



1st July 2019-
30th June 2024

TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME



Comhairle Chontae Shligigh
SLIGO COUNTY COUNCIL

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INTRODUCTION

Sligo County Council, under the provisions of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998, is required to prepare and adopt a new Traveller Accommodation Programme. The new Programme will replace the current programme which expired on 31st December 2018. The Minister for Housing, and Urban Development, by letter dated 19/07/18 directed that the next accommodation programme should be for a period of 5 years from 1st July 2019 to 30th June 2024. The current programme will continue in place until 1/07/19.

Under the 1998 Act, Sligo County Council has certain obligations in relation to the preparation, adoption and implementation of a Traveller Accommodation Programme. In summary, Sligo County Council is required to:

- ❖ Prepare and adopt an Accommodation Programme to meet the existing and projected accommodation needs of Travellers in County Sligo.
- ❖ Allow for public input to the preparation and amendment of the Programme.
- ❖ Take appropriate steps to secure implementation of the Programme.

Under circular 35/2018 dated 19/07/18, the Minister for Housing and Urban Development has set the latest date for the adoption of the Accommodation Programme as **30th September 2019**. The Minister has also directed that a review of this Accommodation Programme should be carried out not later than **31st December 2021**.

SECTION 1

Traveller Accommodation Programme(TAP) 2014-2018

The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018 was adopted on 3rd April 2014. A mid-term review of the programme was completed on 16th December 2016 by the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee and it was considered that the number of household units delivered to date was in keeping with the targets set out in the programme and that therefore it was not necessary to make any amendments to the original programme.

Table

Summary of Accommodation Targets and Achievements for TAP 2014-30th

June 2019

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Achieved</u>
2014	11	5
2015	20	18
2016	16	17
2017	8	10
2018	9	17
Total	64	67

Table

Tenure of Accommodation TAP 2014- 30th June 2019

<u>Accommodation Type</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Achieved</u>
Group Housing/ Halting site	11	0
Specific Purchase	7	7
Upgrade of existing facilities	4	4
Council Tenancy	5	30
RAS/HAP	35	23
Voluntary Housing	2	3
Total	64	67

Despite the economic difficulties faced by the Council, it managed to exceed its overall accommodation targets set out in the TAP 2014-2018 by thirteen. The number of Council Tenancies achieved is in particular noteworthy.

The Table above shows a preference for families to be accommodated in Standard Council housing and to move away from traditional halting site/group housing schemes. It also highlights the difficulty that traveller families have in securing private rented accommodation even with the assistance of HAP.

In addition to the 67 households accommodated, two extensions to dwellings were completed in order to better accommodate families with special needs requirements, as well as 17 bathroom adaptations for Traveller families with disabilities.

In relation to Group Housing/ halting Sites and the delivering of 11 units under the TAP 2014-2018, work is continuing on the construction of two houses at Collooney, with a plan in place for a number of extensions at Ballyfree. There have also been

discussions with the households in Ashlane in order to progress Group Housing at this location.



Construction of two new houses

SECTION 2

2. Policy

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- ❖ Provide for the accommodation needs of Travellers, as far as is reasonable and practicable, using the full range of housing options available to Sligo County Council and having regard to the *Traveller Accommodation Programme*.
- ❖ Carry out an assessment for social housing support as required by statute and in accordance with the Allocation Scheme adopted by Sligo County Council.
- ❖ Consider submissions received in respect of the planning and design of accommodation schemes
- ❖ Provide and manage halting sites in a manner compatible with the local environment and the needs of the Traveller community, based on management plans set up in co-operation with Traveller families. Good management of sites however relies in the first instance on the residents and their behaviour.
- ❖ Deal with unauthorised encampments in accordance with the requirements of the relevant legislation, as appropriate. Each case will be dealt with on its own merits.

2.1 Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC)

Under the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998, the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee was established. The structure, purpose and role of the committee is set down in statute.

2.2 County Development Plan

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

2.3 Back Up Services and Support

The Council employs a caretaker to assist in the operation of the halting sites.

A Traveller Liaison Officer is also employed by the Council. He is a dedicated point of contact for travellers and an important member of the Council team who deal with traveller accommodation.

Standards in respect of waste management will be up held and be fully enforced by Sligo County council. This includes legislation relating to domestic waste; the collection and storage of metals; scrap metals; waste vehicles and End of Life Vehicles (ELV's) and any other transgression of standards relating to waste.

Sligo County Council is happy to work with the representatives of the Traveller community who are prepared to assist the various parties involved in the delivery of Traveller accommodation.

2.4 Inter-Agency Approach

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to work on an inter-agency basis, where possible, in the provision of accommodation to Travellers. This approach is critical in relation to addressing any special needs accommodation and support requirements. The HSE is central to this process, as well as An Garda Síochána, Túsla and the Department of Social Protection.

SECTION 3

3. Public Consultation

Sligo County Council, in accordance with section 8 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 gave public notice on the 15th August 2018(by way of letter) to relevant bodies, of its intention to prepare a Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024.

A total of 2 submissions were received before the closing date of 14th September 2018, details as follows

- ❖ Pavee Point
- ❖ Minceirs Whiden

The contents of the submissions have been noted and taken into consideration in the preparation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme July 2019- June 2024

Another Submission was received after the closing date, and could not be considered.

SECTION 4

4. Assessment of Need

The Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government on the 11th June 2018 directed that housing authorities make an assessment of accommodation needs of Travellers, 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:

- The estimate of the number of Travellers for whom accommodation will be required during the course of the programme.
- Summary of the Social Housing assessment prepared under section 21 (c) of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 as it relates to Travellers.
- The need for transient sites.
- Consideration by the housing authority of the views of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.

The assessment of Traveller Accommodation Needs carried by the Council gives a figure of 136 Traveller families living within the County (530 persons).

Submissions were also sought from local Traveller organisations along with statutory and voluntary bodies. In addition, visits were made to existing Traveller halting sites and homes. The information was used to estimate future accommodation needs.

4.1 Current Traveller Accommodation

The results of the 2018 census accounted for 136 Traveller families living in various forms of accommodation within the County of Sligo and as detailed in Table hereunder.

Table

Accommodation Type	Number of households	% of households
Standard Council	49	36%
RAS/ HAP	27	20%
Halting site	15	11%
Voluntary Housing	7	5%
Own Means- No SHS Applications	22	16%
Homeless Services	2	1.5%
Roadside	4	3%
Sharing	10	7.5%
Total	136	100%

73.5% of Traveller Households are currently accommodated through Social Housing Supports.

4.2 Single Adult Traveller Population

The census also identified the number of travellers over 18 still living at home and those who will turn 18 during the lifetime of the new TAP, as per Table hereunder.

Table

Over 18's on date of Census (Single)			An Additional 41 persons will reach 18 years during the life of plan (July 2019-June 2024)		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
13	9	22	25	16	41

4.3 Projected Traveller Accommodation Need July 2019- June 2024

Sligo County Council recognises the distinct culture and lifestyle of the Traveller Community and will endeavour to provide suitable accommodation for Travellers who are indigenous to the area, using the full range of housing options available, such as standard lettings in local authority estates, HAP, lettings in voluntary housing schemes, group housing schemes, halting sites and single/stand-alone housing where required.

It is estimated, based on the needs assessment that 66 families will need to be accommodated over the lifetime of the plan. This figure is based on the number of families currently sharing accommodation, potential new family formations, and families living in below standard private rented accommodation as well as the number of families in unauthorised sites and transient sites awaiting more permanent accommodation. The Targets are set out in the Tables hereunder.

4.4 Accommodation Types and overall Targets for TAP July 2019- June 2024

Table

<u>Accommodation Type</u>	<u>Target</u>
Group Housing/ Halting site	10
Specific Purchase	5
Upgrade of existing facilities	9
Council Tenancy	23
RAS/HAP	17
Voluntary Housing	2
Total	66

Table

Yearly Targets for Delivery

Accommodation Type	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Total
Group Housing Scheme /Halting sites	2		5		5	12
Specific Purchases	1	1	1	1	1	5
Upgrade of Existing facilities / Serviced sites		6			3	9
Council Tenancy	4	4	4	5	4	21
RAS/HAP	3	3	3	4	4	17
Voluntary Housing	1			1		2
Total	11	14	13	11	17	66



1D208191 Photo: Peter Barrow Tel: 087-2559638, 5th November 2014

Glenview Halting Site

SECTION 5

5. Traveller Specific Accommodation.

Sligo County Council currently maintains 5 Traveller Specific Accommodation Sites, Ballyfree, Cloonamahon, Glenview Park, Alma Terrace and Tubbercurry. Each site is unique and the future requirements differ.

5.1 Ballyfree

During the lifetime of the TAP 2014- 2018 the Council worked closely with the families to alleviate overcrowding issue on the site. This was achieved through the purchase of two properties and one voluntary housing allocation, which allowed 3 families to leave the site and also the reallocation of Bay 5. Fire safety works and bathroom adaptations have been carried out on units where needed.

An evaluation of the current accommodation has been carried out resulting in the development of a plan to provide 6 bedroom extensions to a number of the services units in the site. This development will be carried out on a phased basis with each family decanting to a vacant bay while works are being undertaken by an appointed contractor. The carrying out of the proposed works is totally dependent on the co-operation of the residents on the site and on securing funding from the Department. Funding from the Department has been sought in order to have a report prepared on the site with regard to the disposal of waste and surface water.

5.2 Glenview Park

A large portion of the site is derelict and unused. The Council intends to bring the derelict bays back into use while providing group housing for those resident on the site at this time. Advancing a Scheme for the existing residents is dependent on the support and co-operation of the residents and can only be progressed with their active involvement.

a) Refurbishment Works

The following works are intended,

‘The refurbishment of six no. existing halting bay service units, the construction of a new boundary wall within the site to facilitate separate operation of this portion of the site, the provision of a new vehicular entrance and access road to the development site from the N16, Ash Lane, and all associated site development and drainage works. These bays will be used to accommodate families living in unauthorised encampments and households who are deemed to have a social housing need.

b) Group Housing

The Council have prepared advanced designs for group housing on this site. This proposal can be progressed subject to the co-operation of the occupants.

5.3 Cloonamahon

Funding from the Department has been sought in order to have a report prepared on the site with regard to the disposal of waste and surface water.

5.4 Alma Terrace

Alma Terrace was renovated in 2010. Sligo County Council will continue to maintain the site and allocate the units in accordance with its allocation policy.



Alma Terrace Halting site play area

5.5 Tubbercurry

Sligo County Council will continue to maintain the site.

5.6 Potential New Sites

As part of Sligo County Development Plan 2017 – 2023, 3 sites have been maintained as having a traveller accommodation objective at Finisklin, Cleveragh and Shannon Eighter; not all are in the ownership of Sligo County Council.

5.7 Finisklin Site

The Council will consider advancing group housing on this site if a proposed development can be agreed.

5.8 Implementation

The delivery of the targets set out for the lifetime of the programme is conditional on a number of external factors.

- ❖ Active co-operation and support of Traveller families in pursuing the development of accommodation schemes.
- ❖ Willingness and co-operation on the part of Travellers to complete Social Housing Application Forms.
- ❖ Government policy in relation to housing.
- ❖ Future social and economic climate in Ireland and the UK.
- ❖ Supply of Social and Private housing.
- ❖ Decisions of new household formations to remain locally or leave the County.
- ❖ Returning migrant families.
- ❖ Decision of traveller families not to accept allocated properties.

SECTION 6

6. Conclusion

Sligo County Council acknowledges the co-operation of local Travellers, the Sligo Traveller Support Group and the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee in the preparation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme. As with any group in society, it is not always possible to get the agreement of Travellers in respect of advancing schemes of accommodation or improvements to accommodation within the range of options available to the Council. In those circumstances, efforts by the Council alone will not deliver solutions that meet the expectations of some Travellers in need of accommodation. Accommodation needs can generally be resolved where those seeking accommodation work with the Council and have regard to the statutory and regulatory environment in which the Council operates.

The targets set out in this Programme have been developed having regard to the existing and projected need for Traveller accommodation. The delivery of this Programme requires a commitment from all stakeholders to work together and is also dependent on the availability of funding and adequate staff resources.

The successful implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme July 2019 – June 2024 will be dependent on the co-operation of travellers, reasonable expectations and the provision of funding from the Department of the Housing, Planning and Local Government.

The Council recognise that the provision of appropriate associated supports is also a critical factor in ensuring that the accommodation solutions delivered for individual families are successful. The Council will continue to work closely with Travellers, their representatives, the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee and other relevant agencies in this regard.