

Mayo County Council.

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Traveller Accommodation

Programme

2025 – 2029

Introduction :

The Housing Traveller Accommodation Act 1998 places a statutory obligation of Local Authorities to prepare and implement a Traveller Accommodation Programme. The next Programme will run from 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2029. This Programme will outline the projected number of units of accommodation that will be required and the means in which the Council will provide these units.

The previous Programme 2019 – 2024 was adopted on **9th of September 2019**.

Section Background / Context

The Minister of State Mr Kieran O Donnell, T.D. Minister of State for Planning and Local Government has directed Local Authorities to commence preparation of the next Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAPs) under the Traveller Accommodation Act 1998 for the period 2025-2029.

Section 10 of the 1998 Act specifies that the programme will run for a five-year period.

The Traveller Accommodation Programme will run from **1st January 2025 to 31st December 2029**. The minister has specified that the programme must be adopted at the latest by 31st December 2024.

Notice of intention to make an assessment of need in preparation of Draft Programme 2025-2029 was made on the 19th of December 2023 in accordance with Section 8 of the Traveller Accommodation Act 1998.

On the basis of the assessment of need and future projections on the increase in new family formations for the duration of the Programme 2025-2029, a draft Programme has been formulated to meet the Council's statutory obligations.

To facilitate consultation with members of the Traveller community on the preparation and implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme and to progress the implementation of the Programme, the Council, in accordance with the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1992 has established a Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee, which was initially set up in November 2004. The Committee includes representatives from the Traveller community, Local Elected Representatives and officials of Mayo County Council. We did not have any Traveller Representatives on the LTACC for the past 2 years since the Mayo Traveller Support Group ceased. We are looking forward to welcoming Traveller Reps. back to the LTACC when the new committee is established. The new LTACC will be in place no later than the end of October 2024.

Mid term review

A mid-term review of the next Traveller Accommodation Programme will be carried out not later than **30th June 2027**. Following a review, any amendments to the proposed accommodation programme must be made within seven months.

POLICY

General Policy

It is the Policy of Mayo County Council to provide for the accommodation needs of members of the Traveller community, as far as is reasonable and feasible, using the full range of housing options available to the Council.

Equal Status

The Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 prohibit discrimination in the provision of goods and services, accommodation and education. We aim to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of our employees, customers, service users and everyone affected by the policies and plans as per the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014. Mayo County Council recognise the Traveller Community as a minority ethnic group and will work to ensure that the cultural needs are met in so far as is practicable.

The Council has developed a framework to implement the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. The public sector equality and human rights duty requires local authorities to undertake an assessment of the equality and human rights issues that are relevant to their functions. They cover nine protected grounds: gender, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community. Under the Duty, we are required to take the following steps:

Assess: undertake evidence based and participative assessment of equality and human rights issues that face Travellers in respect of Traveller specific accommodation and have a relevance for the functions of the housing authority.

Address: identify and implement actions in place or proposed to be put in place by the Council to address the equality and human rights issues as assessed, as part of its strategic planning cycle.

Report: report annually on progress made in implementing the Duty and addressing the equality and human rights issues as assessed under our Equality Action Plan for Traveller specific accommodation.

Mayo County Council Equality Statement

Our values define how we approach our work, and how we engage with people. We believe that our values are a critical element in how Mayo County Council delivers its services.

The following set of values will underpin Mayo County Council's work in delivering its Corporate plan 2019- 2024.

Non-Discrimination and Equality. We commit to supporting people who face the greatest barriers to realising their citizen and human rights.

Inclusion: We value a sense of belonging, community, interdependence, collective responsibility and diversity.

Dignity: We value respect, relationships of care and love, human worth, and the absence of inhumane and degrading treatment, harassment and discrimination.

Respect. We build respect and trust by valuing the contribution of everyone involved in the delivery of our Corporate Plan 2019-2024. Respecting the trust placed in us, we conduct our work to the highest professional standards.

Participation. We recognise the personal autonomy and self-determination of all people to work for the common good of all in our society. We are committed to hearing and learning from all perspectives.

Corporate Plan

Mayo County Council are guided by values of equality and human rights in our policies, culture, delivery of services. We endeavour to respond in a humanitarian way to all accommodation needs, particularly for Travellers and other people with protected status.

The vision of our Corporate Plan 2019 to 2024 is for a county that is 'Sustainable, Inclusive, Prosperous and Proud'. Under our inclusive pillar, the plan sets out to promote equality and diversity across the functions of Mayo County Council and to include equality and human rights issues that are relevant to our functions, and the policies, plans and actions that address them. The Plan identifies strengthening and building the Leadership culture to reflect the aims of the Corporate Plan as an area of internal priority. Our Corporate Plan also states that we will work through the LCDC and other strategic partnerships to continue to build a more inclusive Mayo including providing support to LTACC.

Our Corporate Plan sheds light on an important statistic: 1% of Mayo citizens identify as Travellers. It is crucial to acknowledge that the age profile of Mayo Travellers is significantly younger than that of the overall population in Mayo, as Travellers face a significantly lower life expectancy. Statistically 56% of Travellers report that their normal daily activities are restricted due to poor physical and mental health.

At Mayo County Council, we understand the interconnection between housing and health. We recognize that access to suitable and secure housing plays a pivotal role in promoting better health outcomes for individuals and communities.

The existing Corporate Plan 2019-2024 will expire in December 2024 and the new plan will take on board the implementation of the new Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 – 2029

This Strategy is included to ensure the delivery of a Corporate Objective, which is

'to ensure that every Mayo family can live in a dwelling of good standard, located in an acceptable environment, at a price or rent they can afford.'

Training

Mayo County Council is committed to ensure Culturally Appropriate training will be made available to Mayo County Council staff and Members.

An Equality and Human Rights in the Public Service eLearning module to support and enable staff within public bodies to understand and meet their obligations under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty was provided by Mayo County Council to all it's staff and continues to be available as part of Mayo County Council's training.

Social and Economic Committees

The County Local and Community Development Plan will have regard to other relevant Government policy initiatives. In drafting the community elements of the Plan, regard will be given to the need to:- promote equality; develop and implement Sustainable Community Objectives; maximise returns from available resources and reduce duplication; ensure meaningful participation by communities in the planning process, and consultation and engagement with communities generally; utilise community development principles in the LECP development process specifically and the work of LCDCs generally; and set the local context for mainstream funding programmes such as local development/social inclusion programmes, community services programmes, etc.

The LECP will take account of the actions within the TAP and the work of the Traveller interagency forum which is due to reconvene and will comprise of the key stakeholders at a local level working in Traveller Development.

Mayo County Development Plan 2022 – 2028

The following objectives are contained in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022 -2028.

- **Housing Strategy Policies and Objectives: Objective HSO 6** - Secure the implementation of the Council's Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 and to review this programme if required and/or deemed to be necessary, during the plan period.
- **Social Infrastructure Objectives: Objective SCO 10** - To secure the implementation of the Council's Traveller Accommodation Programme (2019-2024) and to review this programme if required and/or deemed to be necessary, during the Plan period.

Accommodation Policy

The Council recognises and will have regard to the distinct cultural identity of Travellers in the provision, maintenance and management of accommodation for the Traveller community. It is the Policy of the Council to provide high standard of accommodation in the right place, offering a high quality of life, in so far as possible. This will include provision of standard social housing, Traveller Group Housing and Halting Site Bay accommodation, specifically designed houses -in the case of persons with additional needs and extensions to existing properties will be provided in certain instances.

Mayo County Council in recognition that 'Nomadism' is an essential element of ethnic identity with the traveller culture, will give approval for Traveller families to make a request to the Council to leave their accommodation for short periods (6 weeks or a specific agreed time on a case by case basis) for the purpose of travelling. Failure to do so will deem the property abandoned.

Mayo County Council fully recognise the distinct ethnicity of Traveller culture and is committed to promoting equality and inclusion for Travellers living in County Mayo.

All request for Social Housing Support must be made using the prescribed Social Housing Support Application Forms. It is important to note that you may only apply for social housing support to one Local Authority at any one time and it must be one of the following: a Local Authority where you currently live in; a Local Authority that you have a local connection to, or there are other reasons why the Local Authority should accept your Application for Social Housing Support.

Having a local connection is defined under Part 9: Basis of Application on the Social Housing Support Application, as follows:

- A household member has resided for a continuous 5 year period at any time in the area concerned; or
- The place of employment of any household member is in the area concerned or is located within 15 kilometers of the area; or
- A household member is in full time education in any university, college, school or other educational establishment in the area concerned; or
- A household member with an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment is attending an educational or medical establishment in the area concerned that has facilities or services specifically related to such impairment; or
- A relative of a household member lives in the area concerned and has lived there for a minimum of 2 years (a relative in this instance means -a parent, adult child or sibling, and may include another relative such as a step-parent, grandparent, grandchild, aunt or uncle, who has a close link with the household member in the form of commitment or dependence)

Refusal of Housing Offers

As per Mayo County Council's Housing Allocation Scheme, where a qualified household refuses two reasonable offers of the allocation of different dwellings in any continuous period of one year commencing on the date of the first refusal, the said household shall not, for the period of one year, commencing on the date of the second refusal, be considered by Mayo County Council for the allocation of a dwelling to which Section 22 of the Act 2009 applies.

New Family Formations and Returning Families

As with all families, new families forming within the County and families returning to the County will be expected to make reasonable efforts to secure accommodation from within their own resources.

Unauthorised Encampments

Mayo County Council cannot permit unauthorised encampments in areas where such encampments could give rise to risk of unacceptable conditions. Mayo County Council, therefore, while taking into account the rights and well-being of Travellers, will institute enforcement action through the Courts, where necessary, to have such unauthorised encampments removed. This course of action will be initiated in cases where, public health, public order, traffic hazard, loss of amenity or where private, commercial or residential interests are being significantly affected/compromised; or where completion of essential public works is being hindered.

The Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2002, which amends the Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act 1994, deals with the matter of trespass and enforcement of this legislation that is dealt with by the Gardai.

Sympathetic consideration will be given to the merits of each individual case and the Local Authorities will have regard to the legal, housing, planning, environmental, social, technical and other constraints within which they must operate.

Horses

It is recognised that the keeping of horses is a tradition, which continues to be practiced by some Traveller families. Such families will be required to make their own arrangements for the acquisition of land for grazing purposes and be prepared to pay for the rent or purchase of this land. It is not the policy of Mayo County Council to provide land for the accommodation of horses.

Transient Accommodation

Mayo County Council will keep under review the provision of transient accommodation in Mayo in line with National Government Guidelines.

Anti Social Behaviour

Mayo County Council adopted a Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour Statement of Policy and Procedures in 2019.

Anti-Social Behaviour is defined in section 1 of the Housing (miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1997 as follows.:

- (a) The manufacture, production, preparation, importation, exportation, sale, supply, possession for the purposes of sale or supply, or distribution of a controlled drug (within the meaning of the Misuse of Drugs Acts, 1977 and 1984).*
- (b) Any behaviour which causes or is likely to cause any significant or persistent danger, injury, damage, loss or fear to any person living, working or otherwise lawfully in or in the vicinity of a house provided by a housing authority under the Housing Acts, 1966 to 1997, or a housing estate in which the house is situated and without prejudice to the foregoing, includes, violence, threats, intimidation, coercion, harassment or serious obstruction of any person.*

Mayo County Council will not tolerate anti-social behaviour in any of the housing developments for which they have responsibility. Where instances of anti-social behaviour occur, appropriate action will be taken to deal with the tenant involved in such behaviour. The sanctions will be as outlined in the anti-social behaviour policy adopted by the Council and may include the ultimate sanction of eviction.

A tenant evicted from Council accommodation due to anti-social behaviour will be deemed to have rendered himself or herself homeless within the meaning of Section 11 (2) (b) of the Housing Act 1988 and may not be provided with another home by the Council until such time as the Council is satisfied that the evicted tenant and his/her family are capable of living and agreeable to live in the community, without causing further anti-social behaviour

Management of Accommodation

Mayo County Council will continue to have regard to models of good practice in the maintenance and management of Local Authority accommodation stock, including Traveller accommodation.

Traveller accommodation is part of Mayo County Council's Maintenance and Energy Efficiency Programmes and it will be included in the Stock Condition Survey.

Mayo County Council will encourage and facilitate the participation of Travellers in the maintenance of Traveller specific Accommodation:

- through the Municipal District Offices by liaising with Housing Officers, Traveller Accommodation Team and Technical Staff in relation to proposed and planned maintenance;
- encouraging and facilitating members of the Traveller community in the participation of Residents Associations, establishing Residents Associations where they are not already established.

Homeless

Due to the housing crisis, Travellers are 11 times more likely to become homeless and 50 times more likely to be discriminated by landlords. There are 5 times the number of families sharing facilities since legislation came into effect (Source: Irish Traveller Movement Submission).

There is a noticeable increase in the number of Travellers experiencing homelessness in County Mayo. There were 21 households, who identify as members of the Traveller community, availing of homeless services in June 2024.

Homelessness is now a common experience for many Traveller families, a particularly fast-growing trend across all Local Authorities.

The TAP 2025-2029 recognises the issue of homelessness within the Traveller community and commits to ensuring the actions set out in the West Region Homeless Strategy and the Youth Homeless Strategy are adhered to, in as far as practicable, during the course of the current Programme.

West Regional Homeless Strategy

Local Authorities are responsible for the adoption of Homelessness Action Plans that address the challenges for all homeless people including people from the Travelling community and these operate in conjunction with the Traveller Accommodation Programme.

Mayo County Council are committed to working with members of the Traveller Community to prevent them from entering homelessness and to find an exit strategy for those who are availing of homeless services.

The Homeless Support Team which comprises the Tenancy Sustainment Officer, Homeless HAP Place Finder Officer, two Social Workers, Traveller Accommodation Officer and Traveller Accommodation Liaison Officer meet once a month to review all households in emergency accommodation and to identify exit routes to a secure tenancy. Also the Homeless Support Team liaises with the Housing Officers in the Municipal Districts regarding allocations.

Mayo County Council utilises a number of own stock properties for short term emergency accommodation. This mechanism prevents several households from going into Private Emergency Accommodation and allows them to have their own front door accommodation, short term, on a Temporary Emergency Accommodation Agreement. This has worked well, although as demand for places has risen, households have sometimes ended up in these “short life” properties for longer periods than intended. The Council had thirteen temporary emergency accommodation houses in use at the end of 2023.

In December 2023 Mayo County Council entered a five-year agreement with Charlestown Lodge for the provision of emergency accommodation. Charlestown Lodge has capacity for up to 100 bedspaces with shared cooking, laundry and living accommodation.

Mayo County Council utilises 7 x 1 bed apartments in Castlebar for the provision of Private Emergency Accommodation.

For vulnerable presentations boarding out accommodation is utilised in Castlebar town.

If deemed necessary B&B/Hotel accommodation is provided. This can be in the form of the provision of an accommodation voucher whereby the household self-sources accommodation or the Assessing Officer secures a reservation. This is reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Mayo Women's Support Service provides support to women and children who have been victims of domestic violence and works closely with Mayo County Council in respect of accommodation needs – on an emergency and/or long-term basis.

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 should be explored to avoid young people accessing mainstream homeless services.

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

Housing Action Team

Mayo County Council's Tenancy Sustainment Officer and Homeless HAP Place Finder Officer and Traveller Accommodation Unit members sit on Mayo's Homeless Action Team, together with representatives from the HSE, Galway Simon & COPE, Sophia Housing, Housing Officers from the Mayo County Council's Municipal District Offices and representatives from other organisations are invited to the meetings as the need arises. This committee was established to offer support to vulnerable people, both members of the settled and Traveller communities, who are in homeless services and have a history of failed tenancies, as a result of addictions and other issues. Referrals are made into the Group from the M.D offices or through self-referral. The Referrals are assessed and prioritised with a view to providing support and assistance through Galway Simon & COPE under the Housing First Programme or additional support from Sophia Housing Tenancy Support Worker. With the Housing First tenancy option, Mayo County Council commits to providing a tenancy under the principles of the Housing First model and when the tenancy is in place intensive supports are provided by Galway Simon & COPE Support workers.

In addition, Mayo County Council's Tenancy Sustainment Officer, Homeless HAP Place Finder Officer and Traveller Accommodation Unit staff formed a sub group, who meet at the beginning of each month to formulate plans to assist people, including members of the Traveller community, who are availing of homeless services to exit homeless services.

Covid 19

Following the Circular 06/20 from the Dept. of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, which issued to Local Authorities on 18th March 2020, advising of mitigating measures which should be put in place in response to the Covid 19 pandemic, Mayo County Council initiated a Covid Action Plan to deal with any outbreaks which arose to roadside Traveller families in the County.

This involved major stakeholders, mainly, HSE Regional Covid Response Team, Mayo Traveller Support Group Social Care Group, MCC Traveller Accommodation Unit having weekly meetings and updates on line in response to Covid 2019.

Mayo Traveller Support Group provided sanitisation kits and Awareness Leaflets to all members of the Traveller Community. Mayo County Council provided port-a-loos to each roadside family together with a refuse service. They purchased 3 isolation units, fully kitted out with furniture with a delivery plan to deal with outbreaks. This included the provision of a diesel generator to power the units along with supplies of fresh drinking water. There were 4 outbreaks all dealt with efficiently and effectively.

Accommodation Provision and Allocation

Accommodation in Social Housing will be allocated transparently and equitably on the basis of need and in accordance with the Mayo County Council's Housing Allocation scheme and having regard to; good estate management practice, achieving a social mix within areas, compatibility of families, anti-social behaviour, social and previous accommodation history and house size requirement.

In relation to achieving good estate management and achieving a social mix, the Council will, in keeping with the wishes of the vast majority of Traveller families, avoid an overconcentration of traveller families in any one housing development. It is considered by the Council that a reasonable balance in this regard currently exists within social housing estates in the County. It will be the policy of the Council to ensure that this balance is maintained.

Halting Sites

There is currently one seven Bay Halting Site in Castlebar with a part-time caretaker. The assessment of need showed no requirement for additional halting site accommodation elsewhere in the County during the course of the 2025-2029 programme. Mayo County Council will keep under review the long-term requirements for Halting Site accommodation in Mayo.

This site in Castlebar is now over thirty years old and while maintenance works have been carried out and additional accommodation provided over the years, it is in need of upgrading. It is planned for a complete refurbishment of the site over the duration of this programme 2025-2029.

Traveller Group Housing Schemes

The Programme will also provide housing for members of the Traveller community through the development of Traveller Group Housing Schemes.

Mayo County Council have 4 Traveller Group Housing Schemes, located in Ballina, Castlebar, Ballinrobe and Charlestown.

There are 3 unoccupied houses in Traveller Group Housing Scheme in Charlestown. Currently no Applicant has indicated a preference for this accommodation.

At present there is an identified need for two Traveller Group Housing Schemes, one to be located in Castlebar and one in Ballina. Active consideration is currently being given to identified lands in Castlebar in relation to their suitability for a Traveller Group Housing Scheme.

Approved Housing Bodies

The Council will promote and support the provision of housing for Travellers by Approved Housing Bodies through direct build and leasing options. The L.T.A.C.C will explore the opportunity to expand provision in this area with Approved Housing Bodies.

Mayo County Council are currently working with CENA, who are an Approved Housing Body who work specifically in the provision and management of accommodation for members of the Traveller community. Following consultation between the families concerned CENA and Mayo County Council, a plan was formulated regarding the preferred accommodation type of the families concerned and the steps to be carried out by each party to provide same.

Caravan Loan Scheme

A target of 2 Caravan Loans for County Mayo was included in the Caravan Loan Scheme provided by the TAU in the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage, which has now expired. It was necessary for a suitable site to be available and evidence of a financial need to allow for each Loan to be progressed. There were some enquiries but no uptakes on this Scheme.

A review of the Caravan Loan Scheme is currently underway by the Dept. of Housing Local Government and Heritage. If a further Scheme is announced all enquiries and Applications will be fully assessed and considered.

This continuation of this Scheme is currently under review and expect that another scheme will be announced in the near future and all Applications or enquires will be fully assessed and considered.

Housing Assistance Payment (H.A.P)

The provision of a Social Housing Support in the Form of HAP provides financial assistance in meeting the costs of rents on properties in the private rented market. This is one of the methods used by the Council to meet the targets set in this Programme.

The services of the Homeless HAP Place Finder Office is available to members of the settled and Traveller communities who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless.

R.A.S & Leasing

Mayo County Council will continue to operate the Rental Accommodation Scheme (R.A.S) and Leasing as other forms of Social Housing Supports allowing access to private rented accommodation with medium/long term security of tenure and on a differential rent basis.

Casual Vacancies

Casual vacancies in social housing arise when tenants leave their accommodation. Mayo County Council makes budget provision annually for pre-letting repairs to bring the accommodation back to regulation standards. In addition, annually Mayo Council make a submission for funding to the Dept. of Housing, Heritage and Local Government, under the Voids Programme, to bring the accommodation back to letting standards. Properties will be let in accordance with Mayo County Council's Housing Allocation Scheme.

Accommodation Alternatives.

The Council will actively encourage and facilitate Travellers who wish to fund their own accommodation through the Local Authority Home Loan and Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan.

Transfers/Transfer List

SHS Applicants who avail of Social Housing Supports in the form or RAS, HAP, Leasing may opt to remain on the Transfer list and be considered for other forms of long- term accommodation in the future .

In addition, tenants who have been living in a particular property for 2 years or more may apply for a Transfer. This generally happens in the case of overcrowding or if there are changes to the family circumstances and a smaller/larger property may be more suitable or additional needs have arose due to disability etc. These Applications will be considered and assessed on a case by case basis in accordance with the Council's Social Housing Allocation Scheme.

Customer Charter

Our Customer Charter defines the standards which you can expect to receive. If a customer feels they are not receiving these standards, they can notify Mayo County Council formally in writing or by clicking on the [Contact Us](#) link on Mayo.ie or by emailing info@mayo.ie stating their name, the nature of the complaint and what department they were dealing with.

Excluded areas include where formal appeal/complaint procedures already exist, e.g. where a customer can appeal to An Bord Pleanála, or where they can request an Internal Review and/or appeal to the Information Commissioner under the Freedom of Information.

It is important that every attempt is made in the relevant section or office to resolve any issues from where they originated so a customer's first point of contact should be there. A member of staff not previously involved in the case will consider the complaint and look to resolve it. If the matter cannot be resolved in that office, the customer may set out the complaint in full and in writing to:

Director of Services
Corporate Development & HR
Mayo County Council, Áras an Chontae
Castlebar, County Mayo F23 WF90

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Programme Delivery - TAP 2019-2024

During the lifetime of this programme 2019-2024 the target of one hundred units of accommodation target was surpassed by forty six with **one hundred and forty six units being provided. (Up to 30th June 2024)**

The Social Housing Supports used for the period 2019 to 2024 were:

- 49 Standard allocations from Mayo County Council's own housing stock- both from Casual Vacancies which arose and first time lettings in new housing developments. The houses ere allocated as per Mayo County Councils Social Housing Allocations Policy;
- Bays in Humbert Way Halting Site, Castlebar: 2 - 1 existing Bay was let to a family and an additional unit of accommodation was provided on the Site to accommodate some of the older family members, who submitted their own Social Housing Support Application.
- Traveller Group Housing: 2 vacant houses in a Traveller Group Scheme were re-let.
- Acquisitions: Mayo County Council acquired a total of 32 properties, through both general SCHIP Funding, Tenant In Situ Scheme and through the Traveller Accommodation Unit in some specific cases.
- Approved Housing Body Allocations: A further 18 units of accommodation were provided;
- Financial Assistance to access 43 Private Rented Properties: Housing Assistance Payment (HAP), Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) / Short Term Leasing /Long Term Leasing.

Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 Social Housing Support Allocated - 1/07/2019 – 30/06/2024

	Halting Site	Group Housing	Local Authority	Local Authority Acquired	Approved Housing Bodies AHB	RAS/ Short Term Leasing RAS/STL/ LTL	HAP	TOTAL
From July 2019			10	1	2	2	3	18
2020	1	-	8	1	1	5	6	22
2021	1		7	5	8	5	6	32
2022	-	-	9	7	3	3	8	30
2023	-	1	13	11	4	1	1	31
2024	-	1	2	7	-	1	2	13
Total	2	2	49	32	18	16	26	146

The above figures include transfers to meet the changing accommodation needs of the families concerned,

TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME 2025-2029
ASSESSMENT OF ACCOMMODATION NEED

Section 6 (as amended in the Housing Miscellaneous Provisions) Act) 2009 requires Housing Authorities, for the purposes of preparing a Programme, in respect of their functional area, to make an assessment of the accommodation needs of Travellers who are assessed under Section 20 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 as being qualified for social housing support, including the need for Culturally appropriate Traveller Accommodation sites along with Traveller Group Housing where this has been requested on housing application form.

In undertaking the assessment, MCC has followed guidance issued by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, including that assessment is evidence based and involves engagement with stakeholders in as far as reasonably possible.

At Present there is no Traveller accommodation Support Group operational in the County, however, the reformation of the Traveller Support Group is at an advanced stage and expected to be operational by September 2024. In the interim, this Draft Programme 2025-2029 will be forwarded to the Director and Board of Directors of the newly formed Company, Mayo Traveller Movement, Pavee Point and Irish Traveller Movement representatives.

The Net Need was established from:

- the figures established in the Annual Count;
 - Applicants expressed preferences
 - Census Data;
- Current figures on the number of households availing of
Emergency Accommodation and residing in caravans on Roadside/Yards;

CSO Number of young travellers coming of age over the period of the Plan 128 X 40%:	51
Number of persons on Roadside and Back Yards:	25
Number of families in Emergency Accommodation:	21
Balance made up of those currently sharing and returning families new family formations:	<u>40</u>
	136

Annual Census

Number of Families Currently Residing in County Mayo – 28/11/23

Municipal Districts	L.A. incl Acquisitions	Local Authority Group Scheme + L.A. Halting Site	RAS / SOCIAL Leasing Initiative	Private Rented / H.A.P.	Approved Housing Bodies	Privately Owned	Sharing /EA	Unauthorised Encampments /Private Yards	Totals Number of families on date of count
Ballina	43	2	17	28	45	29	15	6	185
Castlebar	35	6	15	20	4	4	5/12	8	109
Claremorris	85	7	2	21	2	15	14/11	11	168
West Mayo	6	0	1	1	0	0	1/1	0	10
Totals	169	15	35	70	51	48	35 / 24	25	472

Current Location of Unauthorised Encampments/Private Yards - 30/06/2024

Site	Type	Families/ Applicants	Expressed Preferences/ Identified Need
Site A	At L.A. house	1	1X Standard Local Authority (L.A.) housing
Site B	Privately owned Yard	1	1 X Applicants have expressed a preference to remain where they are
Site C	Privately Owned Site	3	2 Remain where they are 1 Standard Local Authority Housing
Site D	Public Lands (LA)	3	3 Standard LA Housing
Site E	Adjacent to LA house	1	1 Standard LA Housing
Site F	Adjacent to LA house	1	1 Standard LA Housing
Site G	Adjacent to LA house	2	2 Standard LA Housing
Site H	At L.A. house	1	1 Standard LA Housing
Site I	At L.A. house	1	1 Standard LA Housing
Site J	Parked on Public Lands	5	1 Standard LA Housing; 1 Acquisition through CAS Funding; 2 Group Housing
Site K	Parked on Public Grounds	2	2 Standard LA Housing
Site M	At LA House	3	3 Standard LA Housing

Projected Delivery Target Over T.A.P 2025 – 2029

Municipal Districts	Projected Need TAP 2025-2029	Local Authority Casual Vacancies	Local Authority Acquisitions & New builds	Traveller Group Housing & Halting Site	Approved Housing Body (Standard)	HAP/RAS
Ballina	43	14	16	3	4	6
Castlebar	46	14	13	9	4	6
Claremorris/ Swinford Ballinrobe	23 10 7	18	16	0	2	4
Westport/Belmullet	7	4	3	0	0	0
Total	136	50	48	12	10	16

Implementation Strategy - TAP 2025-2029

Year	New Build/Acquisition	Casual Vacancies	Private Rented/H.A.P Ras/ Leasing	Halting site / Group Housing	Vol. Groups & Other	Total
2025	10	7	5	0	2	24
2026	10	7	5	0	2	24
2027	10	7	5	6 *	2	30
2028	12	7	5	3 **	2	29
2029	12	7	5	3***	2	29
						136

Halting site * Renovation - Castlebar. Group Housing Castlebar ** Group Housing Ballina***

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Mayo County Council is the body responsible for the implementation of the proposals contained in this Programme.

Mayo County Council will ultimately drive the accommodation Programme 2025 – 2029. to ensure effective delivery of the Programme we envisage a comprehensive partnership approach involving all of the agencies which have a role to play in the areas of Traveller accommodation, including;

- Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee
- Social & Economic Committee
- Health Service Executive
- Mayo Traveller Movement
- Approved Housing Bodies, including
 - CENA (Approved Housing Body for Traveller specific Housing)
 - TUATH
 - CHI
 - Respond!
 - Cluid
 - Local Voluntary Housing Associations;
- An Garda Siochana;
- Citizens Info.
- MABS
- Mayo North East & Mayo South West Development Comapny
- Traveller Inter Agency Forum
- Local Community Groups
- Local Development Programme Companies
- Involve
- Dept of Education
- Dept of Social and Family Affairs
- Dept of Housing, Local Government & Housing.

Mayo County Council will work in co-operation with these groups and other stakeholders to secure the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 – 2029.

It is the intention of Mayo County Council to communicate the requirements of the Programme and to co-ordinate efforts within the County to ensure the success of the plan for the statutory period 2025 – 2029.

The Council will similarly promote the provision of Traveller specific accommodation. Mayo County Council are currently engaging with CENA, who are a Traveller specific Approved Housing Body in the provision of culturally appropriate accommodation.

Mayo County Council is committed to providing the resources required to implement this Programme and will keep under review resource requirements. The provision of any new units and/or modification of existing units will involve the following:

- general project management;
- preparation and submission of appraisal reports, necessary to secure Department funding in accordance with Programme requirements (single or four stage approval process);
- appointment and management of design consultants, as appropriate;
- planning and design works;
- public procurement process;
- construction works;
- contract management and supervision;
- certification.

There will be an annual review of progress on the implementation of the Programme in addition to the statutory review after three years i.e.30th June, 2027.

In implementing the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 – 2029 Mayo County Council will actively promote an integrated multi agency approach to providing support services to the Traveller Community. The Council will assist Voluntary and Statutory agencies in this work, in as far as is practicable.

Applicants will be advised to keep their files up to date and to ensure Mayo County Council are informed of their preferences for accommodation type or location changes in order for their SHS files and our computerised system to be reflective of the true accommodation requirements in the County.

Communication

In accordance with the requirements of the legislation and with directives issued by the Minister for the Housing, Heritage and Local Government, notice of the carrying out of the assessment of need and of the intention to prepare the draft Accommodation Programme was given to the following bodies:

- Members of Mayo County Council Housing Strategic Policy Committee;
- Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee;
- Health Service Executive;
- Voluntary Housing Groups;
- Adjoining Local Authorities;
- Community and Enterprise Section, Mayo County Council;
- Irish Traveller Movement.

Submissions

A total of 4 submissions have been received to date from the following stakeholders:

- Irish Traveller Movement;
- CENA;
- Mabs;
- Regional Health Co-Ordinator for Traveller Health, Community Health Care West.

The contents of the submissions have been noted and considered in relation to the making of the Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025-2029.

All additional submissions received during the prescribed period, following public display of the Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 – 2029 will be considered for incorporation into the Programme.

Monitoring & Review

In order for the Traveller Accommodation Plan 2025 - 2029 to be effective it must be capable of ongoing modification and improvement over the period of the Programme.

There will be an annual review of progress and a re-assessment of need which will be carried out at the same time as the Annual Estimate of Accommodation of Traveller Families. This will update the need each year, and will set revised targets for accommodation provisions for the remaining years of the Plan, as required.

A Report on the progress of meeting the targets outlined in the TAP 2025-2029 will be prepared by the Traveller Accommodation Team and presented to each Meeting of the Local Traveller Consultative Committee.

A Report on progress on achievement of the targets outlined in the Traveller Accommodation Programme is incorporated into Mayo County Council's Annual Report.

Conclusion

The estimated number of units of accommodation required to meet the needs of the Traveller Community for the period 2025 - 2029 is one hundred and thirty six.

Accommodation is provided for Members of the Travelling Community throughout County Mayo through the following methods.

- Privately owned and financed.
- Acquisitions and New builds.
- Traveller Group Housing Schemes
- Traveller specific halting sites.

- Casual vacancies in Council housing stock.
- Private Rented accommodation / HAP
- Rental Accommodation Scheme accommodation
- Approved Housing Body accommodation.

It is the intention of Mayo County Council to use all of these methods of accommodation to reach the projected targets for additional units of accommodation required in the period 2025 – 2029.

In the delivery of Traveller specific accommodation at local level, consultation will be entered into with the families. Due regard will be given to their housing need and expressed preference of accommodation type, in as far as is practicable.

DRAFT