



Comhairle Contae **Lú**  
**Louth** County Council

## Traveller Accommodation Programme

2014 - 2018

**Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998**

Variation 1 (Review of Programme)

# Contents



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**Louth** County Council

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## 1. Progress on Implementation of Programme 2014 - 2018

The current Traveller Accommodation Programme covers the period of 2014 – 2018 and during the first 3 years of the programme included annual targets for provision of standard social housing only. The overall target for the programme is provision of 58 units of standard social housing accommodation. So far 42 Traveller applicants have been provided standard social housing which represents 72% of the overall targets. The provided accommodation consists mainly of local authority dwellings (25), Approved Housing Body dwellings (8) and long-term leasing units (9). In addition 10 Traveller applicants were accommodated in the recently refurbished halting site in Dundalk. Travellers have also availed of other housing supports such as First-time House Purchase Grant and Incremental Purchase Scheme. The below table summarises the annual targets for the programme and progress made as per 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016.

Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014 – 2018								
Standard Social Housing				Halting Site		Other Housing Supports		
Year	Target	Provided	%	Target	Provided	GRNT	IPS	Total
2014	10	12	120	0		1	3	4
2015	9	14	156	0		1		1
2016	10	16	160	0	10			0
2017	13		0	0				0
2018	16		0	0				0
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>

GRNT - First Time House Purchase Grant for Travellers

IPS - Incremental Purchase Scheme



## Unauthorised Encampments

In conjunction with the provision of a range of good quality and properly managed accommodation the Council will take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that unauthorised encampments are eliminated as far as possible. To achieve this, the Council will avail of the statutory powers available, particularly under Section 10 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1992 as amended by Section 32 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 and also where appropriate the following:

- Public Health (Ireland) Act 1878 as amended by Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992.
- Local Government (Sanitary Services) Act 1948
- Housing Act 1988, ( as amended)
- Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions Act) 1992, (as amended)
- The Roads Act 1993
- Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act 1994 (as amended)
- Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998,
- Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)
- Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2002

Since the implementation of the plan a further two locations in the county have been designated as prohibited areas under the above Sanitary Services legislation, on the basis that the particular lands are either unsuitable or inappropriate for the use of temporary dwellings. This brings to four the number of locations prohibited. These sites are at Whiterath, Collon, Daly's Cross and Racecourse Road.



## 2. Review of Programme 2014 - 2018

### Legislative Context

The section 17 (1) (a) and (b) of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 provides that a relevant housing authority shall review its Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP) at least once in each three year period or at such time as directed by the Minister. The section 17 (2) provides that a relevant housing authority may amend or replace an accommodation programme at any time or following a review under subsection (1).

The Minister directed in a Circular letter 22/2016 that a review of the current TAPs should be carried out no later than 31 December 2016 and that while the form a review should take is a matter for each local authority, having regard to Section 21(3) of the 1998 Act, it is recommended that the local authority includes its Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC) in the review process.

### Review Methodology

Traveller applicants on the housing list were identified through I-house, outcome of the annual count of Traveller families conducted in November 2015 and knowledge of the staff in the housing section. An initial review of 174 housing applications was carried out and all Traveller housing applicants were invited for an interview to confirm their choice of accommodation type, housing needs arising from disability and areas of choice.

Travellers who requested Traveller Group Housing in connection with the interview were invited for a second interview to establish the “group” i.e. families they wish to have group housing with.

Applicants who failed to attend the arranged interviews but were very recent applicant, were known to be in the area through direct contact or family contact or were in an institution during the review were included in the review and information from their housing application was used for the review purposes.



Interviews with traveller applicants were arranged and carried out as shown in the below table;

District	Initial Applicants No	Review Interviews					Excluded Applicants No	Review Applicants No
		Appointment Letters			Attended			
		1st	Reminder	Final	Yes	No		
Ardee MD	4	3	1	1	2	1	1	3
Drogheda BD	32	33	12	9	20	3	9	23
Dundalk MD	138	140	48	27	100	10	28	110
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>136</b>
				274		136		

Note: In cases where new / alternative address was established for an applicant second appointment, reminder and final letters were issued to the new / alternative address.

### Applicants Excluded from the Review

Applicants who failed to attend the review interview were sent reminder and final reminder letters. Those applicants who failed to attend three arranged interviews and no contact was made or their appointment letter(s) were returned by An Post with “gone away” “unknown at this address”, “not at this address” or “deceased” were referred to housing assessment unit for their consideration. All these housing applications were consequently closed and a letter was sent to the applicant by housing assessment unit informing them about the closure of the application. These applicants were not included in the review.

Applicants who were interviewed but were provided permanent accommodation during the review were not included in the review. There were also applicants who advised in connection with the review that they are not travellers or no longer wish to be considered as travellers. These applicants were not included in the review. The below table illustrates number of applicants excluded from the review;



<b>Applicants Excluded from Review</b>				
District	Application Closed	Not Traveller	Housing Provided	Total
Ardee MD	1	0	0	1
Drogheda BD	9	0	0	9
Dundalk MD	17	9	2	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>38</b>

### Requested Accommodation

In connection with the review the majority of the 136 applicants requested standard social housing (77%). It needs to be noted some of those requesting standard social housing also requested Traveller Group Housing and / or Halting Site Accommodation. Many of these applicants indicated that they would accept the accommodation option which would become available first. The requested accommodation is summarised in the below table;

<b>Review Interviews</b>						
District	Traveller Applicants No	Requested Accommodation				Duplication No
		Standard Housing	Traveller GHS	Traveller HS	Total No	
Ardee MD	3	3	0	0	3	0
Drogheda BD	23	22	1	1	24	-1
Dundalk MD	110	80	46	15	141	-31
<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>-32</b>

HS – Halting Site  
GHS – Traveller Group Housing



### Combination of Requested Accommodation

Majority of the 136 applicants (108) requested only one type of accommodation, standard social housing (63%), Traveller Group Housing (15%) and halting site accommodation (1%). Of those applicants who requested combination of accommodation majority requested standard social housing and Traveller Group Housing (10%). The details of requested accommodation is shown in the below table;

Requested Accommodation									
District	Traveller Applicants No	Only			HS	GHS	GHS	GHS	Total No
		SSH	HS	GHS	SSH	SSH	SSH	HS	
Ardee MD	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Drogheda BD	23	21	1	0	0	1	0	0	23
Dundalk MD	110	62	1	20	1	13	4	9	110
<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>136</b>

SSH – Standard Social Housing  
HS – Halting Site  
GHS – Traveller Group Housing

### Traveller Group Housing

In Dundalk Municipal District 46 traveller applicants requested Traveller group housing and consequently formed 10 groups of various sizes. The applicant families who requested group housing together are closely related to each other. 8 of the 46 applicants did not establish a group with any other families and therefore were included in a mixed group for recording purposes only. One family, applying for succession to tenancy in an existing group housing scheme, is included in the group F as an extension to the dwelling may be required. Hence, the





total number of applicants is increased to 47. The below table illustrates the groups requesting Traveller Group Housing;

Traveller Group Housing		
Group	Dwellings No	Comment
A	3	
B	3	Provision of 3 additional dwellings in existing scheme
C	3	
D	5	
E	2	
F	2	Provision of 1 additional dwelling in existing scheme Provision of an extension to an existing dwelling
G	6	
H	9	
I	4	
J	2	
K	8	Mixed group
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	

Currently 10 sites are required in Dundalk to facilitate Traveller Group Housing and to date 1 site has been identified. There is an indication that one large group of 9 families would be willing to split into two smaller groups requiring two small sites as opposed to one large site. Consequently, the number of required sites for group housing would increase to 11.



In Drogheda Borough District one applicant requested Traveller Group Housing. As there is no other family seeking group housing with this applicant, provision of group housing is not feasible.

### **Halting Site Accommodation**

16 applicant families requested halting site accommodation and 15 of these expressed preference for Woodland Park Halting site and 1 for Drogheda Halting Site.

## **3. Consultation Procedures**

Section 21(3) of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 and the directions given by the Minister, emphasise consultation with Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC) in the review process. Louth County Council has consulted the LTACC in the review process including the required amendments to the programme.

The sections 8, 9, and 15 of Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 provide procedures and requirements for appropriate consultation with relevant bodies and the public generally in respect of an amended Traveller Accommodation Programme. All such requirements have been complied with, in the preparation of this document.

## **4. Implementation Measures 2014 – 2018**

The review of the programme showed a requirement for 136 units of accommodation. The options on provision of accommodation will include:

- Standard Social Housing
- Leasing Units
- Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)
- Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)



- Traveller Group Housing
- Halting Site Accommodation
- Special Traveller Grant
- General Assistance to Travellers
- Incremental Purchase Scheme
- Tenant Purchase Scheme

And any other option within the normal housing services model.

**(i) Standard Social Housing:**

Standard social housing will be allocated in accordance with the Council's Allocations Scheme and through Choice Based Letting. The review identified 86 Traveller applicants currently on the Housing List requesting standard social housing only. It needs to be emphasised that the housing list constantly changes. It is envisaged that 58 Traveller families will be provided standard social housing during the course of this Programme. In addition to its own social housing stock Council also utilises available units provided by approved housing bodies in provision of standard social housing.

**(ii) Traveller Group Housing:**

The review showed increased interest for Traveller Group Housing in Dundalk Municipal District. Whilst 47 applicants expressed interest for Traveller Group Housing and formed 10 groups of various sizes, only 20 applicants requested group housing as their only accommodation choice. In light of constraints in funding and big demands on housing department of Louth County Council it is not deemed feasible to provide all these schemes in the lifetime of the current programme.

It is envisaged that the progression of the following will commence during the lifetime of this



programme

### **Existing Traveller Group Housing Schemes**

Provision of three additional dwellings in the existing group housing scheme in Woodland Park, Dundalk is envisaged subject to feasibility and available funding.

Provision of one additional dwelling in the existing group housing scheme in Naughton Close in Dundalk is envisaged subject to feasibility and available funding.

Provision of an extension to an existing dwelling in the group housing scheme in Naughton Close in Dundalk is envisaged subject to feasibility and available funding.

### **New Traveller Group Housing Schemes**

It is envisaged that sites for two new Traveller Group Housing Schemes in Dundalk will be identified with the view to commence planning and construction in the course of the next programme.

- Group Housing Scheme (A) consisting of 3 dwellings in Dundalk
- Group Housing Scheme (C) consisting of 3 dwellings in Dundalk

### **(iii) Halting Site Accommodation**

The review showed increased interest for Halting Site Accommodation. Whilst 16 applicants expressed interest for Halting Site Accommodation only 2 applicants requested halting site as their only accommodation choice.

There are two halting sites in County Louth, in Dundalk and Drogheda, and it is envisaged that these sites are sufficient to meet the need for halting site accommodation.



Woodland Park halting site in Dundalk has 14 bays of which 4 are permanent bays and 10 are basic service bays. The refurbishment of Woodland Park halting site, apart from some minor works, was completed in 2016, and most of the bays are currently occupied. One additional basic service bay is required in Woodland Park halting site and it is envisaged to be provided during the lifetime of this Programme.

Drogheda Halting site has 10 permanent bays. Majority of the bays are damaged and require refurbishment. It is envisaged that individual bays are refurbished when the need arises. Discussion on long-term plan for Drogheda halting site will commence during the lifetime of this programme.

#### **(iv) Long-term Leasing and Rental Accommodation Scheme**

In social housing provision Council also utilises units secured, through arrangements with the landlords, in the private sector. Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) and Long-term Leasing model are examples of this. These units are allocated to qualified housing applicants in accordance with the Council's Allocations Scheme.

#### **(v) Housing Assistance Payment**

Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) is a relatively new form of social housing support where Council provides assistance to qualified housing applicants who have sourced accommodation in the private rented sector. In HAP scheme Council pays the full rent to the landlord subject to rent limits and the HAP recipient pays their rent contribution, which is based on the differential rent scheme, to the Council.

It is noted that there is a significant cohort of housing applicants already availing of accommodation in the private rented sector. It is envisaged that the private rented sector,



through these schemes, will continue being an important provider of social housing units.

#### **(vi) Special Traveller Grant**

The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government operates a scheme whereby Travellers, who have purchased a private house for themselves, for the first time, can avail of a grant. Louth County Council will continue to encourage and process applications for the first time house purchase grant for Travellers.

#### **(vii) General Assistance to Travellers**

Where appropriate full encouragement and assistance will be offered to Travellers who might be in a position and willing to provide accommodation for themselves by availing of the range of initiatives contained in the Government's policy document ***Social Housing – The Way Ahead***. Likewise where any voluntary organisation is willing to undertake the provision of accommodation full assistance and encouragement will be given.

#### **(viii) Annual Targets**

The programme will be driven mainly by standard social housing provision where all forms of social housing, new units and re-lets, will be availed of. Standard social housing units will be allocated in accordance with the Council's Allocations Scheme and through Choice Based Letting. Vacancies in Traveller Group housing will be retained for Traveller applicants. The number of units of accommodation in the below table is considered as realistic targets for standard social housing provision during the life of the programme.



<b>Standard Social Housing</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Drogheda BD</b>	<b>Dundalk MD</b>	<b>Ardee MD</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2014</b>	3	6	1	<b>10</b>
<b>2015</b>	4	5	0	<b>9</b>
<b>2016</b>	4	6	0	<b>10</b>
<b>2017</b>	5	8	0	<b>13</b>
<b>2018</b>	5	9	2	<b>16</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>58</b>



## Appendix

### ***List of Bodies Notified***

#### **Approved Housing Bodies**

- Clanmill Housing Association
- Cluid Housing Association
- Foscadh Housing Association
- North & East Housing Association
- Oaklee Housing Association
- Respond!
- Simon Community Dundalk
- Tuath Housing Association

#### **Child and Family Agency**

#### **Health Service Executive**

#### **Local Authorities**

- Meath County Council
- Monaghan County Council

#### **Louth Leader Partnership**

#### **Louth Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee**

#### **Voluntary organisations**

- Drogheda Homeless Aid Association Ltd.
- Drogheda Women's and Children's Refuge Centre Ltd
- Dundalk Women's Aid
- Focus Ireland
- Irish Traveller Movement
- Louth Carer's Association
- Louth Traveller Movement
- Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre
- St. Vincent de Paul