



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE

Dhún na nGall

DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL



**Traveller
Accommodation
Programme**

2019 – 2024

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Section 1

Introduction

Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998

On 19th July 2018, the Minister for Housing and Urban Development directed housing authorities to prepare and adopt a 5-year Traveller Accommodation Programme covering the period 1st July 2019 to 30th June 2024 in accordance with the provisions of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998.

The Minister has specified 30th September 2019 as the latest date by which accommodation programmes must be adopted. The Minister has also directed that a review of this accommodation programme should be carried out no later than 31st December 2021.

This Programme will be the Donegal County Council's fifth Traveller Accommodation Programme.

Initiating the process for preparation of new Programme

Notification of intention to prepare a Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme issued on 1st August 2018 to adjoining housing authorities, the HSE, approved housing bodies, the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee, Donegal Travellers Project and other local representative groups, community and interest groups. Submissions received (12) in response to the notification were considered in the context of the preparation of the Draft Programme.

Separate notice of intention to carry out an assessment of need for Travellers in the County issued to the same interested groups on 12th September 2018 inviting comment or observations they may wish to make in relation to the carrying out of an assessment of need for Travellers in the County.

In accordance with Section 9 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998, notice was published in the local press on the week beginning 1st April 2019, advising that the Draft Programme had been prepared, that it was available for inspection, and that regard would be had to all submissions received in writing before the 31st May 2019. A total of two submissions were received within the 2-month consultation period.

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 Draft Programme was considered by the LTACC at meetings in December 2018 & September 2019.

The membership of the Donegal LTACC comprises of 12 members with 6 Local Authority Members, 3 Traveller Representatives and 3 Local Authority Officials making up the LTACC membership.

Section 2

County Profile

Donegal County contains five electoral areas, Donegal, Glenties, Inishowen, Letterkenny and Stranorlar. The 2016 national census figures outline the population of County Donegal to be 159,192.

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government facilitates the Annual Estimate of Traveller families nationally at the end of November every year.

The most recent estimate at the end of November 2018 outlines that 287 Traveller families were resident in the County at that time.

In comparison to neighbouring Counties (as per most up-to-date information from the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government), Donegal has a significantly larger number of Traveller families residing in its functional area with Sligo 139, Leitrim 68, Cavan 141 & Monaghan 161.

A break down of the various accommodation types of the 287 families who were residing in the County at the end of November 2018 is as follows:

176	Standard Local Authority Social Housing
36	Private Rented Accommodation
30	HAP
12	Halting Site
16	Sharing with relatives
9	Roadside
4	Permanent Halt
3	Hospital Care
1	Emergency Accommodation

Donegal has two halting sites at Big Isle, Manorcunningham and Ballintra. Two Traveller-specific group housing schemes are located in Letterkenny with six permanent halts located in Letterkenny (4), Kerrykeel (1) & Ardara (1).

Section 3

Review of 2014 – 2018 Traveller Accommodation Programme

The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014 – 2018 was adopted 27th January 2014 and a mid-term review of the Programme was completed in December 2016 in consultation with the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee. The Programme set out the following specific objectives and targets to be achieved over the duration of the Programme.

1. Prioritise accommodation of families residing on the Ballintra & Big Isle halting sites

Both sites were extensively refurbished in the last two years of the Programme.

2. Complete two-storey extension for family home in Ballyshannon

Following a high profile case where accommodation proposed for the family was damaged, an alternative accommodation solution was progressed for the family in question. Completed in 2014.

3. Continue with progression of small scale accommodation projects where emergency need arises

Year on year, a range of varying projects were completed including adaptation works, remedial works, extensions etc.

4. Provide 32 units of accommodation through a range of Social Housing measures

In excess of 70 units of accommodation were delivered.

5. Complete an overall comprehensive review of Transient accommodation in the County

In November 2016, a report was presented to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee which was the culmination of two years work. The report concluded that *“evidence indicates that there has not been a demonstrated need for Transient families to be catered for by means of Transient sites. In light of the findings of the review, it is concluded that there is no identified requirement for a Transient site in Co. Donegal”*

6. Other Traveller specific accommodation projects

A range of other Traveller specific projects were also progressed during the course of the Programme relating to families with specific needs, where funding was secured on a case by case basis through the Traveller Accommodation Unit in the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government to improve, upgrade or extend existing accommodation at a total cost in excess of €520,000.

The range of measures included: extension to existing accommodation (3), refurbishment of existing accommodation (4), internal and external adaptation works (4) and emergency remedial works (4).

7. Fire Safety in Traveller Accommodation

A very significant and unforeseen aspect of the programme was Fire Safety in Traveller-specific accommodation. This followed the tragic loss of life as a result of a fire on a halting site at Carrickmines, Co. Dublin in October 2015. Following this event, the National Directorate Fire and Emergency Management issued a number of circulars including a substantive guidance document on revised fire safety standards in existing Traveller-specific accommodation. A local authority steering group was established headed up by the Chief Fire Officer and membership included senior housing officials, Traveller accommodation staff and technical staff from a range of other services.

A variety of fire safety works and recommendations were identified in a report prepared by the steering group on existing Traveller-specific accommodation. Work programmes were completed which included very significant works, refurbishments etc. on halting sites and Group Housing schemes. A community Fire Safety Awareness Programme was delivered and Fire Protection equipment (smoke alarm, carbon monoxide alarm and fire blankets) was delivered to every Traveller accommodation unit in the County.



Big Isle halting site, Manorcunningham – Four bay site extension



Canal Road, Letterkenny - Permanent Halt Construction



Dwelling refurbishment in Ballyshannon

Section 4

Assessment of Accommodation Needs

One of the key elements in the preparation of a Traveller Accommodation Programme is the making of an assessment of the accommodation needs of Travellers who are assessed under Section 20 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 as being qualified for Social Housing Support. Under Circular No. 35/2018 dated 19th July 2018, the Minister for Housing and Urban Development directed that Housing authorities make an estimate of the current and projected accommodation needs of Traveller families arising over the five-year programme.

Initiating the process for carrying out the Assessment

On 12th September 2018, the Council issued notification to the statutory agencies including HSE, adjoining housing authorities, approved housing bodies, the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee, Donegal Travellers Project and other local representative groups, community and interest groups advising of the intention to carry out an assessment of the need for accommodation for Travellers in County Donegal.

Information gathered from both the summary of social housing assessments which was completed in June 2018 and the November 2018 Annual Estimate of Traveller families was used as a base point in the preparation for the assessment of the accommodation needs of Travellers in County Donegal.

The Annual Estimate of Traveller families completed on 28th November 2018 identified 287 Traveller families residing in County Donegal as follows:

By Accommodation Type

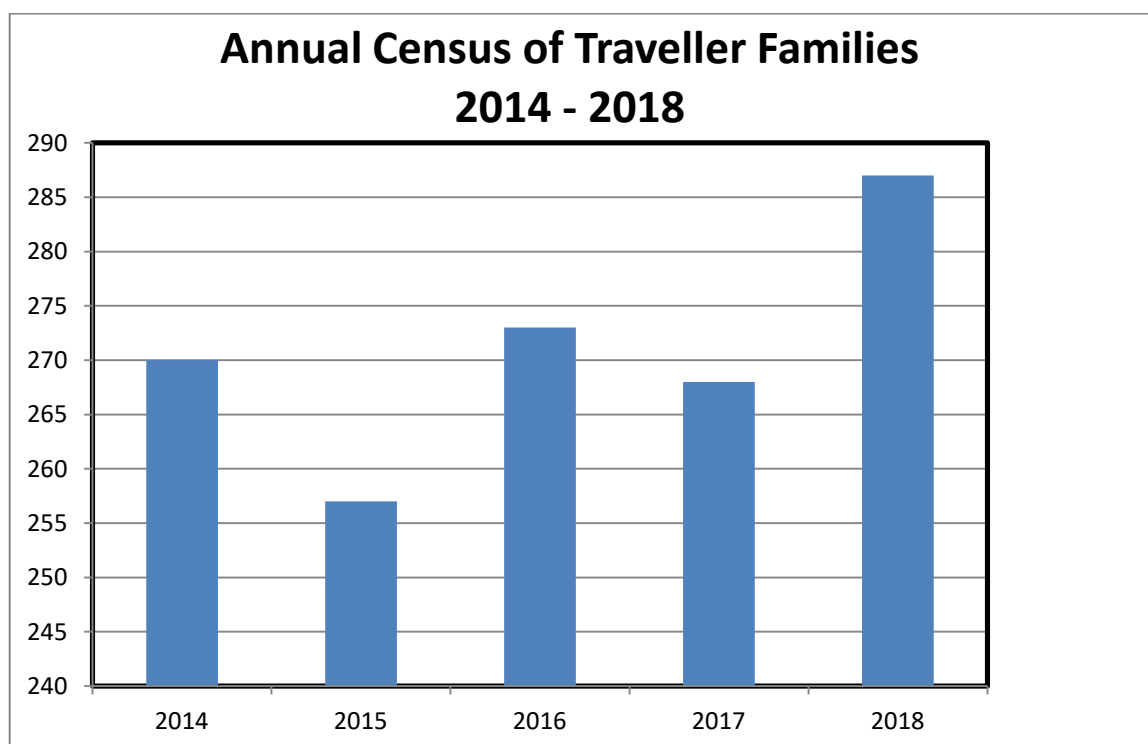
No:	Accommodation Type
176	Standard Social Housing
30	Housing Assistance Payment
36	Private Rented
16	Sharing with relatives
12	Halting Sites
4	Permanent Halts
9	Roadside
3	Hospital / Long Term Care
1	Emergency Accommodation
287	Total Families

By Municipal District

Municipal District	Number of Traveller Families in each MD
Letterkenny	185
Donegal	41
Inishowen	16
Stranorlar	43
Glenties	2
	287

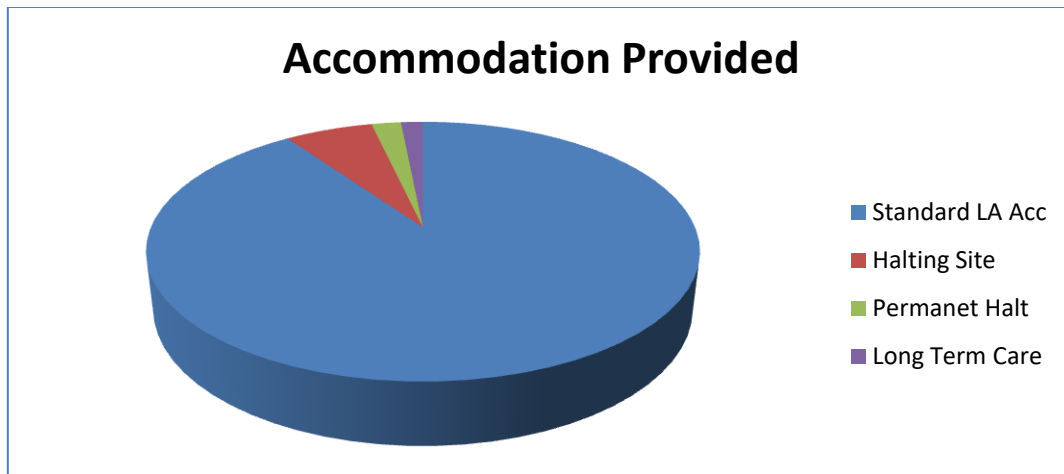
Donegal Traveller Population Profile 2014 - 2018

The chart below outlines the population figures of Travellers in County Donegal over the period of the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014 – 2018. Figures peaked in 2018 with a total of 287 Traveller families residing in the County.

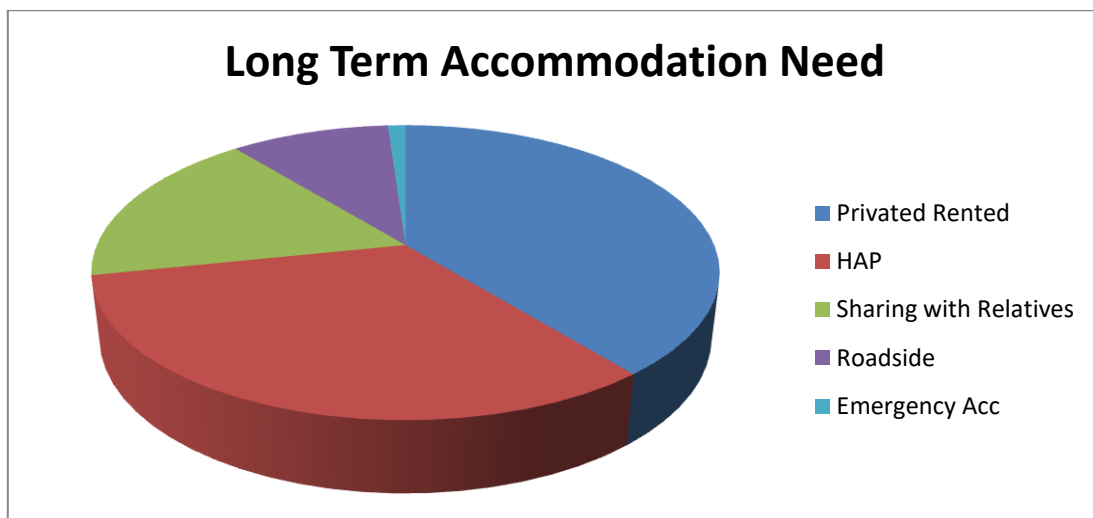


Analysis of Accommodation Need based on November 2018 Needs Assessment

Of the 287 families identified in the November 2018 Needs Assessment, 176 of these families are currently residing in local authority accommodation, 3 families are in Long Term care, 12 families on halting site tenancies and 4 families are in permanent halts.



The balance 92 families are accommodated through HAP (30), Private Rented (36), Sharing with Relatives (16), Roadside (9), Emergency Accommodation (1).



59 of these 92 families identified have a preference for Standard Local Authority Accommodation, 1 Permanent Halt and 35 have not submitted an application for Social Housing Support / are not qualified applicants.

In line with the direction from the Minister, that an assessment of the accommodation needs of Travellers who are assessed under section 20 of the

Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 as being qualified for Social Housing Support, having regard to the information and figures above, **60 families are identified as in need of Social Housing Support.**

Projected Increase in Traveller Population in County Donegal 2019 – 2024

It is difficult to predict with any degree of certainty the projected need, the level of Traveller family formation in the County etc. over the course of the next five years. However, an assessment of the figures outlines that of the 92 families referred in the previous section as having a long term accommodation need, there is 10 adult children residing with families in this category and 15 children will reach the age of 18 during the lifetime of the Programme.

However, in the category of families that currently reside in local authority accommodation, 63 adult children reside with families with 41 of these aged 21 years or under. 65 additional children in this category will reach the age of 18 during the lifetime of the programme (currently aged 13 – 17 years).

Recent marriage trends also indicate that more families are looking to settle in Donegal after marriage. A further consideration of projected need is the age profile of existing families and the rate of new family formations in the County.

In line with the Minister's direction that housing authorities make an estimate of the projected needs of Traveller families arising over the five-year period of the programme, following completion of the November 2018 Assessment of Need, an in-depth analysis of family units, figures etc, research of family profiles, marriage trends and in particular an examination of age profiles, it is estimated that a projected increase of 30 Traveller families is a reasonable and realistic projected figure of families.

The increase in Traveller population and number of units and range of accommodation required will be kept under review on an ongoing basis throughout the duration of the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 – 2024 in close consultation with all the relevant agencies and in particular Donegal Travellers Project and the HSE.

Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 – 2024

Objectives & Targets

	Objectives	Dates / Timeframes	Progress / Status Report
1	Continue with Phase 2 works at the Big Isle Halting Site. Review Phase 3 works	2019 2020	Family consultation ongoing
2	Prioritise, progress and deliver Traveller-specific accommodation project at Cashel, Ardara	2019 - 2020	Project review, tender review in consultation with the Department and Council technical staff
3	Continue with the progression of small scale projects for Traveller families on a case by case basis where emergency need arises during the course of the Programme i.e. adaptation works, remedial works, refurbishment programmes, level access showers, stair lifts etc.	2019 - 2024	2019 - 2024
3	Provide 58 units of accommodation through a range of Social Housing measures. Projected provision over five year period: 2019 – 10 2022 - 10 2020 – 8 2023 - 10 2021 – 12 2024 - 8	2019 - 2024	2019 - 2024
4	Prioritise Canal Road Group Housing scheme with a view to dealing with ongoing illegal encampment issues affecting the scheme. Encourage positive family relations through range of measures and establish tenant participation programme at the scheme	2019 - 2021	2019 - 2021

Section 5

Implementation of Strategy

Range of Accommodation Type

The provision of Traveller Accommodation throughout the previous Traveller Accommodation Programmes includes:

- Local Authority Housing
- Group Housing Schemes
- Permanent Serviced Halts
- Voluntary Housing Schemes
- Private Rented Accommodation (HAP)
- Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)
- Long Term Leasing (LTL)
- Choice Based Letting (CBL)

The standard housing approach provides for the inclusion of Travellers in mainstream housing programmes. The Council's policy of considering qualifying Traveller households in the allocation of local authorities tenancies will continue in accordance with Donegal County Council's Allocation Scheme. The Council also nominates applicants from Council waiting list for the tenancies of Approved Housing Bodies.

It is government policy to promote the provision of accommodation through Voluntary Housing, Rental Accommodation Scheme and Housing Assistance Payment. Donegal County Council will continue to utilise these schemes in the provision of accommodation for Traveller households.

Donegal County Council operates Choice Based Lettings (CBL) system which enables qualified housing applicants an opportunity to express an interest in a property in a specific area as advertising on the Council's website.

Estate Management

Having regard to the Council's ongoing experiences on Local Authority estates, the Council will be attentive to estate management issues to ensure that the continued integration of Traveller households into standard housing throughout the County is successful.

Department Funding

Successful implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme will require the provision of adequate funding to achieve the objectives of the Programme. The Council will continue with current practices and procedures in relation to accessing funding for Traveller-specific projects through the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government.

Voluntary Bodies – Capital Assistance Scheme

Donegal County Council will consider any applications by an approved Voluntary Body to provide housing for Travellers under the Capital Assistance Scheme.

Interagency Consultation and Collaboration

The Council will continue to work with other agencies concerned in the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme including Voluntary Housing Associations, Donegal Travellers Project, Health Service Executive, Tusla, An Garda Síochána, Education Services, Social Welfare Services, CENA Culturally Appropriate Homes Ltd., MABS, North West Simon, adjoining local authorities including cross border and any other agency identified as the need arises.

The HSE submission references a previous model which has worked well, an interagency partnership approach focusing on supporting a family or number of families with complex needs. The submission notes that each agency representative brings a different perspective and resources to the table and the joined up approach makes a greater impact than when each agency is working separately. The Council recommend the continuation of a partnership approach when dealing with complex and difficult family cases and circumstances.

The HSE submission also recommends the development of active Traveller Interagency Group (TIG) which they feel would be a very beneficial move in developing effective interagency collaboration with respect to meeting Traveller need, including that of accommodation.

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 (or any committee member) of the LTACC may convene emergency meetings in such situations.

Cross Border Relationship

Given County Donegal's proximity to Derry and Strabane, submissions received from the Housing Executive Regional Services in Strabane and the Chief Executive of Derry City and Strabane District Council are welcomed. The Housing Executive model and approach in relation to the management and provision of accommodation for the Traveller community in Northern Ireland as well as their preparation in the five-year Traveller Housing needs assessment should be considered by Donegal County Council in the implementation of its Traveller Accommodation Programme. The next Northern Ireland Housing executive Traveller Housing needs assessment is due for publication in June 2019.

Consultation

The working relationships developed between Donegal County Council, Donegal Travellers Project and all the statutory agencies over the course of the previous programmes has led to extremely healthy and positive relations. The Council will continue to work with, support and liaise with all the relevant agencies and stakeholders in the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme. This consultation process was a critical aspect in the successful implementation of the previous Traveller Accommodation Programmes.

The elected members also have a pivotal role to play in the implementation of the Programme and discussions are ongoing throughout the duration of Programme with the members through the LTACC, various other committees as well as on an individual basis.

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Section 6

Policy Statement

1. The policy of Donegal County Council will be to provide suitable accommodation for Traveller families in its administrative area, in consultation with Travellers, Donegal Travellers Project, Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee, Public Representatives, the wider community and other statutory & voluntary bodies.
2. Donegal County Council will continue to consult with Travellers, Donegal Travellers Project, the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee and other statutory & voluntary bodies on issues relating to Traveller Accommodation. This will include the type of accommodation provided, halting sites, group housing schemes, management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation.
3. Donegal County Council recognises Travellers identity as an indigenous minority ethnic group. Where Traveller families wish to leave their accommodation for short periods, accommodation will not be considered abandoned, provided Donegal County Council has been notified and has agreed the period the accommodation will be vacant.
4. It will be the policy of Donegal County Council, within the resources available, to directly provide accommodation to Travellers in accordance with the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998.
5. Donegal County Council will not provide accommodation for Traveller families who continue to avail of accommodation in the functional area of another local authority.
6. Donegal County Council will promote:
 - (a) the involvement of tenants in the development of participation programmes on Traveller-specific accommodation
 - (b) anti-discrimination policies to ensure that Traveller tenants are not excluded, purely because they are Travellers.
7. Donegal 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 its tenants and/or housing applicants.
8. Donegal County Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy sets out the Council's approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour which includes provision that where it is considered that a person has been engaged in anti-social behaviour, or that a letting to that person would not be in the interest of good estate management, offers of accommodation may be refused or deferred in the first instance, and in the case of existing tenants, proceedings will be initiated for termination of tenancy, eviction of the tenant, and repossession of the accommodation.

In the case of existing tenants identified by Donegal County Council as responsible for anti-social behaviour, vandalising a facility or interfering with other tenants or residents of the facility, a speedy and effective response will be taken. A process incorporating the following elements is proposed:

- (a) warning notice
- (b) interview
- (c) rehabilitation programme, where appropriate
- (d) if (a), (b), and (c) do not produce the desired result, then the ultimate sanction of eviction would be pursued.

The provision of the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour strategy also applies to halting sites.

The Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1997 as amended by the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009, defines anti-social behaviour as either or both of the following:

- (a) the manufacture, production, preparation, importation, exportation, sale, supply, possession for the purposes of sale or supply, or distribution of a controlled drug (within the meaning of the Misuse of Drugs Acts 1977 and 1984)
- (b) any behaviour that causes or is likely to cause any significant or persistent danger, injury, damage, alarm, loss or fear to any person living, working or otherwise lawfully in or in the vicinity of a house provided by a housing authority, or a housing estate in which the house is situated, and includes:
 - (i) violence, threats, intimidation, coercion, harassment or serious obstruction of any person,
 - (ii) behaviour which causes any significant or persistent impairment of a person's use or enjoyment of his or her home, or
 - (iii) damage to or defacement by writing or other marks of any property, including a person's home.

9. Donegal County Council shall review the Accommodation Programme at least once in every four-year period, or at such times as the Minister may specify. In this regard, the Minister has directed that the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 – 2024 should be reviewed not later than 31st December 2021.

10. Donegal County Council will endeavour to provide, where possible and appropriate, Traveller specific accommodation, which has regard to Traveller culture and traditional economic activities.

11. In cases where Traveller families so wish and where the Housing Authority consider it appropriate, from good estate management and social point of view, efforts will be made to re-house such families in the mainstream Housing Programme in accordance with the Allocation Scheme.
12. Donegal County Council, when allocating accommodation, will have regard to the provisions of the Allocation Scheme, estate management issues, an appropriate social mix within areas, compatibility of families, anti-social behaviour, house size requirement, families circumstances including health, family size, length of time in district, family history in an area, integration into that area etc.
13. Donegal County Council will continue to provide routine maintenance services on Traveller-specific sites including portaloo maintenance, skip service etc. Protocols are in place for the reporting and carrying out of maintenance and repairs and these will continue into the new Traveller Accommodation Programme
14. Donegal County Council will actively encourage the increased participation and involvement of Travellers in maintenance programmes on their sites, encouraging tenant pride and ownership in their accommodation schemes
15. Donegal County Council will continue to provide assistance to Travellers to provide accommodation for themselves, with the aid of the fiscal incentives available including Local Authority Loans for Purchase, Mortgage Allowance, House Improvement Loan, Improvement Works in lieu of Local Authority Housing, Housing Adaptation Grants for older people and people with a disability, Caravan Grant (subject to terms of Department Circulars)
16. Donegal County Council, in co-operation with Donegal Travellers Project and the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee will deliver appropriate back up, tenancy support and training programmes for Traveller families, prior to and after the allocation of accommodation.
17. The aim of "Children First" is to promote the safety and well-being of children with parents and guardians having the main responsibility for the care and protection of children. Donegal County Council supports a collaborative interagency approach in dealing with specific accommodation cases particularly relating to children.
18. The Chair of the LTACC or any member of the committee may call a meeting of the committee in the event of an extraordinary event or crisis situation.
19. Donegal County Council recognises the pivotal role of the LTACC in the implementation of the TAP. The following core principles are fundamental in the delivery of the TAP; Equality, Non discrimination, Self determination, Collective outcomes, Empowerment, Inclusivity in decision making, Commitment to anti-poverty and high standards, Human Rights including Children's Human Rights.

20. Donegal County Council will work with Donegal Travellers Project in providing information to the Travelling Community, including LGBT Travellers about Housing and other policies.
21. It is the Council's policy to implement its Illegal Encampment Strategy to deal with the removal of temporary dwellings where and when appropriate (any tent, caravan, mobile home, vehicle, other structure or thing, which is capable of being moved from one place to another and is or was used for human habitation). The Council will also work closely with the Gardai in the implementation of Section 24 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2002 where appropriate. The enforcement of legislation will protect residents in existing Traveller accommodation as well as the general public, landowners etc.
22. On all Donegal County Council's Travellers-specific accommodation, regard will be had to guidance documentation issued through Circular by the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management entitled *Guide to Fire Safety in Existing Traveller Accommodation*. A review of Fire Safety on Traveller-specific accommodation will be completed annually including maintenance and service of Fire Points on sites.

Section 7

Emergency Accommodation

In general, emergency accommodation is provided for two nights for any one individual case. Presentation to the relevant Municipal District Area Office for case assessment is the first step in the process should a family find themselves in need of emergency accommodation.

There are several options available to Travellers who find themselves in crisis accommodation situations or homeless.

- The St. Vincent De Paul Homeless Hostel in Letterkenny (part funded by Donegal County Council)
- B&B accommodation for two nights
- Private hostel accommodation
- Deposit support for private-rented accommodation through Community Welfare Service
- Gloria House Women's Refuge, Letterkenny
- Provision of caravans on sites in cases of emergencies

All of the above options have been utilised by Travellers in Donegal. Emergency accommodation situations have arisen for a variety of reasons including family feuding, evictions from rented accommodation, non payment or rent, receivership issues, families arriving in the County without accommodation planned in advance, domestic violence etc.

An interagency approach has been utilised in a significant number of Traveller homeless cases over the duration of the last programme. Cases have been referred through the Homeless Action Team (HAT) comprising of representatives from a range of statutory services and other agencies.

It is the Council's experience, that the provision of accommodation on its own is not the solution to complex difficult homeless cases. Provision of accommodation should be seen as the start of a process as opposed to the conclusion. Families present with varying needs whether medical, financial, family issues etc. and interagency intervention has yielded the best outcomes for homeless families.

There is an ongoing partnership approach in crisis homeless situations between Donegal County Council and Donegal Travellers Project. The Council also works closely with North West Simon and St. Colmcille Hostel in dealing with complex homeless situations. The Council welcomes the HSE's submission to the Programme regarding Traveller families in Donegal experiencing homelessness noting that the needs of Travellers should be addressed in the same way as a member of the general population. Reference to forging links between the Homeless Action Team and LTACC are also noted.

Caravan replacement for families was also utilised over the course of the previous programme. The predominant reasons for emergency replacement were fire, storm, poor repair and health reasons. Minceir Whiden submission to the Programme makes specific reference to local authority support for Travellers in purchasing Residential Standard Mobile Homes and an increase in budgets when providing mobile homes, to enable the purchase of better standard and quality accommodation for Traveller families. A review in this regard is recommended in consultation with the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government.

Section 8

Traveller-specific Accommodation

Donegal County Council currently maintains four Traveller-specific schemes.

Ballintra halting site (Ballintra)

Significant redevelopment and refurbishment works were completed in 2018 creating a modern spacious site. A small play area was also incorporated into the works programme.



Big Isle halting site (Manorcunningham)

Extension works (Phase 1) were completed at the site towards the end of 2018. The provision of 4 additional bays was required to address overcrowding and associated issues at the site. Plans for the refurbishment of the existing site (Phase 2) are proposed for 2019.



Canal Road Group Housing Scheme (Letterkenny)

Canal Road comprises of 8 dwellings and 4 halts and is located off the Neil T. Blaney Road in Letterkenny

Cullion Road Group Housing Scheme (Letterkenny)

The Cullion Road scheme is a 4 dwelling scheme located on the Cullion Road just off the Port Road heading towards the Polestar roundabout.

Permanent Halts

Permanent halts are also located in Kerrykeel and Ardara. It is proposed to complete refurbishment of the site at Ardara in 2019 / 2020.

Transient Accommodation

The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014 – 2018 included as a specific objective of the Programme undertaking to complete an overall review of the position in terms of Transient accommodation. Over a period of two years, information was collated and a report was presented to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee in November 2016. The report concluded that *“evidence indicates that there has not been a demonstrated need for Transient families to be catered for by means of Transient sites. In light of the findings of the review, it is concluded that there is no identified requirement for a Transient site in Co. Donegal”*

The findings of the report were ratified by the committee.

Provision of a Traveller site in South Donegal

The HSE submission to the Programme notes that the building of three temporary sites in South Donegal would contribute to the easing of the situation where families were residing on the roadside in South Donegal.

Donegal Travellers Project submits that the design and building of three halting sites in South Donegal with each site to comprise of four-bays will address accommodation needs in this area.

Over the final two months of the previous Traveller Accommodation Programme, accommodation plans were put in place to address the accommodation needs of four families residing on the roadside in South Donegal. Standard local authority accommodation was the clear preference accommodation choice for these families as it is with the remaining families in similar circumstances in the South of the County.

Methodology for progressing permanent Traveller-specific accommodation proposals

The methodology set out in this section for progressing permanent Traveller-specific accommodation proposals was included in previous Traveller Accommodation Programmes. This process and strategy is an essential part of progressing sites from that of a potential site to a developed site and allows for openness and transparency at all stages for all parties.

The five-point methodology details as follows:

1. The sites to be examined from a planning/technical view point to ascertain if there are any fatal flaws, which would rule the site out
2. Arising from the output of this review, details of the site to be presented to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee, the Housing Strategic Policy Committee, followed by the Municipal District Area Committee
3. Sites then to be included in the Draft Local Area Plan/County Development Plan for publication as part of that process. Public meetings to be held in areas where sites are proposed
4. Following completion of detailed plans of proposed development, normal public consultation process under existing planning regulations to take place
5. Report on consultation to be presented to elected members in the context of making a decision as regards whether or not the proposed development should take place

Development of any land to be acquired will be subject to agreement under Part VIII of the Local Government (Planning & Development) Act 2000. Public consultation in relation to such sites will be conducted in accordance with procedures set out under the above regulations. Wherever possible, suitable sites will be acquired by agreement, however, if necessary, the acquisition of suitable sites by Compulsory Purchase Order is not ruled out.

Criteria to identify sites suitable for Traveller-specific accommodation

- Must comply with Planning and Development Regulations
- Location to take account of Traveller tradition / history of an area
- Location to have regard to individual family needs/requirements in particular safety, health and education
- Consultation with Travellers, Travellers Representatives and Organisations, Elected Members, General Public and other agencies.
- Take cognisance of the needs and compatibility of extended family groupings
- To contribute to improve relations between Travellers and Settled communities
- To include proper landscaping to ensure the site is not only functional but also pleasant to live on and aesthetically pleasing. This should include not only the site itself but also the outer boundary
- To have adequate public lighting for security and safety purposes

- To ensure an appropriate balance between personal privacy and communal needs compatible with the requirements of the Fire Officer
- To include facilities for play space
- Where possible cater for changing family structures;
- To be accessible and appropriate for Traveller tenants with a disability
- That all Health & Safety regulations will be taken into account
- Accommodation to comply with current guidelines issued by the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government, Department of Health and Children as well as Department of Fire and Emergency Management

Section 9

Conclusion

The trend in Donegal over the previous Traveller Accommodation Programme has been a preference for standard social housing and this trend continues into the new Programme.

The Council has an outstanding record in the provision of accommodation for Travellers and with the continued commitment from all stakeholders to work together, it is envisaged that this good work will continue into and throughout the incoming Programme.

The Council recognises that the provision of appropriate supports is a critical factor in ensuring that the accommodation solutions delivered for families are successful. All stakeholders involved in the process of delivering accommodation must take cognisance of the fact that the delivery of an accommodation solution in the more complex cases should be seen as the start of a process to assist and support the family going forward rather than viewing the delivery of accommodation as the end of a process where an accommodation need has been met.

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

The Council acknowledges the significant contribution of all the relevant stakeholders in the successful implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme and in particular the day to day interactions with Donegal Travellers Project staff.

A further key component in the implementation of the Programme is the role of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC). The LTACC has been pivotal in Donegal over the past number of Programmes. The positive and constructive relations between the elected representatives, Council officials and Traveller representatives has been exemplary. The 2019 – 2024 Programme affords the LTACC a further opportunity to continue to build on the excellent work delivering on accommodation for the Travelling community in County Donegal.