

## **Minutes of Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC) Meeting – Wednesday April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

### **In Attendance:**

Mr. Niall Crowley, Independent Chair  
Cllr. Alan Curran, Galway City Council  
Cllr. Noel Larkin, Galway City Council  
Ms. Margaret O’Riada, Galway Traveller Movement  
Mr. Paddy Sweeney, Galway Traveller Movement Representative

### **Officials:**

Mr. Micheál Cormican, Senior Engineer, Housing Department  
Ms. Helena Martyn, A/Senior Executive Officer, Housing Department  
Ms. Maria Fallon Ward, Administrative Officer, Housing Department  
Mr. Aidan Falvey, Senior Executive Engineer, Housing Department  
Ms. Catherine Fahy, Senior Social Worker, Housing Department  
Mr. Peter Barnett, Social worker, Housing Department  
Ms. Edel Killarney, Traveller Accommodation Officer  
Ms. Róisín Bourke, Traveller Liaison Officer  
Mr. David Finan, Assistant Staff Officer

### **Apologies:**

Councillor Declan McDonnell, Galway City Council  
Ms Joanna Corcoran, Galway Traveller Movement  
Ms. Lieze Fanning, Galway City Council

Condolences were extended to Joanna Corcoran on the passing of a family member.

### **1. Minutes of the Meeting of February 21st, 2024.**

**The adoption of the Minutes was proposed by Ms. Catherine Fahy and seconded by Ms. Margaret O’Riada and agreed by all present.**

### **2. Matters Arising**

Margaret O’Riada mentioned the online maintenance logging system which operates in Galway County Council as a potential model in this area.

Róisín Bourke said that she is awaiting feedback from other local authorities regarding same, and she will have some results for the next LTACC meeting.

Margaret O’Riada acknowledged the work done by the council in relation to the Caravan Loan Scheme, but that a lot more work needs to be done in developing the scheme itself. It was noted that the scheme is to be reviewed in 2024 and it was agreed that the council should contribute to the review of the scheme engaging with the GTM and the LTACC in doing so.

It was decided that the new Estate Management Strategy review would need to be reviewed at the next Estate Management subcommittee meeting and would subsequently be presented at the next LTACC meeting.

### **3. TAP 2025-2029: Update**

567 families were contacted, and there were only 66 responses – this was low and very disappointing.

It was noted that the form could be confusing for some people and that perhaps there should be a section explaining how to fill out the form. It was further suggested that if the issue of overcrowding was put on the forms, there could be a fear that the rents may increase as a result. GTM is to conduct its own survey and there is potential to make use of the results of this.

Niall acknowledged the positive work done by Edel but said that the points mentioned should be taken into consideration.

### **4. Reflections on current TAP**

Helena Martyn complimented Niall Crowley on his role as chairperson of the committee and suggested that we must have realistic expectations going forward. The An Bórd Pleanála refusals for the Keeraun & Headford Road sites were noted as very disappointing.

The Equality and Human Rights Action Plan should be an ongoing area of work for the LTACC going forward. It was noted that the Local Authorities are improving in this area with their Corporate Plans now being developed to drive an ongoing implementation of the Public Sector Equality & Human Rights Duty.

A cross departmental approach could usefully be taken in GCC to deliver Traveller accommodation and the new CEO could be advised of this.

The final document of these reflections is attached to the meeting minutes for consideration by the future LTACC.

### **5. Capital Update**

The capital update was delivered by Micheál Cormican.

The licence to treat the Japanese Knotweed at Doughiska was refused by the NPWS.

GCC are not qualified to remove the Knotweed themselves. It is a very substantial operation as it is difficult to stop the spread of Knotweed. The cost of clearing the site will have to be assessed and the Department will decide if the site is developable or not. RESPOND could develop the land once it has been cleared.

Micheál Cormican noted that dumping has increased on the site in the last month and requested that the LTACC assist with communications with tenants regarding dumping at the site as this could jeopardise funding.

It was agreed that a planned task group be convened, and an action plan developed to manage the situation in a sustainable way with an initial meeting between the GTM, Environment and Planning. The setting up of a Task Group was agreed.

Roisin Bourke will link with the GTM regarding a communication/education piece of work on Knotweed and the assistance of the Biodiversity officer was recommended for this project.

GTM highlighted the major overcrowding issue on the St Nicholas Park halting site and the frustration of families waiting on housing to be erected through the Respond

project. With regards to the Keeraun site, a multi-modality report is currently being conducted to assist with the next application. An update should be available next month. Noel queried the considerable cost of treating the Knotweed and he also noted the level of dumping taking place.

## **6. Maintenance update**

The maintenance update was provided by Aidan Falvey.

Fire inspections have been completed and one has come back.

The firehose reels are being repaired and the welfare units are being inspected as and when required. 94 Firepacks have been distributed and the playgrounds have been inspected weekly. It was noted that some of the power connections in Cul Tra are not up to standard.

The electrical repairs are ongoing. Aidan Falvey noted that maintenance requests should be logged by email or phone.

The City Bin Company have started to install their bins across all sites. It was noted that provision of bins at Doughiska might help with dumping issues. Dumping continues on the service road for the Transient site. Aidan Falvey commented that €20,000 was spent last year for rubbish removal at the Carrowbrowne Transient Service road and suggested this could be addressed with a similar initiative to that in Doughiska.

There is a weather alert scheme in place and a text alert system is being progressed.

Edel Killarney & Róisín Bourke are to develop a communication strategy for the text alert system.

A Conditions Survey of the Welfare units is progressing to a tender stage.

By next meeting an application will be made for a water network to be installed for new caravans on the Tuam Road.

## **7. Sub Committee**

In relation to the Estate Management sub-committee, Maria Fallon Ward said that the GTM has taken over the lease of the community centre in Carrowbrowne and the key handover has been done.

GTM & GCC staff have held regular meetings to progress issues.

The Operational sub-committee did not meet.

## **8. Traveller Homelessness**

The Homeless team are working through accommodation allocations, and they are continuing to work on the decanting process at the PMVT site.

Nora Corcoran from the GTM will be commencing in the role of Traveller Accommodation Officer for Traveller women who are homeless – an 18-month GENIO funded project that the GTM has secured.

## **9. Any other Business**

Paddy Sweeney asked how those families with accounts with WEIRS Waste can cancel their accounts – Róisín Bourke agreed to follow up with a response.

Helena Martyn suggested another meeting might be needed before the Draft TAP goes public.

Catherine Fahy noted that the 2 sub-groups should meet over this period. The timeline for the next TAP includes; July 1<sup>st</sup> publish the notice that the Draft TAP is available for inspection & August 30<sup>th</sup> is the latest date for receipt of Submissions. Niall thanked everybody for their patience and goodwill throughout the process and the progress made in the work of the LTACC over the last period, in an environment which fostered dignity, autonomy and participation. Helena Martyn thanked Niall Crowley for his input over the last 5 years.

## **Capturing the Learning for the Future from the Perspective and Experience of the Current LTACC**

### **Context**

There have been positive shifts in the context for preparing and implementing the next TAP during the life of the current LTACC that offer foundations to be built on:

- A Traveller Accommodation Officer and a Traveller Liaison Officer are now in place and hold potential to drive new progress.
- The LTACC is functioning well, along with its two subcommittees.
- There is additional data available with the use of the Traveller identifier on the housing application form, and it will be important to make full use of this data.

Within this, it is acknowledged that new builds and delivery remains the biggest challenge.

### **Process for the TAP**

There is a challenge to innovate in the development of a new TAP and the conditions have been created for this:

- New participative planning processes could be employed to generate new ideas and to embed these appropriately in the TAP and it will be important to create spaces for this.
- The conditions are in place to implement the public sector equality and human rights duty in the preparation of the next TAP with the assessment of equality and human rights issues undertaken and in place to be applied in developing the new TAP. This focus on the public sector equality and human rights duty would be enhanced within a whole organisation approach to its implementation.

### **The LTACC**

The next LTACC should sustain and further evolve the approach that has been developed. In this:

- It would be timely to review and update the Communication Protocol.
- It would be useful to retain the approach of having an independent chairperson.
- Communication and relationship building needs to be further emphasised.

### **Priorities for the TAP and the Ongoing Work of the LTACC**

Priority areas for attention in developing and implementing the next TAP and the ongoing work of the LTACC might include:

- Implementing the culturally appropriate Traveller specific accommodation model that has been developing Galway, and watching for new guidance emerging from national level.
- Finalising and implementing the new approach to estate management.

- Developing new approaches to stimulated 'shared neighbourhoods'.
- Continuing to implement and monitor, and further develop as needed, the equality and human rights action plan developed.
- Ensure a contribution to the review and full establishment of the caravan loan scheme, and continue to enhance its local implementation.
- Taking a regeneration approach in the redevelopment of existing sites.
- Further developing maintenance logging systems, based on good practice.
- Engaging with expertise from mobile home suppliers in planning sites that include mobile homes.
- Innovating in the use of social enterprise approaches to such as transient sites.
- Innovating in the employment of Traveller apprentices, engaging as need with GRETB to facilitate this.

### **Issues for the TAP and the Ongoing Work of the LTACC**

Issues noted over the last period, some of which are not in the control of the local level, include:

- Impossibility of meeting HAP/RAS/LTL targets.
- Missing targets set.
- Planning barriers experienced.
- Difficulty in securing resources needed from national level.

**10 April 2024**