

Galway City Council
Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024
Year Four Progress Report
December 2023

The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 - 2024 was adopted by Galway City Council on 8th July 2019.

This report highlights the progress to date since its adoption in line with the requirements of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998. The report also outlines the achievement of accommodation targets for the period July 2022 to June 2023 (Year 4).

Section 10(2)(e) of the Act requires that the Programme must include specific measures or proposals for each implementing authority or other party concerned. It is considered that such measures should cover:

- The provision of the range of accommodation required,
- Assistance to Travellers to provide accommodation for their own use,
- Assistance to approved housing bodies in respect of the provision or management of accommodation for Travellers, and
- Arrangements for the proper management, including assistance towards the management, of the above accommodation.

Section 10(2) of the 1998 Act, sets out that annual targets shall be included in the Programme, in respect of implementation of the Programme. The targets should include details of the numbers of units of accommodation proposed to be delivered for each of the five years of the programme for Traveller specific accommodation (including group housing, bays on halting sites, including transient sites) both new and refurbished and for standard housing.

Section 17(1)(a) of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998, provides that a relevant housing authority shall review its Accommodation Programme at least once in each three-year period, or at such time as directed by the Minister. Any amendment to the Accommodation Programme proposed following any such review must be made within seven months and is subject to the same procedures and requirements, including public consultation. A mid-review of TAP has been completed and is scheduled for consideration by the LTACC at their October meeting.

The report is structured across the following headings:

1. Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee
2. Annual Targets Analysis
3. Capital Programme Update
4. Planned Maintenance / Upgrades
5. Sub-Committees

1. Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee:

In August 2019, Galway City Council in partnership with the GTM held elections in each electoral area for the position of Traveller Reps to sit on the LTACC. Reps and deputy reps from each area were successfully elected. Equality & Diversity Training was delivered to LTACC members on the 13th December 2019 & 23rd January 2020 by Mr. Niall Crowley and Ms. Maria Joyce.

On 29th January 2020, the first meeting of the newly constituted LTACC convened. An Independent Chair, Mr. Niall Crowley, was appointed by agreement of all members. This appointment was agreed initially for a year and was extended twice by agreement for a further one year period. The LTACC held three meetings in 2022, 29th January, 1st July and 28th October. The meeting scheduled for the 8th April was cancelled due to the ongoing COVID 19 emergency situation. Two sub groups were proposed and appointed by the LTACC – an Estate management Sub Group and an Operational Sub Group. Both groups comprise of elected members, officials & Traveller Reps.

In 2022, four meetings were held in February, May, October and November. In 2023, two meetings were held to date in February and June with a further two scheduled for September and December 2023. The Galway Traveller Movement representative resigned in January 2021 and the Westside representative has now assumed that position on the committee. The deputy Westside representative as elected in August, 2019 has agreed to take up the vacant position on the Committee.

2. Annual Target Analysis:

Section 6 of the 1998 Act (as amended of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009) requires housing authorities, for the purposes of preparing a programme, in respect of their functional area, to make 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, including the need for sites. In making an assessment, a housing authority is required to have regard to the estimate of the number of Travellers for whom accommodation will be required during the course of the programme and the summary of social housing assessments prepared under section 21 (c) of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 as it relates to Travellers.

Year 1: The targets below refer to the period from July 2019 to June 2020

Accommodation Type	2020 Target	Total Achieved to date
Standard Local Authority (incl Transfers)	10	14 & 2 transfers from July 2019 – Dec 2019 11 & 4 transfers in 2020
AHB standard housing	10	10 (1 is a Housing First supported tenancy)
Extensions to Standard Local Authority	1	(3 completed in 2019 relating to the previous plan)
Group Housing Scheme (LA and AHB)	0	0
Culturally Specific Traveller Accommodation	5 (1 scheme)	0
Permanent Residential Halting Site	2	5
Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)	1	0
Long-Term Leasing Scheme	1	0
Housing Assistance Payment	20	4 Homeless HAP from July 2019 – Dec 2019 10 Homeless HAP in 2020
Total	50	61

Year 2: The targets below refer to the period from July 2020 to June 2021

Accommodation Type	2021 Target	Total Achieved
Standard Local Authority (incl Transfers)	10	17
AHB standard housing	10	14
Extensions to Standard Local Authority	1	0
Group Housing Scheme (LA and AHB)	10 (2 schemes)	0
Culturally Specific Traveller Accommodation	20 (3 schemes)	0
Permanent Residential Halting Site	1	2
Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)*	1	0
Long-Term Leasing Scheme	1	0
Housing Assistance Payment	20	11 (includes 5 Homeless HAP)
Total	74	44

Year 3: The targets below refer to the period from July 2021 to June 2022

Accommodation Type	2022 Target	Total Achieved
Standard Local Authority (incl Transfers)	10	11
AHB standard housing	5	15
Extensions to Standard Local Authority	1	0
Group Housing Scheme (LA and AHB)	0	0
Culturally Specific Traveller Accommodation	0	0
Permanent Residential Halting Site	1	0
Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)*	1	0
Long-Term Leasing Scheme	1	1
Housing Assistance Payment	20	1
Total	39	28

Year 4: The targets below refer to the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

Accommodation Type	2023 Target	Total Achieved
Standard Local Authority (incl Transfers)	10	19
AHB standard housing	5	4
Extensions to Standard Local Authority	1	0

Group Housing Scheme (LA and AHB)	0	0
Culturally Specific Traveller Accommodation	0	0
Permanent Residential Halting Site	1	0
Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)*	1	0
Long-Term Leasing Scheme	1	0
Housing Assistance Payment	20	0
Total	39	23

3. Capital Programme Update:

The table below provides an overview of progress in relation to the capital schemes noted in TAP 2019 – 2024. A combined sum of **€7,780,346** has been agreed for the provision of Traveller accommodation under the schemes below.

	Location	Update
8 Culturally Specific Traveller Units	Keeraun	Stage 2 approval received. Part 10 planning publication September 2021. Additional surveys required. Decision anticipated Q4 2022. On site Q2 2023. €3,692,698 approved at Stage 2. Refused by An Bord Pleanala Q1 2023
4 Culturally Specific Traveller Units	Doughiska	CAS/CALF Funding approved. Part 8 publication delayed pending clarity on timeframes for knotweed removal – projected Part 8 publication Q1 2024. Respond - €1,278,376 approved at Stage 1.
5 Culturally Specific Traveller Units	Circular Road	Stage 2 approval received January 2021. Part 8 approved June 2022.. Decanting of site will be required. GCC in partnership with CENA. Funding of €1,673,862 approved at Stage 2. (redesign of existing halting site) Will be on site Q3 2023 with 15 month completion date.
3 Culturally Specific Traveller Units	Headford Road	Stage 2 approval for 21 homes and 3 Traveller specific homes April '22. Part X planning published June 2022. Pending ABP approval, procure contractor, commence on site in Q1 2023. Funding of €1,135,410 approved at Stage 2. Refused by An Bord Pleanala Q4 2022.
8 Culturally Specific Traveller Units	Merlin Lands	Prelim design stage. Stage 1 application pending. Additional adjacent lands to be acquired 2022. Engagement with GCC planners re proposed development ongoing. Will not be completed by 2024 and will be noted for delivery in the next TAP.
5 Culturally Specific Traveller Units	Doughiska (redesign of St. Nicholas	Preliminary proposals are being considered for the redevelopment of the existing halting site and replacement with group / Traveller specific homes. Potential for 5 units (similar to Circular Road) to be included in

	Halting Site)	next TAP for delivery. Consultation with residents will be required in advance of design team engagement.
8 Unit Group Scheme	Fana Glas Ballybane	Wider housing proposal for the area being considered. Submission seeking DHLGH funding approval in 2022. Will not be completed by 2024 and will be noted for delivery in the next TAP.

4. Planned Maintenance / Upgrades

Group Housing Scheme Upgrades

A programme of works is being developed to upgrade the existing stock of Traveller group housing schemes across the city. Funding provision was secured in the 2022 budget to commence a cycle of such planned works over the following three years, 2022 to 2025.

Condition surveys were planned in 2022 with the first phase of works following thereafter.

Tender documents for the appointment of consultants to carry out Traveller accommodation condition surveys and subsequent works was published on etenders in 2022, No tenders were received by the June closing date, it was retendered in June and again no submissions were received.

The detailed project brief covering the condition survey works is being updated that describes the planned implementation of works beginning with listing of properties, reporting on identification of defects and prescription of remedial works. It is proposed to retender the condition surveys project and subsequent works in early 2024.

Work will be prioritised based on need identified in surveys. Any existing deficiencies will be addressed, and it will signal a move to a planned maintenance approach to maintenance of Traveller Accommodation.

Carrowbrowne Halting sites.

Works to upgrade **heating and hot water systems** at the Carrowbrowne 20 bay site commenced in 2021 and are fully complete. The works included the provision of mechanical, electrical services installation and works to upgrade the existing district heating system by carrying out modifications and remedial works to the existing heating systems and water systems. €287,997 has been recouped from the Department for costs incurred during the works in this period.

The traffic calming measures at the Carrowbrowne site have been successfully upgraded.

The **sewerage pumping stations** on both Carrowbrowne sites underwent upgrades in Q2 2022, new sewerage pumps were installed including new access covers with modern safety features. Annual pump servicing and drains are carried out by the installation contractor.

The installation of **traffic calming measures** and associated works for the **Temporary Halting** site were completed in July 2022. The works involved the laying of macadam-based speed ramps at 3 locations, the installation of appropriate signage and road markings. The works were completed with all ramps and signs. A local specialist contractor was used at a cost of **€8,950**. Traffic calming measures to the 20 bay Transient Site went to tender in Q3 2022, with the works to be completed in 2023 subject to funding approval. Funding was subsequently refused for this works.

Tender documents for the refurbishment of the **community centre** on the Transient 20-bay site were published in Q2 2022. Proposed works include the replacement of 2 Gas boilers for the district heating

system. A funding application to the Department for these works was not approved but the Council will fund the cost of the works from own resources if required. There were no replies to the Tender published on eTenders therefore the Council has engaged a Contractor directly. Works were completed in Q4 2022 at a cost of c. **€77,000.**

A funding application was submitted to the TAU towards costs of **upgrade of the play facility** at Carrowbrowne Transient 20 bay site. While an initial €17,500 per local authority was preliminarily available from Dormant Accounts Funding, Council submitted an application for €94k. The application for funding has been successful and Council has been awarded €94,894 towards the upgrade of the play facility. Procurement of a contractor has commenced through e-tenders. Works to be completed by year end.

Doughiska Road Halting Site

The following works have been completed at the Doughiska Road Halting Site:

- Jetting of sewer lines.
- Servicing of all hose reels.
- Testing of all fire hydrants.
- Riddance programmes and monitoring of waste.
- Inspection surveys of all fire alarms.

Works planned at the Doughiska Road Halting Site.

Servicing and repairs to the solid fuel heating appliances and chimneys are in planning at the time of writing of this document.

Tuam Road Halting Site

The following works have been undertaken at the Tuam Road Halting Site:

- Jetting of sewer lines.
- Servicing of all hose reels.
- Testing of all fire hydrants.
- Riddance programmes and monitoring of waste.
- Inspection surveys of all fire alarms.
- Maintenance of the community centre

Cul Tra Halting Site

The following works have been undertaken at the Cul Tra Halting Site:

- Testing and servicing of all fire hydrants.
- Riddance programmes and monitoring of waste.
- Inspection surveys of all fire alarms.
- Maintenance of the community centre

Fire Safety / Traveller Specific Housing - Upgrade of smoke / heat carbon alarms and fire blankets

A contractor was appointed in 2021 to carry out a review of all lifesaving equipment i.e. smoke, heat and carbon alarms, fire blankets installed in Traveller specific accommodation including halting sites and Traveller group housing schemes. The works also included a Safe Electric Periodic Certificate issued for each installation. Works commenced in Q2 2021 and are complete. Funding of €28,942.50 has been approved for recoupment from the Department.

Annual Condition Surveys are carried out of alarms, Heat, Smoke and Carbon along with inspection of Fire Blankets. Any issues found at time of survey, will be rectified on the day.

Annual servicing and cleaning of all the solid fuel appliances and flues will be carried out in Q4 in all Halting Sites welfare units.

Issuance and distribution of fire packs to all mobile homes is imminent in Q4 2023 in all city council halting sites, both authorised and unauthorised units. Instructions on the use of these fire packs are being prepared and will also be provided to the mobile home occupants.

Property Acquisitions

The damaged property at Kiltulla, Oranmore previously was assessed, and demolition and rebuild are required. A design team was appointed to bring the project through design, planning, and construction phases. A planning application was lodged with Galway County Council in September 2021 with an initial decision due on the 25th November 2021. A subsequent planning application was required and was lodged, with a decision date due in March 2022. Planning permission was approved on the 14th March 2022. An appeal has subsequently been with An Bord Pleanála and a decision with a grant of Planning Permission was issued by ABP in August 2023. This project will be progressed by the Councils Technical Team within the Capital Delivery Unit.

Acquisitions - Traveller Accommodation Support Unit Funding

In 2022 and 2023 Work progressed on delivery of units through individual unit acquisitions through funding from the Traveller Accommodation Support Unit. Three units were purchase during the period applicable for this reporting period. The table below demonstrates the number of units purchased to date.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Unit Detail</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>West</u>
2022	3 Bed House		1
2023	3 Bed House	1	
2023	4 Bed House	1	
2023	3 Bed House		2

Replacement Caravans / Caravan Loans

2022

Funding approved in GCC budget 2022 for replacement of up to 4 caravans at 50% of cost with balance to be funded by the TAU, subject to prioritisation and funding approval. Council have agreed to acquire one caravan for a family on the Doughiska halting site due to over-crowding. This acquisition will exhaust the full budget for 2022 as recoupment of 50% of costs will not be permissible in this instance. Details of the 2022 Pilot caravan loan scheme were announced on the 18th July 2022 and Council will now consider all future applications for replacement caravans under the terms of the scheme. Galway City Council was given an allocation of 4 loans in 2022.

4 Caravan Loans were offered to eligible applicants in December 2022 and 1 caravan has been purchased to date.

2023

The National Pilot Caravan Loan Scheme 2023 was launched in July 2023. Galway City Council was given an allocation of 4 loans. Four qualifying Traveller Families were offered loans in early November 2023. The loan amount is a maximum of €40,000 inc VAT.

Galway City Council / TAU Funded Works 2022/3

In addition to funding allocated in the revenue budget for general maintenance and management of Traveller accommodation in the city, €1,104,915.70 was approved and / or recouped from the Department of Housing Traveller Accommodation Unit for expenditure incurred in the period July 2022 to June 2023.

Funding totalling €47,011 in relation to the Heating upgrade for Carrowbrowne was recouped in the second half of 2022. Fire Safety Halting sites works totalling €39,362.18 were undertaken during the period.

Clean-ups to Traveller Accommodation sites has cost c.€120,000 in 2023 to date, this is mainly funded from Galway City Councils Revenue Budget.

	Expenditure	TAU Income
Traveller Management and Maintenance Claim 2021/2	€1,037,142	€107,904
Carrowbrowne Heating Upgrade		€47,011.70
Property Acquisitions	€910,000	€910,000
Safety Works to Halting Sites	€39,362.18	0.00
Caravan Acquisitions	€40,000	€40,000
Total	€1,093,074.00	€1,104,915.70

5. Sub-Committees:

Estate Management Sub-Committee

A sub-committee of the LTACC was established in 2020 to focus on Estate Management in Traveller Specific Accommodation. This Committee met 4 times in 2020, 3 times in 2021 and 3 times in 2022 to date. The focus of the sub-committee, as agreed at the outset, remains:

- To advise and provide direction to the LTACC on issues relating to Estate Management in Traveller Specific Accommodation.
- To assist in the development of an Estate Management Strategy for Traveller Specific Accommodation.
- To promote best practice in Estate Management with the aim of improving the quality of life for those in Traveller Specific Accommodation.
- To support the application of the Equality & Human Rights Statement developed by Galway City's LCDC in actions and initiatives relating to the Estate Management of Traveller Specific Accommodation.

The initial meetings of the sub-committee focused on agreeing Terms of Reference and a direction and remit for the committee, with discussions taking place on the definition of estate management, goals, objectives and legacy. In addition to these general considerations, specific work tasks and

actions were discussed, including Galway City's Severe Weather Response Plan, public consultation during Covid19 and budgetary concerns in Traveller Specific Accommodation.

Through the committee, a positive perspective on estate management will be promoted, with a focus on building relationships, sustainable communities, engagement and integration. Work has commenced on specific actions, including the development of a Galway City Council staff directorate, the drafting of an Estate Management Strategy and the promotion of Residents Associations within Traveller Specific Accommodation.

Arising from this sub group, Galway City Council staff on the Estate Management Team and the Social Work Teams have met GTM in a collaborative space on two occasions thus far to foster shared understanding and learning with a view to enhancing the above work – support has been given to form a Residents Association, ongoing work in relation to the A-Z directory, sharing of the tenant handbook with the GTM with a view to their input.

The input of the technical and maintenance department on this sub group has facilitated enhanced protocols around the reporting of all maintenance issues in a more robust manner. The focus on moving away from crisis management to planned maintenance has been central to these discussions and support was sought and given by the GTM to assist in addressing issues on the ground, through their network of primary care workers.

2023 progress

The drafting of an Estate Management Strategy for Traveller Specific accommodation continues to be progressed and it is envisaged that this will now be complete in Q4 2023. A consultant was appointed in June 2022 and has met with target groups to formulate the strategy during September and October 2022. The consultant has presented to the LTACC on 2 occasions in 2023.

Carrabrowne Transient Site - Wifi on Halting Sites.

NBI (national Broadband Ireland) have installed all network infrastructure/poles on the service road of this site and residents of the Halting site can now subscribe via one of NBI BB retail partners (Eir Vodafone Sky etc.)

Licence Agreement – Community Facility Carrabrowne Transient Site.

Blake and Kenny have drafted a Licence Agreement for the Carrabrowne Transient Site, and has been forwarded to the GTM for consideration.

Residents Groups

The Residents of Halting Sites can set up a Residents group and apply for a grant of between €500 and €1,000 per year for landscaping /planting /painting. Funds are paid through the GTM. Two Residents Groups have availed of this funding in 2023.

Playground at Carrabrowne Transient Site

Funding for this project was secured under the dormant funds account. This Playground is completed, and is operational. It is a positive addition to the Halting Site. Galway City Council cleared an area close to the Community Centre, already railed off, which the residents indicated they would like to turn into a memorial garden. The area is left ready for planting by the residents.

A Traveller Liaison Officer was appointed in November 2023 and a Traveller Accommodation Officer will be appointed in December 2023.

Operational Sub-Committee

The LTACC Operational Subcommittee met twice in 2020, five times in 2021, five times in 2022 and three times in 2023. The work of the sub-committee has been underpinned by the agreed primary objectives, which are to:

- Support and drive the implementation of the planned TAP housing/accommodation projects in between the LTACC meetings.
- Have a key focus on the delivery of the Traveller specific culturally appropriate accommodation projects
- Enable and foster a space to discuss and troubleshoot issues of planning, design and communication including ongoing consultation with the Traveller community.
- Foster a space that generates ideas and innovation that will support the full implementation of the TAP targets
- To promote best practice in the provision of housing and accommodation for the Traveller community
- Apply the Equality & Human Rights Statement developed by Galway City's LCDC to the work of the subcommittee.

Attention and focus has been on the upgrade works at Carrowbrowne, profiling the needs of families on Carrowbrowne to seek solutions and timelines for those families, progressing the Circular Road and Headford Road Schemes as well as the Keeraun development and Cul Trá closure. The focus of the subgroup in 2023 has been driving forward actions agreed such as the following:

- The upgrading works to address maintenance issues in Carrowbrowne.
- The Capital Progress Report.
- Consultation with families from different sites about future options (Headford Road, Cul Trá).
- Ensuring families onsite in Carrowbrowne have access to GCC Choice Based Letting System and GCC facilitating a CBL session with GTM staff to support families on sites to express interest in properties.
- Drive the Capital Section to proactively source acquisitions of land in the city which may be used to accommodate Traveller specific developments.
- Operational Subgroup to drive the requirement for equality training at an organisational level and underpin corporate policy.
- Joint meetings are convened by Housing Capital, Social Work and GTM to explore acquisitions of properties to support family's movement off sites.
- GTM and GCC Social Work have been convening joint meetings to scope the needs and preferences of families on sites.