



## Summary of Concerns and Recommendations

**Assessment Process and Figures**

- Figures were based on either the 1999 census returns or social work records only with no actual consultation with Travellers as to their accommodation preference
- Travellers already in group or local authority housing were not surveyed
- The preferences of single young people were not included.
- Surveys were carried out during the summer months when many transient families were away and therefore not included.
- Surveys were carried out during office hours only.
- Young teenage Travellers were not included.
- Travellers already in local authority accommodation were not included
- Travellers were not aware of or prepared for the survey
- Projected need is based on inaccurate figures
- Projected need is based on marriage projections only
  - 4% growth as indicated in the 1995 Task Force Report
  - Projections based on age profile and current need
  - Estimate 50% children who reach 18 during programme will marry
  - Estimate 30% children who reach 18 during programme will marry
- Programmes explicitly state that single adult Travellers will not be accommodated outside family units.

### **Accommodation Preferences**

- Settlement overtones
- Assessment was based on paper records only and options were not actually put directly to Travellers.
- It was assumed that local authority housing was the *first* preference of those on local authority housing lists.
- Nomadic families were not included in the assessment.
- Transient site was not included as an option
- Travellers were verbally told that local authority housing was the most likely
- Travellers assumed housing was the correct/desired answer
- Travellers in local authority or group housing were not given an opportunity to express a preference.
- Travellers seeking transfers from existing accommodation were not included.
- No reference to the accommodation needs of lone parents, older Travellers, women, Travellers with disabilities, Travellers in institutions or who are currently homeless or living outside the Traveller community.

## Summary Key Issues

- Impressive guidelines – lost opportunity?
- There is huge variety in the quality of the plans.
- Can see influence of Traveller organisations and representatives
- The language used is often vague and non-committal.
- Question the commitment or understanding
- Unsatisfactory assessment procedures resulting in an under estimation of current and projected need.
- Figures are confusing, contradictory and difficult to analyse.
- Hard to tell what is already in place and what will be new and additional provision?
- Bias towards local authority housing inbuilt in many assessment procedures.
- Use of term ‘indigenous’ and quota systems
- No specific attention given to Travellers with a disability, living in institutions, homeless or not living with Traveller community.
- No implementation details – timescales, targets, locations
- Non-compliance with many of the Department of Environment guidelines especially in areas relating to meeting the distinct needs of Travellers.
  - Space for horses
  - Space for scrap and Traveller economy
  - Space for visitors
  - Large families
- Lack of tenant centred approaches to management, back up and training.
- Poor commitment to supporting voluntary organisations provide housing
- No provision of transient sites
- Use of Section 32 to serve evictions without provision of alternative accommodation.
- No attention to specific needs of women, people with a disability or Travellers living outside the family unit.

## **Recommendations**

### **General Recommendations**

- Nothing in the report which highlights the inadequacies of many of the Local Traveller Accommodation Programmes or the need for some of the programmes to be reviewed should be used as an excuse to delay existing plans to provide good quality Traveller accommodation.
- The housing and good quality culturally appropriate accommodation should be recognised as a legally binding fundamental right open to all people, Traveller and settled. The establishment of such a right would ensure government policy, attention and resources were adequately focused on this essential requirement for human dignity.

### **Specific Recommendations**

#### **Department of the Environment and Local Government and the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (NTACC)**

- The Minister should introduce sanctions and incentives for local authorities to enforce the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programmes. This may involve cutting local authority administrative budgets for poor performance and increasing these budgets for high performance on implementation of Traveller Accommodation Programmes.
- The Minister should require local authorities that have inadequate Traveller Accommodation Programmes that do not fulfil the requirements of the Memorandum on Implementation of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 to carry out an immediate review and develop a comprehensive Traveller Accommodation Programme.
- The Department should ensure that a review of all the Traveller Accommodation Programmes be carried out within the timeframe as set out in section 17 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 without interfering with progress on implementation.
- The Minister should review section 10 of the Housing Act 1988 as amended by section 32 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 and place a moratorium on use of this section until all appropriate accommodation has been provided.
- The Department should ensure that the requirements of the Equal Status legislation are complied with by ensuring that false distinctions between Travellers, such as the use of the term 'indigenous', should not prevent some Travellers from applying for accommodation with the local authority of their choice.

- The Department should put in place a programme of funding to ensure that an accommodation worker can be employed at city and county level by Traveller organisations to ensure that Travellers are positioned to impact on accommodation issues.
- The Minister should require local authorities to reserve land banks in each of the electoral areas to ensure that they have enough land available to build Traveller accommodation.
- The Department should put in place systems for the poverty and equality proofing of all the Traveller Accommodation Programmes.
- If local authorities are not on schedule in implementing the Traveller Accommodation Programmes by the end of the year 2002 the Minister should put in place a National Traveller Accommodation Agency as outlined in the Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community 1995.
- The NTACC should advise the Minister regarding the adequacy of the Traveller Accommodation Programmes and make recommendations to ensure that the strengthening and development of the Traveller Accommodation Programmes is achieved.
- The NTACC should develop effective monitoring procedures to assess the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programmes by the local authorities on a regular basis.
- NTACC should put in place mechanisms to ensure co-ordination in relation to local authorities provision for transient sites.
- **Local Authorities and Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees (LTACC)**
- Local authorities should prioritise the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programmes to ensure they provide all the necessary accommodation by the year 2004.
- Local authorities should carry out reviews of its Traveller Accommodation Programmes as set out in section 14 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 without affecting progress on implementation.
- Local authorities should cease to use section 10 of the Housing Act 1988 as amended by section 32 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998.
- The local authorities should resource the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee in carrying out its functions such as holding regular meetings of LTACC, providing information on progress on implementation at each meeting and putting in place mentoring and alternate systems that would benefit Traveller sector representatives.

- The local authority should support Traveller organisations in carrying out its role in supporting Traveller representation on the LTACC this would involve recognising the role and independence of Traveller organisations and their function in organising their own representation for the LTACC.
- LTACC should set targets and timeframes for the implementation of its Traveller Accommodation Programmes and monitor its implementation.
- As appropriate each LTACC should put in place a review process for the Traveller Accommodation Programme whilst ensuring that implementation of Traveller Accommodation is not impeded.
- When drawing up specific accommodation designs LTACC should ensure that the diverse needs of the Traveller community are included taking in to account the needs of Travellers with a disability, Traveller women and older Travellers.
- LTACCs should adopt and implement the recommended code of practice arising from the report on the 'Evaluation of the operation of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees by Liza Costello commissioned by the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.
- LTACCs should engage in anti-racist training to ensure the committee is equipped with the know-how to oversee the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programmes.
- LTACC should prepare guidelines on consultation with Travellers on the design and location of Traveller Accommodation.
- LTACC should develop Traveller tenant participation initiatives to ensure effective management of accommodation.
- **The Irish Traveller Movement (ITM) and local Traveller organisations**
- The ITM should continue to monitor the use of section 32 and campaign for this section to be amended.
- The ITM should monitor the progress on implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programmes and will publish results on progress of local authorities in implementing Traveller accommodation.
- The ITM should continue to support Traveller representative operating on Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees through providing training and advice on strategy development.
- The ITM should provide training for local authorities on Traveller issues.
- The ITM should continue to support the emergence of new Traveller organisations and resource them in responding to Traveller Accommodation issues.

- Traveller organisations should provide anti-racist training to the LTACC.
- Traveller organisations should facilitate representatives of Traveller interests on the LTACC and support them in attending national training for representatives of Traveller interests on LTACC provided by the Irish Traveller Movement.
- Traveller organisations should lobby for resources to employ an accommodation worker to ensure that Travellers are resourced to participate in the process.
- Traveller organisations should monitor progress on implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programmes and report regularly to the Department of the Environment and Local Government.
- Traveller organisations should carry out an assessment of Traveller accommodation needs each year to ensure accuracy of figures included in Local Traveller Accommodation Programmes.
- Traveller organisations should monitor the use of section 10 of the Housing Act 1988 as amended by section 32 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 and report on its use to the Irish Traveller Movement.
- Local and National Traveller organisations should consider their involvement in the LTACC if evictions persist, and/or if adequate progress is not made in clearing the backlog in Traveller accommodation provision.

### **Non-Traveller Organisations**

- Community organisations and Area Development Management funded groups should support the emergence of new Traveller groups.
- Community and other organisations should include Travellers in their organisations and Traveller issues in their work programmes especially where Traveller organisations do not exist.
- The social partners, trade unions, farmers, business organisations and community & voluntary organisations at a national and local level should be advocates for the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programmes in line with the commitments made in the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness.