

Planning Report

Proposed Social Housing &
Traveller Appropriate
Accommodation Development
– Lands at Headford Road,
Galway





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1.

INTRODUCTION

Our client Galway City Council is applying for planning permission under Part X of the Planning & Development Act (2000) for the construction of 24 no. residential dwellings (comprising 21 no. social housing units and 3 no. Traveller Appropriate Accommodation units) and all associated works on lands at Headford Road, Galway.

The development description, as per the public notice, is worded as follows:

“Proposal: Pursuant to the requirements of Section 177AE(4)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) notice is hereby given that Galway City Council proposes to seek approval from An Bord Pleanála to carry out the following development at Headford Road, Galway.

Nature of Development: to construct a social housing development of 24 no residential units, comprising – 3 no. 1-bedroom units, 14 no. 2-bedroom units, 4 no. 3-bedroom units and 3 no. 4-bedroom TTA (Traveller Appropriate Accommodation) units, associated carparking and bicycle parking, green spaces and landscaping, connections to existing services and all ancillary/enabling site development works.

A Natura Impact Statement has been prepared in respect of the proposed development.”

This report will outline the context of the site, the relevant planning policies and objectives, and take into account the planning history of the site, before presenting a planning assessment and conclusion.

2.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1

Site Location

The proposed development site is a vacant site in the Ballinfoyle, Headford Road area, on the outskirts of Galway City. The proposed development site is located to the north of Galway City on the west side of Headford Road (N84) just over c. 3km north of Eyre Square in the centre of the city. The subject site is c. 2.6km south-east of Lough Corrib. Ballindooly Lough is just over c. 0.5km northeast of the subject site.

There is a quarry site c. 60m to the west side of the proposed development site boundary. There is also a garage and machinery yard immediately to the south of the proposed development. An industrial complex including large premises / factories of companies including the Clada Group bottling plant and Western Beverages Limited is located on the opposite side (east) of the Headford Road to the proposed development. A number of residential dwellings currently exist along Headford Road to the north and east of the proposed development site.

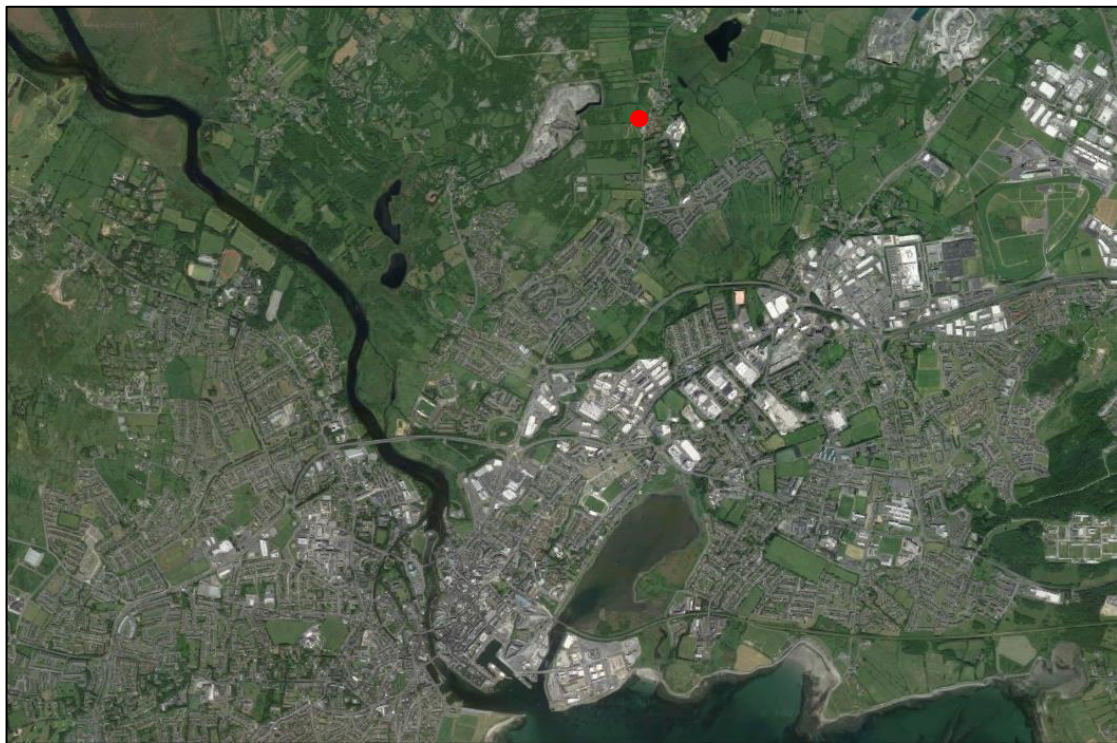


Figure 1: Site Location, Identified with Red dot (Source: Google Maps)

2.2

Site Characteristics

The site extends to c. 0.9ha and is bounded to the north and west by agricultural lands, the east by the N84 and the south by a commercial development. The site currently rises from east to west, creating a sloped landscape. The site is enclosed by vegetation, however, there little to no mature trees on site.

It should be noted that the Galway City Ring Road (GCRR), recently granted by An Bord Pleanála, passes to the north of the subject site.



Figure 2: Site Context



Figure 3: View of Subject Site from N84

2.3

Proposed Development

The proposed development involves the construction of a social housing scheme comprising a mix of standard residential units and Traveller-specific accommodation. The completed project will deliver high quality residential accommodation which will represent a positive intervention in the context of the existing sub-urban/rural location in a sustainable, efficient and cost-effective design.

All site services will form part of the development including connection to existing foul water sewer, connection to existing water mains, and connection to surface water drainage system in proximity to the site.

The design of the proposed development, and in particular the Traveller Appropriate Accommodation (TAA), has been the subject of extensive consultation with the Traveller Community Liaison Officer who has conveyed the requirements of the Traveller Community to the design team. This has resulted in a number of iterations to the design to this stage in order to meet the requirements of the Traveller Community while ensuring that this element could be provided as part of a cohesive and high-quality residential proposal for the entire site.

The proposed development comprises the following in terms of accommodation:

1. Social housing scheme of 21 no. dwellings; &
2. The Traveller Appropriate Accommodation scheme in the western quadrant of the site, comprising 3 no. TAA dwellings.



Figure 4: Proposed Site Layout



Figure 5: 3D View of Proposed Development

3.

PLANNING HISTORY

A search of Galway City Council's planning history reveals that there are no previous or extant planning applications on the specific site, however, there are a number of relevant planning applications in the vicinity of the site which highlight the patterns and trends of development at this location. Please refer to the table below.

Table 1: Relevant Planning History

Planning Ref.	Applicant	Development Description	Decision
06/634	Mr. Joseph Joyce	Permission for (a) Construction of 22 No. terraced and semi-detached houses in 7 No. two storey blocks. (b) All associated site development works including construction of flood mitigation measures, landscaping, provision of 3 No. bin storage/meter rooms, a substation and additional surface car parking. This is a proposed amendment to the previously approved application (P.A. Ref. 592/03 and 04/704) including revised site boundary, omission of 6 No. residential units (1 No. Block F and 1 No. semi-detached house type 2), resulting in an additional 16 No. semi-detached and terraced houses.	Granted 23/04/2007
08/532	Mr. Joseph Joyce	Permission for the construction of 84 No. residential units (14 No. 1 bed apartments, 44 No. 2 bed townhouses and 26 No. 3 bed townhouses) in 8 No. two and three storey blocks, 118 No. car parking spaces (comprising 26 No. new basement spaces and 92 No. new surface spaces) construction of flood mitigation measures and landscaping to pond area to north of site, provision of 3 No. bin storage/meter rooms and 1 No. substation and all associated site development works. In addition to the proposed 118 No. new spaces, this proposal involves the use of 36 No. existing basement car parking spaces (approved under Pl. Ref. 592/03) to accommodate the proposed residential development.	Granted 29/01/2014

4.

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1

National Planning Framework: Project Ireland 2040

The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government published the National Planning Framework (NPF) entitled 'Ireland 2040' in February 2018 to succeed the National Spatial Strategy (NSS). The NPF comprises the Government's proposed long-term strategic planning framework to guide national, regional and local planning and investment decisions over the next 25 years.

The NPF is a strategic document which provides the framework for future development and investment in Ireland, providing a long-term and place-based aspect to public policy and investment, and aiming to coordinate sectoral areas such as housing, jobs, transport, education, health, environment, energy and communications, into an overall coherent strategy.

A key focus of the NPF is the need for compact growth. National Policy Objective 3a seeks to deliver at least 40% of all new homes nationally, within the built-up footprint of existing settlements.

The following National Policy Objectives are of direct relevance to the proposed development:

- **National Policy Objective 11** which favours development that can encourage more people to live or work in existing settlements;

The surrounding area in which the development is being proposed is at the edge of an established residential suburb, with existing development and land zoned for residential development. This objective is therefore met.

- **National Policy Objective 27** which prioritises walking and cycling accessibility to existing and proposed development;

The development is accessible on bicycle and on foot via footpath along the Headford Road. This objective is therefore met.

- **National Policy Objective 33** which is to prioritise the provision of new homes that can support sustainable development.

This development is proposed in an existing residential neighbourhood on lands zoned for residential development and which are serviceable. It is therefore considered that this proposal supports sustainable development.

- **National Policy Objective 6** relating to increased residential population and employment in urban areas.

The population of Ireland and specifically Galway is increasing. This proposal will meet demands generated by population increase. It is considered that this objective is met.

4.1.1

Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) (2019)

The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) was first published by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government in April 2013. It has been subsequently updated with the latest update being 2019. It sets out design

guidance and standards for constructing new roads and reconfiguring existing urban roads and streets in Ireland.

DMURS sets out an integrated design approach. Which means that design must be:

- Influenced by the type of place in which the street is located, and
- Balance the needs of all users.

A key aim of DMURS is to put well designed streets at the heart of sustainable communities. Well-designed streets can create connected physical, social and transport networks that promote real alternatives to car journeys, specifically walking. Guided by DMURS, this proposal encourages walking as a mode of transport, by delivering an attractive neighbourhood, with designated footpaths and pedestrian linkages to the surrounding neighbourhoods.

DMURS encourages designers to give due consideration to creating a ‘sense of place’. It identifies four interlinked characteristics (all of which can be found in this proposal) that influence the sense of place within a street as follows:

- *Connectivity: The creation of vibrant and active places requires pedestrian activity. This in turn requires walkable street networks that can be easily navigated and are well connected.*

A walkable and navigable street network is proposed at the site, with careful consideration given to connection to and through future adjoining developments.

- *Enclosure: A sense of enclosure spatially defines streets and creates a more intimate and supervised environment. A sense of enclosure is achieved by orientating buildings toward the street and placing them along its edge. The use of street trees can also enhance the feeling of enclosure.*

The Landscape Plan submitted illustrates an attractive, tree-lined development. The Landscape Plan has been guided by the provisions of DMURS by proposing trees and planting which offer spatial definition, enclosure and greening.

- *Active Edge: An active frontage enlivens the edge of the street creating a more interesting and engaging environment. An active frontage is achieved with frequent entrances and openings that ensure the street is overlooked and generate pedestrian activity as people come and go from buildings.*

High quality streetscapes and building frontage with extensive passive surveillance are proposed as part of this development.

- *Pedestrian Activity/Facilities: The sense of intimacy, interest and overlooking that is created by a street that is enclosed and lined with active frontages enhances a pedestrian’s feeling of security and well-being. Good pedestrian facilities (such as wide footpaths and well-designed crossings) also make walking a more convenient and pleasurable experience that will further encourage pedestrian activity.*

Pedestrian and cycles facilities are proposed. The layout and orientation of residential blocks within the development is intended to facilitate the creation of streets and active frontages. The layout provides a safe and pleasant environment for pedestrians navigating the proposed development.

DMURS emphasises that these four characteristics represent the basic measures that should be established in order to create people friendly streets that facilitate more sustainable neighbourhoods. Each of these four characteristics informed the design process for the proposed development and it is considered that the provisions of DMURS are met in the proposal. This is demonstrated in the enclosed Traffic and Transport Assessment.

4.1.2 Social Housing Strategy – 2020

The Social Housing Strategy 2020 aims to support the realisation of a new vision: that to the greatest extent possible, every household in Ireland will have access to secure, good quality housing suited to their needs at an affordable price and in a sustainable community. It will: Provide 35,000 new social housing units, over a 6-year period, to meet the additional social housing supply requirements as determined by the Housing Agency, Support up to 75,000 households through an enhanced private rental sector; and Reform social housing supports to create a more flexible and responsive system.

The three pillars underpinning the Social Housing Strategy are as follows:

- **Pillar 1:** *Provision of New Social Housing Supply - Provision of 35,000 new social housing units through a range of delivery mechanisms over the lifetime of the Strategy;*
- **Pillar 2:** *Providing Housing Supports Through the Private Rental Sector - Supports for eligible low-income households through the private rental sector. This Pillar includes the new Housing Assistance Payment which will aim to provide housing support for up to 75,000 households; and, innovative measures that the State, as a significant funder and regulator of the rental market, can take to help ensure that future supply is more stable, affordable, secure and cost effective; and*
- **Pillar 3:** *Reform Creating More Flexible and Responsive Social Housing Supports -This Pillar includes the implementation of reforms— a new rent framework, a new tenant purchase scheme, expanded powers to counter antisocial behaviour and housing services plans— and an on-going commitment to monitor and review the Strategy to refresh and drive reform and policy development.*

In summary the Strategy is focused on three key numbers: 90,000 households on the current waiting list; 35,000 new housing units to be provided by local authorities and AHBs; and Up to 75,000 households moving onto HAP or RAS.

The proposed development is intended to assist in realising the aims of the social housing strategy by providing high quality, social housing in an area of Galway City which is zoned for residential development.

4.2 Regional Planning Policy

4.2.1 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032 (Norther & Western Regional Assembly)

The Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Northern & Western Regional Assembly (RSES NWRA) was adopted on 24th January 2020. The principal purpose of the (RSES) is to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework and the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the regions. Section 3.6 of the RSES sets out the Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP).

The Vision of this MASP is that Galway will be a leading global city, renowned as a successful, sustainable, competitive, compact and accessible city of scale that supports a high quality of life, maintains its distinctive identity and supports its rich heritage, language and cultural experience.

The primary centre identified for growth in the region is Galway City through its designation as a Metropolitan Area in the NPF. Section 3.6 of the RSES sets out the Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (GMASP), which provides a strategic focus on the City and environs and sets out how it is envisaged the NPF will be implemented in the regional context of the RSES.

The GMASP outlines the aim to consolidate key neighbourhoods which have the potential to develop c.170ha of residentially zoned land suitable for higher density development. Relevant objectives outlined in the GMASP include:

- *RPO 6.3.2: The Assembly supports the proposition that 50% of new homes for the population targets will be constructed within the existing city development envelope, 40% of these shall be located on infill and/or brownfield sites.*
- *RPO 6.3.10: Support the provision of Childcare, Education and Health Services within the same timeframes as the residential and employment uses outlined above.*

With regard to growth ambitions for the region, the RSES NWRA notes the importance of compact growth in order to create more compact settlements:

‘Compact growth will be pursued to ensure sustainable growth of more compact urban and rural settlements, supported by jobs, houses, services and amenities, rather than continued sprawl and unplanned, uneconomic growth.’

The policy framework of the RSES aims to meet projected demand through promoting the development of sustainable high-quality neighbourhoods, sustainable densities incorporating high design standards and key urban design principles. The strategy is to provide for integration of housing with transportation infrastructure fostering sustainable transport patterns. The strategy must also promote a range of house types, sizes, and tenures suitable for households with different income levels or those who may have specific requirements. A number of strategic locations have been identified that present the opportunity and capacity to deliver the necessary quantum of housing to facilitate targeted growth.

The RSES has also set out the ambition to improve quality of life in the region. Relevant objectives to meet this ambition include:

- *RPO 7.9: Promote the provision of high-quality, accessible, and suitably proportioned areas of public open spaces and promote linkage with social, cultural and heritage sites and buildings. In this process prioritise access for walking and cycling.*
- *RPO 7.17: Ensure that the housing delivered meets the needs of the community in terms of social, affordable, private, and sheltered in both urban and rural areas.*
- *RPO 7.18: Support the development of housing to meet the population targets in this strategy using as wide a variety of funding mechanisms as possible including regeneration funds, Part V, direct public funding and Public/Private Partnerships.*

The proposed development includes Social Housing and Traveller Appropriate housing of high design quality, in an area zoned for residential development. Accordingly, the proposed development is considered to be consistent with the pertinent regional planning policy.

4.3 Local Planning Policy Context

4.3.1 Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023

The current statutory planning policy document for the subject site is the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 (GCDP), which was adopted by the City Council in December 2016 and came in to effect on the 7th January 2017. The GCDP includes a Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy that notes the need to accommodate continued population growth, in line with the City’s designation as a ‘Gateway’, in a sustainable manner. In this regard, the adopted Settlement Strategy is primarily based on consolidating the urban form of the City. The strategic goals of the GCDP include the following:

- *Promote balanced and sustainable economic development that will enable Galway City to fulfil its role as a National Gateway and a Regional Centre, providing sufficient employment opportunities and appropriate services.*
- *Use the role of the Gateway to harness the strengths and maximise the economic development of the region.*
- *Provide for a built and natural environment that is of high quality and that contributes to providing a good quality of life for residents and visitors and affords sustainable transportation opportunities.*

The Development Plan sets out a co-ordinated and integrated spatial framework for the continued development of Galway City in a sustainable and inclusive manner. It is set within the overall national and regional planning contexts, taking into account relevant national guidelines published by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.

4.3.1.1 Zoning Objective

The proposed development site is subject to 2 no. zoning objectives in the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023, these are set out alongside their pertaining zoning objectives below:

‘R – Residential’ - *‘To provide for residential development and for associated support development, which will ensure the protection of existing residential amenity and will contribute to sustainable residential neighbourhoods.’*

‘RA – Recreational and Amenity’ - *‘To provide for and protect recreational uses, open space, amenity uses and natural heritage.’*

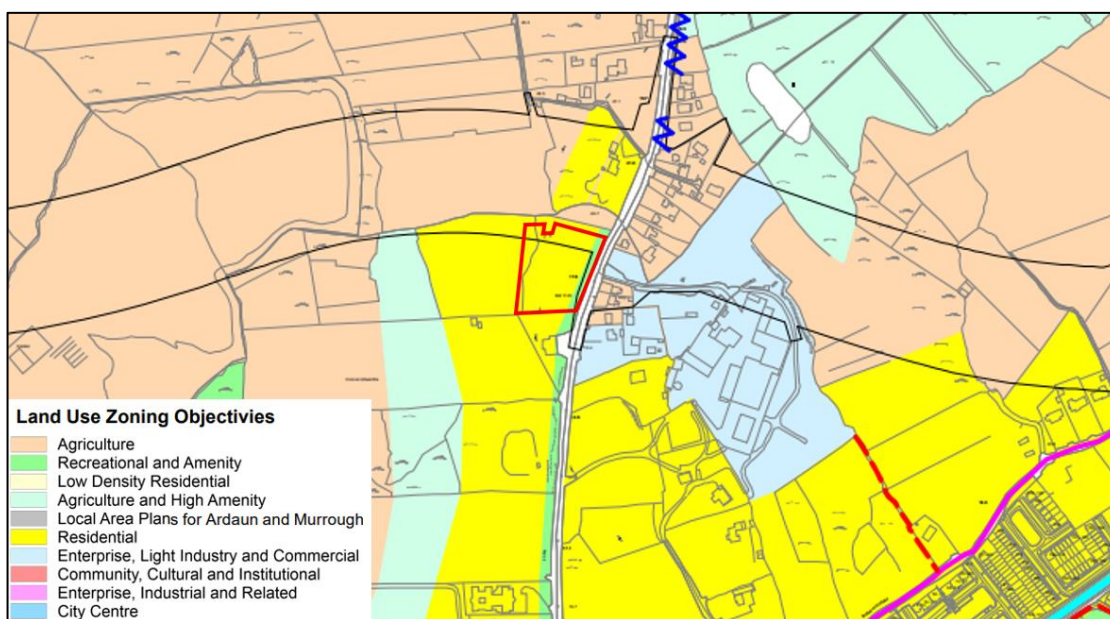


Figure 6: Land Use Zoning Map (Site outlined in Red)

4.3.1.2 Housing

Section 2.2 of the GCDP relates to ‘Neighbourhood Concept’ and states that the Council will protect and enhance the character of residential neighbourhoods through development standards and through the implementation of environmental improvements.

Policy 2.4 Neighbourhood Concept sets out to:

- *Encourage the development of sustainable residential neighbourhoods, which will provide for high quality, safe, accessible living environments which accommodates local community needs.*
- *Encourage sustainable neighbourhoods, through appropriate guidelines and standards and through the implementation of local area plans, framework plans/masterplans.*
- *Protect and enhance new/existing residential neighbourhoods through appropriate guidelines and standards, preparation of framework plans, development briefs and design statements.*
- *In the design of residential developments regard shall be had to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009) and the accompanying Urban Design Manual–A Best Practice Guide and the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2013).*

Section 2.4 of the GCDP sets out the framework of residential neighbourhoods in the city and divides the neighbourhoods into indicative areas as follows:

- Outer Suburbs;
- Established Suburbs;
- Inner Residential Areas and
- City Centre Residential

As illustrated on Figure 7, below, the application site is situated within the areas indicatively zoned for residential development. The site is specifically located in the ‘outer suburbs’, according to the framework above.

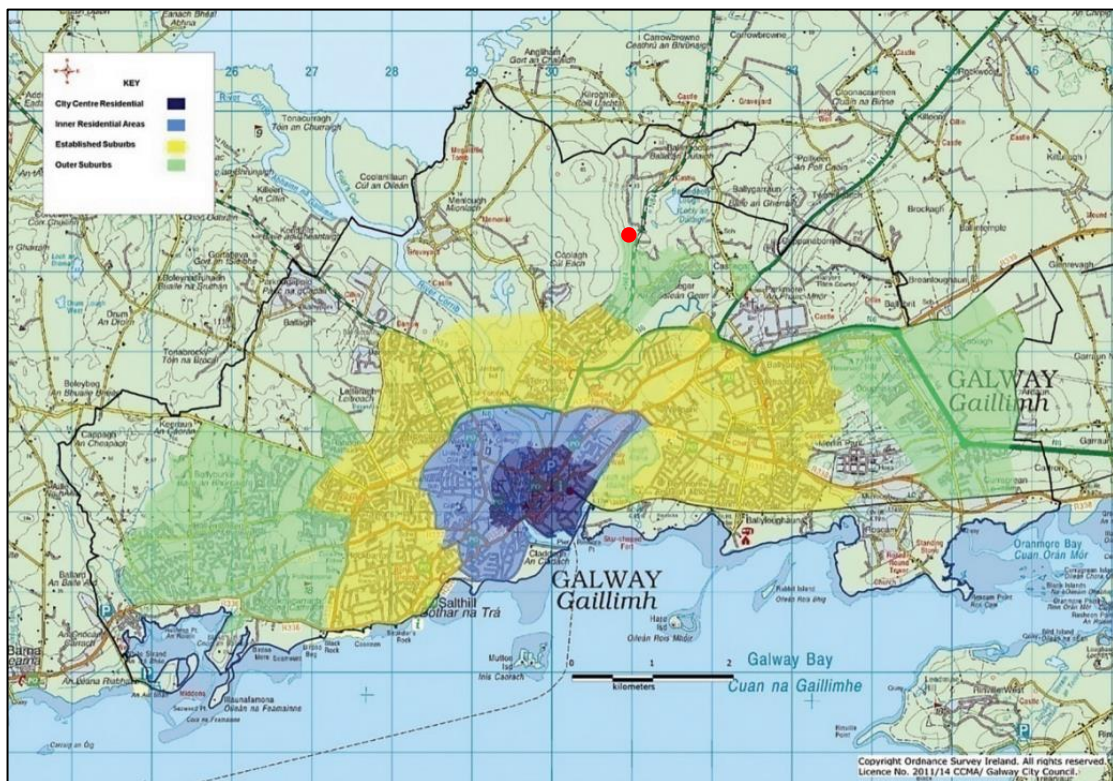


Figure 7: Framework of Residential neighbourhoods in Galway City (Site indicated by red dot)

Policy 2.5 – Outer Suburbs

Encourage higher residential densities at appropriate locations especially close to public transport routes and routes identified in the Galway Transport Strategy as suitable for high frequency, public transport services.

The site is located on the Headford Road, which is serviced by Galway City Services, the most frequent service being the no. 456 which stops at directly outside the proposed pedestrian access point for the development. The bus destination is Galway Bus Station (Commencing at Stephen Garvey Way, Castlebar), The bus journey from Headford Road to Galway Bus Station is approximately 30-40 minutes.

Ensure that sustainable neighbourhoods are places where housing, streets, open spaces and local facilities come together in a coherent, integrated and attractive form.

- The design of the proposal has undergone many iterations to ensure that each of the principles in this policy are met. The final design represents a sustainable, attractive neighbourhood, with ample open space which is integrated with and connected to surrounding proposed developments.

Ensure the layout of residential developments has regard to adjoining developments.

- It is noted that there is currently a commercial development locates south of the site, it is proposed that this development will be kept separate with no integration.

Encourage a mix of housing types and sizes within residential developments.

- A mix of housing types and sizes based on a 'need assessment' is proposed.

Require residential developments of over 10 units to provide recreational facilities as an integral part of the proposed open space.

- The proposed development is over 10 units, therefore a suite of recreational facilities is proposed, such as an informal play area, a basketball/football play area, and green open spaces for residents to use an amenity space.

Ensure a balance between the reasonable protection of the residential amenities of the outer suburbs and the protection of the established character and the need to provide for sustainable residential development.

- Both the established character of the area, and the surrounding residential amenity have been carefully considered and protected as part of this proposal.

4.4

Traveller Accommodation

Section 2.3 of the GCDP sets out the policies and objectives relevant to development of Traveller accommodation. A mandatory requirement of the Development Plan is inclusion of objectives for the provision of accommodation for Travellers and for the use of particular areas for that purpose.

Through zoning objectives for different land uses, the Development Plan can facilitate achieving the recommendations contained in the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 and any subsequently adopted recommendations.

Policy 2.3 Traveller Accommodation

Have regard to the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-18 and any subsequent plan in the provision of accommodation for the Travelling community.

The proposal has had regard to the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024, which supersedes the previous Programme. As demonstrated later in the report, significant engagement with the Traveller Community was undertaken as part of this project and has informed the design detail of this element of the proposed development.

4.4.1

Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024

The Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP) was drafted in compliance with the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998, which requires each Housing Authority to adopt a programme for its functional area. The Programme was adopted by Galway City Council on 8th July 2019. The Traveller Accommodation Programme outlines the accommodation requirements of the Traveller Community over a five-year period from 2019 – 2024.

An ‘Assessment of Need’ formed part of the TAP. The Assessment was carried out specifically for the Galway City Council functional area. The results of the Assessment of Need guided the Traveller Accommodation aspects of this proposal and are set out below.

“265 Traveller families were assessed as being in need of housing in Galway City Council’s administrative area. This figure captures all Traveller households assessed as having a Social Housing need and incorporates all households that have been approved for a transfer.

This figure includes all the families residing on the Transient Halting Site in Carrowbrowne, including families requiring larger or smaller properties. This highlights the differing levels of need – those without any local authority provision and reliant on private rented accommodation, those whose need is being temporarily met and those whose need had been met by Galway City Council but has changed over time, either due to change in family size or accommodation preference.

As part of the need assessment, 265 letters were issued requesting all families to indicate their accommodation choice in preference order for halting site accommodation, culturally appropriate Traveller accommodation, standard group housing or standard local authority/voluntary housing. First preferences are set in the pie-chart below and show that the majority of respondents prefer to live in Local Authority housing, as evident in the chart, the preferences are otherwise evenly distributed across the remaining options.”

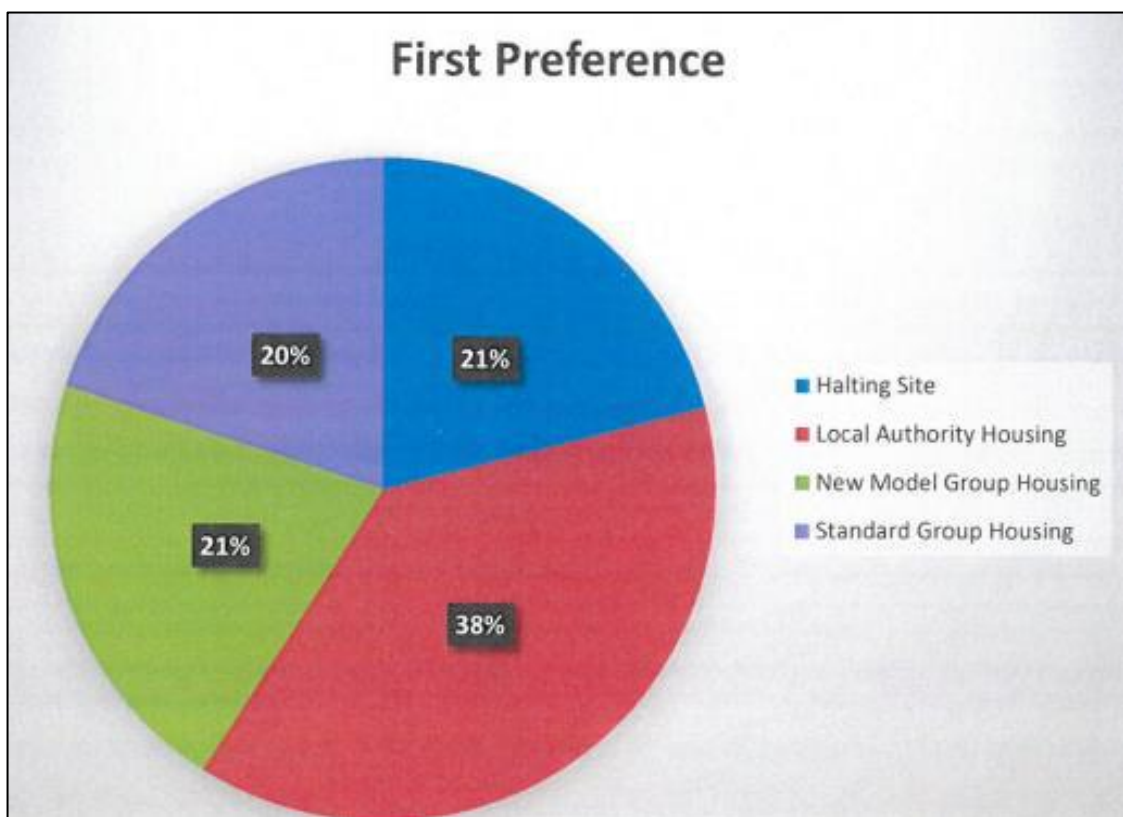


Figure 8: Traveller Accommodation Preferences

The proposed development will provide Local Authority Housing for Travellers in line with the assessed demand/preference of the local travelling community. Therefore, the proposed development is considered to accord with the provisions of the TAP.

4.5 Urban Design

Section 8.7 of the GCDP sets out the principles of good urban design which are required to be implemented into new developments:

- **Character:** The promotion of character by reinforcing the local distinctiveness, identity and sense of place. The typology of streets, layout of parks, open spaces, the natural heritage and the urban morphology contributes to character which evolves over time. New development should enhance this character.
- **Legibility:** The creation of places that are easily recognisable, and while part of the overall city, they have their own identity through recognisable landmarks and/or streets. New development should enhance the legibility of the surrounding place.
- **Ease of Movement and Connectivity:** The promotion of accessibility, permeability and universal access making places easy to get to and move within. Ease of movement within a city centre may be through pedestrianisation schemes, creation of new streets, permeability through shops. In the wider area it may be through enhanced public transport, provision of greenways and linkages from residential areas to local services and facilities. New development should ensure maximum permeability and accessibility for all.
- **Quality of the Public Realm:** The promotion of streets and public spaces that are attractive and safe and that allow for social interaction. The design of the public realm in any new development requires careful consideration in terms of its layout, function and use of materials such as surfaces and street furniture.
- **Continuity and Enclosure:** The promotion of the continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of spaces by clearly defined edges which distinguish public and private areas.
- **Diversity and Adaptability:** The creation of places that have variety and choice through a mix of uses which are compatible and viable and which can adapt to changing socio-economic conditions.
- **Environmental Responsibility:** The creation of places which foster sustainable energy consumption and reduced carbon footprint through enhancing sustainable transportation, utilising renewable energy technologies and SUDs, enhancing biodiversity and climate adaptation measures.

Each of the Urban Design Principles set out above, have been considered in the design process of this proposal and have informed the design conclusions presented. The scheme represents a high design-quality urban form, with a contemporary character sympathetic to its surrounding environment. The scheme is designed to be legible and is future-proofed for connectivity and permeability to and through permitted adjacent developments. Landscaping provides attractive green spaces and a sense of enclosure for residents with a high-quality public realm and open space provision, over and above the minimum requirement. Please refer to the enclosed Architectural Design Report for further detail on this matter.

4.6 Galway Transport Strategy

The Galway Transportation Strategy (GTS) 2016 represents a partnership approach between Galway City Council, Galway County Council, and the National Transport Authority. It includes a series of measures which will address the transport problems experienced across the city particularly during peak hours, over a phased and co-ordinated basis over the next 20 years, based on priority needs. The GTS has established that the reduction in traffic congestion requires both improvements to public transport, cycling and walking networks and the provision of a new orbital route.

The proposed measures were arrived at following transport modelling which included defining the existing transport problems, predicting future travel demands, access mode share and assessing their mutual impacts and interdependencies. The strategy includes traffic management, giving priority to

walking, cycling and bus movements, modifications to the traffic network, management of parking activities and heavy goods vehicles, improvements to the public realm and use of ‘smarter mobility’.

The intentions within the GTS have been considered throughout the design process of this proposal. The recently granted N6 Galway City Ring Road runs along the Northern edge of the application site, providing excellent connectivity opportunities for the site in the future. In addition, the site is designed to be cycle and pedestrian friendly, the 456 (Bus Éireann) route runs along the Headford Road to the East of the site, all of which should serve to reduce car dependence and assist in the realisation of the Galway Transportation Strategy’s aims.

4.6.1

N6 Galway City Ring Road

Galway County Council, on behalf of itself and Galway City Council, is proposing to develop the N6 Galway City Ring Road (N6 GCRR) around Galway City. The N6 GCRR is a key component of the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) which realises Galway City and County Council’s vision of all elements of transport working together to achieve an integrated sustainable transport solution. The proposed trajectory of the N6 GCRR is in close proximity to the proposed development site and has potential to transform the area. The N6 GCRR aims to resolve a number of significant transport problems that Galway City experiences. These problems include:

- Peak hour congestion and journey time unreliability
- Over reliance on private cars
- Lack of alternative transport modes
- Lack of road space for the development of Smarter Mobility and Public Transport

The N6 will support the economic and social development of the region and improve connectivity and accessibility to the city and areas surrounding the city. It will also focus on supporting trips that cannot be facilitated by measures such as city-bound, cross-city and cross county movements. This will relieve congestion in the city and, in turn, improve the quality of the city environment and increase opportunities for reallocation of existing road space for sustainable transportation.

5.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

5.1.1

Compliance with Core Strategy

Located on greenfield lands zoned for residential development in a suburb of Galway City and in proximity to existing and permitted residential development, the proposed development is acceptable in view of the strategic policy for Galway City, as evidenced in the policy section and commentary above.

The Galway City Development Plan predicts a population increase in Galway of 23,171 between 2011 and 2022. This represents a need for 8,510 further houses during this period. Conversely, between 2011 and 2016, a total of 467 houses were built in the administrative area of Galway City. This pace is not rapid enough to keep up with demand, and it is accepted both in Galway and across the country that there is a severe deficiency of housing stock. The proposal presented here aims to contribute towards this deficiency of housing stock by providing a sustainable social and Traveller-appropriate housing scheme on residentially zoned land.

Furthermore, this proposal has been cognisant of local policy, as set out in the Galway City Development Plan wherein policies and objectives for housing, social housing, and Traveller appropriate accommodation are listed. This application has shown that the principles and provisions of the relevant policies have guided the design process of this proposal.

The proposed development also provides for consolidation and compact urban development in accordance with the National Planning Framework objective to seek a greater proportion (40%) of future housing development to be within and close to the existing 'footprint' of built-up areas. As illustrated above, the subject site is located in close proximity to both existing and forthcoming residential developments.

In summary the proposed development is consistent with the local, regional and national objectives which support compact urban growth and with the Core Strategy of the Galway City Development Plan which seeks to support the development Galway City and its suburbs.

5.1.2

Compliance with Zoning Objective

The application site is zoned for 'Residential' use under the operative GCDP. The zoning objective is:

'To provide for residential development and for associated support development, which will ensure the protection of existing residential amenity and will contribute to sustainable residential neighbourhoods.'

In accordance with the operative Development Plan, the proposed scheme includes 24 no. residential units. Residential uses are considered to be compatible with, and contribute to the zoning objective, in accordance with Chapter 11 (Part A) of the GCDP. The proposed development will assist Galway City Council in meeting its commitment to provide for residential development which will ensure the protection of existing residential amenity and will contribute to sustainable residential neighbourhoods.

5.2

Principle of Development

The Galway City Development zones the lands specifically for Residential development as illustrated in the zoning maps above. Clearly, the Authority have identified a need for housing in Galway, specifically Knocknacarra, and have identified the subject lands as an area where this housing need can, in part, be met. This proposal therefore represents a provision of housing to address an identified need, in an area which has been deemed suitable and sustainable.

5.2.1 Housing Quality Assessment

The proposed scheme has been developed in a manner which employs best practice in urban design and having regard to the following policy documents:

- Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities: Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities (2007)
- Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009)
- Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2018)
- Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities (2007)
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2013)
- Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide (2009)
- Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023

The Housing Quality Assessment completed by O'Briain Beary Architects demonstrates that all the residential units meet the design standards outlined in the documents listed above. The majority of the units exceed these standards. This provides flexibility and adaptability which are key components of sustainable development.

Within each apartment block the units are designed to maximise daylight and sunlight penetration, taking advantage of favourable orientation, and eliminating north facing living rooms and private amenity spaces.

For further details please refer to the Housing Quality Assessment which is included with the application.

5.2.2 Traveller Accommodation Site Design

Overcoming the site constraints of the subject site, while facilitating a project brief informed by consultation with the Travelling Community has presented challenges in terms of reaching a sustainable and policy-compliant design conclusion. This has created a unique design challenge in terms of meeting the requirements of a specific cohort who require accommodation in a manner that is sensitive to their needs and cultural preferences. It is considered that the proposed development successfully achieves this.

The proposed scheme is the result of a lengthy design process informed by reference to local area objectives, local and national planning policy, and extensive consultation between GCC Housing personnel and Traveller representatives. Through the consultation process and interrogation of precedent Traveller accommodation developments, a series of fundamental design parameters emerged. These informed the location, layout, and design of the Traveller houses resulting in an overall development comprised of a cluster of 3 no. Traveller specific detached houses closely related to but respectfully separated from a more typical arrangement of 1-3 bed social apartments.

Through Traveller consultation, it was communicated that there was a strong preference for the Traveller houses to be grouped so as to retain a sense of community.

5.3 Connectivity

The site benefits from a direct connection to the Headford Road, to the eastern boundary of the site. In addition to this, it is noted that the Galway City Ring Road, recently granted permission from An Bord Pleanála, will be located north of the site, as seen in Figure 9, below. As part of the Ring Road development, upgrade works along the Headford Road, parallel to the site, will be undertaken. These upgrade works will allow for higher quality access to the development.

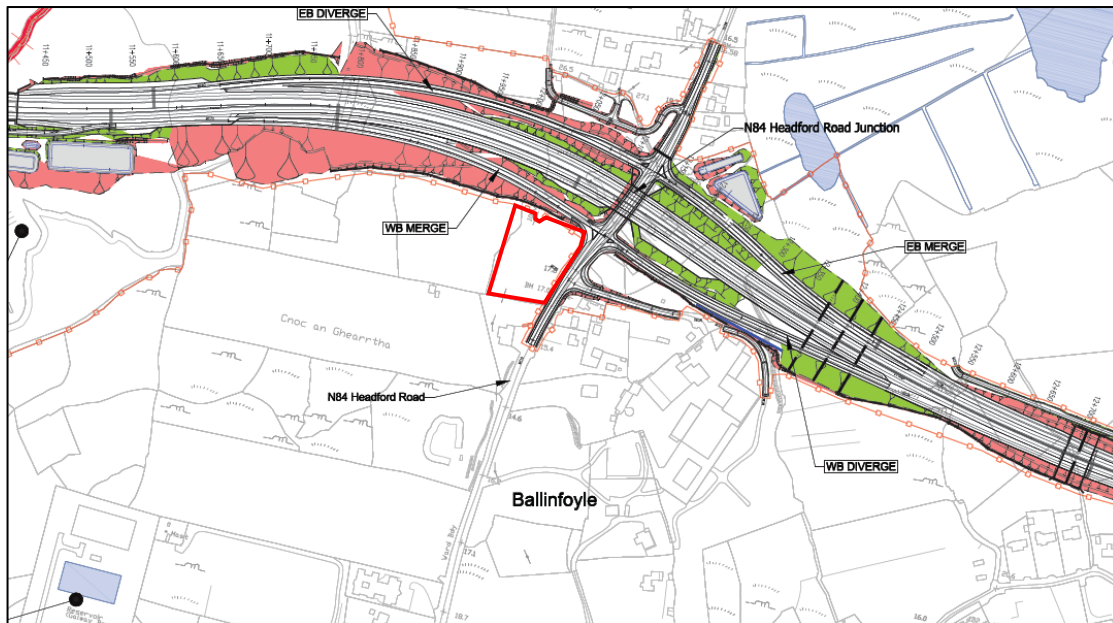


Figure 9: Galway City Ring Road (Subject site outlined in red).

5.4

Traffic Safety

A Traffic & Transport Assessment has been undertaken by DBFL Consulting Engineers; the aforementioned report concludes with the following statement:

“Based upon the information and analysis detailed within this Traffic and Transport Assessment it has been demonstrated that the impact on the surrounding road network, as a result of the proposed development will not adversely impact the operational performance of local junctions which will continue to operate with significant levels of reserve capacity. This is based on the anticipated levels of traffic generated by the proposed residential development and the information and analysis summarised in the above report. Accordingly, it is concluded that the proposals will not result in a material deterioration of road conditions and as a result there are no significant traffic, transportation or road safety related reasons that should prevent the consideration and ultimately the granting of planning permission for the proposed development.”

5.4.1

Open Space

The GCDP requires that public open space is provided at a minimum rate of 15% of the site area for greenfield sites. The communal amenity space requirement for apartments is set out in Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments 2020 as follows:

- 1 bedroom apartment – 5 sqm
- 2 bedroom apartment (3 person) – 6 sqm
- 2 bedroom apartment (4 person) – 7 sqm
- 3 bedroom apartment – 9 sqm

The GCDP requires that all developments with more than 10 units provide a specific recreational facility within the communal open space. For developments of 21 - 50 units, examples of suitable facilities provided are Play Equipment, Kick About Area, and Formal Garden.

A total of 1432 sqm of public open space is proposed, which equates to 15.7% of the site area.

5.4.2

Parking Standards

The GCDP sets out car parking standards that should not be exceeded in the design of residential developments:

- 2 spaces per dwelling and 1 grouped visitor space per 3 dwellings; or
- 1 on-site space per dwelling and 1 grouped visitor space per dwelling; or
- 1.5 grouped spaces per dwelling and 1 grouped visitor space per 3 dwellings; or
- 3 spaces for dwellings over 200m² and 1 grouped visitor space per 3 dwellings; or
- 1 space for one bedroom residential dwellings and 1 grouped visitor per 3 dwellings

It is proposed that 10 no. sheltered bike spaces are to be provided in the courtyard of the apartment complex, to comply with the requirements of the Galway City Development Plan. The design of the own-door access to ground floor units with large, protected terraces will also accommodate safe storage of bicycles. A total of 39 no. car parking spaces are provided, which is a shortfall of 3 no. spaces from the standard outlined in the GCDP. Please note that this reduced provision has been agreed with GCC and the spaces per unit are still achieved, while visitor spaces are provided at approx. 50% of the standard.

6.

CONCLUSION

This Planning Report has been prepared to accompany a planning application for a social housing and Traveller Appropriate residential development on lands at Castlegar, Headford Road, Galway.

The proposed development is situated on lands zoned for residential (R) development with a stated objective *‘to provide for residential development and for associated support development, which will ensure the protection of existing residential amenity and will contribute to sustainable residential neighbourhoods.’*

It is submitted that the proposed development fully accords with Galway City Council’s policies and zoning objectives relating to R zoned land, and with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. It will provide an attractive, high quality, contemporary development, as well as contributing some much-needed social housing units to the local and national stock as required by the Social Housing Strategy.

It is submitted that the proposed scheme includes planning gain for the area for the following reasons:

- The proposed development provides a total of 24 no. residential units on residential zoned land. It provides a response to Galway’s social housing needs in accordance with the adopted Housing Strategy 2017-23, which has been informed by the Core Strategy of the GCDP.
- The applicant proposes to provide 3 no. Traveller Appropriate housing units in accordance with the requirements of the Traveller Accommodation Programme (2019-2024) and the GCDP, and in liaison with appointed spokespeople for the local Traveller Community.

We trust this application is in order to consideration by the relevant Authority.

