



LONGFORD TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION PLAN

2019 – 2024

Introduction:

Longford County Council under the provisions of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998, is required to prepare and adopt a new Traveller Accommodation Programme for the five-year period 1st January 2019 to 31st December 2024. The new Programme will replace the current 2014-2018 Programme which expired on 31st December 2018.

In July 2018 Minister Damien English T.D., Minister for Housing & Urban Development issued Circular 35/2018. This circular under Section 10 extended the Traveller Accommodation Plan 2014-2018 to June 30th 2019. The new Traveller Accommodation Plan would be for a five year period from 1st July 2019 to 30th June 2024.

The following statutory obligations have been placed on the local authority to:

1. To prepare and adopt a Traveller Accommodation Programme, subject to periodic review, for the provision of Traveller accommodation in the County.
2. To provide for a public notification and consultation process in respect of the preparation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme, including an opportunity to comment on draft programmes.
3. To take reasonable steps to secure the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme in the County.
4. To provide for the establishment of a Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (see Appendix 1 LTACC committee membership) to facilitate consultation with Travellers about the preparation and implementation of Traveller Accommodation Programme.
5. To extend to halting sites the powers available to local authorities under the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1997 relating to anti-social behaviour and estate management.

In Circular 35/2018, the Minister for Housing, Planning & Local Government has directed that a review of this Accommodation Programme should be carried out not later than 31st December 2021.

Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee:

In accordance with the provisions of Section 21 and 22 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) 1998 Act, a *Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee* has been established to facilitate consultation between the Local Authority and the Local Traveller community. The Committee meets on a quarterly basis to advise Longford County Council on the provision and management of accommodation of Travellers.

Membership of the Longford Local Traveller Consultative Committee comprises of five Traveller representatives, six elected members and five County Council officials.

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

Policy Statement

Section 10(2)(c) requires that a statement of policy in relation to the meeting accommodation needs is included in the programme.

Longford County Council is committed to addressing equality and human rights concerns for all in the delivery of its Housing Functions, including Traveller Accommodation, by the promotion of the values of dignity, inclusion, social justice, democracy and autonomy.

It is the policy of Longford County Council to provide a high standard of living accommodation, which will be based upon the distinct needs of Travellers, which will be accommodated in so far as possible.

Travellers 'are an identifiable group of people, identified both by themselves and by other members of the community (referred to for convenience as the 'settled community') as people with their own distinctive lifestyle, traditionally of a nomadic nature but not now habitual wanderers. They have needs, wants and values which are different in some ways from those of the settled community.'

The Traveller Community was officially recognised by the state as an ethnic minority in March 2017. In his statement to Dail Eireann, the then Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, TD, noted that the Traveller Community has their own unique heritage and culture and that it is reasonable to identify as both a Traveller and Irish.

Longford County Council recognises this and endeavours to provide accommodation supports to the Indigenous Travelling Community.

Applicants for social housing support, including Traveller specific accommodation are required to submit a valid housing application together with all required documentation in accordance with the Social Housing (Assessment of Need) Regulations, 2011. Any specific family circumstances e.g. disabilities will be considered in determining the most appropriate social housing solution.

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

- Standard social housing
- Group Housing
- Units provided by an Approved Housing Body
- Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)
- Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)
- Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan Scheme

When allocating properties Longford County Council 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 and house size requirements. Separate waiting lists will not operate for the Travelling community.

Homelessness:

Individuals or families who present as homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless can avail of the Homeless services. A full homeless assessment will be completed, and the most appropriate course of action will be established.

There is currently provision for homeless female and male Travellers in Longford in St Martha's Hostel and Bethany House. The Hostels are staffed 24 hours a day and provide an essential service in Longford. Homeless Travellers must present to the Local Authority in Longford where they are entered on PASS (Pathway Accommodation & Support System) to ensure the best possible outcome.

Halting Site Accommodation:

It is the policy of Longford County Council to provide Traveller specific accommodation for Travellers on permanent halting sites, if so requested by Travellers themselves. Currently there are two families living in Willow Park.

Unauthorised Encampments/Transient Accommodation:

The incidents of unauthorised encampments in Longford County is infrequent and seasonal. Hence there is no immediate requirement for a transient site in Longford. Transient sites will be considered on a regional basis. Consideration should instead be concentrated on Traveller families currently living in the County.

Back up Services and Support:

Longford Community Resources Ltd. (LCRL) has secured a worker who provides a wide range of support to members of the Travelling Community. In addition, a Public Health Nurse for Traveller health is employed by the HSE. This nurse covers counties Longford and Westmeath.

Strategy/Implementation Statement:

Longford County Council is the implementing Authority for the Accommodation Programme. The council co-operates and Co-ordinates with other agencies and adjoining authorities to meet the accommodation needs of Travellers. In particular, a number of groups have an important role to play in securing the implementation of the programme including:

- The Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee
- Housing SPC
- Health Service Executive

- Longford Community Resources Limited
- Longford Traveller Inter Agency Group
- MABS
- An Garda Siochana
- Department of Education
- Voluntary Housing Groups
- Department of Social Protection

Longford County Council seeks the cooperation of the above groups to ensure implementation of the Programme. Progress is monitored by the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.

2. Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014 – 2018

2.1 Background

The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014 – 2018 was adopted by the members of Longford County Council on 27th February 2014. In drawing up and adopting this Traveller Accommodation Programme, in accordance with Section 9 of the Housing Act 1988, as amended, and Section 6 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998, Longford County Council assessed and identified the accommodation needs of Traveller families to be met during the Programme, from 1st January 2014 to 31st December, 2018.

The overall targets for delivery under the Longford Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014 – 2018 were as follows:

	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Group Housing	0	0	0	0	0
Permanent Halting Site	2	0	0	0	2
Transient Halting Sites	0	0	0	0	0
Standard Housing	9	9	9	9	36
Rent Supplement/HAP	19	19	19	19	76
RAS	12	12	12	12	48
Leases	1	1	1	1	4

Total	43	41	41	41	166
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TAP outputs 2014 - 2018

	Year 1: 2014	Year 2: 2015	Year 3: 2016	Year 4: 2017	Year 5: 2018	Totals
Transient	0	0	0	0	0	0
Permanent Halting Site – 2 occupied bays	0	0	0	0	0	0
Standard L.A Housing	9	15	12	7	13	56
HAP	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	6	14
RAS/Lease	13	1	3	3	3	23
Voluntary Housing Body	0	5	3	1	3	12
Total	22	21	18	19	25	105

You will note from above that the targets were not achieved. However, these figures do not include Travellers that were in receipt of rent supplement during the five year period. Long term rent supplement was replaced by the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP). This commenced in January 2017.

Additional Works on Traveller Accommodation 2014 – 2018:

In addition to the outputs achieved, works were carried out to Willow Park Halting site in 2014/2015. These works consisted of upgrading the two bays and carrying out some demolition works.

Public Consultation Process

Longford County Council, in accordance with Section 8 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998, gave public notice on 8th January 2019 of its intention to prepare a Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme for the period 2019 –2024 and

to carry out an assessment of existing and projected accommodation needs of Travellers.

2no Submissions were received from Longford Community Resources (LCRL)

Submission 1:

The following issues were highlighted in the submissions

- Overcrowding
- Discrimination
- Healthy Environment
- People with disabilities
- Accommodation Needs

Submission 2:

- Outlined findings of survey carried out by Longford Community Resources (LCRL) which identified accommodation needs of Travellers
- Suggestions regarding the new Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024.
- Traveller Accommodation Concerns
- Suggestion in relation to the LTACC

ASSESSMENT TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION NEEDS/PROJECTED NEED:

Census 2016 recorded that the total number of usually resident Irish Travellers enumerated was 30,987. This figure was an increase of 5.1% on the 2011 figure.

Of the towns with a population of 1,500 or more persons, Longford had the second highest number of Irish Travellers with 730 persons. The biggest percentage increase was in Longford Town where Traveller numbers increased by 40.8%. Longford had the highest absolute increase in Traveller numbers of any county, increasing by 303. Longford also had the highest number of Travellers per head of population, with 25.7 Travellers for every thousand people.

The biggest increase in Travellers living in permanent housing occurred in Longford, where the number increased by 43.1 per cent (or 295 people) since 2011

In accordance with Section 9 of the Housing Act 1988, as amended, and Section 6 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1988, Longford County Council assessed and identified the accommodation needs of Traveller families to be met during the period of this Programme, from 1st January 2019 to 31st December, 2024 including the need for sites.

The assessment relates to the existing accommodation need and the projected need estimated to arise. The following housing options will be utilised:

- Standard Local Authority Housing
- Voluntary Housing Bodies
- Group Housing
- Long Term Leasing
- Rental Accommodation Scheme
- Housing Assistance Payment Scheme
- Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan

Within County Longford, due to some Travellers having their own means, there have been a number of Traveller families who have been able to purchase accommodation from their own resources.

2019 – 2024 PROGRAMME TARGETS

An analysis has been carried out of the current Housing Waiting List. Twenty three approved housing applicants have identified themselves as travellers. Having regard to this it is considered that a total of 108 units of accommodation should be provided over the 5 year programme to cater for the existing demand and projected demand as follows:

	Year 1: 2019/20	Year 2: 2020/21	Year 3: 2021/22	Year 4: 2022/23	Year 5: 2023/24	Totals
Transient	0	0	0	0	0	0
Permanent Halting Site – 2 occupied bays	0	0	0	0	0	0
Standard L.A Housing	12	12	12	12	12	60
HAP	6	5	5	4	4	24
RAS/Lease	2	2	2	2	2	10
Voluntary Housing Body	2	2	2	2	2	10
Group Housing	0	0	0	4	0	4
Total	22	21	21	24	20	108

CONCLUSION

Longford County Council's Housing Department will continue to provide support To the Traveller families in the area to ensure the best possible outcome to meet their needs.

Indication from Housing Needs Assessments carried out on Traveller's over the period of 2014 – 2019 continue to reflect a preference for standard types of housing as opposed to Halting site accommodation.

Longford County Council is responsible for the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Plan in consultation with Traveller Groups Representatives, HSE, Social Protection, The Department of Housing , Planning & Local Government, An Garda Siochana and all other appropriate agencies.

Programme Monitoring

Progress will be monitored and, as prescribed, a formal review of the programme will be carried out by no later than December 2021.

APPENDIX 1 - LTACC Membership – 2019 to 2024

Name	Address
Cllr. Micheal Carrigy	Elected Cllr. - Chairperson
Cllr. John Browne	Elected Cllr.
Cllr. Peggy Nolan	Elected Cllr.
Cllr. Joe Flaherty	Elected Cllr.
Cllr Martin Monaghan	Elected Cllr.
Cllr.Gerry Warnock	Elected Cllr.
Mr. Frank Horne	LA Official
Mr. Gerry Gillen	LA Official
Ms. A. Glancy	LA Official
Mr. John Brannigan	LA Official
Ms. Orla Maguire	LA Official
Ms. Caroline Stokes	Traveller Rep.
Bridget Power	Traveller Rep.
Patrick Stokes	Traveller Rep.
Lorraine O'Reilly	Traveller Rep.
(New member of Committee – to be appointed)	Public Health Nurse for Traveller Health Longford/Westmeath