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Sligo Local Authorities

TRAVELLER

ACCOMMODATION

PROGRAMME

(2009 - 2013)

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TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME (2009- 2013)

Introduction

The recent assessment of Traveller Accommodation Needs carried out by Sligo Local Authorities indicates that there are approximately 87 Traveller families living in County Sligo. The requirements imposed on Sligo Local Authorities under the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 (subsequently referred to as the 1998 Act) ensures that significant steps will be taken to resolve the Traveller accommodation issue within the County.

Sligo Local Authorities adopted a Traveller Accommodation Programme in 2005 in respect of the period ended 31st December 2008. It is now necessary to prepare and adopt a new programme to cover the period 2009 - 2013.

The purpose of the 1998 Act and the Accommodation Programme is to put into place the necessary procedures, measures, resources and facilities which are required to successfully accommodate Travellers in a manner, which will address all concerns relating to the provision of accommodation. Under this Act, responsibility for implementing the Traveller Accommodation Programme for the County of Sligo falls to Sligo Local Authorities. The adoption, amendment or replacement of the proposed Accommodation Programme is a function for the Council Members.

The steps which will be taken by Sligo Local Authorities, in co-operation with the other agencies within the County, over four years to accommodate Travellers are detailed in this Traveller Accommodation Programme for the period 1st January 2009 to 31st December 2013.

The Accommodation Programme for Traveller families residing in County Sligo has been prepared following:

- An assessment of Traveller families' accommodation needs.
- Consultation with Travellers through the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.
- Advice from Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.
- Notification to relevant Bodies that a Draft Accommodation Programme was being prepared by Sligo Local Authorities.
- Submissions received from interested Bodies on the Programme.

There are many issues, such as education, training etc. which must be tackled in conjunction with the provision of Traveller accommodation in order to successfully implement the Accommodation Programme. It will require changes in attitudes and acceptance of different lifestyles from all parties involved, from those providing the accommodation and those requiring it, to members of Local Communities in areas close to the accommodation.

The provision of adequate accommodation, as outlined in the programme, will not be achieved quickly or easily. However, it is essential that the process commences throughout County Sligo immediately in order to make progress to resolve the problems arising from the current lack of suitable accommodation.

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PART 1

1.0 ASSESSMENT OF TRAVELLERS ACCOMMODATION NEEDS.

1.1 Current Accommodation:

The existing locations of Traveller families who are living on serviced Halting Sites and in private rented accommodation highlight the urgent need for suitable accommodation for many of these families.

The numbers of families currently residing in the Council's functional area, their current locations and the range of their accommodation is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 Current Accommodation Position

	Standard Local Authority/ Voluntary	Living on Halting Site	Sharing with Family	Roadside / Emergency / Mobile	Private Rented	Total
Sligo Borough Council	17 & 2	9	4	11	10	53
Sligo Local Authorities	8	18	2	2	4	34
Total	27	27	6	11	14	87

Summary

27 Families living in Standard Local Authority Accommodation / Voluntary Housing

27 families living on official Halting Sites

6 Families in overcrowded conditions in houses with relatives

14 families in private rented accommodation

11 Families in roadside or emergency / mobile accommodation

87 Families in Total

1.2 Summary of Accommodation Needs:

The following tables set out a breakdown of the results of the most recent Assessment of Traveller Accommodation Needs for Sligo County and Borough.

Table 2 Assessment of Needs Summary

	Borough	County	Total
Total Number of Families	53	34	87
Total No Assessment Returns	40	22	62
Non Compliance Refusals	9	6	15
Non responsive to assessment / Not contactable for assessment	4	6	10
Numbers currently seeking Housing	38	21	59

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Borough Figures	
Accommodation Sought	No of Family Units
Local Authority Standard Housing	21 12 have expressed preference for Borough Council area 9 for a preference for the County area.
Group Housing Scheme for particular family group. Family group did not comply with the assessment of needs. (Notional assessment from previous discussions)	9
Specific Instance Special needs	3
Permanent Site accommodation	2
Specific Instance / Standalone	3
County Figures	
Local Authority Standard Housing	6 (2 wish to be accommodated in the Borough area)
Group Housing Scheme One group of 7 families did not comply with the assessment of needs. (Notional assessment from previous discussions)	9
Specific Instance Special needs	1
Permanent Site accommodation	1
Specific Instance / Stand alone house	4

As can be seen from the above tables, the majority of first preferences are for standard local authority houses (either new build or second hand). In the County, there is a trend for families seeking provision of specific instance stand alone housing. In the context of the Assessment, 11 families stated a preference for specific instance housing of which 4 would have special needs that may need special provisions. In both authorities, preferred locations were mostly influenced by a wish to be near relatives but it is also a requirement of applicants to be located with easy access to all utilities, services and schools in the location of their choice.

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In the Borough, the majority of families explicitly stated that they did not wish to be housed in the Cranmore area and the majority of first preferences relate to Ballytivnan, Sea Road and Rathbraughan. In the County, the majority of first preferences of location were Tubbercurry, Ballymote and Ballisodare/ Collooney.

As with previous Assessments, a number of families either refused to co-operate with the Assessment or were un-contactable. One such family grouping in the Borough, who are seeking a 9 unit group housing scheme, are not reflected in the above returns as they declined to participate in the actual Assessment. Furthermore, it should be noted that, since the 2003 Assessment was carried out, a number of families (including two substantial family groupings) have left Sligo for other counties.

Young traveller couples and families formerly living with housed family members or in a combination of caravans and relatives houses in estates are now in private rented accommodation. This reflects a national trend for traveller accommodation. Private rented has also been the preferred accommodation for extended family members of Sligo relatives, who are returning from England and other Counties to settle again in Sligo (currently 6 – 8. families).

In the County, the figures show a slight decrease in the number of families relative to the 2003 Assessment figure of 38 families. Currently, there are 34 families in the County area. One family group who have previously sought a group scheme declined to comply with the assessment but in conversation are maintaining their desire to be considered for a group scheme of 6 units in the Collooney or West Sligo areas.

As you will see from the following table, there is quite a large population of young travellers under 18 years of age. This gives the local authorities an insight into the numbers of families who may be seeking housing in the future. The TAP 2005-2008 projected an estimated number of 3 couples per annum marrying in each of the local authority areas. Taking the number of marriages for 2007, these figures have proven accurate. It is therefore appropriate that the population of Traveller families would be projected to grow by 6 families per year during the next Traveller Accommodation Programme.

Table 3 Unmarried Traveller Population Figures

	Sligo Local Authorities		Sligo Borough Council	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Over 18 years - Single	4	1	5	4
Under 18 years - Single	25	25	47	50
Engagements 2007/2008	1		3	
Marriages 2007	2		4	

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The locations of the proposed accommodation will be based on the existing locations of Traveller families, their native areas and their preferred choices of location where possible, however it may not always be possible to accommodate Traveller families in their preferred areas and therefore families may have to look at other location options in consultation with the Local Authority.

The assessment of the accommodation needs of the indigenous Traveller families residing in the Council's functional area, indicates that accommodation is now required for 59 families in order to cater for these needs. Taking into consideration the age profile of existing travellers and the rate of new family formations in the county, it is expected that an additional 30 new families will require accommodation during the period of the programme.

Overall 89 families will require permanent accommodation during the lifetime of the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009 - 2013. It is expected that newly formed travellers households will make suitable arrangements for their accommodation pending the provision of accommodation by the Local Authority. It is proposed in consultation with other agencies to examine ways in which difficulties experienced by traveller families in accessing private rented accommodation can be overcome.

The unauthorised parking of caravans will not be tolerated by the Council as the practice has a negative effect on the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme.

1.3 Traveller Accommodation Programme

Sligo Local Authorities will continue to consult with individual traveller families and traveller support groups with a view to identifying the most appropriate accommodation for individual families. The provision of Local Authority housing will be the main focus of the Programme for 2009 - 2013. Halting Site accommodation will be provided as a transitional measure where desired. Other social housing options, such as the Shared Ownership Scheme, Affordable Housing Scheme and Council Loan Scheme will also be promoted amongst members of the Travelling Community.

The following specific proposals will be addressed during the period of the programme.

- The completion of the planned redevelopment of Alma Tce Transient site in Sligo Borough Council.
- The refurbishment / redevelopment of Glenview park Halting site also in Sligo Borough
- The upgrading of facilities of Cloonamahon to full transient site recommended standards.

1.4 Transient Sites

The Traveller Accommodation Act, 1998 requires the Council to have regard to "*the provision of sites to address the accommodation needs of Travellers other than as their normal place of residence and having regard to the annual patterns of movement by Travellers*".

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The Sligo local authorities will within the life of this programme have available suitable facilities for transient families which will include providing one transient halting site in the Borough area and one in the County area. These sites will seek primarily to accommodate transient families but may also be used to facilitate indigenous transient families.

2.0 MEETING TRAVELLERS ACCOMMODATION NEEDS -POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 Public Consultation

The Local Authorities requested submissions from interested persons or parties in relation to the preparation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme as required under Section 8 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998.

Submissions have been received from the following and the issues raised have been considered in drafting the Programme.

- (i) Health Service Executive.
- (ii) Ballinacarrow Development Association.
- (iii) Irish Traveller Movement.

Consultation in relation to the accommodation needs of Travellers has taken place with Travellers representatives on the local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee to draw on their first hand knowledge and experience in relation to Traveller accommodation and also due to their close relationship with Travellers in need of accommodation. Housing Staff have also consulted directly with Travellers requiring accommodation in order to ascertain their preferred type of accommodation and location.

2.2 Ongoing Consultation

In order to continue to assess the accommodation needs, as accurately as possible during the period of the programme, further consultation will take place with Travellers representatives, members of Local Communities and Travellers who will be accommodated. This consultation will include matters relating to the selection of suitable sites, design of the proposed accommodation and the number of families to be accommodated. Members of the Councils, within the County, and Local Authorities adjoining the Council's functional area for the purposes of the programme, will be consulted in relation to specific accommodation proposals for Travellers in their relevant areas.

2.3 Specific Targets for Meeting Needs

The Council intends to accommodate 68 families in its functional area by 31st December 2013 in accordance with the Accommodation Programme. The accommodation, which will be provided during the period of the programme, will be implemented in conjunction with the Council's Annual Housing Building Programme. The numbers and types of accommodation to be provided will be identified during each year of the four year period of the programme. The provision of accommodation will, as far as possible, be arranged in order of priority of Traveller families' accommodation needs.

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2.4 Provision of Permanent Accommodation

The provision of adequate Traveller accommodation, as outlined in the Assessment of Needs, is essential in order to fully cater for the accommodation needs of Travellers during the period of the Programme. Sligo Local Authorities will allocate the available resources to provide permanent accommodation required to accommodate Travellers in County Sligo as indicated in the Summary of Accommodation Needs.

The range of accommodation sought is listed below.

Table 4 Accommodation Sought

Sligo Borough Council

Accommodation Sought	No of Family Units
Local Authority Standard Housing	21 9 SCC 12 SBC
Group Scheme	9
Specific Instance Special needs	3
Permanent Site accommodation	2
Specific Instance/ Stand alone	3
Total	38

Sligo County Council

Accommodation Sought	No of Family Units
Local Authority Standard Housing	6
Group Scheme	9
Specific Instance Special needs	1
Permanent Site accommodation	1
Specific Instance	4
Total	21

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Annual Targets

The following Annual Targets have been set in respect of the implementation of the programme.

Table 5 Annual Targets

<i>Type of Accommodation to be Provided</i>	<i>No. of Units to be commenced in 2009</i>		<i>No. of Units to be commenced in 2010</i>		<i>No. of Units to be commenced in 2011</i>		<i>No. of Units to be commenced in 2012</i>		<i>No. of units to be commenced in 2013</i>	
	SCC	SBC	SCC	SBC	SCC	SBC	SCC	SBC	SCC	SBC
Permanent Halting Site	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Group Housing Scheme	0	0	0	0	7	0	2	9	0	0
Standard LA Housing /Specific Instance	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3
Rental Allowance Scheme	0	1	0	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Voluntary Housing Bodies	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
TOTAL:	2	5	4	8	11	6	7	15	5	6
SUBTOTAL :	7		12		17		22		11	
TOTAL	69									

- Commencement of the above schemes is dependent on funding and departmental approval

Standard Local Authority Housing

Travellers seeking standard housing from both Housing Authorities will be accommodated, where possible, in existing or new local authority estates and applications for such housing will be processed in accordance with the Local Authority's Scheme of Letting Priorities and having regard to estate management issues, an appropriate social mix within areas, compatibility of families, anti-social behaviour, social and previous accommodation history, and house size requirement.

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Specific Borough Council Measures

Alma Terrace

The Borough Council is already in the process of redevelopment of Alma Tce Halting site into a 4 no. bay transient site that will meet all department guidelines. This site will cater for new families arriving into the borough area that have short term accommodation needs and also will cater for indigenous families that have no other accommodation available.

Glenview Park

The Borough Council intend to redevelop this site during the term of this plan and will endeavour to enlarge the site and provide more suitable accommodation for permanent families that are accommodated on the site. This may include the construction of bedrooms in each of the bays and the provision of a number of 4 bedroom units may be considered. Subject to survey findings and available funding

Finisklin Site

The Borough Council have in their ownership a suitable development site for a group housing scheme to provide for the permanent accommodation needs of an extended Traveller family at Finisklin. The site is zoned residential in the current SEDP 2004 – 2010 and the draft SEDP 2010-2016, with a specific objective in the plan to provide Traveller accommodation at this location. The original family for which this particular site was targeted have left the area. The site will be considered for any suitable family group housing request.

Cleveragh Road

The Borough Council will during the lifetime of this plan seek to establish a site at the Back Avenue, Cleveragh would be a suitable option for the development of a group housing scheme for a particular family. This site is currently zoned C3 (which includes residential use) in the SEDP 2004-2010 and the site is zoned Mixed -1 (which includes residential use) in the draft Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016. This family have expressed a preference for transfers within the Borough or County and have also indicated that they may consider a group scheme provision. Currently this family would require 6 family units. Development of this site would follow the purchase of the site by Sligo Borough Council.

Bundoran Road

Sligo borough Council intends to revisit previously identified sites in private ownership which have not been developed in the lifetime of the last plan possibly due to the current economic climate. It is the intention of the Council to establish if a site can be acquired to accommodate a family who have expressed a preference for this area.

Whilst every endeavour will be made to acquire a site and provide the required accommodation during the lifetime of the plan there can be no guarantee that this can be achieved at this particular location. Issue relating to future road proposals that have sanitised certain lands (such as the proposed new N15 to Donegal), access onto the National Primary Road (the Bundoran Road), and the availability of sites along the

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Bundoran Road within the Borough Council area leave a restricted menu of options for the Council at this location. The Local Traveller Consultative Committee advised that should the Bundoran Road option identified above not prove feasible, that the option of housing this family at their current location is explored having regard to the Sligo & Environs Development Plan.

Specific County Measures

Tubbercurry

A Council house occupied by a Traveller family with a council provided mobile to the rear also accommodating another related Traveller family is to be demolished and rebuilt to provide permanent accommodation for both families. In their interim they are to be re-housed in standard local authority accommodation for the duration of the construction of these houses.

Tubbercurry Halting site

The Tubbercurry Halting site is to be redeveloped into two housing units that will provide permanent accommodation for 2 family units. One unit currently has bedrooms provided while the other will be renovated to add this provision. One family currently resides on the site and another currently in private rented.

Cloonamahon Halting Site

Cloonamahon halting site will be redeveloped to a standard Transient halting site with accommodation units for the six bays. The DEPT guidelines for the provision of accommodation for transient families will be used to achieve these standards. This site will provide accommodation for families arriving into the county on a transient basis and indigenous families have other accommodation available.

Group Housing Schemes

Collooney – West Sligo.

One specific 6 family group are requesting provision of a group housing scheme in the Collooney West Sligo area. Efforts to find a site suitable and agreeable to the families and the Local Authority Planning officials in the West Sligo area have not been successful to date but will continue.

Collooney -Ballysadare

Two families resident in the County have requested the provision of a 2 unit group housing scheme in the Ballysadare Collooney area. A suitable site would have to be identified in this area.

Ballymote

Two sites in Council ownership in the Ballinascarrow area of Ballymote will be investigated toward the provision of traveller specific accommodation. Suitable families

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looking for accommodation in the Ballymote area may be considered for the construction of local authority housing on these sites.

Rental Allowance Scheme

The Rental Accommodation Scheme is for long-term rent allowance recipients (over 18 months), who need long-term housing. It is being run by the Local Authorities to provide additional, good quality rented accommodation for people receiving rent supplement.

Under the RAS the Local Authority identifies suitable accommodation and pays rent to the landlord directly. Tenants still contribute to the rent, but pay it to the Local Authority, not the landlord. Tenants whose landlords sign up to the scheme are allowed to remain in their current accommodation.

With the increase in private rented accommodation for Traveller families it is envisaged that a number of families could secure long term accommodation through this scheme and would aid the Local Authority in achieving its targets.

Voluntary Housing

Approved Voluntary Housing Organisations will be required to have regard to the provisions of the Traveller Accommodation Programme when providing accommodation. Traditional locations, native areas, current locations of Traveller families and their preferred choice of location will be important factors when assessing sites for the successful accommodation of Travellers in the County.

Traveller families seeking accommodation will be requested to indicate their preferred type of accommodation and choice of location similar to the choice offered to other Council housing applicants. The Council will endeavour to provide accommodation for Travellers on this basis having regard to the availability of land and reasonable development costs, particularly in urban areas, and the accommodation needs of the Traveller families.

The provision of accommodation for Travellers will also involve:

- (i) An assessment of means of families requesting accommodation.
- (ii) An assessment of accommodation requirements of families.
- (iii) Management and maintenance arrangements for the accommodation.
- (iv) Compliance with various regulatory requirements.

2.5 Provision of Training and Support

Sligo Local Authorities employ a Senior Social Worker and a Traveller Liaison Officer who give advice and assistance to members of the Travelling Community. The Housing Officer of the Housing Sections of both Local authorities will oversee the preparation, development and implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme.

- All families who have been allocated houses/units will be requested to attend a pre-tenancy course prior to their entry to their accommodation. To help promote better community spirit in our estates and to help provide a better understanding on policies and tenancy conditions, Pre- Tenancy Courses are now being arranged throughout the County for all new tenants of Local Authority accommodation both Traveller and non-Traveller.

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- Traveller families housed in Halting Sites will be given every encouragement and assistance to form their own Residents Association. Traveller families residing in Local Authority Estates will be encouraged to participate in existing Resident's Associations.
- Sligo Borough Council has allocated a house from its stock to Sligo Traveller Support Group as a base for its Primary Health Care Project.
- Sligo Local Authorities work in partnership with other relevant agencies to progress Traveller Specific Actions under the Traveller Inter-Agency strategy group set up under the auspices of the County Development Board.
- The LTACC are committed to undergo intercultural awareness training on an annual basis. This training will be co-ordinated in consultation with the Sligo Traveller Support Group and will independent of both the Local Authority and Traveller Support Group. It is designed to aid in the interaction within the committee and to build a good working relationship.

Sligo Local Authorities recognise the need for support for Traveller families, in order to ensure that the accommodation which is provided will be suitable and effective in resolving the accommodation needs of these families. The provision of assistance from any interested parties or other State agencies, in relation to support for Traveller families requiring accommodation and those already provided with accommodation will also be welcomed.

2.6 Meeting Distinct Needs and Family Circumstances of Travellers

The individual family circumstances and distinct needs of Traveller families will be ascertained by the Council when specific accommodation for these families is being arranged. This will involve consultation between the Traveller families, Council staff and Traveller support representatives, as required. The design of non standard housing traveller accommodation will generally be in accordance with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government guidelines.

2.7 Unauthorised Sites

The elimination of unauthorised sites will be dependant on the provision of adequate serviced accommodation for Traveller families in accordance with the Traveller Accommodation Programme. Accordingly, as serviced sites or housing are provided for indigenous Traveller families, unauthorised encampments can be reduced in number or eliminated over the course of the Traveller Accommodation Programme. Where Travellers take up residence on unofficial sites in close proximity to where accommodation is available for Traveller families by

Local Authorities in County Sligo, appropriate action will be taken by the Council in accordance with the provisions of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998.

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3.0 STRATEGY TO SECURE IMPLEMENTATION OF TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME.

3.1 Implementing Authorities

Pursuant to the 1998 Act, Sligo Local Authorities will have overall responsibility for the implementation of the Accommodation Programme in its functional area. The implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme is depending on funding and approval from Dept. of Environment Heritage and local Government. Capital funding is available from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for Traveller specific accommodation subject to approved budgets.

3.2 Co-ordination between Implementing Authorities

Sligo Local Authorities will consult regularly with all the interested Authorities and Bodies to ensure that the needs outlined in the programme are fulfilled. The consultations will include regular meetings between the staff of the Local Authorities and the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee in order to co-ordinate accommodation development and agree time scales for the provision of the accommodation.

3.3. Provision of Accommodation

3.3.1 Direct Provision by Implementing Authorities

The Housing Authorities for both council areas will be required to take whatever possible steps to implement these proposals for their functional areas. The Local Authorities must also have regard to the provisions of the Accommodation Programme when performing any functions in relation to Traveller Accommodation.

They will be required to provide accommodation for Travellers from their annual Housing Building Programme and from casual vacancies in Council houses as outlined in the Assessment of Accommodation Needs. Standard Local Authority housing, Group housing schemes and Halting Sites will be the forms of accommodation which will be provided by all Local Authorities within the County.

3.3.2. Assistance to Approved Voluntary Bodies

Accommodation by Voluntary Bodies is provided with the assistance of capital funding from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and with the co-operation of the Local Authority. Sligo Local Authority would like to work with the approved Voluntary housing bodies to assist in the achievement of their targets.

3.4 Interagency Traveller Strategy

Sligo County Development Board was requested by the Government in mid-2006 to initiate a process of developing a strategic plan to enhance inter-agency co-operation in the delivery of service and supports to the Traveller Community (Circular LG12/06). Consequently, an Inter-Agency Traveller Strategy Group (ITSG) was established by the County Development Board in July 2006 to develop an '*Integrated Traveller Strategy*' for the County. Agencies involved are Sligo Local Authorities, County Sligo Vocational Educational Committee, Sligo Traveller Support Group, FAS, Department of Education

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and Science, Sligo Leader Partnership Company, Sligo County Childcare Committee, Garda Síochána, Health Service Executive, Sligo Northside Community Development Project, Department of Social and Family Affairs, and Easkey Family Resource Project.

The overall aim of the ISTG group stated:

'To devise an integrated plan for the delivery of services at a local level that will result in greater participation by Travellers in mainstream society with better outcomes for Travellers in Co. Sligo.

In the context of the above, specific working groups were established on the following themes:

- Accommodation,
- Health, Education,
- Training and Employment,
- Childcare
- Youth.

Sligo Local Authorities are the lead agency in the Accommodation subgroup and works together with the other agencies to coordinate service provision to Traveller families and to improve accommodation standards and any issues relating to accommodation and tenancies.

3.5 Public Relations and Consultation

The positive effects of good public relations should not be underestimated in achieving progress with the provision and maintenance of Traveller accommodation. The Traveller Accommodation Programme itself will be an effective Public Relations instrument and it should help alleviate the fears and worries of members of Local Communities and Travellers. The negative effects of fears and concerns, if not addressed, or the lack of information in relation to the need to provide Traveller accommodation may result in slower progress in achieving the implementation of the Programme. Information in relation to the previous or alternative accommodation of Traveller families in other Local Authority areas will be sought and provided where necessary when assessing Traveller accommodation needs. Information will be made available in relation to all aspects of the accommodation proposals outlined in the Programme and Council staff will be available to discuss plans to provide accommodation for Traveller families. Consultation will be required in order to clarify matters of concern and to form relationships which will result in the acceptance of Traveller accommodation proposals and different lifestyles of all parties. Residents will have the opportunity to present their views on specific accommodation proposals in their local areas through the planning process at the development stage

3.6 Management and Maintenance Arrangements for Traveller Accommodation

It is essential that adequate arrangements are made for the management and maintenance of Traveller accommodation in order to ensure that the accommodation and surrounding area are maintained in good condition and that the families are successfully located there.

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A Caretaker will continue to be provided for permanent Halting Sites. Members of local communities need re-assurance that the proposed accommodation in their areas will be adequately maintained and managed in order to encourage acceptance for the proposals. Regulatory powers are available to ensure that Traveller accommodation is successfully managed in accordance with the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998, Litter Act 1997 etc. The maintenance and management of the accommodation will also be dealt with in conjunction with the Letting Agreements.

A sense of responsibility and ownership of Bays or houses will be encouraged among residents of the accommodation in order to reduce the level of management and maintenance required for the various sites and schemes. Support will be required from the Caretaker of the accommodation, Council staff involved with Traveller accommodation, Travellers support representatives and any other interested parties to ensure Travellers adequately maintain their Bays, Halting Sites or houses. A pre-tenancy course will be organised by the Local Authority when new tenancies are allocated.

3.6 Procedures for Resolving Difficulties

The Council's Traveller Liaison Officer along with Staff involved in the provision of Traveller accommodation will be available to provide assistance in the event of any difficulties arising with regard to the accommodation. Problems in relation to the maintenance of the accommodation must be raised initially with the Caretaker or immediate Council Staff involved in the maintenance of the accommodation. Inspections will be carried out and repairs completed as necessary for maintenance problems as in the case of Local Authority standard housing repairs.

Traveller families will be visited regularly by the Traveller Liaison Officer or other Council Support Staff involved in Traveller accommodation in order to help resolve difficulties which may arise from the new accommodation.

Discussions and meetings will be held by Sligo Local Authorities staff with members of the local Community regarding any related problems which may arise following the provision of accommodation in their locality. Appropriate action will be taken to resolve the problems, as soon as possible, following an assessment of the particular situation by the Council.

3.7 Programme Progress Review

A review of the programme will be carried out in 2011, in accordance with the requirements of the Act. This progress review will also include the results of the most recent annual census and assessment of needs of accommodation for Traveller families to take account of changing circumstances due to the increase in the number of families and the locations of indigenous families in the County. Consultation will also take place with Travellers and Traveller Representative Groups.

PART 4

4.0 MEASURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION BY SLIGO LOCAL AUTHORITIES

4.1 Provision of Range of Accommodation to Meet Needs

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The Housing Officers of the Housing Sections along with their staff will be responsible for the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme.

4.2 Assistance for Travellers to Provide Own Accommodation

Travellers who may be in a position to provide their own accommodation will be encouraged to acquire their own dwellings either from their own resources or with the assistance of loans or other Social Housing options. Further details in relation to Local Authority funded assistance towards the provision of accommodation is outlined in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government booklet “**Your Housing Options**”. Council support staff for Travellers will advise and encourage all families seeking accommodation to consider all the above options in relation to the provision of their own accommodation.

4.3 Assistance to Approved Voluntary Bodies

The Council will consider providing land to approved Voluntary Bodies in respect of the provision of housing for Traveller families as outlined in the Traveller Accommodation Programme.

4.4. Arrangements for the Proper Management of Traveller Accommodation

Experience to date has shown that close and regular contact is required with families in Traveller accommodation if progress is to be achieved towards the proper management of sites. Appropriate action will be taken by the Council in the event of any breach of agreements by residents in Traveller accommodation to ensure that the accommodation is managed successfully for everyone involved and that high maintenance standards are kept in these areas.

CONCLUSION

Substantial progress was made during the previous Traveller Accommodation Programme Period (2005 - 2008) to build relationships between the Travelling Community and local communities through the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee and the employment of the Traveller Liaison Officer.

It is recognised that the successful implementation of this programme, and indeed other related traveller programmes, is dependant on the commitment of all parties to continued development of trust and in recognising and addressing the concerns of all members of the community. The implementation of the programme will be contingent on building on the relationships developed and through continued dialogue and negotiations in relation to each accommodation proposal having regard to the appropriate use of the legislation.

The overriding aim of the Programme will be the development of an inclusive society, which will recognise the needs of all members of the community.