

## **TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION PLAN 2000 - 2004**

### **1. Introduction.**

**1.1** In accordance with the provision of the Housing Traveller Accommodation Act 1998, Mayo County Council are obliged to adopt a five year plan for the period 2000 – 2004 setting out its plans for the provision of suitable accommodation for members of the travelling community.

**1.2** To progress the implementation of the programme, the Council in accordance with the Act established a “Traveller Consultative Committee” which was duly set up by the Council in February 1999.

This Committee has met on three occasions in March, April and December 1999 and has discussed issues relating to the Draft Accommodation Plan and submissions received following the statutory period of two months of public consultation.

The membership of the Committee is given in Appendix 1.

**1.3** The work of the Committee is ongoing and it has discussed the housing accommodation requirement for travellers based on the most recent assessment of housing need for traveller accommodation.

**1.4** On the basis of the assessment of need and projections on projected population increases for the period 2000 – 2004, a traveller accommodation plan has been formulated to meet the Council’s statutory requirements.

### **2. Assessment of Need.**

**2.1** For the purposes of evaluating the need for traveller accommodation for the period 2000 – 2004, an assessment of current need was undertaken.

**2.2** The assessment identified the following:

- Travellers currently accommodated by the four housing authorities, i.e. Mayo County Council, Ballina Urban District Council, Castlebar Urban District Council and Westport Urban District Council.
- The number of travellers currently on the roadside in Mayo.
- The number of travellers renting private accommodation in Mayo.

- The need arising from the projected growth in the traveller population over the period of the plan based on the number identified above.

2.3 The position with regard to the existing current accommodation needs and the projected need are as follows:

3. **Existing Travellers Accommodated.**

3.1 A total of 99 families are presently accommodated in Council housing/halting sites throughout the county. The breakdown of the number for each area are attached in Appendix 2.

4. **Travellers on Roadside and Privately Renting.**

4.1 The number of travellers awaiting accommodation is 58 although this figure is subject to change but can be relied on as an indicative figure for actual need at present. The breakdown of this figure is given in Appendix 3.

5. **Additional Projected Accommodation.**

5.1 A survey of the travelling families in accommodation and on the roadside similar to the survey carried out in 1995 is used to predict the estimated number of families that will be seeking housing from the Council up to the end of the year 2004 in addition to those already on the roadside. This additional need is estimated at 81 and a breakdown is given in Appendix 4.

6. **Total Requirement 2000 – 2004.**

6.1 The existing need and projected need having been established the total need for the next five years of 139 units of accommodation is given in a breakdown in Appendix 5.

7. **Transient Sites.**

7.1 In addition to the obligation to provide units of accommodation for 139 families for the next five years, the legislation enacted requires the Council to establish the need for temporary serviced sites in areas where travellers are allocated houses or are awaiting same and to provide same in the 5 year period.

## **8. Public Consultation.**

**8.1** In accordance with the requirements of the Traveller Accommodation Act and directives by the Minister for the Environment, the Draft Traveller Accommodation Plan was placed on public display for two months from the 17<sup>th</sup> September 1999 and was circulated to the following:

- Members of Mayo County Council
- Urban District Council
- Western Health Board
- Voluntary Housing Groups
- Local Consultative Committee

In addition public comment was invited by advertisements in the local press.

**8.2** Submissions were invited by the 17<sup>th</sup> November 1999 and a total of eight submissions were received as follows:

- Councillor Mary Kelly and Councillor Michelle Mulhern, Ballina Urban District Council
- Town Clerk for members of Ballina Urban District Council
- Ballina Traveller Support Group
- Mr. Brian Conway, Ballina
- Ballina Urban District Council, c/o Chairman Johnnie O'Malley
- Mr. Brendan Sweeney, St. Vincent de Paul, Ballinrobe
- Mr. S. Mannion, Western Health Board
- Ms. Mary Syron, Traveller Health Unit, Western Health Board

**8.3** The submissions were subsequently considered at length by the Local Consultative Committee.

**8.4** The main points raised in the submission and the Council's response having considered the recommendations of the Local Consultative Committee are summarised in Appendix 6.

## **9. Strategy for Implementation of Plan.**

**9.1** It is the intention of Mayo County Council to communicate the requirements of the plan and to co-ordinate efforts with the Urban District Councils of Ballina, Castlebar and Westport to ensure the success of the plan for the statutory period.

**9.2** The Council will similarly promote the housing of travellers by voluntary housing groups where appropriate.

- 9.3** The projected cost of implementing the Plan is approximately £15m. This has major resource implications on the staffing side and it is intended to appoint a Traveller Accommodation Officer in the Housing Section to focus the successful delivery of the accommodation requirement and associated issues.
- 9.4** Issues relating to information dissemination, training of tenants and management issues relating to accommodation will be addressed by the Local Consultative Committee and appropriate steps undertaken by the Council on these issues.
- 9.5** It is also proposed that there will be an annual review of progress on the implementation of the Plan in addition to the statutory requirement for a 3 year review.
- 9.6** It is proposed that a local monitoring committee be established in all Urban areas
- to monitor social integration
  - to assist and liase with local communities to solve problems if they arise
  - to review the implementation and progress of the plan as it impacts on the community, in addition to statutory review ever 3 years.
- 9.7** Local monitoring committee to be made up of members from
- Local Authority representative (County and Urban)
  - Traveller representatives
  - Chamber of Commerce representatives
  - Resident Association representatives
  - Garda Siochana Representatives

## **10. Policy on Accommodation Provision.**

### **10.1 *Housing***

- 10.1.1** Subject to suitability, individual family circumstances and legal requirements, it is proposed to provide housing accommodation as follows:
- To allocate 1 in 8 new houses in larger Council housing schemes, i.e. up to 40 units, to travellers.
  - In smaller schemes a ratio of 1 traveller to 5 is recommended.

- Casual vacancies in scheme houses to be filled on the basis that travellers are accommodated 8 units apart subject to compliance with Statute and Regulations.
- Group schemes specifically for traveller families.
- Once off houses.
- A points housing allocation scheme to be considered for allocating traveller housing.

**10.1.2** The evaluation of traveller numbers of the period 2000 to 2004 is an estimate based on current traveller numbers which will be reviewed annually.

**10.1.3** It should be noted that it is the intention that the centres indicated also include villages etc. around the centre mentioned. It may be possible therefore to accommodate families within a reasonable distance of these centres.

**10.1.4** The Council will also actively encourage and facilitate travellers who wish to avail of privately funded accommodation through affordable housing, shared ownership etc.

## **10.2 *Halting Sites***

**10.2.1** The vast majority of travellers wish to be rehoused and it will be the Council's policy to facilitate their needs with houses.

In the case of the projected need for Ballina, Ballinrobe, Castlebar, Westport or in any area of the County where an established need arises, if the needs cannot be met by conventional housing during the term of the Plan in any of these areas, halting sites will be provided.

## **10.3 *Transient Sites***

**10.3.1** To satisfy the requirement of the legislation, 2 transient sites are planned, 1 for East and 1 for West Mayo. It is envisaged that these sites will satisfy the requirement to accommodate transient travellers in any location of the County. Provision of these sites will enable enforcement of court orders and illegal occupation issues. Rules and Regulations governing these sites to be discussed with a Local Monitoring Committee as outlined in **9.7**.

**11. Conclusions and Recommendations.**

- 11.1** The number of units required for the period 2000 to 2004 has been established at 139. Approximately 9 families will be accommodated in the County before the due date for adoption of the plan in March 2000 leaving a residual need of 130 for 2000 – 2004.
- 11.2** It had been established by the Council that (a) the current need will be required in the centres outlined in the report and (b) that it is the wishes of the travelling community that houses are required to satisfy their needs.
- If the full compliment of houses cannot be provided by way of scheme integration, group housing, single houses etc., then permanent residential caravan parks will be provided in Ballina (1 no.), Ballinrobe (1 no.), Westport (1 no.) and Castlebar (1 additional) or in any location in the County where an established need arises.
- 11.3** That transient sites are required in 2 locations in the county and that these should be located in East Mayo and West Mayo.
- 11.3** It is recommended that the plan be considered by the Council at a meeting to be arranged specifically for the purpose and adopted with or without amendment before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2000.
- 11.4** In the interests of balance and equity, Mayo County Council will encourage take-up of accommodation by travelling families in towns other than Ballina, Ballinrobe and Castlebar

***ADOPTED 27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2000***

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **MAYO COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

Councillor S. Molloy, Chairman  
Councillor F. Leneghan  
Councillor P. McHugh  
Councillor J. Maloney  
Councillor B. Golden  
Senator P. Burke  
Councillor M. Burke  
Councillor E. Staunton  
A. Fleming, Assistant County Manager  
S. Smyth, A.O., Housing  
B. Rowland, Social Worker, Mayo County Council  
A. Doherty, Social Worker, Mayo County Council  
Fr. P. Curran, Castlebar Traveller Support Group  
M. Cleary, Ballyhaunis Traveller Support Group  
B. Comiskey, Ballina Traveller Support Group  
E. Maughan, Ballinrobe Traveller Support Group

#### **Members of Committee pre June 1999**

Councillor B. Cooper-Flynn, T.D.  
Councillor P. Higgins  
Councillor A. M. Reape  
Senator E. Caffrey  
J. McDonagh, Ballina

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Families in Houses/Halting Sites**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Families in Accommodation</b>	<b>%</b>
Ballina	42	42
Ballinrobe	19	19
Castlebar	19	19
Ballyhaunis	8	9
Westport	4	4
Swinford	3	3
Claremorris	2	2
Foxford	1	1
Ballindine	1	1
Charlestown	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

### **APPENDIX 3**

#### **Families on Roadside and Privately Renting**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Families on Roadside and Privately Renting</b>	<b>%</b>
Ballina	14	24
Ballinrobe	6	10
Castlebar	22	38
Ballyhaunis	6	10
Westport	2	3.5
Swinford	1	2
Claremorris	4	7
Foxford	0	0
Ballindine	1	2
Charlestown	2	3.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100</b>

**APPENDIX 4**

**Projected Additional Need**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Projected Additional Need to 2005</b>	<b>%</b>
Ballina	39	48
Ballinrobe	10	13
Castlebar	19	23
Ballyhaunis	4	5
Westport	1	1
Swinford	2	2.5
Claremorris	2	2.5
Foxford	0	0
Ballindine	3	4
Charlestown	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100</b>

**APPENDIX 5**

**Total Projected Need 2000 - 2004**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Total Projected Need to 2004</b>	<b>%</b>
Ballina	53	38
Ballinrobe	16	12
Castlebar	41	29
Ballyhaunis	10	7.5
Westport	3	2
Swinford	3	2
Claremorris	6	4.5
Foxford	0	0
Ballindine	4	3
Charlestown	3	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>100</b>

## **APPENDIX 6**

### **Councillor Mary Kelly/Councillor Michelle Mulhern**

- That travellers should be housed on a proportional basis to existing and new centres.
  - This proposal is not considered to be workable as travellers who are associated with particular areas wish to stay in those locations.
- Travellers do not want houses as their first priority.
  - The Council have interviewed all indigenous travellers, the vast majority of whom wish to be housed.
- Transient sites not required near Ballina.
  - The Committee's view is that a transient site is required in the area to ensure there is no illegal camping.

### **Town Clerk on behalf of Ballina U.D.C.**

- Travellers should be distributed throughout the county.
  - This proposal is not considered to be workable as travellers who are associated with particular areas wish to stay in those locations.

### **Ballina Traveller Development Group**

- Priority should be given to indigenous local travellers for housing.
- A priority system should be introduced for allocation of housing.
- There should be consultation with community groups on traveller issues.
- Travellers should be integrated throughout the whole community.
  - The recommendations made are broadly acceptable.

### **Brian Conway, Ballina**

- Travellers should make decisions with regard to their accommodation.
  - Travellers are involved at present in all issues relating to their accommodation.
- The assumption that travellers want houses is incorrect.
  - As stated above the vast majority of travellers want housing.

### **Ballina Urban District Council, C/o Chairman**

- The projected number of travellers to be housed in Ballina is impractical.
  - The projections are based on current need in Ballina and the increase in family units from those already housed and those families on the roadside from Ballina.
- U.D.C. should accommodate traveller families from those already accommodated.
  - These families are the basis of the projections made for the number of units required.
- Halting sites are not acceptable.
  - The need for a halting site(s) in Ballina is under review and if the housing need is not met then a halting site will be required.

### **Brendan Sweeney, St. Vincent de Paul**

- The housing of further traveller families in Ballinrobe is unwise.
  - The projected figures for families in Ballinrobe is for local families.
- Halting sites are not acceptable.
  - The need for a halting site(s) in Ballinrobe is under review and if the housing need is not met then a halting site will be required.

### **S. Mannion, Programme Manager, Western Health Board**

- Consideration should be given to more transient and halting sites.
  - The areas identified for transient, halting sites in the plans are considered to be adequate for present and projected needs for the term of the plan.

### **Mary Syron, Traveller Health Unit, Western Health Board**

- Accommodation provided should suit each family's particular needs with training, back up services provided.
  - The need for consideration of the needs of individual families and support services as outlined is accepted.