Leasing & RAS | Private Rented & HAP | Total |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Ennis & Environs | 14 | 10 | 12 | 68 | 104 |
| Shannon & Environs | 3 | 3 | 0 | 7 | 13 |
| Ennistymon & Environs | 2 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 17 |
| Total | 19 | 17 | 15 | 83 | 134 |

4.5 Table 5 : Annual Targets for Implementation of Programme 2014 - 2018

| | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | Total |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Group Housing | 5 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 17 |
| House Purchase Special Needs | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| LA Housing / AHB | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 14 |
| Leasing / RAS | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 15 |
| Private rented / HAP | 63 ¹ | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 83 |
| Total | 74 | 16 | 16 | 14 | 14 | 134 |

4.6 Transient Sites

The Council will consider the development of a small transient site at a suitable location adjacent to the Ennis Bypass in line with DECLG guidelines. It remains the Council's view that this development needs to form part of a managed national approach to the provision of such facilities and will cater only for a limited number of Traveller households for stays of short duration.

¹ It is likely that the majority of households currently in Private Rented accommodation with financial support will remain in that sector.

4.7 Backup, Training and Support

The Council recognises that backup, training and support are essential requirements for Travellers for whom accommodation has been provided and for those waiting for accommodation. Such backup and support will be provided through the co-ordinated approach of designated Council staff, appropriate state agencies and other groups. The Council will seek to maximise the mechanism of the County Development Board to ensure a co-ordinated response to the needs of Traveller families.

In order to promote the principle of integration it is necessary that specific training schemes be provided, including special schemes for skills development. It is the Council's policy to work with all agencies and the various Traveller support groups in the provision of necessary training and support for Traveller families.

4.8 Proposals & Time Scale

It is proposed to carry out the following work under this programme:

| | |
|--|---|
| Ballaghboy, Quin Road, Ennis. | Development of 4 permanent housing units for current residents to replace existing mobile homes. |
| St. Michael's Park, Ballymaley, Ennis | 1 vacant unit to be refurbished to cater for expected need. |
| St. Anthony's Grove, Kildysart Road, Ennis. | Fully occupied, adequate provision for expected need. |
| Knockanean Tulla Road, Ennis | 1 vacant unit, adequate provision for expected need. |
| Ashline, Kilrush Road, Ennis | Currently completely vacant. Invite redevelopment proposals in partnership with Approved Housing Body |
| St. Endas Park, Beechpark, Ennis | Completely vacant. Refurbishment on hold until conditions permit. |
| 1-6 Watery Road, Ennis | 4 Vacant units to be refurbished. |
| St. Helen's Park, Ballymurtagh, Shannon. | 1 vacant unit, adequate provision for expected need. |
| Ballymacraven Kilfenora Road, Ennistymon. | Fully occupied, no expected need |
| St. John's Park, Deerpark, Ennistymon | 1 vacant unit to be refurbished for expected need |
| Glen North, Ennis Road, Ennistymon | 1 vacant unit – adequate provision for expected need |

5. Implementation

5.1 Implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014 - 2018 will focus on the following:

- (1) Engagement with all accommodation providers
- (2) Maximising use of Resources
- (3) Eliminating threats / damage to accommodation
- (4) Report on progress achieved using ITM template
- (5) Consultation with the Community, individually and collectively
- (6) Promoting community development
- (7) Developing a mechanism to manage problems arising

5.2 Resources

Successful implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme will require the provision of adequate funding, both capital and revenue, to achieve the objectives of the programme. Accommodation is the responsibility of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and the Council assumes that such funding will be available to provide new accommodation and improve existing accommodation in accordance with the Traveller Accommodation Programme.

The Council will also make provision in its annual revenue budget for the management and maintenance of all such accommodation provided.

5.3 Provision of Support

The Council will continue to directly provide Traveller accommodation and will work proactively with any agency or body seeking to provide accommodation or other services to the Traveller Community.

5.4 Consultation

The Council is committed to extensive consultation to achieve the objectives of this Traveller Accommodation Programme. Under the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 a Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee has been established comprising of the following:-

- Six elected members appointed by Clare County Council
- A representative of Ennis CDP
- Three members of the travelling community
- Two officials of Clare County Council
- One official from Ennis Town Council
- Representative nominated by Clare County Council – currently Clarecare.

The purpose of this Committee is:-

- (1) To advise in relation to the preparation and implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme.
- (2) To advise in the management of accommodation for Travellers.
- (3) To provide a liaison between Travellers and Members and officials of Clare County Council.

The Council issued notice of its intention to prepare a Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme on 6th September 2013, and invited interested parties to participate in the consultative process. In accordance with legislative requirements, adjoining Housing Authorities, Town Councils, HSE, The Local Traveller Consultative Committee and local community bodies engaged in Traveller Welfare were also advised of the preparation of the Draft Programme.

The content of submissions received have been noted and taken into consideration in the preparation of this Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018.

The Council recognises that consultation with prospective tenants and the local community is an important factor in ensuring the provision and management of Traveller accommodation. The Traveller Community and its representatives, and local residents will be consulted in the formulation of proposals for implementation under this Traveller Accommodation Programme. The relevant proposals will also be subject to Part 8, Article 81 of the Local Government (Planning & Development) Regulations 2001 and this will facilitate consultation at a wide level.

5.5 Management and Maintenance

As with all housing, the effective management and maintenance of Traveller housing is crucial. The Council will at all times endeavour to operate best practice in estate management by communicating regularly with the residents and developing community involvement through local initiatives. The Council's Anti Social Behaviour Strategy will be used to investigate complaints / reports of activity which diminishes the enjoyment of Traveller Accommodation facilities by those resident or visiting there.

5.6 Traditional Activities

Any accommodation provided under this programme will be for accommodation purposes only and will not serve traditional economic activities engaged in by the Traveller community. It is recognised that the keeping of horses and scrap is traditional and closely associated with Traveller families. Such Traveller families must make their own arrangements for the acquisition of land for grazing of horses and for scrap purposes, and be prepared to pay for the renting of this land.

Clare County Council acknowledges the work of implementation groups of the “Strategy for the Co-Ordination of Public Services to Travellers”. The Council will support initiatives from this strategy towards the development of projects which support the traditional activities of the travelling community.

5.7 Unauthorised Encampments

It is the Council’s policy to fully implement the provisions of Section 10 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1992 as amended by Section 32 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 as amended by Section 21 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2002. It is specifically the Council’s policy to rigidly implement the one mile radius exclusion zone provided for in the amended Section 10(1) c of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1992. The Council will also work closely with the Gardaí in the implementation of Section 24 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2002, where appropriate. The enforcement of legislation will protect both residents in existing Traveller accommodation and other residents in the vicinity of Traveller accommodation. It is expected that the Traveller community will themselves assist in this regard.

6. Partnership Approach

It is expected that the provisions of this Traveller Accommodation Programme will serve to meet the existing and projected accommodation needs of Travellers over the duration of the programme. The programme is an attempt to deal fairly and equitably with the settled community and Travellers in tackling a complex and difficult issue. The programme is seen as a viable framework within which the accommodation needs of Travellers can be met.

Local Authorities have responsibility to ensure that accommodation is provided for the Traveller community. The Traveller community in turn has responsibilities in relation to the community at large. It is expected that the Council, the settled community and the Traveller community will mutually recognise these responsibilities and will work together to achieve the objectives of this Programme. Other statutory bodies and semi-state agencies have responsibilities in relation to the Traveller community also. The Council expects that these will participate in the implementation of this Programme in a co-ordinated way to build on the benefits that accommodation delivered under this programme will bring.