

Minutes of Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC) Meeting – Wednesday 3rd February 2021 (via Zoom)

In Attendance: Mr. N. Crowley, Independent Chairperson

Cllr. D. McDonnell, Galway City Council

Cllr. F. Fahy, Galway City Council

Cllr. M. O'Connor, Galway City Council

Cllr. O. Hanley, Galway City Council

Cllr. N. Larkin, Galway City Council

Ms. M. O' Riada, Galway Traveller Movement

Ms. J. Corcoran, Galway Traveller Movement

Mr. P. Sweeney, Galway Traveller Movement Representative

Officials:

Mr. D. Mahon, A/Director of Services, Housing Department

Ms. H. Martyn, A/Senior Executive Officer, Housing Department

Mr. T. Prendergast, A/Senior Engineer, Housing Department

Ms. S. Donoghue, Senior Social Worker, Housing Department

Ms. S. Carroll, Administrative Officer, Housing Department

Present:

Ms. M. Kilgarrieff, A/Assistant Staff Officer, Housing Department

Ms. E. McCarthy, Student Social Worker

Apologies:

Ms. A. Delaney, Galway Traveller Movement Representative

Cllr. J. Connolly, Galway City Council

Mr. N. Crowley welcomed all attendees and thanked everyone for attending. Apologies were recorded for Cllr. J. Connolly & Ms. A. Delaney. Condolences were offered to Cllr. F. Fahy on the recent death of his wife. Ms. Eilish McCarthy, Student Social Worker, was welcomed to the meeting.

1. Minutes and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the Meeting dated 28th October 2020 were circulated prior to the Meeting and Mr. Crowley asked if there were any comments or corrections. Ms. J. Corcoran requested that the minutes reflect more of the discussion that takes place during meetings. It was agreed to add a 'key issues' box to capture decisions and to track issues over time.

The adoption of the Minutes was proposed by Cllr. F. Fahy, seconded by Cllr. D. McDonnell and agreed by all.

Ms. S. Donoghue noted that Ms. B. Kelly has left the LTACC and that Ms. J. Corcoran has replaced her on behalf of Galway Traveller Movement. This leaves a vacancy for a Traveller Representative on the Westside of the City.

2. COVID-19 Update

Ms. S. Donoghue advised that the Housing Department continue to meet weekly with the Traveller COVID Forum. Travellers have been adversely affected by the virus with more than 100 cases currently among Travellers in the City. Ms. Donoghue acknowledged the work done by Galway Traveller Movement in providing a wraparound service to support the Traveller Community. Ms. O' Riada acknowledged the assistance of the Community Health Workers in providing this support. Ms. Corcoran noted that the families that do not have access to heat or hot water are finding it challenging to employ preventative measures such as washing hands.

Mr. D. Mahon advised that it has not traditionally been the responsibility of the Local Authority to replace caravans except in emergency cases. A caravan loans scheme is to be piloted but details of

this scheme have not yet been provided by the Department. Mr. Mahon stated that he could write to the Department on behalf of the LTACC to request clarity on the terms of the Scheme. This may enable discussion on how best to proceed in relation to the issue of substandard caravans. Ms. H. Martyn noted that caravans may be acquired for the purposes of self-isolation and that Galway City Council has already purchased one of these units.

Mr. Mahon advised that €80,000 COVID funding has been drawn down and he stated that additional funding can be applied for. It is hoped that the Capital plan will address many of the current accommodation issues. Under the next Traveller Accommodation Plan alternative locations for the Carrowbrowne Permanent site will need to be investigated. If the site is to be retained, alternative accommodation will need to be looked at. The cost of maintaining the temporary site at Carrowbrowne needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

3. Capital Programme Update

Mr. T. Prendergast presented the Capital Programme Update outlining the progress on the Keeraun, Doughiska, Circular Road, Headford Road, Merlin Lands and Fana Glas schemes.

The fire damaged property in Kiltullagh will need to be demolished and rebuilt. The cost of this will be mostly covered by the insurance. This process could possibly be delayed by appeals at planning stage. There is no update in relation to the Garda investigation. The heating and hot water at Carrowbrowne Permanent Halting Site is due to be upgraded and this should be complete by April.

Mr. Prendergast advised that the Diocese has not changed their position on the Cul Trá site and it will be closing at the end of 2022. The GTM are to meet with the Bishop to discuss the situation as the families wish to stay on the site, but this meeting has not yet come to pass.

Mr. Prendergast advised that Part 8s for the planned projects should be available online and that he will consult with Planning in relation to this. Engagement has taken place with St. Nicholas Park residents in relation to the development at Doughiska. It was agreed that the Housing Department should also engage with the An Sean Bhaile residents.

Ms. M. O' Riada noted that the Keeraun development will not accommodate all Cúl Trá residents and that the Operations Committee is looking at this issue. She also referenced the €1 million that had been promised by CENA in relation to the Circular Road development and stated that she would like that to be kept in mind. Ms. O' Riada agreed that more discussion is needed in relation to Fana Glas.

4. Sub-Groups Update

Operations Sub-Group

Ms. S. Donoghue noted that Ms. S. Carroll will be departing from the Housing Department in March and that Ms. H. Martyn will replace her on the Operations Sub-Group. She thanked Ms. Carroll for all of her work with the group and in the area of Traveller Accommodation. The group will meet again later this week. Ms. Donoghue advised that another Traveller Representative would be welcome to take the place of Ms. B. Kelly. Ms. O' Riada stated that the issue of heat and hot water at the Carrowbrowne Permanent Halting Site must be prioritised by the group and requested that alternative temporary measures be looked at to alleviate the situation before April.

Estate Management Sub-Group

Ms. S. Carroll advised that this group has met twice since the last LTACC meeting. She stated that work has commenced on the preparation of the Estate Management Strategy. Some actions will be left blank for public consultation. It is hoped that the draft will be ready soon. Ms. Carroll advised that the group would be focusing on one area at a time initially with the first being energy usage on Halting Sites. Aidan Falvey will join the sub-group to provide a Maintenance perspective on this issue. On the

subject of Integrated Communities, Ms. Carroll advised that it will form part of the strategy with a view to this topic becoming a standalone piece.

Ms. S. Donoghue advised that the Tuam Road site is being considered as a pilot location for the rollout of Imagine WiFi. Ms. Donoghue suggested that Resident's Associations, such as the one being set up on the Tuam Road site, could be developed based Local Traveller Action Network.

Mr. T. Prendergast advised that the Halting Sites were contacted recently regarding the correct procedure for logging maintenance calls. He said that he was not aware of any outstanding requests but that a schedule of issues could be brought forward by the GTM.

Mr. N. Crowley suggested that the Estate Management structures and processes could provide an avenue for maintenance requests. Ms. J. Corcoran is to link in with Mr. Prendergast and emphasised the importance of the Integrated Communities document.

Traveller Homelessness Sub-Group

Ms. S. Donoghue advised that another GTM rep would be welcome in this group. The group will focus on younger Traveller families. One of the 27 families in Homeless Services have requested Traveller Specific accommodation. This group will meet before April.

5. Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) Equality Review

Further discussion to take place at July LTACC meeting. Has been discussed at in-house Traveller meeting. Documentation has been received from Meath County Council. Some queries had been received from IHREC.

6. AOB

In relation to the Annual Estimate of Traveller families, which is done yearly at the request of the LGMA and the Department of Housing, Ms. Donoghue advised that it is challenging to accurately estimate the number of Travellers in the City due to the lack of an ethnic identifier on Housing forms. This is to be addressed nationally. Ms. Donoghue noted that the numbers of Travellers in HAP accommodation has decreased since 2019.

Mr. N. Crowley & the members of the LTACC wished Ms. S. Carroll well in her new post and thanked her for her contribution to Traveller Accommodation over the years.

The contributions of Ms. B. Kelly to the LTACC were also noted and she was thanked for this.

Mr. N. Crowley thanked all for attending and the meeting then concluded.

Key issues:

- Urgency of addressing hot water and heating issues at Carrowbrowne Halting Site alongside progressing the resolution for this site and the families living there
- Cúl Trá site & disappointment at decision of Diocese to close the site & need to address needs of all families on the site
- Maintenance Strategy – working with GTM to ensure clear process for reporting maintenance issues
- Clarity to be requested from Department regarding Caravan Loan Scheme
- Further discussion on layout of Fana Glas redevelopment needed
- Integrated communities