



COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLÁIR
CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME

2019 - 2024

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Section 1: INTRODUCTION

County Clare, known as 'The Banner County' borders three counties: Limerick to the south, Galway to the north and Tipperary to the east, Clare shares an estuarine border with Kerry to the south. The national census figures in 2016 list the population of Clare as 118,817 with some 20,524 (17%) residing in Ennis, the County Town.

Census 2016 recorded that a total of 30,987 Travellers living in Ireland and 910 of these are resident in County Clare making up almost 1% of the total population of the County. The local authority annual count carried out in November, 2018 indicated that there are 305 Traveller families resident in the County.

The socio economic status of the Traveller population is of relevance when determining accommodation needs e.g. the census shows that 10,653 Travellers in Ireland were included in the labour force, however 80.2% were unemployed compared with 12.7% of the general population; 13.3% of Traveller females were educated to upper secondary or above compared with 69.1% of the general population; nearly 57.2% of Traveller men were educated to at most Primary level in sharp contrast to the general population 13.6%; almost 1 in 8 (11.3%) Travellers indicated they were unable to work due to a disability, nearly three times the equivalent rate for the general population (4.3%); household sizes are bigger – more than 1 in 4 comprised 6 or more persons compared with less than 1 in 20 households in the state overall; just over 1 in 10 were living in one person households compared with almost 1 in 4 in the general population; 23% of Travellers aged 15 – 24 were married compared with just 1% of the general population; 58% of Travellers resident in Ireland were aged 25 or under compared with 33% of the general population and just 932 were aged 65 or over.

Home ownership by Travellers while increasing is at 20%; 1 in 5 Traveller families own their own home, this compares to 67.6% of the general population who own their own homes. 65.6% of Traveller families rent from a Local Authority with the census indicating a decrease in Traveller households renting from a private landlord.

These census findings are supported in the Spotlight report ***Traveller Accommodation: The challenges of Implementation***; Houses of the Oireachtas publication October 2018.

The report also sets out the challenges to successful implementation of successive Traveller Accommodation Programmes

1.1 Legislative Background

The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998 came into effect on the 10th September, 1998. Its primary purpose is to provide a comprehensive legislative framework which requires housing authorities to meet the accommodation needs of Travellers normally resident within their administrative areas. The provisions of the Act play an integral part in promoting social inclusion and equality and counteracting discrimination that may be experienced by members of the Traveller community.

A summary of the main provisions of the 1998 Act is outlined as follows:

- to provide for the carrying out of a housing needs assessment in respect of Travellers resident in the county
- to provide that each housing authority must prepare and have adopted a programme of Traveller accommodation in their area.
- to provide that the adoption of programmes will be a reserved function, but in the event that the members fail to do so, the Chief Executive will be required to adopt the Programme by way of Chief Executive Order.
- to provide for an extensive public notification and consultation process in respect of the preparation of a Traveller Accommodation Programme.
- to require housing authorities to take reasonable steps to secure the implementation of Traveller Accommodation Programmes.
- to provide for the establishment of a Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee to facilitate consultation with Travellers.
- to provide the requirement to include objectives concerning the provision of Traveller accommodation in County and City Development Plans and Local Area Plans.
- to extend to halting sites the powers available to local authorities under the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1997, relating to anti-social behaviour and estate management.

The Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government has issued a number of directions under the Act, the most recent of which is contained in Circular 35/2018 with Guidelines for the Preparation, Adoption and Implementation appended which requires housing authorities to prepare and adopt a 5 year Traveller Accommodation Programme from 1st July, 2019 to 30th June, 2024 by 30th September, 2019.

Since the last plan was published the Travelling Community was formally recognized by the Irish State as a distinct ethnic group (1st March 2017). Taoiseach Enda Kenny in his address to Dáil Eireann stated: *“together we agreed that the recognition of Travellers could have a transformative effect on relations between Travellers and the wider society and will create no new individual, constitutional or financial rights because of course Travellers already enjoy all the human rights and responsibilities that are afforded for all people under the Constitution and laws. The acceptance and implementation of those rights and responsibilities has to work both ways in order for society to function effectively, inclusively and with mutual respect for all citizens”*.

1.2 Initiating the process for preparation of new Programme

The notification of intention to prepare a Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme issued on 20th July 2018 to adjoining housing authorities, the HSE, approved housing bodies, the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee and other local representative groups, community and interest groups.

Ten (10) submissions were received in response to the notification, all of which have been considered in the context of the preparation of the Draft Programme.

1.3 Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC)

Under Section 21 and 22 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees (LTACC) were established to facilitate consultation between Housing Authorities and Travellers and to advise on any aspect of accommodation for Travellers, and to advise on the preparation and implementation of any accommodation programme.

The Committee is follows:-

- Six elected members appointed by Clare County Council
- A representative from HSE Traveller Health Unit
- A representative of Ennis PPN
- A representative of Clare Local Development Company
- Three members of the travelling community
- Three officials of Clare County Council
- Representative nominated by Clare County Council – currently Clarecare

The Clare LTACC plays an active and pivotal role in both the preparation and implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme in County Clare.

1.4 Traveller Accommodation Programmes

Successive Traveller Accommodation Programmes in Clare has resulted in the delivery of the following Traveller specific accommodation in the County:

Location	No of units House/Appt	Serviced Bay	Comment
Ashline, Ennis	6		Scheme demolished, site to be redevelopment as part of larger SHIP housing development
Ballymaley, Ennis	1	4	1 house demolished (fire damaged)
Ballaghboy, Ennis	0	4	Site to be redeveloped, 5 TA group houses
Ballaghafadda, Ennis	6	0	
Knockanean, Ennis	6	0	
Watery Road, Ennis	6	0	4 vacant houses
Beechpark, Ennis	3	2	1 vacant bay
Ballymurtagh, Shannon	1 + 2 appts.	6	2 vacant bays
Deerpark, Ennistymon	6	0	1 house undergoing refurbishment
Ballymacraven, Ennistymon	6	0	2 vacant houses
Glen North, Ennistymon	6	0	1 fire damaged house
TOTAL	43	16	

Following the demolition of the vacant properties at Ashline in late 2017, there are a total of 59 units of Traveller specific accommodation in County Clare. Of these 8 houses and 3 bays are currently vacant. In addition there are a number of tenanted properties where we believe the tenants normally reside in another jurisdiction.

The Housing Agency review of *“Funding for Traveller Specific Accommodation and the Implementation of Traveller Accommodation Programmes”* (June 2017) found that the key challenges to successful delivery of the Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP) are planning issues, establishing an effective assessment of need process and delivery of stringent monitoring and reporting processes.

This Council has successfully delivered Traveller specific accommodation in the County in partnership with the elected members following extensive consultation with the Traveller groups and local communities.



Section 2: POLICY STATEMENT

Clare County Councils policy is set out in the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 and is as follows: *Clare County Council recognises the specific requirements of providing accommodation for the Traveller community. It also recognises its role in empowering and facilitating the Traveller 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 Council has provided housing for Traveller communities in a number of towns and villages throughout the County. The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018 sets out the need location and types of accommodation for that period.*

Objective 4.9 of the County Development Plan is: *To provide appropriate housing accommodation for the Traveller Community in accordance with the Social Housing Strategy 2020 and the Clare County Council Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014 – 2018 and any subsequent programme adopted by the Council.*

Clare County Council will comply with the General Data Protection Regulations in the administration of these functions.

Further this Council will ensure compliance with the Children First Act, with policies and procedures implemented to protect our most vulnerable service users, appropriate staff training has been provided in this regard.

Nothing in this Programme shall prevent the Chief Executive 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.

2.1 Provision of Accommodation

The Council recognises Travellers' identity as a distinct group with their own customs, traditions and culture. It is the policy of Clare County Council to provide suitable accommodation for Traveller households in its administrative area, in accordance with the Assessment of Need carried out under the Act, in compliance with the laws of the State.

- 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.

- It is the Council's policy to consult with Travellers and their representatives, based on Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government Guidelines, about their accommodation needs, and to provide, based on need, where appropriate, Traveller specific accommodation.
- It is the Council's policy that, where feasible, the preferred option in terms of accommodation type requested will be considered. If this is not feasible other accommodation options may be offered to individual households. If this reasonable accommodation offer is refused, without good reason, their housing application may be given reduced priority in line with statutory provisions.
- It is the Council's policy that, Traveller families will only be considered for single instance housing in exceptional circumstances - Priority 1 medical need as determined by the HSE or in situations where other forms of Traveller specific or standard accommodation have proven particularly unsuitable.
- Clare County Council reserves the right to refuse to provide accommodation to any household irrespective of ethnicity, if the following was deemed the case:
 - By their own act, deed or commission have deprived themselves of adequate accommodation
 - Were proven to be involved in serious or on-going anti-social behaviour
 - Good estate management would be compromised, if accommodation was provided.
- It is the policy of the Council that Travellers themselves must take primary responsibility for their economic activities including horse husbandry and care. Persons who own horses are obliged to comply with the requirements of the Control of Horses Act, 1996 and Local Government Bye-Laws 1998 and 2013.
- 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.

Applicants for social housing support, including Traveller specific accommodation are required to submit a valid housing application together with all required documentation in accordance with the Social Housing Assessment Regulations, 2011 as amended. Advice and assistance will be provided to applicants, if requested, to address any difficulties that may arise in completing the application form. Specific family circumstances e.g. disabilities will be considered in determining the most appropriate social housing solution.

The full range of social housing supports available will be used to achieve optimum accommodation solutions for Travellers included in the Programme and approved for permanent accommodation.

When allocating properties Clare County Council will have regard to the provisions of the Clare County Council Social Housing Allocation Scheme 2017, which sets out the basis for

allocation social housing support to qualified households. Separate waiting lists will not operate for the Travelling community and all qualified applicants for an area of choice will be considered, when a property arises, taking into account the following:

- Applicant type
- Qualification Category
- Length of time on Housing Waiting List
- Previous Offers made (if applicable)
- Previous Tenancy (if applicable)
- Requirement for housing on Medical grounds
- Requirement for ground floor bedroom/bathroom
- Estate Management - Consideration of applicant and community profile factors
- Status of Current Tenancy – HAP, RAS, NTQ
- Tenancy Sustainment – Requirement for support

The sequence of priorities as listed in the Social Housing Allocations is applied, as follows:

(a)	Households living in dwellings deemed to be dangerous
(b)	Households residing in dwellings deemed to be unfit for human habitation
(c)	Households living in overcrowded conditions
(d)	Households in need of housing because of a disability in accordance with the national housing strategy for people with a disability, or because of exceptional medical reasons
(e)	RAS tenants who require alternative accommodation as a result of a lease expiry or non renewal of contract by landlord
(f)	Households identified by the Housing Welfare Officer(s) who have a requirement for accommodation for exceptional reasons (social worker also)
(g)	Households who have a reasonable requirement for separate accommodation or who require accommodation on compassionate or other similar grounds including persons who are not able to meet the cost of rented accommodation

2.2 Estate Management

All council housing stock, including Traveller specific accommodation, is managed in accordance with the Council's policy for the Management and Maintenance of rented housing stock. Together with this all tenants are required to sign a tenancy agreement which outlines the terms and conditions of the tenancy including tenant responsibilities for maintenance, anti-social behaviour etc. Each tenant has a responsibility to ensure that the terms of the tenancy are met in full and the Council will ensure that the terms are enforced. Estate management also includes securing the interest of tenants in the enjoyment of the house and the avoidance, prevention and abatement of anti-social behaviour in the housing estates in accordance with Clare County Council's Antisocial Behaviour Strategy. Therefore,

Clare County Council shall, in the interests of good estate management, use all legislative powers at their disposal to control anti-social behaviour on the part of all of its tenants and applicants approved for social housing support.

2.3 Homelessness

Individuals or families who present as homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless can avail of the Homeless services available in Clare County Council. The HAP place-finder is available to assist those to secure or retain private rented accommodation.

2.4 Temporary Dwellings

The Council will implement its procedures to ensure a co-ordinated response, when temporary dwellings are identified, in accordance with the requirements of the relevant legislation as appropriate:

- Section 10 of Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1992 as amended by Section 32 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998
- Housing Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2002
- An Order of the District Court
- Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)
- Local Government (Sanitary Services) Act 1948
- The Roads Act 1993
- Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act 1994 (as amended)
- Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878 as amended by Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992.

A temporary dwelling means any tent, caravan, mobile home, vehicle, other structure or thing (whether on wheels or not) which is capable of being moved from one place to another, and is or was used for human habitation, either permanently or from time to time or was designed, constructed or adapted for such use. Public place means any street, road or other place to which the public have access whether as of right or by express or implied permission and whether the subject to or free of charge and any property or other land owned or occupied by or leased to a public authority. The Council will investigate the circumstances of the household in the temporary dwelling and take appropriate action.

2.5 Transient Sites

Under Section 10 39(C) of the Act, a relevant housing authority in preparing an accommodation programme, must take into account the needs of transient Traveller families. Given the numbers and pattern of movement of Traveller families in Clare the provision of a transient site within the County is not considered necessary. That said, the provision of transient accommodation must be pursued on a national/regional basis with

transient accommodation provided as part of a coordinated network of sites throughout the country. In this regard the Council will continue to liaise with neighbouring authorities to determine the need for the provision of transient accommodation within the Mid-West Region.



Section 3: STRATEGY STATEMENT

3.1 Implementing Authority

Clare County Council is the implementing authority for the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 – 2024 and has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Programme in its functional area. Specific responsibility for the provision of suitable, cost effective, good quality accommodation and the implementation of the programme lies with the Housing Department.

In implementing the provisions of this programme, housing authorities will seek to achieve understanding and acceptance of the respective preferences, needs, right and legitimate concerns of both Travellers and the general public.

3.2 Provision of Accommodation

It is the aim of Clare County Council to provide accommodation, in so far as is possible, that responds to the different needs of Travellers using the full range of social housing supports and various forms of social housing delivery including; standard local authority housing provided under the Social Housing Investment Programme (SHIP), leased units provided by either the authority or an Approved Housing Body under the Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme (SHCEP), Traveller specific accommodation or private rented accommodation supported through the Housing Assistance Payment Scheme.

The identification of suitable sites for provision of Traveller Group Housing continues to be a challenge. Sites owned by the Council may be used for this purpose together with the acquisition of additional sites if required and subject to the availability of funding.

Loans under the “Rebuilding Ireland” Loan Scheme are available to Travellers who wish to provide their own accommodation subject to the normal terms and conditions of the scheme.

3.3 Resourcing the Programme

Funding is made available by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (the Department) for the provision of housing under the Social Housing Capital Investment Programme (SHCIP) and other funding streams as appropriate. All such housing provision is subject to the availability of funding.

In addition for the provision of Traveller accommodation there is a separate stream of funding provided by the Department. This funding provides for the provision and refurbishment of Traveller Specific accommodation and other such projects which are subject to Department approval and the availability of funding.

All staff employed in the Housing Department are involved in the implementation of the programme as necessary. This includes both technical and administrative staff and includes assessment staff, tenant liaison officers, staff dealing with rents or anti-social behaviour, the

homeless social worker or tenancy sustainment officer together with the staff employed in the maintenance and management of accommodation as required.

3.4 Co-operation with Approved Housing Bodies

Clare County Council continues to work with the various Approved Housing Bodies operating in the county for the delivery of the various social housing options funded under the Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme (SHCEP), the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) and the Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF).

3.5 Allocation of Accommodation

The allocation of properties is based on Clare County Council's Social Housing Allocation Scheme. Nominations are also provided to Approved Housing Bodies from the Council's housing list for their tenancies. Separate waiting lists do not operate for members of the travelling community.

Special needs dwellings and old persons dwellings are allocated to housing applicants based on their specific needs. Traveller Group housing where provided, is allocated to Travellers who have requested and agreed to be accommodated together.

3.6 Interagency Consultation and Collaboration

The Council will continue to work with other agencies concerned in the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme including: Irish Traveller Movement, Pavee Point, Approved Housing Bodies, Health Service Executive, Tusla, An Garda Síochána, Education Services, Social Welfare Services, Clarecare, Clare Local Development Company, Clare Public Participation Network, MABS, adjoining local authorities and any other agency identified as the need arises.

It is the intention of Clare County Council that during the lifetime of this TAP the Council will lead an interagency partnership approach focusing on supporting a family or number of families with complex needs. This model is at inception stage within this Council and the early indication is that there is significant value in this person centred approach. Invariably it is the case that agencies are independently working with clients and the model focuses a collaborative approach to supporting the individual/family. The Council will lead in this partnership approach when dealing with complex and difficult family cases and circumstances.

3.7 Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC)

The role and distinct expertise of LTACC membership is recognised in relation to the successful implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme. In cases of specific

urgent or crisis situations arising and where deemed necessary, the Chairperson of the LTACC may convene an emergency meeting.

3.8 Back up Services and Support

This Council has recently strengthened tenancy support services to assist those transitioning from homeless services to accommodation. This model is proving effective and has already been rolled out to support vulnerable tenants. Together with this, Clare County Council has appointed a HAP place-finder to assist those at risk of homelessness to secure accommodation in the private rented market and sustain tenancies as necessary.

Traveller individuals or families can avail of the Homeless Services available in Clare County Council should they find themselves homeless or are at risk of homelessness.

The management and maintenance of Traveller group housing schemes continues to pose a challenge for Clare County Council. This Council is committed to the development of a model to ensure effective management and maintenance of Traveller specific accommodation.

3.9 County Development Plan

Provisions contained in the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 are sufficient to realise the Traveller accommodation objectives set out in the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 – 2024.

3.10 Monitoring Arrangements

The implementation of the programme will be monitored as follows:

- Progress report will be presented at each meeting of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.
- A progress report will be presented to the Housing Strategic Policy Committee at the end of each year of the programme
- Through the Annual returns to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
- A Review of the Traveller Accommodation Programme will be carried out in accordance with Circular 35/2018 in 2021 and no later than 31st December, 2021

Section 4: ASSESSMENT and IDENTIFICATION of ACCOMMODATION NEEDS

Section 6 (as amended) of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2009 requires Housing Authorities, for the purposes of preparing a programme, to make an assessment of the accommodation needs of Travellers who are assessed under Section 20 of the said Act as being qualified for social housing support, including the need for sites. Such assessment will have regard to; the estimate of the number of Travellers for whom accommodation will be required during the course of the programme; the Annual Summary of Social Housing Need as it relates to Travellers; the need for transient sites and consideration of the views of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.

Consideration of iHouse is the first platform for identifying Traveller accommodation need. It is considered that to determine the true need for Traveller accommodation in Clare a measure for ethnic identification should be included in the social housing application form. Evidentially, it is the case in Clare, that in particular Travellers in unauthorised occupation do not apply to the Council for housing supports.

4.1 Initiating the process for carrying out the Assessment

Information gathered from both the Annual Housing Needs Assessment (completed in June, 2018) and the National Annual Traveller Count in November, 2018 was used as a base point in the preparation for the assessment of the accommodation needs of Travellers in County Clare. In addition existing group housing scheme sites were surveyed to ascertain occupancy, in particular those in unauthorised accommodation on the sites. Also, illegal encampment sites were surveyed to determine the Traveller accommodation requirement therein.

Further Clare County Council relied in part on a survey of 233 Traveller families (76% response rate) carried out by Pavee Point for the HSE Traveller Health Unit. The survey was an independent survey undertaken in March 2018. This survey related to accommodation standards rather than determination of accommodation need. The survey gathered information on living conditions of Travellers, the nature of the tenure, access to facilities and services and the view of the Traveller household of the health and safety of the environment in which they live.

4.2 Identified Need

The process of understanding the full extent of accommodation needs for the Traveller community presents challenges in ascertaining the true need for Traveller accommodation. The current process for collection of this data is flawed as there is no way to ascertain ethnicity of a housing applicant who does not choose Traveller specific accommodation.

At the time of drafting there were 23 open applications on iHouse with a classification of need identified as “Traveller”. The accuracy of this information is questionable as the social housing application form does not have a unique identifier for those who want to identify as members of the Traveller community. Interrogation of the iHouse data on the housing list indicated that there are:

Table 1: Open iHouse applications

Municipal District	Location	Total
Ennis	Clarecastle	3
	Ennis	14
Ennis MD Total		17
	Newmarket on Fergus	2
	Shannon	4
Shannon MD Total		6
Killaloe		0
Killaloe MD Total		0
West Clare	Ennistymon	0
West Clare MD Total		0
Total		23

Of the 23 households seeking social housing 7 have a stated preference for standard social housing with no preference indicator on the balance of applications.

In addition the Annual Estimate of Traveller families completed on 28th November, 2018 identified 305 Traveller households residing in County Clare as follows:

Table 2: Accommodation/Location of Traveller families based on Annual count

No. of Families	Accommodation Type/Location
89	Standard Local Authority Social Housing
6	Voluntary Housing
32	Traveller Group Houses
12	Serviced halting site
19	RAS & Leasing
35	HAP
25	Private Rented Accommodation
42	Sharing with relatives
12	Unauthorised sites
29	Privately owned
4	Emergency Accommodation
305	Clare County Council Annual Traveller Count

**Accommodation need deemed to be met although those on in HAP remain on the Council transfer list.*

It should be noted that while this survey provides information on need this need is not reflected in terms of social housing applicants.

For the purpose of this programme and based on the above table there are 58 Traveller households who require accommodation during the lifetime of this programme.

4.3 Projected Need

The provision of social housing support is demand driven. The Council has regard to future demand to cater for the emerging need. The exercise in projecting need for the Traveller Accommodation Programme is hindered as there are so many variables for consideration. The Council's capacity to cater for projected need is through the provision of all available social housing supports subject to approval of housing need.

It is considered that the provision of standard housing supports and the existing vacancies in the group housing schemes will in the main provide for the projected need of the Traveller community.

Extrapolation of national figures for the Traveller community would indicate that there are in the region of 140 single persons between the ages of 15 and 30, which could yield approx 40 family formations during the period 2019-2024.

4.4 Reported Disability Need

Statistically we are aware of disability need in the Traveller community however this is not supported by evidence in terms of need. Disability need will be considered, as the need arises, during the lifetime of this programme based on the individual merit of the case.

4.5 Total Need for inclusion in Traveller Accommodation Programme

The following need for Traveller accommodation has been identified for inclusion in the Programme.

Table 3: Families in need of Permanent Accommodation at end 2018

Location	No. of Families
Ennis & Environs	43
Kilrush	0
Ennistymon & Environs	10
Shannon & Environs	5
Scarriff & Killaloe	0
TOTAL	58

Taking into account the need for permanent accommodation from Table 3 above and the projected need as outlined in section 4.2 the overall need for the lifetime of this programme is accommodation for 98 Traveller families.

It is intended based on current information and statistics available to meet the anticipated need in the 2019 – 2024 Traveller Accommodation Programme is as follows:

Table 4: Accommodation Required 2019-2024

Location	LA & AHB Direct provision	Group Housing	Leasing & RAS	Private Rented & HAP	Total
Ennis & Environs	14	10	12	34	70
Shannon & Environs	4	2	2	4	12
Ennistymon & Environs	4	3	3	6	16
Total	22	15	17	44	98

Annual targets to be achieved during the lifetime of the programme are as follows:

Table 5: Annual Targets for Implementation of Programme 2019 – 2024

	1/7/19 – 30/6/20	1/7/20 – 30/6/21	1/7/21 – 30/6/22	1/7/22 – 30/6/23	1/7/23 – 30/6/24	Total
Group Housing	5	3	3	2	2	15
LA Housing / AHB	5	4	4	4	5	22
Leasing / RAS	4	3	4	3	3	17
Private rented / HAP	8	10	9	9	8	44
Total	22	20	20	18	18	98

4.6 Illegal Encampments

There are number of illegal encampments in the County as per the table hereunder:

Location	Family Size	Description	iHouse status
Location A			
Household 1	2+4	1 Mobile & 3 caravans	Open Application, preference for standard accommodation in Clarecastle
Household 2	2+0	1 Caravan	Open Application, preference for standard accommodation in Clarecastle
Household 3	1+4	1 Caravan	Open Application, preference for standard accommodation in Ennis
Location B			
Household 1	2+0	1 Mobile Home	2 separate applications. No interaction for a number of years. Preference for Group Housing scheme?
Household 2	2+3	1 Mobile Home	No application on iHouse
Household 3	1+0 X 3	4 Caravans	No application on iHouse
Location C			
Household 1	2+3	1 Caravan	Open Application, preference for standard accommodation in Ennis. Open application in another LA - one to be closed.
Location D			
Household 1	2+5* (3 over 18)	1 Mobile & 1 caravan	Open Application, preference for standard accommodation in Ennis. Preference for Group Housing Scheme?
Household 2	2+1	1 Caravan	Open Application, preference for standard accommodation in Ennis

Trespass on Clare County Council's lands will not be tolerated. This Council will invoke the procedures to address illegal encampments in the interest of law and order.

Where the family in question are approved social housing applicants this Council will work with the families on these unauthorised sites to provide an accommodation solution to meet the need including the consideration of additional Traveller specific accommodation if required.

4.7 Transient Halting Site

Given the numbers and pattern of movement of Traveller families in Clare the provision of a transient site within the County is not considered necessary. That said, the provision of transient accommodation must be pursued on a national/regional basis with transient accommodation provided as part of a coordinated network of sites throughout the Country.

In this regard the Council will continue to liaise with neighbouring authorities to determine the need for the provision of transient accommodation within the Mid-West Region.



Section 5: MEASURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Standard Social Housing

This Council will continue to allocate properties as they become available in line with our scheme of letting priorities. Traveller households who have expressed interest for standard social housing will be considered in their area of preference. Table 5 above sets out annual targets for Traveller accommodation delivery during the lifetime of the programme. A system to record allocations to Traveller families is to be put in place in order to determine performance against targets.

5.1.1 Traveller Group Housing

Prior to the development of this Traveller Accommodation Programme, this Council undertook a comprehensive programme to bring all Traveller specific group housing units up to minimum rented standard. The cost of this project was in the region of €750,000, the result being Clare County Council can be assured the existing stock is at the required minimum rented standard at a point in time.

In addition the following works are proposed under this programme:

Location	Description	Timeline
Ballaghboy, Quin Road, Ennis.	Development of 5 permanent units.	Q1 2020
St. Michael's Park, Ballymaley, Ennis	Development of additional bay on site of house 1 (demolished) to accommodate existing occupant of the site.	Q4 2019
St. Anthony's Grove, Kildysart Road, Ennis.	Fully occupied, adequate provision for expected need.	-
Knockanean Tulla Road, Ennis	Fully occupied, adequate provision for expected need.	-
St. Endas Park, Beechpark, Ennis	One vacant bay, adequate provision for expected need.	-
1-6 Watery Road, Ennis	4 Vacant units to be refurbished.	Q1 2020
St. Helen's Park, Ballymurtagh, Shannon.	2 vacant bays, adequate provision for expected need.	-
Ballymacraven Kilfenora Road, Ennistymon.	2 vacant houses, adequate provision for expected need.	-
St. John's Park, Deer park, Ennistymon	2 vacant houses to be refurbished to cater for need. 1 to be completed	Q2 2019
Glen North, Ennis Road, Ennistymon	1 vacant unit (fire damaged) – adequate provision for expected need	-

5.2 Additional Housing Supports

There are a range of other housing supports available to Travellers in addition to social housing provision as follows:

5.2.1 HAP - Housing Assistance Payments

A Traveller household who is approved for social housing support may seek accommodation in the private rented sector and apply for support under the HAP scheme. If approved the local authority will pay a contribution towards the monthly rent and the recipients will be charged a differential rent based on their household weekly income in accordance with the Differential Rents Scheme in operation by the Council. As this is a form of social housing support the accommodation needs are met, however, the HAP recipient can elect to remain on the transfer waiting list and be considered for standard social housing support as outlined previously. The tenancy is governed under the Residential Tenancies Acts.

5.2.2 RAS - Rental Accommodation Scheme

A Traveller household who is approved for social housing support may seek accommodation in the private rented sector and if the landlord is interested can apply to have the property taken into the RAS scheme. This is a three way agreement whereby the local authority leases the property under a Residential Tenancy Agreement for the tenant and agrees to pay an agreed monthly rent to the landlord for the property on condition that the tenant continues to pay a differential rent to the authority by way of a Rent Contribution Agreement. As this is a form of social housing support the accommodation needs are met, however the RAS recipient may apply for a transfer to standard social housing support as outlined previously.

5.2.3 Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan

Rebuilding Ireland Home loan is a Government backed mortgage scheme for first time buyers who are unable to get a loan from a bank or building society and who meet the terms and conditions of the scheme. The loan is available for the purchase of a new or second- and house or to build a new property. The maximum loan available is €225,000 in Clare.

5.2.4 First-time House Purchase Grants for Travellers

A grant of €3,810 is available to Travellers who purchase a private house for themselves, for the first time. The grant is paid by the local authority and must be claimed within 3 years of the purchase. The grant is not available to Travellers who are tenants of a local authority house or any other house where the local authority has provided support by way of discounts, e.g. the incremental purchase scheme.

5.2.5 Caravan Loans

A loan of up to €6,350 is available to approved applicants for social housing support for the purchase of a new or second-hand caravan. The repayment period is 1 to 5 years. The local authority must satisfy itself that the caravan to be purchased will be located on a bay or other site provided by the local authority.

5.2.6 Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme

The Tenant (Incremental) Purchase scheme is available to tenants in receipt of social housing support for one year or more, who meet the eligibility criteria, to purchase their house at a discount based on household income. The tenant must remain living in the house as long as they own it. An incremental purchase charge, equal to the discount, is placed on the house and will remain for 20, 25 or 30 years (depending on the discount). The charge is reduced by 2% each year and if the house is resold before the end of the charge period, the value of the outstanding charge must be paid back to the Council. The scheme does not apply to all properties e.g. apartments, houses specially designed for older people or providing for people with disabilities, Traveller group housing, RAS units or houses provided under Part V are not available to purchase.

5.2.7 Grants for People with a Disability

Grants are available to assist in the carrying out of works which are reasonably necessary for the purposes of rendering a house more suitable for the accommodation of a person with a disability who has an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment. They are available to both tenants of council houses and to private house owners. Applications will be considered in accordance with the terms and conditions of the scheme and are subject to funding availability. Tenants should note that the Council will always consider the most cost-effective option to address the housing needs of the disabled person, which includes transferring to a more suitable dwelling.

5.2.8 Housing Aid for Older Persons Grant

The Scheme of Housing Aid for Older People is available to assist older people 66 years of age (or over) living in poor housing conditions to have necessary repairs or improvements carried out. Grants assistance is means-tested, is provided on a priority basis and is subject to funding availability.

5.2.9 Housing Transfer

Tenants of the Council may apply for a transfer to move to alternative accommodation in certain circumstances e.g. under occupancy, over-crowding or where the house no longer meets their needs if they have a disability. Their rent account must be up to date.

Section 6: CONCLUSION

It is expected that the provisions of this Traveller Accommodation Programme will serve to meet the accommodation needs of Travellers over the period 2019 – 2024. In order that the Programme continues to reflect the accommodation needs, a review will be undertaken in 2021.

The Council recognises the importance of working together in a partnership approach when dealing with complex and difficult cases and circumstances and it is intended that this will continue with the relevant stakeholders over the course of the new Programme.

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.

The Council acknowledges the significant contribution of all relevant stakeholders in the successful implementation of the Traveller Accommodation programme together with the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee and the Members of Clare County Council who have a pivotal role to play in its implementation.

