

Traveller Accommodation Programme

2025 - 2029



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council



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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Map of Traveller Specific Accommodation in County Galway.....	2
3. Legislation.....	3
4. Equality and Human Rights Statement.....	5
5. Policy Statement	13
6. Strategy Statement.....	16
7. Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee	21
8. Traveller Interagency Group	21
9. Traveller Specific Accommodation in Galway County.....	22
10. Funding and Expenditure	25
11. Assessment of Need.....	27
12. Fire Safety.....	30
13. Targets and Objectives	30
14. Traveller Specific Accommodation Programme 2025 – 2029	33
15. Conclusion	35

1. INTRODUCTION

The County of Galway, the second largest County in Ireland, covers an area of 6,148 square km. It has a Traveller population of 2,509 persons, the majority of whom are living in the Eastern side of the County.

Galway County Council is required, under the provisions of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 to prepare and adopt the 6th Traveller Accommodation Programme for 2025 – 2029. This Traveller Accommodation Programme sets out the proposals that Galway County Council intends to implement to meet the current and future accommodation needs of Traveller families within the County of Galway over the course of the programme from January 2025 – December 2029.

The National Housing Policy - Housing for All – A New Housing Plan, the governments housing plan to 2030, states that addressing Traveller accommodation needs is a priority for the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and commits to improving the quality, quantity, and comfort levels of accommodation available to Travellers.

The Traveller Accommodation Unit within Galway County Council, including a Traveller Liaison Officer, Social Workers, Engineering, Technical, Caretaking and Administrative Staff will ensure that all options are explored, progressed, and developed to meet the current and future needs of Travellers in the County. It is intended to continue the extensive ongoing programme of updating and refurbishing current Traveller specific accommodation and to increase the supply of such accommodation. The programme of works which will provide accommodation options for Travellers is based on the preferences expressed by Travellers on their Social Housing Supports application forms, in the completed Summary of Social Housing Assessments and during the review and verification exercise which took place during March – April 2024.

The Traveller Accommodation Unit will continue to work closely with all relevant stakeholders including the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee, local and national Traveller representative organisations, the Traveller Accommodation Unit in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to maximise the provision of new and improved accommodation for Travellers in the County of Galway.

3. LEGISLATION

The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 requires each local authority, following a consultation process, to prepare, adopt and implement 5 year rolling accommodation programmes to meet the existing and projected accommodation needs of Travellers in their areas.

It is noted that, on 1st March 2017, Travellers were recognised in Dáil Éireann as a distinct ethnic group within the Irish nation.

In 2018, the Traveller Accommodation Expert Group was established to review the Traveller Accommodation Act, 1998, and other legislation that impacts on the provision and delivery of accommodation for Travellers. The Traveller Accommodation Expert Review Board were tasked with putting forward recommendations and proposed actions to improve the delivery of Traveller accommodation and delivered 32 recommendations. Delivery and implementation of these recommendations involves several Government Departments, Local Authorities and other stakeholders.

The Joint Committee on Key Issues affecting the Traveller Community was established by Orders of both Houses of the Oireachtas in September 2020. The Committee's Orders of Reference required it to undertake a programme of work examining four specific areas and making policy proposals related to them: 1) physical health, mental health and suicide levels; 2) school completion rates and educational attainment, particularly at second and third level compared to the settled population; 3) labour market participation, having regard to the unemployment rate of 80 per cent among Travellers; 4) access to housing and accommodation, including Traveller-specific accommodation, in the context of the significantly higher homelessness rate among Travellers compared to the settled population. The Final Report of the Joint Committee included 18 recommendations regarding accommodation for Travellers.

On the 18th of December 2023, the Minister of State for Planning and Local Government issued a direction to all local authorities to commence preparation of the 6th five-year Traveller Accommodation Programmes (TAPs) for adoption by 31st December 2024. *Guidelines on the Preparation and Implementation of Traveller Accommodation Programmes 2025 - 2029* were issued and provide housing authorities with advice and guidance on the preparation, adoption, and implementation of the next TAPs.

The following key dates were identified for the development and implementation of the *Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 – 2029*:

December 2023	Give one month's notice to stakeholders before making assessment of need.
January/February 2024	Conduct assessment of need.
March/April 2024	Analysis of results of assessment of need.
May/June 2024	Preparation of Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme.
01st July 2024	Publish notice in newspapers that Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme is available for inspection and circulate it to all stakeholders.
30th August 2024	Latest date for receipt of written submissions on draft programme.
01st October 2024	Submission of Draft to plenary Council for adoption (3 months before date Minister specifies as date for adoption of programme).
31st December 2024	Latest date for adoption of programme.
21st January 2025	Latest date for adjournment of Council meetings.
21st February 2025	If there is a failure to adopt by elected members a further 1 month is allowed before the programme, as may be modified, is adopted by Chief Executive Order.
Following adoption	Publication and submission to the Minister of Adopted Traveller Accommodation Programme.




4. EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS STATEMENT

In the preparation of this Programme, the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee agreed to review and update the Equality and Human Rights Statement that was included in the previous Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 – 2024. The Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 ('the Acts') prohibit discrimination in the provision of goods and services, accommodation, and education. They cover the nine grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community.

This Equality and Human Rights Statement reflects the commitment of the Council and, particularly in this instance, the LTACC to equality and human rights. It addresses our obligations under the Irish Human Rights Equality and Commission Act 2014 to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and protect human rights in carrying out our functions.

Galway County Council prepared and adopted an "Implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty - Implementation Plan" in July 2023. This plan set out the equality and human rights statement of Galway County Council which provides a framework for the implementation of this duty.

The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (the Duty) is a statutory obligation on public bodies to have regard to the need to:

-  **Eliminate discrimination.**
-  **Promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services; and**
-  **Protect the human rights of its members, staff, and the persons to whom it provides services.**

The assessment of equality and human rights issues within the plan identified Travellers as a group that have a relevance for the functions of Galway County Council. It is acknowledged that it is necessary to integrate the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty within the development and review of the Traveller Accommodation Programme.

This review and the development of an updated Equality and Human Rights Statement was carried out in consultation with Traveller representatives and staff from the Traveller Accommodation Unit, Galway County Council.

Our Values

Our commitment to equality and human rights is motivated by a particular set of values, that have been established as shared values in motivating the work of the Galway County Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee. These are the values of: Dignity, Autonomy, Diversity, Inclusion, Participation, Social Justice, and Sustainable Development.



● Dignity ● Autonomy ● Diversity ● Inclusion
● Participation ● Social Justice ● Sustainable Development

Values: Objectives, Processes, and Issues

1. Dignity

Dignity is about respecting and valuing people and their individual human worth.

The *Traveller Accommodation Programme* seeks to meet standards that enable dignity for individual Travellers, respond to their needs, and provide for real choices.

The *Traveller Accommodation Programme* aims to be delivered in a manner that is fair, offers options, and enables Travellers to understand and make informed choices.




We are, therefore, concerned to ensure that the following **equality and human rights issues** are addressed in the planning, implementation and review of the Programme:

- Living in sub-standard accommodation.
- Experiencing discrimination, harassment, and stereotyping.
- Failure to respond to and take account of stated needs and requirements.
- Lack of access to information and capacity required for making informed choices.

2. Autonomy

Autonomy is about everyone having access to the same set of choices and the freedom and capacity to make their own choices, provided such choices do not impact negatively on the rights of others. Autonomy is about independence, self-determination, choice, and a bottom-up approach. It involves being flexible in meeting changing, emerging and contextual needs and supporting a capacity to make choices and be involved in decision-making.

We are, therefore, concerned to ensure that the following **equality and human rights issues** are addressed in the planning, implementation, and review of the Programme:

-  Inflexible plans and policies that fail to address changing and emerging needs.
-  Processes where people are ignored, decision-making that excludes, and decisions coming from a single source.
-  Communities and their members being stripped of independence or subject to coercion or not listened to.





3. Diversity

Diversity is about acknowledging and planning by design for the particular identity, situation and experience of specific groups in society.

The *Traveller Accommodation Programme* seeks to reflect and respond to Traveller cultural preferences and to enable Travellers express their cultural identity.

The *Traveller Accommodation Programme* aims to be delivered in a manner that explores cultural preferences, affirms Traveller identity, and makes adjustments for cultural difference, and that takes account of diversity within the Traveller community, including disability, gender, age and family status.

We are, therefore, concerned to ensure that the following **equality and human rights issues** are addressed in the planning, implementation, and review of the Programme:

-  Failure to acknowledge and plan by design for the diversity of a community.
-  Failure to acknowledge and plan by design for diversity within a community.
-  Lack of provision for or failure to make the necessary space for diversity.
-  Lack of data on Travellers.









4. Inclusion

Inclusion is about securing outcomes for people that reflect their individual choices and for groups that are on a par with the wider society through a mixture of targeted and general services.

The *Traveller Accommodation Programme* seeks to deliver on the targets set for meeting current and future accommodation needs and to enable Travellers to be a welcome part of sustainable communities.

The *Traveller Accommodation Programme* aims to be delivered in a manner that promotes community building and mobilises interagency supports.

We are, therefore, concerned to ensure that the following **equality and human rights issues** are addressed in the planning, implementation and review of the Programme:

-  Inadequate provision of accommodation.
-  Insecurity in accommodation.
-  Isolation due to locations that limit access to economic and social supports and opportunities.
-  Exclusion from being part of the community.
-  Poverty and social exclusion.
-  Stereotyping and perceived notions of needs and aspirations.
-  Unemployment, under-employment, and precarious work, including comparatively high levels of unemployment among Travellers.
-  Lack of access to decent work, in particular for Travellers¹.

1 The Galway County Council: Implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty Implementation Plan (July 2023, p11.)





5. Participation

Participation is about people having a say in decisions that impact on them and having a capacity to do so effectively.

The *Traveller Accommodation Programme* seeks to enable Traveller ownership of and pride in the programme itself, and their participation in the structures, processes, and associations that play a role in managing housing and accommodation provided.

The *Traveller Accommodation Programme* aims to be delivered in a manner that empowers Traveller participation in informing the programme and its delivery, ensuring it meets their needs and requirements.

We are, therefore, concerned to ensure that the following equality and **human rights issues** are addressed in the planning, implementation and review of the Programme:






-  Exclusion from having an input into decision making, as individuals or collectively as a group.
-  Barriers to participation, including financial costs, lack of transport, and inappropriate models for organising participation.
-  Lack of encouragement, information and capacity to enable effective participation.
-  Not being listened to or contributions made in consultation processes not being valued.

6. Social Justice

Social justice is about the distribution and redistribution of resources and power in order to enable greater choices and improved outcomes for individuals and communities.

It is about transparency and fairness in the distribution of economic, educational, cultural, and other resources. It involves proactive targeted approaches to support those experiencing injustice. A commitment to the concept of social justice, which believes that everyone deserves equal economic, political, and social rights and opportunities and can be seen as a commitment to comprehensive engagement to ensure the promotion of cultural, environmental, economic and socially sustainable policies and practices.

We are, therefore, concerned to ensure that the following **equality and human rights issues** are addressed in the planning, implementation, and review of the Programme:

-  Poverty in all its manifestations.
-  Lack of education and issues of literacy.
-  Lack of income and low incomes.
-  Homelessness, including hidden homelessness.
-  Inadequate childcare and care support.

7. Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a continuous, guided process of economic, environmental and social change aimed at promoting wellbeing of citizens now and in the future. Sustainable Development refers to development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) now inform all public policy making in Ireland, with targets to be met by 2030. Among these are Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

There is also a pledge that “*no one will be left behind*” - with three elements: (i) to end poverty in all its forms, (ii) to stop the discrimination and inequality that have resulted in unequal outcomes for the disadvantaged population, and (iii) to reach the furthest behind first. The framework involves empowering the left-behind by ensuring their meaningful participation in decision-making; and enforcing equity-focused policies, and interventions with a dedicated budget to support rights-holders and duty-bearers to address the deprivations of the people left behind. An objective of the national implementation plan is the integration of the SDGs into Local Authority work to better support the localisation of the SDGs.

We are, therefore, concerned to ensure that the following **equality and human rights issues** are addressed in the planning, implementation, and review of the Programme:

- The SDG target of ensuring access for all to adequate, safe, and affordable housing and basic services by 2030.
- Addressing the five factors of Leaving No One Behind – in relation to Socio-economic status, Geography, Discrimination, Vulnerability Shocks, Governance.
- Ending poverty in all its forms, stopping the discrimination and inequality that has resulted in unequal outcomes for the disadvantaged population, and reaching the furthest behind first.
- Empowering the left-behind by ensuring their meaningful participation in decision-making; and enforcing equity-focused policies, and interventions with a dedicated budget to support rights-holders and duty-bearers to address the deprivations of the people left behind.

This Statement

This equality and human rights statement will be:

- Used as a standard in our ongoing work in the provision of accommodation to the Traveller community.
- Applied as a proofing instrument in our annual review and business planning on Traveller accommodation.
- Applied as an evaluation tool in the mid-term review of the Traveller Accommodation Programme.
- Referred to on an ongoing basis to identify actions required to ensure that the issues identified continue to be addressed in the provision of Traveller accommodation.
- Used in reports on implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme to establish progress on the issues identified.

Indicators

In reviewing the planning, implementation, and review of the Traveller Accommodation Programme in terms of this Statement it was decided to develop agreed indicators. The indicators would enable the application of the values in the Statement to be measured and evaluated in an objective way. These indicators involve specific information on an event, activity or outcome that can be related to Equality and Human Rights Statement, and that can be used for assessment and monitoring.

At a consultation attended by Traveller representatives and staff of the Traveller Accommodation Unit of Galway County Council, a set of indicators was agreed in relation to the Equality and Human Rights Statement.

Structural Indicators - LTACC Equality and Human Rights Statement

- Event:** Consultation process and preparation of Equality and Human Rights Statement April/May 2024.
- Action:** Equality and Human Rights Statement adopted in LTACC meeting of 29th April 2024 in Council Chamber Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway.
- Outcome:** The Equality and Human Rights Statement will be incorporated into the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025-2029.

Process Indicators – LTACC Equality and Human Rights Statement

- Event:** The Equality and Human Rights Statement will be knitted into the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025-2029.
- Action:** One issue identified in the preparation of the Statement was the varying levels of awareness of the social housing support options, such as the permanent nature of Approved Housing Body tenancies and Traveller Group housing.

 1. There will be twice yearly information sessions arranged with Traveller primary health care workers on issues around the various options in social housing support, the significance of completing the ethnic identifier in housing applications and the significance of responding to reviews of the application for social housing support.
 2. There will be detailed consultation on the design of any new or regenerated Traveller specific accommodation with the people who will live there.
 3. There will be annual training for Galway County Council housing staff on the LTACC Equality and Human Rights Statement. This training will include practice reflection exercises and will be delivered in collaboration with the Traveller Representative organisations.
- Outcome:** Application and awareness of the Equality and Human Rights Statement as demonstrated by participation in the regular new housing staff training events.

Outcome Indicators – LTACC Equality and Human Rights Statement

- Event:** The Equality and Human Rights Statement will be embedded in the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025-2029.
- Action:**

 1. An indicator will be the level of offers of Traveller Group Housing, halting site bays and all forms of social housing support made to Travellers by Galway County Council. It is recognized that the County Council is dependent on Government funding, planning and other constraints in this context.
 2. Offers will be made, where possible, within three months of availability of Traveller specific accommodation.
- Outcome:**

 1. The objectives of the Equality and Human Rights Statement are included in the Traveller Accommodation Programme and thus any indicators on the delivery of accommodation will also reflect the objectives of the Equality and Human Rights Statement.

2. There will be a short new feedback form to ascertain the experience of Travellers who have, within the previous three months, taken up Traveller specific housing. This will be developed by the County Council and arranged through the Traveller primary health care workers.
3. Any funding application for Traveller specific housing by Galway County Council will specifically include a request for funding for green areas for children's use.

These indicators will be referred to on an ongoing basis to proof the planning and development of Traveller accommodation. They will be utilised to evaluate progress on an annual basis and in preparation of the Mid-Term Review of the *Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 - 2029*.

Galway County Council commits to the development of a Communications Policy, to include an anti-racism code of conduct.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

Section 10(2)(c) of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 requires that a statement of policy in relation to meeting accommodation needs of Travellers is included in the Traveller Accommodation Programme.

National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy II 2024 - 2028

This Strategy is about protecting and promoting human rights, delivering equality and creating strong and cohesive communities. It includes two Strategic Objectives under the theme of Accommodation:

- 1) Adequate provision of Traveller-specific accommodation for Travellers and delivery of accommodation under Housing for All.
- 2) Address Traveller and Roma homelessness, and support access to accommodation services.

The strategy acknowledges the involvement of Local Authorities in delivering the aforementioned strategic objectives.

It is the policy of Galway County Council to meet the housing needs of Travellers using the range of accommodation options available to the Council. This provision takes place in consultation with the Traveller community, the public and with other statutory and voluntary agencies delivering services to Travellers.

Galway County Council will continue to prioritise the provision of Traveller Accommodation in accordance with the objectives and targets of the Traveller Accommodation Programme.

Galway County Council is committed to providing a high-quality standard of preferred housing options for Travellers:

Permanent accommodation

The stated preferred permanent housing options will continue to be offered to Travellers who are approved housing applicants, in line with Galway County Councils Housing Allocations Scheme in their Areas of Choice.

Standard Social Housing – This includes Local Authority and Approved Housing Body housing. These are allocated in line with Galway County Councils Housing Allocations Scheme. The majority of Travellers on the Housing Waiting list in the County have a preference for standard social housing.

Traveller Specific Group Housing – These are small housing schemes developed specifically for allocation to Traveller housing applicants. They will be offered as a housing option to Travellers who have selected Traveller Group Housing as a housing preference in their housing application form. The demand for additional Traveller Specific Group housing is low however it is proposed to provide such accommodation in Tuam where there is a demand from residents of the halting site for such a development. There will be extensive consultation with Travellers and Traveller Representative Groups concerning any proposals for the development of new Traveller Specific Accommodation.

Halting sites

Due to the low demand for halting site accommodation, the preferred option is to consider including a small number of halting site bays in the development of Traveller Specific Housing. There will be consultation with potential occupants of the Traveller Specific Housing regarding their preferences.

Transient accommodation

The provision of transient halting site bays will be considered for inclusion in all new Traveller Specific Accommodation. There will be consultation on the provision of transient bays with potential occupants of the accommodation and Traveller representative Groups, prior to any final decision on including such facilities.

Provision of support for those waiting on accommodation

Housing Assistance Payment and Rental Accommodation Scheme financial supports are available to approved social housing applicants waiting for an alternative form of accommodation.

Homeless accommodation	<p>A homeless assessment for consideration to access homeless accommodation can be requested by contacting the Homeless Section at 091 509203. Emergency accommodation provided for Galway County Council is in Galway City and the allocation is managed and supported by COPE Galway on behalf of Galway County and City Councils. Funding for emergency accommodation is provided on a regional basis by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, based on the presenting need. There is no funding available through the Traveller Accommodation Unit for the provision of emergency accommodation specifically for Travellers. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is an overrepresentation of Travellers in emergency accommodation, Galway County Council is very proactive in providing alternative solutions to homeless accommodation. The Council HAP Placefinder can provide an increased level of financial support to enable homeless families to access private rented accommodation, including payment of a deposit and a month's rent in advance.</p>
Meeting the distinct needs and family circumstances of Travellers	<p>The distinct needs and family circumstances of Travellers, as were identified at consultation during review and verification exercise are incorporated into the <i>Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 - 2029</i>. It is noted that the preference for the vast majority of Traveller social housing applicants is Local Authority or Approved Housing Body accommodation.</p>
Unauthorised encampments	<p>The Traveller Liaison and Housing Liaison Officers of the Council will work closely to provide a preferred housing solution to families who are unwillingly residing in unauthorised encampments, in line with the Councils Housing Allocations Scheme. The Council successfully allocated a number of houses to families who were residing in unauthorised encampments in the lifetime of the previous Traveller Accommodation Programme. At this time there are two households remaining in an unauthorised encampment who have had a reasonable housing solution offered to them.</p>



Cluain Órtha, Craughwell – newly constructed Traveller Group Housing Scheme, comprising 6 houses and 2 bays.

6. STRATEGY STATEMENT

Section 10(2)(d) of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 requires that an accommodation programme should specify a strategy for securing the implementation of the programme.

The Housing Unit of Galway County Council has responsibility for the implementation of the *Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 – 2029* in the County of Galway.

Means of providing accommodation:

The provision of the preferred accommodation options for Travellers will be incorporated in Galway County Councils Housing Delivery Programme.

Applications will be submitted to the Traveller Accommodation Unit of the DHLGH for funding to progress the delivery of the continued upgrading and the increase of supply of Traveller Specific Accommodation.

The allocation of all social housing, including Local Authority and Approved Housing Body properties will be allocated in line with Galway County Councils Housing Allocations Scheme.

Information/awareness and consultative exercises between and with Travellers and the general public:

Galway County Council, following discussion and agreement with the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee at the LTACC meeting on 29th April 2024, appointed Professor Padraic Kenna, an independent expert on housing who specialises in housing law and housing rights to complete an independent review and verification exercise in relation to the housing preferences identified by Travellers who were approved housing applicants or approved housing transfer applicants. This independent exercise was progressed

with the co-operation and assistance of the Traveller Liaison Officer and the Traveller Representative Organisations – Galway Traveller Movement and Western Traveller Intercultural Development.

Two hundred and sixty approved social housing applicants or housing transfer applicants who identified as Travellers were invited, by letter, to an independent and confidential consultation with Professor Kenna and his colleague Ms. Roso Keogan to review and discuss their housing need and the types of social housing support options available. The letter stated that, in preparing the Traveller Accommodation Programme, the Council recognised the importance of consulting with those affected by the final programme – Traveller housing applicants (including transfer applicants) who may be allocated housing during the lifetime of the Programme.

Consultations were held on seven occasions in five different locations in Galway – two in Galway City, two in Tuam, one in Ballinasloe, one each in Loughrea and Gort. The Traveller representative organisations publicised the independent review exercise extensively through their social media platforms and actively encouraged eligible Traveller housing applicants to attend. Forty-eight households attended the independent review and verification exercise.

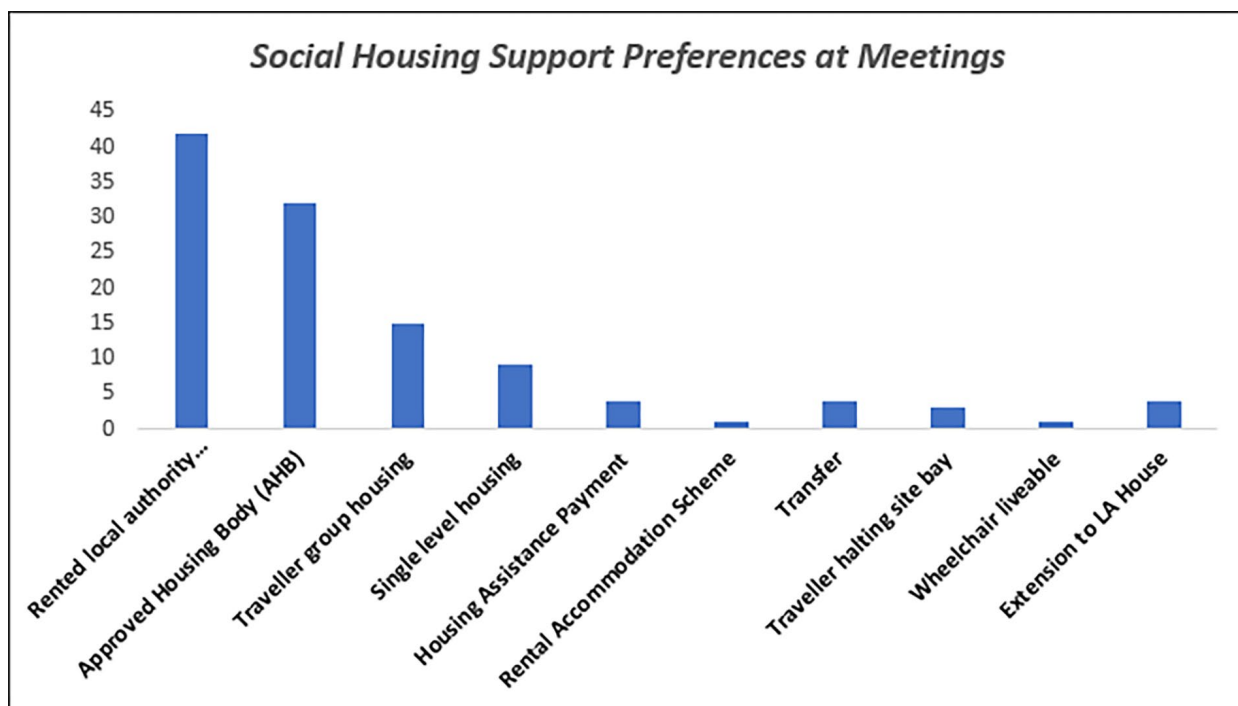
Social Housing Support Preferences – as identified at Independent Review and Verification Exercise:

The full range of 15 social housing support options as outlined on the table (following page) were explained by Professor Kenna and considered by the attendees at the meetings.

This Independent Review and Verification exercise set out to determine the social housing support preferences of Travellers who had selected an area of choice in the County of Galway (which included both Galway County and Galway City applicants). Over the course of seven consultations details of these preferences were collated, but, as in the standard Social Housing Support Application forms, these are not ranked in priority. The main preference expressed at the Independent Review meetings was for standard rented housing, either through the local authority or an Approved Housing Body. The third most popular option was Traveller group housing, although all except one who chose this preference also expressed a preference for standard rented housing. Single level housing was also a common preference.

	Preferences on Application Form	Preferences stated at Review Consultations
Rented local authority accommodation	24	42
Approved Housing Body (AHB)	2	32
Traveller group housing	1	15
Single level housing	0	9
Housing Assistance Payment	4	4
Rental Accommodation Scheme	8	1
Transfer	8	4
Traveller halting site bay	4	3
Wheelchair liveable	0	1
Extension to LA House	0	4

Social Housing Support Preferences at consultations (attendees could select more than one preference) Total = 48.



90% of the housing preferences expressed in this Independent Review and Verification exercise were for local authority standard rented housing, or after clarification, also Approved Housing Body (AHB) standard rented housing.

Fifteen attendees at the independent review meetings expressed an interest in Traveller group housing (nine in Tuam, and two each in Ballinasloe, Loughrea and Galway City). Of these fifteen households, all but one also expressed a preference for standard local authority housing – and in the meetings many confirmed that standard housing was their first preference.

Traveller halting bay sites was the preference for one household in Ballinasloe and two from Galway City. One of these households from Galway City expressed a preference for a halting site for the specific use of her own family only.

In relation to the Areas of Choice within the Galway County areas, the most popular area was Tuam (33%), Athenry (17%), Ballinasloe South (16%), Galway North (9%).

Overall, the level of awareness of the various social housing support options was surprisingly low. Most attendees requested an explanation of what AHB standard housing and Traveller group housing entailed. It was recommended that information sessions be arranged to address this, particularly highlighting the need for applicants to regularly update their applications for social housing support.

All attendees (except one) confirmed they identified as an Irish Traveller. Most attendees referred positively to their Traveller identity and culture, although some mentioned that neither they nor their parents had travelled or lived in a caravan or trailer. One person highlighted that her children were very proud to be Travellers.

Most attendees stated a preference to live in mixed estates, i.e., with Traveller and non-Traveller households, without a concentration of Traveller households. Many who were applying for social housing support, emphasised how their children were involved in school activities, in sports clubs and a range of community activities and did not want to move from the area – even if their housing conditions were overcrowded. Several emphasised the need to remain linked in with their local GP and healthcare systems due to poor health/children's disabilities.

Management and maintenance of the accommodation:

Common areas within Traveller Specific Accommodation including both Traveller Group Housing and Halting Sites are maintained by dedicated Traveller Accommodation caretakers.

Tenants can log maintenance issues online at <https://www.galway.ie/RepairRequest/> Updates on maintenance requests logged will be issued via text and e-mail.

Galway County Council and tenant responsibilities in relation to the maintenance of Council properties are detailed in the Housing Maintenance - Council and Tenant Responsibilities Handbook –

<https://www.galway.ie/RepairRequest/Tenants%20Responsibilities%20English.pdf>

Tenancy Sustainment:

Galway County Councils Tenancy Sustainment Strategy outlines the various interventions and supports available to assist our tenants in sustaining their tenancy, preventing tenancy breakdown and possible homelessness. The Councils Traveller Liaison Officer actively and regularly engages with many of the tenants and occupants of the ninety-six Traveller specific accommodation units to ensure they continue to meet their households needs. She ensures any issues raised by tenants or neighbours are investigated and dealt with appropriately, in accordance with tenancy agreements and the Councils Tenancy Sustainment Strategy and Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy.

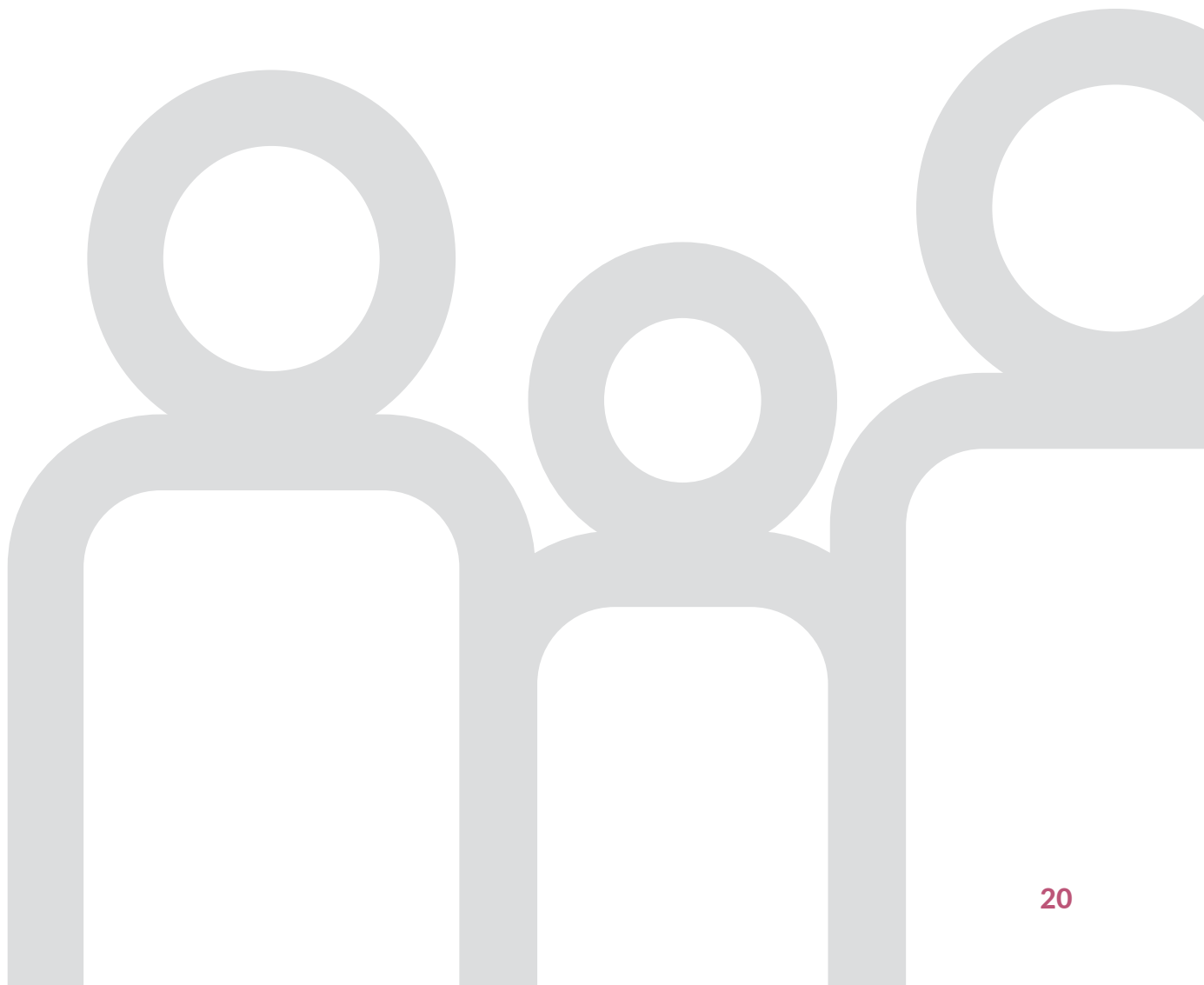
Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy:

Galway County Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy aims to create stable and sustainable communities by working towards the elimination of anti-social behaviour in Council properties and estates. The Council recognises that the majority of our tenants are law-abiding and only a small number of households are involved in such behaviour.

Galway County Council will not tolerate anti-social behaviour and its' Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy outlines the appropriate steps which will be taken to deal with such behaviour to include enforcement action where necessary.

Monitoring Progress in Implementing the Programme:

Comprehensive updates on the progress of the Traveller Accommodation Programme will be provided at each meeting of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.



7. LOCAL TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee is an advisory committee and a consultative forum between the Local Authority, Travellers, and the Traveller Representative Groups. The Committee meets a minimum of 4 times per year. The membership of the LTACC consists of 8 Councillors, 3 representatives from Traveller Representative Groups, 2 Travellers representing the Tuam and South Galway areas and senior officials from the Housing Unit of Galway County Council. The provision, upgrade and management of Traveller accommodation is discussed at these meetings. The Standing Orders for the operation of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee sets out how the business of the Committee is conducted. Terms of Reference for the LTACC which operate alongside the Standing Orders will be reviewed in tandem with the adoption and implementation of the *Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 - 2029*.

8. TRAVELLER INTERAGENCY GROUP

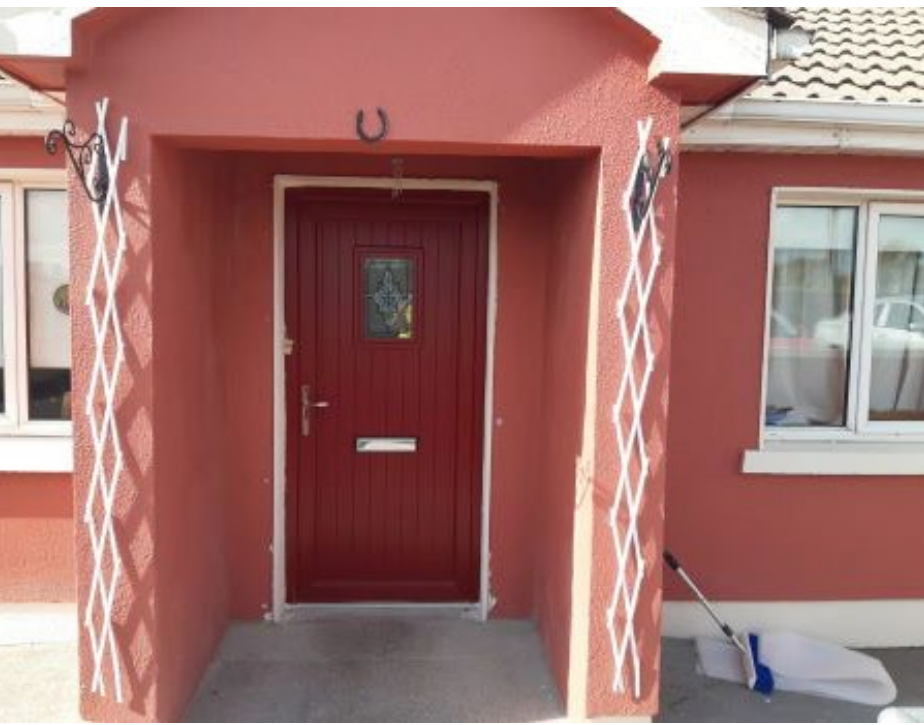
The County Galway Traveller Interagency Group (TIG) seeks to promote and support adequate, appropriate, and effective service provision to the Traveller community. The Traveller Interagency Group consists of representatives from a number of public, community and voluntary bodies in the administrative area of County Galway including Galway County Council, Health Service Executive, Tusla, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board, Galway Rural Development, Western Traveller and Intercultural Development, Galway Traveller Movement, and the Galway County Public Participation Network. The TIG also consists of an Education Sub-Group to serve as a forum for collaboration on matters related to Traveller education requiring joint action by public services and Traveller organisations. Member organisations have participated in cultural competence training and have committed to delivering cultural competence training within their organisations. As part of Traveller Pride Week 2021 the Group launched a Framework for Public Bodies responding to Traveller ethnicity in County Galway. It was developed to implement a common strategy across public sector organisations to take account of the practical implications of Traveller culture and ethnic identity in planning, policy development, and service provision.

9. TRAVELLER SPECIFIC ACCOMMODATION IN GALWAY COUNTY

Galway County Council is responsible for the provision, refurbishment, upgrade and maintenance of Traveller Specific Accommodation (Group Housing Schemes, Halting Sites, Single Rural Properties) in the County of Galway. There are a total of 63 group houses, 17 single rural houses and 16 halting site bays under the remit of Galway County Council.

Over the course of the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 – 2024, a substantial programme of work on Traveller Specific Accommodation has been delivered. Funding was provided by the Traveller Accommodation Unit, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage following consideration of detailed submission of works to be completed made by Galway County Council:

TRAVELLER GROUP HOUSING SCHEMES			
Group Housing Scheme	No of Properties	Works Completed	Completion Date
An Cheathru Bán, Athenry	3 houses	Allocation of 3 houses in new housing estate as Traveller Specific Accommodation	Q2 2023
Ballydavid, Athenry	6	1. Provision of footpath access to town 2. Energy Efficiency Upgrade Works	Q1 2020 Q2 2024
Ballygurrane, Athenry	2	Major refurbishment to 2 properties. Accessible extension to 1 property.	Q3 2024
Canal Drive, Ballinasloe	4	Major refurbishment & upgrade of properties	Q1 2021
Clontuskert, Ballinasloe	3	Major refurbishment & upgrade of properties. Extension to 1 property	Q2 2024
Cloonlyon, Ballygar	13	Major refurbishment & upgrade of sewer system	Q4 2024
Cluain Órtha, Craughwell	6 houses & 2 bays	Demolition of halting site and construction of 6 A rated houses and 2 bays	Q4 2021
Creggaun, Ballinasloe	7	Structural repairs to roofs and chimneys	Q4 2019
Gortbride, Loughrea	7	Extension of gardens to remove alleyway and repairs to wastewater treatment facilities	Q4 2019
Moyne Park, Ballinasloe	3	Refurbishment & upgrade of 2 properties	Q4 2022
Sandymount, Killimor	3	Major refurbishment & upgrade of properties	Q2 2021



House in Traveller Specific Group Housing Scheme - red door and paint to facilitate the needs of a visually impaired family member.

SINGLE RURAL HOUSES			
Area	No of Properties	Works Completed	Completion Date
Athenry	2	Refurbishment and extension	1 Q3 2024 1 Q4 2024
Ballinasloe	2	Purchase, upgrade and extension	Q2 2023
Loughrea	1	Refurbishment and extension	Q4 2022
Oranmore	1	Refurbishment and extension	Q4 2022
Doughiska	1	Refurbishment	Q4 2019



Single house refurbished and extended in Athenry for a larger family.



Single house for Traveller Specific Accommodation purchased, refurbished, extended and adapted in Ballinasloe to meet specific requirements for a family.

HALTING SITES

Area	No of Bays	Works Completed	Completion Date
Tuam	10	Provision of new welfare units and fire safety improvement works	Q1 2019
Capira, Portumna	4	Reconfiguration of halting site to create 4 bays including provision of new welfare units and fire safety works	Q4 2019



Halting site bay and welfare unit in Capira Halting Site, Portumna.

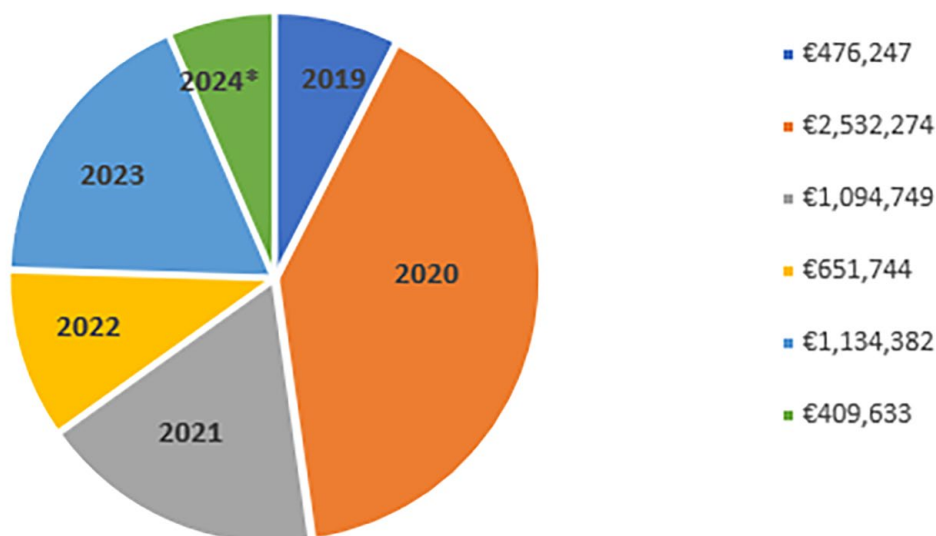
10. FUNDING AND EXPENDITURE

Galway County Council has successfully made submissions for funding and delivered a significant programme of works during the lifetime of the previous Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 - 2024. The consideration and agreement of the Traveller Accommodation Unit to remove the annualised element of funding and instead allocating it by project has enabled the continuous delivery of the programme. It was the most significant and effective change of policy that empowered the Local Authority and supported the allocation of additional staff resources to the delivery of the Traveller Accommodation Programme.

CAPITAL SPEND ON PROVISION OF TRAVELLER SPECIFIC ACCOMMODATION	
Year	Capital Expenditure
2019	€476,247
2020	€2,532,274
2021	€1,094,749
2022	€651,744
2023	€1,134,382
2024*	€409,688
*To date	

Capital Expenditure on Traveller Specific Accommodation 2019-2024

Capital Expenditure on Traveller Specific Accommodation 2019-2024

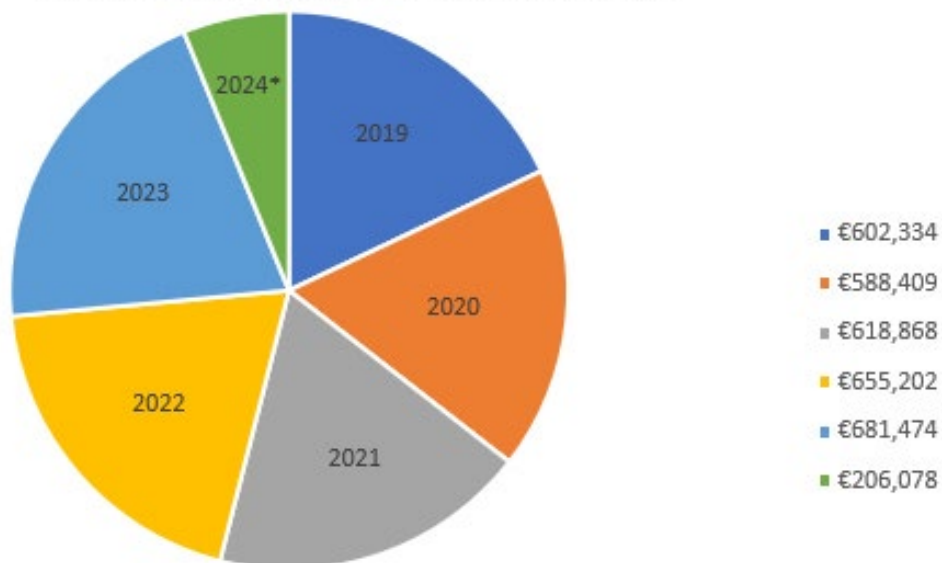


REVENUE SPEND ON PROVISION OF TRAVELLER SPECIFIC ACCOMMODATION

In addition to the capital spend there is significant expenditure on the daily maintenance and management of Traveller Specific Accommodation.

Year	Revenue Expenditure
2019	€602,334
2020	€588,409
2021	€618,868
2022	€655,202
2023	€681,474
2024*	€206,078
*To date	

Revenue Expenditure on Traveller Specific Accommodation 2019 - 2024



Caravan Loan Scheme

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, through the Local Authorities, introduced a nationwide Pilot Caravan Loan Scheme in 2022 to support the provision of Traveller-specific accommodation through local authorities to provide preferential loans to Travellers to purchase their own caravan/mobile home on halting sites for use as their primary residence. The Scheme allowed for a maximum loan to be issued of €40,000, inclusive of VAT. Galway County Council notified all the current residents of the two halting sites of the availability of the loan and interest was initially expressed by some residents. One application was received for which a loan was issued of over €30,000.

The Council will continue to support Travellers who are authorised residents of Council owned halting sites to purchase a caravan/mobile home suitable to their own family's needs, dependent on the continuation of financial supports from the Traveller Accommodation Unit for the scheme. During discussions with potential applicants, they will be advised to contact their local MABS who can provide them with necessary independent financial advice, as it is a significant financial commitment.

11. ASSESSMENT OF NEED

Section 6 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 requires housing authorities to carry out an assessment of needs of Traveller households for whom accommodation will be required during the duration of the *Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 - 2029*.

In accordance with the 2022 census, Galway County has the highest number of Travellers in the country with 2,509 persons enumerated. Of towns in the country with 1,500 or more persons, Tuam town had the highest number of Travellers with 737 persons.

Independent Review and Verification Exercise

An independent review and verification exercise to which 260 Traveller housing applicants were invited was completed. There were forty-eight attendees. Forty-two of those who attended expressed a preference for Local Authority or Approved Housing Body housing. Fifteen people said they would consider Traveller Group Housing Accommodation but fourteen of these said they would prefer standard housing. Three expressed a preference for halting site accommodation, two of whom are residing in Galway City.

Annual Estimate of Accommodation of Traveller Families 2023

Galway County Council completed the 2023 Annual Estimate of Traveller Families on 23rd November 2023, the annual census of Traveller families. It provides details of the accommodation position of Travellers on this date. This information is compiled using data from the Summary of Social Housing Assessment completed in 2023 and the local knowledge of the Traveller Liaison Officer in Galway County Council. It was identified that there was a total of 601 Traveller families residing in the County of Galway on 23rd November 2023, 80 of whom were living in private rented accommodation and a further 15 sharing involuntarily with their extended families in private rented or in a Traveller Group scheme.

Submissions to TAP 2025 - 2029

Galway County Council contacted all relevant stakeholders notifying them of the Councils intention to prepare a draft Traveller Accommodation Programme for the period 2025 – 2029 and of the intention to assess the accommodation needs of eligible housing applicants, who identify as Travellers, in its administrative area. They were invited to make a submission in relation to the assessment of needs or the Traveller Accommodation Programme.

Seven submissions were received from the following organisations:

1	Brú Bríde (Western Traveller & Intercultural Development Tuam)
2	National Traveller Health Implementation Office, H.S.E.
3	National Traveller MABS
4	Joint Submission - Irish Traveller Movement, National Traveller Women's Forum, Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre
5	Galway Traveller Movement
6	Galway City Council
7	CENA

The contents of their submissions have been taken into consideration in the preparation of this Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 - 2029.

Galway City Council Approved applicants with an Area of Choice in the administrative area of Galway County Council

Galway City Council advised Galway County Council that twenty-two Traveller families who are eligible applicants for Social Housing supports in Galway City and who have selected Local Authority housing as their preferred housing option have selected an Area of Choice in Galway County on their application. Fifteen of these families have selected Athenry/Oranmore/Claregalway/Clarinbridge as an Area of Choice; three have selected Headford, two have selected Galway North and two have selected Tuam. Galway County Council allocates housing in accordance with the Councils adopted Housing Allocations Scheme. All Galway City Council housing applicants who have selected an Area of Choice in the County are considered for the allocation of any suitable property that becomes available in their Area(s) of Choice and meets their needs, along with all other eligible housing applicants in line with the Housing Allocations Scheme.

The City Council further advised that eleven families of a total of fourteen currently residing in a temporary halting site in Carrowbrowne have selected halting site accommodation as their accommodation preference and have an Area of Choice in Athenry/ Oranmore/ Claregalway/ Clarinbridge. The City Council is examining potential sites within its administrative area to provide culturally appropriate accommodation for these families and has requested that Galway County Council also consider the provision of such accommodation in the County.

All households who are eligible housing applicants in Galway City Council and have selected an Area of Choice within the administrative area of Galway County Council were invited to attend the independent review and verification exercise. Three households attended during the two consultations that were held in Galway City. Two of these households have expressed an interest in halting site accommodation, with one of them preferring Traveller Group Housing Scheme accommodation. One household expressed an interest in standard Local Authority Housing.

Summary of Social Housing Assessment

A summary of social housing assessment of 1,056 social housing applicants is underway. Based on knowledge of the Traveller Liaison Officer and the Social Work team, 107 of these are identified as Travellers. To date responses have been received from 92 of the applicants who are identified as Travellers, with standard Local Authority or Approved Housing Body housing their expressed preference.

Ethnic Identifier

Whilst the option of an ethnic identifier was added to the application form for social housing support in February 2022, there has been limited response to this question on the form or during the annual Social Housing Assessment. To date, the data returned in relation to this identifier cannot be relied upon to inform estimates on Traveller families and social housing. It is proposed that Galway County Council will hold twice yearly information sessions arranged with Traveller community care workers on issues around the various options in social housing support, the significance of completing the ethnic identifier in housing applications and the significance of responding to reviews of the application for social housing support.

It is apparent from all research completed to compile relevant data that the vast majority of Travellers wish to reside in standard housing, whether provided by Local Authority or the Approved Housing Body, with a minimal wish for Group Housing accommodation. Local knowledge has identified Tuam as a suitable location for a Group Housing Scheme, with all 10 of the current residents of the halting site having expressed a desire to be accommodated at the same location in a Group Housing Scheme. A small number of halting site bays will also be provided at this location.

Youth Homeless

Housing for All - Youth Homeless Strategy 2023 – 2025 identified young Travellers as one of the six vulnerable cohorts at risk of homelessness. Early intervention and interagency collaboration involving Local Authorities, Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee, Traveller Representative Groups and HSE Regional Traveller Health Forum is essential to prepare young Travellers to find their preferred accommodation and to access any necessary supports in the community.

It is important that there is early liaison with community health care workers and the Local Authority regarding the housing needs of young Travellers. Housing preferences and options, both for temporary and permanent housing, should be explored to avoid young people accessing mainstream homeless services.

The Homeless Section, the Traveller Liaison Officer and the Tenancy Sustainment Officer will engage with young Travellers who are at risk of homelessness and provide guidance towards mediation, tenancy sustainment and other available supports as necessary.

The Local Authority will provide regular training to community health care workers to enable them to assist young Travellers to complete and submit a complete social housing support application at the earliest opportunity.

12. FIRE SAFETY

Fire Safety on both halting sites in the County, in Tuam and Capira, is of the utmost importance and is regularly on the agenda for discussion at meetings of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.

Galway County Council provides fire safety equipment on both halting sites including fire extinguishers which are serviced as required and hose reels which are also maintained. Due to repeated vandalism of fire extinguishers which were provided in the common area of the site in Tuam, the Council decided to provide 2 fire extinguishers per bay which are located within the curtilage of each bay. Unfortunately, there continues to be unauthorised usage of the fire hose reels on each site. Fire blankets, carbon and smoke alarms have been provided along with informational material on safety in the home.

Twice yearly onsite fire safety training is provided by the Council but there has been limited engagement from the residents. Following discussion and consideration by the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee a successful application was made to the Dormant Accounts Fund for the creation of a short informational video which will be circulated to residents and available widely through social media. This video is being developed in collaboration with Brú Bríde and the Fire Services.

13. TARGETS AND OBJECTIVES

Housing Need Targets & Delivery 2019 – 2024

Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 – 2024 contained an assessment of the number of Traveller households requiring accommodation within the lifetime of the Programme. The Programme identified a requirement for 111 accommodation units to meet the then current and projected need, comprised of a current need of 71 and a projected need estimated at 40 accommodation units.



Newly constructed Traveller Specific Accommodation in Athenry.

While there are variances across the various accommodation types, Galway County Council exceeded its overall targets in the programme with the accommodation needs of 351 households met during the period 2019 – 2024.

Targets & Delivery 2019 – 2024

Accommodation Type	Target 2019-2023	2019 Delivery	2020 Delivery	2021 Delivery	2022 Delivery	2023 Delivery	2024 Delivery - to date	Total Delivery
Group Housing Scheme - Existing	5	1		2	1			4
New Group Housing Scheme	6			6		2	1	9
Permanent Halting Site Service Block - Existing	7		1	3	5	2		11
Local Authority Standard Housing	49	17	27	25	36	32	31	168
Rental Accommodation Scheme/Long Term Leasing	3		1	2		1		4
Single Rural - Traveller Specific Housing	0		2		1	1		4
Voluntary Housing	12	3		10	15	6	11	45
Purchase by Travellers	2							0
Housing Assistance Payment/ Private Rented Accommodation with/out Rent Supplement	27	10	21	38	12	11	14	106
Totals	111	31	52	86	70	55	57	351

Targets 2025 - 2029

The targets and objectives are outlined below based on the independent review and verification exercise, the assessment of need and the number of current eligible Traveller housing applicants:

The projected need over the 5-year period of this Accommodation Programme is for 50 households which added to existing need of 260 gives a total estimated need of 310 homes.

Accommodation Type	Target 2025-2029	2025 Delivery	2026 Delivery	2027 Delivery	2028 Delivery	2029 Delivery
Group Housing Scheme - Existing	5	1	1	1	1	1
New Group Housing	10			10		
Permanent Halting Site Service Block	7	1	1	3	1	1
Local Authority Standard Housing	111	22	22	22	22	23
Rental Accommodation Scheme/Long Term Leasing	3		1	1		1
Single Rural - Traveller Specific Housing	2				1	1
Voluntary Housing/ Approved Housing Body	80	16	16	16	16	16
Purchase by Travellers	2				1	1
Housing Assistance Payment/ Private Rented Accommodation with/out Rent Supplement	90	18	18	18	18	18
Totals	310	58	59	71	60	62

14. TRAVELLER SPECIFIC ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME 2025 – 2029

Timelines and Targets

The Council will continue to deliver an extensive programme of refurbishment, upgrade and extension works to Traveller Specific Group Houses and individual single rural properties to complete the renovation of all such Council stock and to ensure it meets the needs of Traveller families. Energy retrofits will be factored in for all properties undergoing major refurbishment to contribute towards the reduction of energy costs and reducing the impact on the environment. The delivery of retrofit works will be reliant on the continuation of the Energy Efficiency/Retrofitting Programme. The works to be completed will be agreed following inspection, survey and consultation with the families. The completion of the works will be subject to the allocation of funding by the Traveller Accommodation Unit, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and available staff resources.

TRAVELLER GROUP HOUSING SCHEMES			
Group Housing Scheme	No of Properties	Works Completed	Completion Date
Ballydavid, Athenry	6	Major refurbishment	Q4 2025
Cloonlyon, Ballygar	1	Construction of property – to replace property demolished following fire	Q1 2026
Gortbride, Loughrea	7	Major refurbishment and upgrade of sewer system	Q4 2026
Carrowmagowan, Tuam	2	Major refurbishment and upgrade of properties	Q4 2027
Creggane, Ballinasloe	7	Major refurbishment and upgrade of properties. Regeneration and possible extension of site.	Q4 2029

SINGLE RURAL HOUSES			
Area	No of Properties	Works Completed	Completion Date
Ballinasloe	2	Major refurbishment	Q4 2025
Mountbellew	1	Major refurbishment	Q1 2026
Athenry	1	Refurbishment and possible extension	Q4 2026
Headford	1	Refurbishment and extension	Q4 2027
Williamstown	1	Major refurbishment	Q4 2028
Tuam	2	Major refurbishment	Q4 2029



Halting site bay with caravan and welfare unit in Capira Halting Site, Portumna.

Group Housing Scheme - Tuam

In addition to the refurbishment and upgrade of Traveller Specific Housing, the redevelopment of Tuam Halting Site to provide a culturally appropriate Group Housing Scheme of 10 houses and a small number of halting site bays will be progressed to construction.

Initial consultation has taken place with the current residents on the halting site and all households have expressed a desire to reside in a house at this location. This location is attractive and suitable as it is safe, private and allows easy access to local services. Further extensive consultation with the proposed residents and the public will take place prior to the finalisation of the development.

As with all new developments of Council housing, they will be built to comply with the current building standards which require a Building Energy Rating of A2. This will make the homes more energy efficient and cheaper to heat than existing houses and help address climate change. The Council will also explore options to provide energy efficient measures at the halting site bays to reduce the impact on the environment and ensure energy costs are kept to a minimum.

The development will include a safe, secure play space for children and age friendly space to encourage healthy lifestyles at all stages of life.

CENA Culturally Appropriate Homes has made a submission requesting that Galway County Council consider establishing a working relationship with them. It is the intention to consider involving them in the planning and delivery of this new development and to explore the possibility of CENA managing the development, including the establishment of a resident's association with the tenants.

15. CONCLUSION

The Traveller Accommodation Unit in the Council has an excellent record in the provision of quality housing and has a robust programme of improving the quality, quantity, standard and energy efficiency of Traveller Specific Accommodation. It is recognised that the availability of strong supports and advice for Travellers in housing ensures tenancies are successfully sustained. The Traveller Liaison Officer, the Social Work team and the Traveller Representative Groups will continue to support and advocate on behalf of Traveller families to ensure their rights and needs are met whilst also understanding and explaining the responsibilities of the housing applicant or tenant.

It is noted that Travellers are expressing a strong preference for standard social housing as expressed by 90% of those who attended Independent Review and Verification consultation. The Council is committed to delivering an extensive housing programme to meet the existing and projected need for accommodation for Travellers to include all housing options in line with the stated preferences of the housing applicants.

The delivery of this Programme requires a commitment from all stakeholders to work together and is also dependent on the availability of necessary funding, including the continuation of the Energy Efficiency/Retrofitting Programme and the availability of staff resources.



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council