



Traveller-Specific Accommodation: Practice, Design and Management



Centre for
Housing Research

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Housing Research

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Foreword

Traveller accommodation is a difficult area for local authorities to get right. Traveller families' needs and preferences vary, can be difficult to clarify and if clear can be difficult to realise. Accessing appropriate sites throws up challenges; likewise the design and planning stages, construction, on-going management and maintenance, and inter-agency co-operation. Where Traveller-specific accommodation works well it seems to work very well, but when it does not, the results are all too visible and profound.

One of the key objectives of the Centre for Housing Research is to enable local authorities to develop a more responsive housing service. It is in this context that the Centre undertook this work on Traveller accommodation.

The work is presented in three distinct but interrelated reports:

- A Review of Policy and Practice (Coates et al, 2008)
- This Research Report (Treadwell Shine et al, 2008)
- Good Practice Guidelines (Kane et al, 2008)

Much has been achieved in recent years in the provision of quality Traveller accommodation, but there remain too many examples of situations where policy objectives are not being realised on the ground. It has been argued in this work that focusing on quality of life may be a way to move forward in the management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation.

A core feature of this work has been the development and application of an indicator system to measure various aspects of Traveller accommodation provision. It is hoped that the indicator system might provide a framework on which national standards could be developed and agreed.

I would like to thank the authors of these three reports, Dermot Coates, Fiona Kane and Kasey Treadwell Shine, for the considerable advancement in our understanding of the relevant issues which they have facilitated through their work. Elena Moore helped with data collection while on a student placement with the Centre. I would like to thank officials from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for providing data and commenting on earlier drafts of the reports. The researchers drew on the expertise and experience of many Traveller families and organisations representing their interests, local authority officials and other service providers, and I would like to thank all those who gave of their time to help in the completion of this work. I would also like to thank Clare Curley of South Tipperary County Council for comments on an earlier draft of the reports.

David Silke

Director
September 2008

Executive Summary

Introduction and Context

In recent years, perspectives on Traveller accommodation have focused on multicultural views recognising Traveller differences, with an associated policy context of providing Traveller-specific accommodation options. However, nearly all stakeholders – policy-makers, local authority practitioners, politicians, Traveller organisations and members of the Settled and Traveller communities – express dissatisfaction with the current state of Traveller accommodation in Ireland. In most cases these issues relate to halting sites, but there are difficulties in delivering and managing other Traveller-specific accommodation, e.g. group housing schemes.

It was on foot of these issues that the Centre for Housing Research, in consultation with the Traveller Accommodation Unit of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG), put forward a proposal ‘to evaluate current systems of management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation and formulate guidelines for local authorities on achieving good practice in this area’.

The resultant Traveller Accommodation Study (TAS) generated a considerable amount of both primary and secondary data and findings. Therefore three publications have been produced around the TAS. The first publication reviews Traveller accommodation policy and practice in Ireland (Coates et al, 2008). It also refers to relevant European and UK developments that indirectly inform the Irish context and introduces the concept of quality of life. The second publication in this series is this research report, which presents the results of the primary data collected. The third publication, good practice guidelines, follows the pattern of other Centre for Housing Research guidelines and makes a number of suggestions for improving and adopting good practice in the management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation (Kane et al, 2008). These guidelines also suggest some ways forward to achieve a more consistent practice and delivery context at local level, using quality of life considerations as a guide.

Methodology

The research methods used in this report involved an examination of 40 halting sites/ group housing schemes in seven local authority operational areas: Carlow (4), Clare (6), Fingal (7), Kildare (6), Westmeath (5) and Wexford (7) County Councils and Cork City Council (5). The examination included 19 halting sites, 15 group housing schemes and 6 unauthorised sites/roadside encampments. This analysis involved

interviews with national stakeholders, local authority officials, Travellers and Traveller representatives and the development of two quantitative data collection tools:

- A survey designed to capture local authority financial and demographic data which was distributed to all county/city councils. The content of this survey was developed in agreement with the DoEHLG. The survey was piloted in one case study area, refined, and then distributed to all 34 local authorities in Ireland. However, only seventeen surveys were returned. In addition, the returns varied considerably in quality, highlighting the lack of locally-based quantitative evidence regarding Traveller-specific accommodation (see Appendix 2).
- An indicator system designed to compare and contrast specific elements around management and maintenance across local authorities and Traveller-specific accommodation types. The indicator system covered areas such as physical conditions, geographical issues, safety and security issues and specific management and maintenance issues. Quality of life issues were examined through questions on perceptions of quality of life by residents of the site/group housing scheme. Forty-two Traveller respondents completed the quality of life questions. In total 20 principal indicators were developed and rated on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (see Appendix 3). A summary of the key findings from the indicator system is provided at the end of this Executive Summary.

Key Findings

Strategic Planning and Delivery Effects

The research has found that there was little variability across local authorities in terms of key issues arising in relation to Traveller-specific accommodation. At the same time, however, the research suggested that national strategic frameworks are often not a key influence of local practice and delivery. Instead, informal consultation mechanisms, and to a much lesser extent formal mechanisms, are a stronger driver of practice and delivery. The dominance of informal mechanisms for determining outcomes around Traveller-specific accommodation leads to difficulties in achieving consistency of approach. As such, different approaches and practices around Traveller-specific accommodation have emerged at a local level. The approach adopted at local level was usually dependent on a number of factors such as organisational conditions and the different perspectives of stakeholders involved.

In a situation where so much depends on the local context and informal working relationships, a strong evidence base is important to determine housing needs, progress and value for money. However, the research found that evidence-based working and data collection on Traveller-specific accommodation is weak. The lack of evidence base makes it difficult to identify progress or explanations for not meeting the targets set out in local authority Traveller Accommodation Programmes.

Design and Provision

Design and provision elements of Traveller-specific accommodation operate within and are shaped by local practice and delivery frameworks, as well as being affected by national and local conditions. Five main elements within design and provision dimensions were identified:

- the role and influence of broader national conditions, especially policy directives and recent changes
- the role and influence of local conditions, such as the attitudes of the local Settled populations towards existing Traveller-specific accommodation, and local institutional, political, economic and social conditions
- the preferences and characteristics of the Traveller population including Travellers' nomadism, economic traditions and family dynamics
- opportunities for design and provision options
- issues around achieving and sustaining design and provision outcomes

Broader national and local conditions also set the parameters of relatively limited design and provision options in the current context. These design and provision options are:

- pursuing new halting sites or group housing schemes, or substantially renovating existing sites/schemes (effectively knocking down and rebuilding in existing or nearby locations)
- refurbishing and maintaining existing sites/schemes
- providing alternative options, e.g. through the private rented sector or once-off housing

From the three options mentioned above, the construction of new Traveller-specific accommodation was considered to be the best option to meet housing need. In practice, however, land use, planning and density changes and local opposition contribute to difficulties in developing new halting sites/ group housing schemes. To overcome this problem the refurbishment of existing sites/ group housing schemes was often considered. Concern was raised by service providers about the sustainability, appropriateness and cost-effectiveness of refurbishment. It was argued, for example, that refurbishment of existing sites/ group housing schemes does not remove factors associated with the sometimes poor location in the first place and may not be adaptable to respond to future needs and demographic changes.

In face of the difficulties associated with providing new or refurbished Traveller-specific accommodation, providing alternative accommodation is the third option available. An example of such accommodation is private rented accommodation or once-off rural housing. However, respondents expressed concern about the sustainability of such accommodation in the long term. In line with the government's housing policy statement *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities*, considerations of long-term sustainability must be considered as an important element in the design and provision of all Traveller accommodation.

Direct Management and Maintenance

The research indicated that most local authorities face similar issues in relation to management and maintenance concerns. Five broad areas are examined here:

- service delivery effects
- revenue and income streams
- design and provision effects
- societal and cultural effects
- management concerns/issues

Service Delivery Effects

In 31 of the 40 sites/ group housing schemes caretakers were employed to provide management and maintenance services for Traveller-specific accommodation. There were mixed opinions on the appropriateness and effectiveness of caretakers. At one extreme, it was argued that caretakers could contribute to perceptions of special treatment and perpetuate negative perceptions of Traveller differences. On the other hand, it was suggested that caretakers had an important role in managing and maintaining sites/ group housing schemes. The research found that 24 of the 31 caretakers had limited or extremely limited duties. For example, the majority of these duties were focused on waste management, to the detriment of other duties such as repairs and tenant liaison. This suggests that, whether respondents had positive or negative views on the roles and responsibilities of caretakers, their actual responsibilities on the majority of sites/ group housing schemes examined for this research were not extensive.

Revenue and Income Streams

Rental income is important for covering at least some of the cost of managing and maintaining Traveller-specific accommodation. Determination and collection of rents and the effects of different payment methods was a key issue to emerge from the research. Rents for group housing schemes are charged in the same way as for a standard local authority tenant, which is on the basis of income-related schemes established by each local authority. However, those living in halting sites tend to pay a flat rate rent which is not income linked and is usually significantly lower than standard local authority rents. For example, in one local authority the average weekly rent level in 2005 for standard local authority housing was €42.50, in comparison to a flat rate of €5 rent for a halting site bay.

The proportion of rent collected varied considerably between local authorities. The issue of long-term rent arrears was also significant for some Traveller-specific accommodation. Low proportions of rent collected and high levels of rent arrears place considerable strain on the ability of the local authorities to effectively carry out good programmes of management and maintenance.

Design and Provision Effects

The research raised questions about the standard of the facilities, location, infrastructure and the poor compliance of certain sites/ group housing schemes with Departmental guidelines:

- Eighteen of the 40 sites/ group housing schemes had all facilities in good working order; however, 8 had half or less facilities in good working order.
- Thirteen of the 40 sites/ group housing schemes were rated as having very good provision of infrastructure (sewage and drainage, tarmacing of bays and related areas, public lighting and road safety measures), but 10 were also reported as having very poor or little or no provision of infrastructure.
- Most sites/ group housing schemes do not have access to emergency equipment, phone services, or provisions for green spaces. Thirty-one of the 40 sites/ group housing schemes had no or out-of-date emergency equipment. Only 2 sites/ group housing schemes had communal access to phone services. Sixteen sites/ group housing schemes had no provisions for green spaces and an additional 19 had such areas but these were not in use; only 5 sites/ group housing schemes had green areas in use.
- Only 3 of the 42 respondents specifically cited access to services as one of the best things about the site/ group housing scheme.
- An additional 9 of 42 respondents cited proximity to town/urban centres and 3 respondents stated schools as one of the best things about the site/ group housing scheme.
- Just 6 of 42 respondents cited poor location as one of the worst things about the site/ group housing scheme.
- The majority (33 of 40) of sites/ group housing schemes had some form of environmental hazard nearby (electricity pylon, telephone masts, dumps, major roads, industrial pollution).
- Most respondents did not report difficulties with neighbours and 3 cited good neighbours as one of the best things about the site/ group housing scheme.

The impact of the provision of the Caravan Grants and Loans scheme, which assists with the purchase of a caravan, was also examined. A number of concerns with this scheme emerged:

- Ten of 17 local authority respondents of the survey noted that the useful economic life of a caravan is likely to be less than five years. This, in turn, implies that 'top up' loans are likely to be needed on a regular basis rather than in exceptional circumstances only.

- Two local authorities ceased to participate in the Caravan Loan scheme. Reasons for cessation included high level of loan arrears and the fact that caravans funded in this manner were likely to be taken out of their operational area.
- Travellers on the roadside or in unofficial sites are excluded.
- Restrictions imposed on where caravans can be purchased takes buying power away from the Travelling community. A VAT registered caravan dealership must be used and a designated area is prescribed in a minority of instances.
- The requirement for a 10 per cent deposit can create difficulties for low-income households (Quinn and McCann, 2001).

Societal and Cultural Effects

Social and cultural aspects that affect the management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation include: Travellers' economic activity, mobility, the impact of family dynamics and compatibility and the control of horses and dogs.

In some cases local authorities made provisions for activities such as providing space for the Traveller economy, for keeping horses and dogs and for holding bays open for a number of months to facilitate nomadic families. These responses could technically run counter to the tenancy/licence agreement. However, it was argued by some service providers that such flexible approaches often lead to better management and maintenance outcomes. Other service providers suggested that such flexible approaches can lead to difficulties for local authorities in instances when it is not possible to accommodate such activities, for example if facilities for horses cannot be provided. These service providers called for a consistent approach to be adopted by local authorities when dealing with such issues.

Family dynamics and compatibility was raised as a dominant concern for managing and maintaining Traveller-specific accommodation in most local authorities. Conflicts within or between families can sometimes lead to families leaving a site/ group housing scheme, having consequence for managing vacant bays. It was suggested that one individual or family can create difficulties for others on-site. In extreme cases it was reported that certain families were effectively allocating and sub-letting bays on halting sites implying that these were let to compatible families to the exclusion of other families.

The typically larger family size of Traveller families was also reported to have consequences for managing Traveller-specific accommodation. In 2006 41.6 per cent of Traveller families had 6 or more persons in the household compared to 5.2 per cent of the total Irish population (CSO, 2007). The relevance of this for management includes:

- increased wear and tear of accommodation
- the use of halting site service bays as alternative accommodation, e.g. for sleeping in because of insufficient space in caravans
- overcrowding

Management Concerns/Issues

The research included indicators to determine the scale of management issues such as safety and security concerns and anti-social behaviour on the sites/ group housing schemes visited as part of the study. The following were identified:

- Four of the 40 sites/ group housing schemes showed evidence of considerable toleration of certain behaviours such as dumping near sites/ group housing schemes and open spaces being blocked by mounds of dirt or boulders (bouldering).
- Twenty-one of the sites/ group housing schemes showed poor or no evidence of general, day-to-day maintenance.

- Thirty of the sites/ group housing schemes had little or no evidence of anti-social behaviour (e.g. evidence of graffiti/vandalism, joyriding).
- Two respondents cited safety and security concerns as one of the three worst things about the site/ group housing scheme.
- Thirty-seven sites/ group housing schemes did not have CCTV.
- Twenty-eight sites/ group housing schemes had all public lighting working.
- Other proxy measures of safety and security show that 24 sites/ group housing schemes have little or no defensible spaces (For example, no communal areas of sites/ group housing schemes overlooked alternative entrance or exit points).
- Twenty-eight have barriers to entering the site/ group housing scheme; of the remaining 12 sites/ group housing schemes that did not have entrance barriers, four were unauthorised/roadside encampments.

Recommendations

A key objective of this research is to make recommendations to improve the management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation. Based on the findings of this study the recommendations are grouped into three categories:

1. The current policy framework
2. Strategic planning and delivery approaches
3. Local authority practices in relation to the management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation

1. The Current Policy Framework

1.1 Apply Sustainability Principles to Traveller Accommodation

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government should apply the sustainability principles outlined in the Housing Policy Statement Delivering Homes: Sustaining Communities to address below-standard Traveller-specific accommodation, where it exists.

1.2 Develop National Standards for Traveller Accommodation Practice and Delivery

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government should develop, in consultation with stakeholders, agreed national standards for Traveller accommodation. The indicator system developed for this study to examine standards of management and maintenance should be used as a basis for the development of these standards.

1.3 Standardise Service Delivery Approaches and Support Good Practice

The large degree of local variability in service delivery approaches identified in this study is a barrier to the development of good practice in this area. While recognising the importance of local-area responses to local needs, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government should consider methods to encourage a more common approach to service delivery and to sharing of good practice between local authorities.

1.4 Improve Evidence-Based Working and Data Collection

More systematic data collection and use of data to inform planning and service delivery is required. The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government should review and up-date the data requirements for evidence-based policy making and good practice development. The research tools developed for this study should be used as a base for this review. The Department should also undertake a national audit of the standard of Traveller-specific accommodation.

2. Strategic Planning and Delivery Approaches

2.1 Implementing Traveller Accommodation Practice and Delivery as part of the Sustainable Communities Framework

Local authorities should apply the Sustainable Communities framework to implement better practice and delivery at local level. Guiding principles here include:

- addressing persistent problems
- overcoming obstacles
- implementing systemic good practice
- creating supportive local institutional settings
- promoting evidence-based working
- ensuring that all aspects of the practice and delivery of Traveller accommodation is transparent and sustainable

Local authorities should use the national standards and guidance from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, as recommended above, to ensure that there are clear parameters around what design and provision options are to be delivered. Robust strategic planning frameworks to deliver these options should be established, including considerations for sustainable community proofing.

2.2 Implementing Systemic Good Practice and Achieving Sustainable Outcomes

Local authorities should implement systemic good practice, by:

- drawing upon the knowledge and expertise of their own, and other, local authority staff
- identifying and implementing appropriate training and development
- addressing organisational and staff issues

Local authorities may want to consider an internal audit of their current practice and delivery contexts, for example by drawing upon the methodologies and documents developed for this study. In common with broader housing management reforms, local authorities should implement good practice from other sources.

2.3 Address Organisational and Staff Issues

Local authorities should consider ways of advancing intra- and inter-agency approaches to improve communication, facilitate the transfer of skills and learning, and support relevant staff. Local authorities may also want to consider establishing dedicated Traveller Accommodation Units, keeping in mind the benefits and drawbacks of these identified in this study.

2.4 Address Design, Provision and Delivery Barriers

Lack of clarity and the complexity of factors affecting the practice and delivery of Traveller accommodation can create design, provision and implementation barriers. Local authorities should use departmental guidance to facilitate overcoming these barriers. Local authorities should also investigate, and have clear parameters for, assessing housing needs and allocation procedures. Defined timetables for delivery and procedures to deal with refusals of offers, including an assessment of reasons for refusal, are especially important. Good data collection and evidence-based working is essential here.

2.5 Explore the Potential Role of Other Service Providers and Stakeholders

There is a need to examine and develop a model for Traveller-specific accommodation that explicitly engages with community development and estate management principles. To achieve sustainable outcomes it is necessary for Traveller tenants to be proactive in the management of the accommodation.

The voluntary housing sector should also be encouraged to further develop and facilitate programmes for the delivery of Traveller accommodation, including Traveller-specific accommodation. The establishment of a Traveller Voluntary Housing Association, with the support of Traveller representative groups, should also be considered.

3. Local Practices in Relation to the Management and Maintenance of Traveller-Specific Accommodation

3.1 Develop More Strategic Management and Maintenance Practices

Research evidence suggests that current management and maintenance practices are often reactive and crisis-oriented. Management and maintenance staff should avail of opportunities to positively learn from experiences and to actively apply them to new situations/families. Furthermore, in common with all management and maintenance programmes, efforts should be made to keep up standards, respond to issues in a timely fashion, institute cyclical repairs and maintenance, and other principles of general good practice, as everyday practice (see Centre for Housing Research Good Practice Guidelines on a range of topics).

3.2 Adopting Systemic Good Practice and Addressing Local Variability

The research revealed that stakeholders' perceptions and approaches to issues relating to Traveller-specific accommodation varied considerably. In contrast to more objective measures, this can reinforce the current difficulties with local variability and present challenges for instituting systemic good practice. There is a need to recognise the real effects of such varied perceptions on Traveller accommodation, but also use good data and evidence to ensure that perceptions/attitudes do not define all management and maintenance practices and delivery.

A substantial challenge is to move the positive aspects of informal working relationships into systemic good practices that can be supported and sustained by all stakeholders. Key principles here include:

- supportive national and local institutional settings
- good relationships and dialogue with local Settled and Traveller populations
- a commitment to collectively progress sustainable outcomes through existing or new consultation mechanisms

3.3 Defining and Delivering Management and Maintenance Tasks

The research evidence highlights a number of difficulties around defining and delivering management and maintenance tasks. There is need to clearly define roles and responsibilities, particularly for caretakers, and have clear procedures in place for handing over routine tasks to tenants. Pre-tenancy training outlining the roles and responsibilities of tenants and linking Traveller residents with Estate Management/Tenant Liaison Officers can assist here. Long-term, there may be a need to re-examine the role and effectiveness of caretakers. Balancing Traveller-specific concerns with universal concerns in common with all local authority tenants is one way of ensuring greater clarity, transparency and fairness in defining and delivering appropriate tasks.

3.4 The Role of Traveller Differences in Management and Maintenance Practices

This research has found that good service delivery outcomes for Traveller-specific accommodation are often based on a good understanding and appreciation by service providers of family dynamics within the Traveller Community. This is particularly clear when the impact of family incompatibility is considered. Often nuanced responses are required of service providers, which requires skilled and experienced staffing. But family dynamics does have implications for a range of day-to-day management and maintenance concerns such as stability of tenure, overcrowding and quality of life. There is a need to recognise the importance, and the crucial management and maintenance implications, of Traveller traditions and differences while also considering broader management and maintenance concerns.

Box 1 Summary of Key Findings from the Indicator Systems

General Information

- In total, the indicator system was applied in 40 sites/ group housing schemes across seven local authorities. There were 42 respondents to the qualitative questions (Quality of life) of the indicator system, across these seven local authorities.
- Respondents were generally female (31 respondents), aged between 18 and 30 (9 respondents) or between 30 and 40 (15 respondents), married (37 respondents) and with children (40 respondents). Forty of these 42 respondents had lived in some other accommodation. Thirty-one had extended family members on the same site. Eleven respondents had been living on the site/ group housing scheme for one year or less; 15 had been living in their accommodation for between one and five years; 13 had been in their accommodation for between five and twenty years and 3 had been in their accommodation for over 20 years.
- Where it was possible to determine (relying on residents' or officials' knowledge), half of sites were previously green field sites, and six had been located on waste ground.
- Comparisons of median number of bays and number of individual families suggest that some sites are under-occupied while other sites are over-occupied. Wexford had the lowest ratio of occupation, with a median of 4 families and a median of 6 bays/houses per site. Fingal had the highest ratio of occupation, with a median of 10 families and a median of 7.5 bays/houses per site.

Physical Conditions

- The general provision of infrastructure on a quarter of sites/ group housing schemes (including drainage, paving/tarmac of bays, public lighting and road safety measures) is poor or non-existent, while 13 of the 40 sites/ group housing schemes had very good provision of such infrastructure.
- The design of sites/houses, as rated against departmental guidelines (considerations for light space, wind shelter and optimisation of sunlight), showed some variation across different types of accommodation. However, 27 of the sites/ group housing schemes did not meet any criteria for special needs and 14 sites/ groups housing schemes met only one or none of the criteria for environmental standards.
- Thirty-three of the sites/ group housing schemes had at least one boundary around the site; 8 of these sites/ group housing schemes had walls over 6 feet high. Eight of the sites/ group housing schemes with boundaries had more than one type of boundary around the site.

Geographical/Spatial Issues: Built Quality Environment

- Thirty-five of the sites/ group housing schemes had access to essential services (i.e. a range of services including GP, schools, local shops, public transport, etc. were located in close proximity to the site). Fifteen had access to non-essential services (i.e. a range of 'non-essential' services including other shops, churches, social and community support networks, etc. were located in close proximity to the site).
- Only 3 of 42 Traveller respondents cited access to services as one of the best things about their accommodation. An additional 9 cited proximity to town/urban centres and 3 stated schools as one of the best things about their accommodation. Just 6 cited poor location as one of the worst things about their accommodation.
- Five of the 6 unauthorised sites visited for the study were located in close proximity to other types of Traveller-specific accommodation.
- A sizable majority (33 sites/ group housing schemes) had some form of environmental hazard nearby (electricity pylon, telephone masts, dumps, major roads, industrial pollution).

Safety and Security

- Thirty of the 40 sites/ group housing schemes showed little or no evidence of anti-social behaviour.
- Surveillance and observations of sites through CCTV, public lighting and/or defensible spaces varied. Most sites (37) did not have CCTV coverage but did have working public lighting (27). Twenty-four of the sites/ group housing schemes were laid out with poor or no defensible spaces (e.g. all spaces in a site were overlooked, or there were no back alleyways).
- The provision and use of green spaces was generally poor. Sixteen of the sites/ group housing schemes had no such spaces and of the remaining 19 half were unused and only 5 were in use.
- While access of emergency vehicles was generally good, the presence of and access to emergency equipment and/or phone services on site were poor. Thirty-one of the sites/ group housing schemes had no, or not working, emergency equipment. Thirty-eight had no communal phone access.
- Eleven of the sites/ group housing schemes were 32km (20 miles) or more from the nearest hospital, but 11 were also within 8km (5 miles) of a hospital.

Management and Maintenance

I. Housing Management and Maintenance

- Thirty-one sites/ group housing schemes employed caretakers, the majority of whom were hired by local authorities. Caretakers were on-site for less than 6 hours on 13 of the sites/ group housing schemes and on 4 the caretaker was off-site unless contacted.
- Twenty-four of the 31 caretakers were rated as having limited or extremely limited duties (e.g. basic waste management duties). Of those 24 sites/ group housing schemes in which caretakers had reported limited or extremely limited duties, 17 also reported moderate or no evidence of fly-tipping.
- Twelve of the 31 sites/group housing schemes with a caretaker reported little evidence of repairs or maintenance works, an additional 17 sites/group housing schemes reported limited evidence of repairs works or maintenance and 1 site showed some evidence of repairs/ maintenance works.
- Twelve of the 31 sites/ group housing schemes have no evidence of fly-tipping or illegal dumping, while 11 had light evidence, 4 had moderate evidence and an additional 4 had substantial evidence of fly-tipping or illegal dumping in or close to the site/ group housing. In contrast two-thirds (6) of the 9 sites/ group housing schemes with no caretaker did have substantial or moderate evidence of illegal dumping. However, as mentioned above 5 of these 9 sites were unauthorised sites/ roadside encampments with usually limited or no waste facilities.

II. Estate Management

- Thirty-five of the sites/ group housing schemes had no or limited communal facilities.
- Only 5 of the 40 sites/ group housing schemes had provisions for horses on-site, an additional 3 had off-site provisions and 10 of the sites/ group housing schemes had unbounded/unofficial areas on or close to the site. Twenty-one of the sites had no provisions for horses.

Quality of Life

- Ten of the 42 respondents for this section cited location, layout and safety, and an additional 9 cited proximity to town/city centres, as one of the three best things about their accommodation.
- Eight respondents cited size or lack of facilities as one of the three worst things about their accommodation. Seven also cited rubbish/untidiness, and 7 stated lack of heating or damp as the worst thing about the site/ group housing scheme.
- Twenty-eight respondents stated they did not travel at all now. Ten of the remaining 14 respondents who did travel replied they travelled once a year.
- Thirty-four respondents reported that it would be difficult or very difficult to travel.
- Eight respondents travelled for holidays and/or for summer travel.

Residents' Preferences

- Twenty-six of the 42 Traveller respondents stated they were happy or very happy with the provision of facilities on site.
- Twenty-four of all respondents would prefer different accommodation. Of these, 11 would prefer group housing, 4 would prefer halting sites, 2 would prefer standard local authority housing, 5 would prefer once-off rural housing, and 2 would prefer another type of accommodation, e.g. private rented.
- Twelve of 18 respondents on permanent halting sites would prefer alternative accommodation. Four would prefer (different) halting sites; 3 would prefer once-off rural housing, 2 would prefer standard local authority housing, 1 would prefer group housing, and 2 would prefer another type of accommodation, e.g. private rented.
- There is some evidence to suggest health effects arising from accommodation issues. However, causal links are difficult to determine. Thirty-six respondents, or a family member, had visited a doctor in the previous year, and 26 in the previous two weeks.
- Access to services and service providers appears to be quite good. Thirty of the 42 respondents answered 'no' to the question 'Would you like to be nearer to some services?' [Examples of such 'services' were given to respondents], and 30 answered 'no' to 'Would you like to see more of any official or other person?'

SECTION ONE
Introduction



1.1 Background and Context

The consideration of Travellers' needs in relation to Traveller-specific accommodation and the public policy responses to such needs have evolved incrementally over the course of recent decades. The first widely recognised expression of interest in Irish Traveller accommodation and living conditions occurred in the 1960s. Since then, wider societal and government perspectives on Traveller accommodation have shifted significantly.

Broadly speaking these views have evolved from one that prioritised solving the 'problem of itinerancy', with an associated policy context of assimilating Travellers into mainstream Settled society. Current perspectives now tend to prioritise a more heterogeneous view. This recognises Traveller difference, with an associated policy context of providing Traveller-specific accommodation options. The legislative, policy and related contexts with respect to Traveller accommodation have also developed over time to reflect and support these changes, for example:

- The Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community (Task Force, 1995)
- The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998
- The Report of the High Level Group on Traveller Issues (DoJELR, 2006)

Moreover, the recently launched Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) housing policy statement, *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* (2007) makes a commitment to:

- continue to facilitate, at national level, the development of strategies devised to accelerate the provision of Traveller accommodation
- work to achieve effective co-ordination, at local level, of the provision of all services to Travellers in conjunction with the work of the High Level Group on Traveller Issues
- support the introduction by local authorities of systematic procedures for the management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation
- work through the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee on all aspects of the local authority Traveller Accommodation Programme (a particular priority for the Committee will be to see how Travellers can develop self-supporting approaches to meet their own needs)

Despite these developments, there is widespread agreement that practice around the provision of Traveller accommodation remains particularly difficult. Policy-makers, local authority practitioners, politicians, Traveller organisations and members of the Settled and Traveller communities express dissatisfaction with the current state of Traveller accommodation in Ireland. Much of this dissatisfaction relates to the physical appearance of Traveller-specific accommodation including: the perceptions by the Settled community about the accumulation of rubbish, or perceptions by many

Travellers that some sites are not adequately maintained by local authorities. In most cases these issues relate to halting sites. There are also difficulties in delivering and managing other Traveller-specific accommodation, e.g. group housing schemes.

On foot of these issues, the Centre for Housing Research, in consultation with the Traveller Accommodation Unit of the DoEHLG, developed a proposal to evaluate current systems of management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation and formulate guidelines for local authorities on achieving good practice in this area. The Centre was tasked with ‘carrying out an evaluation of the management and maintenance systems of Traveller-specific accommodation ... to determine what new practices and procedures need to be adopted so that problems can be tackled in a comprehensive manner’ (DoEHLG, 2007).

The resultant suite of research – referred to cumulatively as the Traveller Accommodation Study (TAS) – consists of three distinct but interrelated reports which should be considered as a whole. Each of these reports addresses critical aspects of the management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation, as follows:

- Traveller Accommodation in Ireland: A Review of Policy and Practice (Coates et al, 2008)
- This Research Report: Traveller-Specific Accommodation: Practice, Design and Management (Treadwell Shine et al, 2008)
- Good Practice in Housing Management: Guidelines for Local Authorities – The Management and Maintenance of Traveller-Specific Accommodation (Kane et al, 2008).

This research report focuses on current local authority practice relating to the management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation. It also examines key factors affecting the delivery of management and maintenance services and the potential scope for improvement.

1.2 Clarifying the Terminology

In this report, the terms ‘Travellers’ and the ‘Travelling (or Traveller) Community’ are used interchangeably as are ‘Settled people’ and the ‘Settled community’. However, this is not to suggest that these are homogenous groups.

The report uses the phrase ‘Traveller differences’ as a generic way of highlighting self-identified and/or visible, observable ‘differences’ between the Settled and Traveller communities. Both the literature and research data show that there is considerable debate around how to characterise, and hence respond to, these ‘differences’. While these debates are important, this study is concerned less with the precise definition and perception of these ‘differences’. It focuses instead on the role these ‘differences’ play in local contexts and in shaping issues around the management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation.

‘Traveller-specific accommodation’ is used to refer to group housing schemes and halting sites (authorised or unauthorised).

1.3 Research Methods

The research methodology involved three main strands:

- literature review
- case study areas and interviews
- TAS survey and indicator system

Literature Review

The review of literature and review of secondary material was the first strand of the TAS methodology. This involved an examination of policy, legislation and reports in Ireland and the UK. The review of literature is reported in the TAS Review of Policy and Practice (Coates et al, 2008).

Case Study Areas and Interviews

Seven case study local authority areas were chosen for this study based on four main criteria from the DoEHLG's annual count of Traveller families 2004:

- local authority areas with the greatest population of Traveller families
- local authority areas with the highest and lowest per cent of Traveller families accommodated in group housing and halting sites
- local authority areas with the highest and lowest per cent of Traveller families accommodated on unauthorised sites
- local authority areas pursuing innovative practices with regard to Traveller accommodation

The case studies chosen were:

- Carlow County Council
- Clare County Council
- Cork City Council
- Fingal County Council
- Kildare County Council
- Westmeath County Council
- Wexford County Council

On the basis of initial findings, an additional three case study areas were identified for in-depth research. Stakeholder interviews were carried out in:

- Donegal County Council
- Galway City
- Waterford County Council

In total over 70 individuals were interviewed individually or in groups. Interviews ranged from 20 to 90 minutes in length and where possible were taped. Interviews were conducted with:¹

- Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
- local authority officials
- national and local Traveller organisations
- Traveller representatives and Traveller residents
- a Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC)
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- Belfast City Council
- Irish Council for Social Housing
- Conference of Religious in Ireland (CORI)
- Respond! Housing Association

Other information was gathered from:

- Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)
- The Family Support Services of the Department of Family and Social Affairs
- FÁS

To ensure confidentiality and protect identities all responses were coded according to the type of respondent, and any quote or reference used in this report refers to this code. Code types are:

LAO – Local authority official

TR – Traveller resident, Traveller representative, and/or member of local or national Traveller organisation

OSO – Other statutory official, including central government representatives and officials from Northern Ireland

TAS Survey and Indicator System

In addition to the qualitative data, two data collection tools were produced:

- a survey capturing financial and demographic data on Travellers and Traveller accommodation in each local authority area
- an indicator system for gauging comparative standards of management and maintenance as well as quality of life concerns for residents

These documents drew heavily on ideas from Communities Scotland's standards and methods for evaluating social housing.² In addition literature on housing standards and evaluations were consulted (Dewulf and van Meet, 2004; Ghirotti, 1992; MacDonald, 2000; Milner and Madigan, 2004). These documents were designed to develop an evidence base that could help inform the development of national standards and/or benchmark for local authority officials and stakeholders.

¹ See Appendix 1 for full list of organisations interviewed

² (see http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/cs_011857.hcsp)

The survey was designed to capture local authority financial data on local Traveller-specific accommodation and demographic data on local Travellers (see Appendix 2). The content of this survey was developed in agreement with the DoEHLG. Data were initially collected for 2004 and 2005. This survey was piloted in one case study area, refined, and then distributed to all 34 local authorities throughout Ireland; however, only seventeen were returned. The returns varied considerably in quality, highlighting the lack of locally-based quantitative evidence regarding Traveller-specific accommodation.

The TAS indicator system was designed to compare and contrast specific elements around management and maintenance across local authorities and Traveller-specific accommodation types (see Appendix 3). It was also developed to identify key factors that appear to be consistently linked, for example how design of Traveller-specific accommodation may impact on safety and security concerns.

The system covered six areas:

- physical conditions, including adherence to DoEHLG guidelines and layout/design
- geographical/spatial issues, specifically with respect to the built environment and including issues such as proximity and access to services, location of the accommodation in question and provision of infrastructure
- safety and security issues, including evidence of anti-social behaviour, the provision and monitoring of public and private spaces and access of/to emergency services and equipment
- specific management and maintenance concerns, in the areas of housing management, maintenance and estate management
- quality of life issues, including perceptions of quality of life by residents on site and an indication of patterns of movement/nomadism
- residents' preferences, including accommodation and services

In total 20 principal indicators were developed and rated on a Likert scale of 1 to 5. A rating of '1' represented the poorest or lowest rating. A rating of '5' represented the best/highest rating. Some indicators had multiple criteria. For example, in gauging the provision of facilities, 11 potential facilities were identified (such as provision of hot taps, toilets and showers, recycling facilities, other facilities). In these cases, the number of criteria met the basis for the 1 to 5 scale. Some of the measures contained open questions or were otherwise unable to be scaled. In this case these responses were clustered thematically for analysis.

1.4 Profile of TAS Indicator Systems

Profile of Sites Covered by TAS Indicator Systems

The indicator system was applied to 40 sites/ group housing schemes. Table 1.1 overleaf displays the breakdown of the accommodation visited by type of Traveller-specific accommodation. The table reveals that the indicator system was conducted in 19 halting sites, 15 group housing schemes and 6 unauthorised sites/ roadside encampments.

Table 1.2 (also overleaf) shows the number of sites/ group housing schemes that were visited in each case study area. It was intended to visit all Traveller-specific accommodation in each case study area. However, due to difficulties carrying out the research (e.g. tensions on certain sites) this was not possible. The results therefore cannot be treated as statistically representative. Nonetheless they give a good overview of the standard of accommodation on the sites included in the study.

Table 1.1 Type of Accommodation Visited

Type of Traveller-Specific Accommodation	Number
Permanent Halting Site	13
Temporary Halting Site	4
Transient Halting Site	2
Group Housing Scheme (no bays)	7
Group Housing Scheme (with permanent bays)	8
Unauthorised Sites/ Roadside Encampments	6
Total	40

Table 1.2 Number of Sites Visited by Local Authority Area

Local Authority Area	Number
Carlow	4
Clare	6
Cork City	5
Fingal	7
Kildare	6
Westmeath	5
Wexford	7
Total	40

Profile of Respondents for TAS Indicator Systems

Forty-two Traveller respondents completed the quality of life and qualitative questions. The profile of these respondents, in summary, was as follows:

- Thirty-one of the 42 Traveller respondents to the quality of life indicators were female.
- Twenty-four respondents fell into the 18-30 or 30-40 age brackets.
- Only 2 of these respondents were over 60 years of age.
- The majority (37 respondents) were married.
- Almost all (40) had children, ranging from 1 child to 17 children, with 5 children being the average.
- Thirty-one all had at least some, usually extended, family members living on the same site/ group housing scheme.
- All but two respondents said that they had previously lived in some other accommodation.
- Eleven respondents had been living on the site/ group housing scheme one year or less; 15 had been living in their accommodation between one and five years; 13 between five and twenty years and three had been in their accommodation for over 20 years.

1.5 Structure of the Report

This report is set out in five sections. This first section of the report provides a background to the study and outlines key aspects of the methodology.

Section 2 examines local practice and delivery approaches to Traveller-specific accommodation.

Section 3 looks at the effects of design and provision on Traveller-specific accommodation.

Section 4 focuses on the management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation.

Section 5 draws together key conclusions from the study and makes several recommendations.

SECTION TWO
Local Practice and Delivery Approaches



2.1 Introduction

This section examines the effect of national and local-level strategic frameworks on the delivery of Traveller-specific accommodation. It then examines the importance of stakeholders' perceptions of what is possible in shaping Traveller accommodation management and maintenance responses. It outlines different models of practice which are shaped by these perceptions. It ends by examining the implications of a lack of an evidence-based approach in the area of Traveller-specific accommodation.

2.2 The Role of National and Local Strategic Frameworks

The TAS Policy Review (Coates et al, 2008) outlines the current policy framework with respect to Traveller-specific accommodation and demonstrates its potential to facilitate good practice. However, it also points to implementation difficulties and associated delays in achieving improved outcomes.

The research on the management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation found that, for the most part, national strategic planning was not a strong driver of local practice and delivery. In its absence, service providers, Traveller residents and other stakeholders often struggled to find approaches and responses that were appropriate for them – with varying degrees of success. The frustration which resulted from the lack of progress was stated in different ways:

I have got a sense that good practice in these areas [of Traveller accommodation] is a luxury ... Traveller Representative (TR)

We are on the anvil, I suppose, of the settled people's expectations ... and also the hammer blow coming on us from the Traveller rights groups and Travellers themselves about what their expectations are ... Local Authority Official (LAO)

I suppose the compromises that local authorities make to get the schemes through the planning process and through Travellers, both sides and the mechanism that they have to go through ... there are a lot of decisions on that ... if it's rejected it goes back five years. It's issues like that, on a daily basis, that exercise our minds ... Other Statutory Official (OSO)

As a result, different practices, procedures and delivery around Traveller-specific accommodation at local level emerged. A number of factors were found to be important in determining the approach adopted at a local level:

- the local context in any given local authority area
- the group of stakeholders involved
- historical relationships between local Settled and Traveller residents
- the effects of local political opposition
- planning delays and conflicts
- different perspectives and professional positions of key stakeholders
- different approaches and attitudes of local Traveller communities
- internal (organisational and institutional) conditions, such as: levels of senior staff support for actions taken, issues of institutional discrimination, and success of local efforts to co-ordinate inter-agency approaches and attempts at local strategic frameworks

2.3 Local Practice and Delivery

This research has found that different ‘rationales’ have developed in different local authority areas which determine the development of local practice and delivery. These are based on what stakeholders have come to believe was achievable. Research findings identify two principal elements which were strongly inter-linked:

- different perspectives between service providers and the Traveller Community
- perceived obstacles to progress

These two elements are elaborated upon below.

Different Perspectives between Service Providers and the Traveller Community

From the service provider perspective, Traveller-specific accommodation was often perceived as inherently problematic. However, service providers wished to fulfil their statutory obligations and, in many cases, perceived that problems could be resolved via soft-skills. These included the establishment of informal networks, developing good working relationships, building trust and engaging in both formal and informal consultation. Where such soft-skills were utilised some successes were achieved.

However, the use of these soft-skills was not uniform, and indeed this would not be possible. Therefore this leads to uneven service experience in the different case-study areas. Some service providers suggested that engagement with the ‘issue’ of Traveller-specific accommodation was deliberately avoided in some areas, and by doing this Travellers would not present in these districts.

Traveller respondents generally did not express strong opinions about how accommodation should be provided or serviced. In most cases, they did not see a direct role for themselves in these issues and were more focused on accommodation outcomes than the process behind delivery. It was this focus on outcomes that frustrated the attempts of some service providers to implement, or even determine, what best practice might involve. As such, it was reported by service providers that staff morale in Traveller accommodation units was often low.

Some Travellers expressed dissatisfaction at attempts to consult with them through representatives. In addition, it was argued that service providers understood consultation mechanisms from the point of view of a democracy, while Travellers understood consultation as an individual/family-level discussion. Therefore service providers, engaging with who they understood to be Traveller representatives, were in fact overcoming problems for a family unit who often left discussions once they achieved personal success in terms of their accommodation. Service providers and Travellers were coming to the consultation table from different perspectives and with differing agendas without either side fully comprehending the other's point of departure.

Perceived Obstacles to Progress

External conditions, such as local economic, social and political factors and relationships between the Settled and Traveller communities, were a potential obstacle to good practice and progress. The Settled community's inability or unwillingness to accept Traveller-specific accommodation in their area was identified as the main obstacle to progress – although some also pointed out that such difficulties were encountered with social housing generally. Legal challenges to planned Traveller-specific accommodation developments were considered to place considerable financial and human resource burdens upon local authority staff. Only in a very few instances were these external conditions identified by service providers as facilitating good practice and delivery. In most cases they were seen as the conditions in which officials had to work and which usually presented obstacles to progress.

When the 'problems' of such accommodation were perceived as being insurmountable, this perception tended to heavily influence the extent of what was felt could be achieved. Many service providers highlighted issues arising from dealing with a 'demanding' client group who were considered to have unrealistic expectations about what can be provided.

It is unreasonable to expect in an urban setting that you can afford or provide detached bungalows with caravan space. Spacewise, everyone else is living in apartments ... the density guidelines are such ... There is a change needed in that sense, so I think all of these things, it's a gradual process, it's an evolution. (OSO)

There was also a tendency to blame lack of progress on a failure of Travellers to take up accommodation. As one local authority representative expressed it:

Our obligation in the [Traveller accommodation] programme is to provide suitable accommodation and except for one, two, three specific sites, it's through the provision of social housing. Now we have no problem fulfilling our obligation ... Now at the end of the four years how many of them take them up will be on their success or failures rather than ours. (LAO)

Safety and security concerns and general anti-social behaviour on the part of some Travellers were raised as significant challenges to solving problems on some Traveller-specific accommodation.

I suppose we have had a number of families who have left Traveller-specific accommodation, such as group housing, and have ended up with nothing better than rented accommodation. We have a couple of sites where so many people are coming to me saying they don't want to live here anymore - 'it's a dump'. Clearly the reason for it being a dump doesn't lie with the council. But mothers and children who just don't want to live there anymore, and they are having to go into private rented accommodation because there is nothing else really. (LAO)

It was reported that if anti-social behaviour is a problem on a temporary halting site, there is usually increased opposition from the local settled community and elected members to a proposal for a permanent halting site or group housing scheme in that same area.

Incidence of threats and/or actual violence towards service providers perpetrated by a small minority of Travellers was also raised as a key issue. These incidences make it very difficult for local authority staff to engage with the Traveller community and to carry out their duties on the site/ group housing scheme. It was recognised that these incidences were often related to the frustration of Travellers regarding their accommodation. However, when staff cannot access Traveller-specific accommodation this has negative impacts on the management of the accommodation and on other residents of the site/ group housing scheme.

2.4 Stakeholder Perceptions of Potential for Problem-Solving

Some service providers did attempt to meet Traveller expectations, for a variety of reasons: to achieve 'progress', a perception that positive discrimination was needed, close relationships with specific families, or a desire to avoid conflict or legal challenges. However, some service providers did not look beyond statutory obligations and tended to perceive the problems often associated with Traveller-specific accommodation as insurmountable. These service providers had more negative experiences of working in this area.

Other service providers did not perceive that there were overall insurmountable problems. Instead they addressed obstacles on a case-by-case basis. Once-off rural housing is such an example. This housing is not explicitly covered by statutory obligations, but in exceptional instances, for example in the case of a family member with a severe medical condition living on an unauthorised site, the DoEHLG may allow for such purchases. Many service providers expressed reservations about the sustainability of such options for a large proportion of Traveller families:

How able the council is to meet that need remains to be seen. We're working hard at it at the moment but ... It's proving to be a challenge, because it's not only Travellers who are looking for a nice house in the countryside with an acre of land. (LAO)

Travellers, unless they acted as Traveller representatives in formal consultation meetings, often did not comprehend the problems associated with the delivery of Traveller-specific accommodation. As a result, many Travellers expressing dissatisfaction with their current accommodation were considerably frustrated that their accommodation needs were not being met. They could not see the reasons for delays, did not perceive that their 'expectations' of accommodation were in any way problematic, and therefore could not understand why the situation had not been resolved.

2.5 Formal and Informal Consultation

In the absence of national policy directing local practice and delivery, local authorities have experimented with ways of implementing local strategic guidelines with regard to Traveller-specific accommodation. Rarely do these locally-produced guidelines provide comprehensive guidance on all aspects of service delivery. Thus, practice and delivery is often shaped by the local context.

Formal consultation mechanisms are mandated at national level to guide the drawing up and delivery of Traveller Accommodation Programmes. At local level, the actual operation of these mechanisms – usually in the form of Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees (LTACCs) – rarely occurs as intended. These difficulties, together with poor evidence-based working and many Travellers' discomfort and unfamiliarity with formal consultation, have knock-on effects. They contribute to the dominance of informal methods in driving local practice and delivery. 'Informal methods' generally refers to working relationships between service providers and Traveller families. However, a few support services and community development projects by Traveller organisations, and/or the work of other officials (e.g. local teachers, Traveller resident associations), also support and indirectly influence these.

Furthermore, formal consultation was viewed by many Traveller representatives as being:

- a 'rubber-stamping' exercise
- a method for Settled stakeholders to block provision of Traveller-specific accommodation in their area
- a weak 'add-on' to the process of a local strategic plan
- incapable of addressing all the accommodation needs across the Travelling community
- a bureaucratic delaying mechanism for any possible quick implementation of Traveller Accommodation Programmes

The difficulties in perceptions of the structure and functions of the LTACCs and formal consultation processes generally therefore limit the possibilities of formal consultation mechanisms at present. As LTACCs currently operate, many do not present sufficient opportunities to drive strategic thinking in practice and delivery. More problematically, assumptions of what they could and should do feed back into negative perceptions, raise the prospect of unrealistic expectations, and heighten frustrations.

In this context, service providers often turn to informal consultation mechanisms. There are certain advantages to this approach:

- It allows the time necessary to build relationships.
- It is flexible enough to work with Traveller-specific family dynamics and the importance of internal differences.
- It can achieve successful and sustainable outcomes for some families.
- It can make practice and delivery concerns easier for service providers involved, allowing them to concentrate on specific concerns at specific points of time.

However, there are a number of potential drawbacks to the dominance of informal mechanisms for driving local practice and delivery. Drawbacks identified through interviews include the following:

- The sustainability and adoption of 'good' practice based on these informal mechanisms can be difficult.
- The research showed examples of both 'good' working relationships, with productive channels of 'consultation' and/or communication, and 'poor' relationships that could close down the possibilities for successful outcomes. It was reported that poor relationships can sometimes develop with Traveller families when local authorities make an offer of accommodation which they consider an attractive offer but which is different to the type of accommodation requested by the family.
- Informal mechanisms make it difficult to achieve uniform and consistent responses to Travellers' accommodation needs, which can contribute to 'unreasonable' or 'unrealistic' expectations, as well as frustrations when obstacles to practice and progress are poorly identified or understood.

In summary, consultation mechanisms become the drivers for local practice and delivery, but informal consultation mechanisms play a stronger role than formal ones. These informal mechanisms are then key determinants of actual Traveller accommodation outcomes, leading to difficulties in terms of trying to achieve consistency of approach or result. Conversely, it was reported that even when there has been formal and informal consultation with Traveller families regarding their accommodation needs, in some cases the accommodation agreed upon during the consultation process has been refused after it has been developed.

2.6 Models of Practice and Service Delivery Approaches

Five main approaches to local level service delivery of Traveller-specific accommodation were identified in varying degrees during this research:

- i Inertia
- ii Toleration of Traveller difference
- iii Pragmatism
- iv Positive discrimination
- v Aspirational approach

Each is now outlined in turn.

i) Inertia

The first approach refers to reinforcing the status quo. This approach:

- uses statutory obligations as the benchmark of and scope for action for practice and delivery
- has negative expectations and limited perceived possibilities for success
- perceives Traveller differences as unsustainable
- sees Travellers' expectations as unreasonable
- negatively views the effectiveness of formal mechanisms

ii) Toleration of Traveller Difference

The second approach is based on toleration of Traveller difference. Attitudes to Traveller accommodation tended to view 'problems' as difficult to address. Under this approach, consultation is seen as a form of strategic planning. Traveller differences

Box 2 Case Study Example of Toleration of Traveller Difference Approach

In this Traveller-specific accommodation, provision had been made for community and recreational facilities and for dog kennels, but due to a number of difficulties these had not been subsequently managed or maintained. The given reasons for these difficulties included:

- the time and effort required by the one caretaker of the site to conduct these activities
- a lack of sense of ownership and/or responsibility on the part of Traveller residents
- dumping from non-residents (both Traveller and Settled)
- the fact that some of these facilities were at the rear of the site
- lack of information and communication

Recent provision of CCTV had addressed some of these issues but there were concerns about how effective this would be in the long term.

are often seen as legitimate, but unsustainable. An example from a research case study shows the recognition of Traveller-specific facilities on a halting site but, at the same time, the absence of conditions to make these work; see Box 2 above.

iii) Pragmatism

The third approach is 'pragmatism'. This tended to emphasise learning from experience. As one respondent explained:

There is no hard and fast rule because every situation is different. So whatever situations arise we have to deal with it the best we can. (LAO)

This approach is defined by a responsive mindset to the 'problems' of Traveller-specific accommodation. Recognition of the need for co-operation is more common in this approach. Traveller 'differences' were in most cases seen as legitimate, but in some cases could be perceived as unsustainable. For some service providers this service-delivery approach also incorporated aspects of community development, estate management and/or tenant participation.

iv) Positive Discrimination

Positive discrimination refers to policies intended to improve access to resources by members of a given society who traditionally did not have such ease of access to these resources. In the case of the 'positive discrimination' approach, some service providers felt this was necessary in light of Traveller difference, but did not see this approach as sustainable or even legitimate in the long term. Others felt that given historical prejudices and lack of progress, it was important to continue to promote positive discrimination.

Travellers had for so long been treated as 'less than' it is only right that they are now being treated as 'more than'. (LAO)

v) Aspirational Approach

In this approach, attitudes not only centre on experiential learning and a proactive mindset but also begin to explicitly attempt to advocate on behalf of Travellers. Community development, empowerment, and estate management and/or tenant participation are implicit themes.

Traveller ‘differences’ are seen as legitimate, sustainable and to some degree central to service delivery. Difficulties with progressing Traveller accommodation are generally located outside of Traveller-specific contexts, for example in organisational or political blockages. Problems were also identified in poorly understood interactions (including methods of consultation) between different actors. For example, one respondent suggested:

We need to look at why what we are doing is not working first, and then ask why Travellers are doing what they are doing. (LAO)

In summary, these five theoretical approaches to planning and delivery result in varying management and maintenance responses to Traveller-specific accommodation. The responses range from practices that use statutory obligations as a benchmark for practice and delivery to those that focus on long-term solutions and promoting community development and estate management. In this research none of the case study areas represented a complete model for any of these approaches. Instead, a combination of these approaches was generally applied to each situation.

2.7 Evidence-Based Approach

Data to inform evidence-based strategic practices is a key requirement. In a situation where so much depends on informal working relationships and – sometimes problematic – formal consultation mechanisms, a strong evidence base is needed to determine, for example housing needs, progress, and value for money concerns. The TAS Policy Review (Coates et al, 2008) identified a dearth of data in relation to evidence-based practice.

Interviews with service providers suggested that evidence-based working in the area of Traveller-specific accommodation is not common at local level. The reasons given for this include the following:

- Local conditions, practices and procedures were considered too complex to be captured by quantitative data; and therefore analysis of actual outcomes would not give an accurate picture of the context-specific, complex nature of practice and delivery.
- Data collection was seen as too time-consuming and costly.
- Existing data were considered unsuitable because of double-counting, the definition of sites (unauthorised/temporary, etc) in DoEHLG annual counts, and reliance on self-identification.
- Appropriate data were lacking on, for example, offers of accommodation and outcomes.

Achievement of Targets under Traveller Accommodation Programmes

The Traveller Accommodation Programmes are meant to inform local strategic planning and delivery and set clear targets (see Coates et al, 2008). In practice, failure to meet these targets without a clear understanding of why this has happened has contributed to negative perceptions of what can be achieved. The lack of an evidence-base contributes to this lack of understanding.

The literature and interview data for this study pointed to the following three possible reasons why Traveller Accommodation Programmes targets were not met:

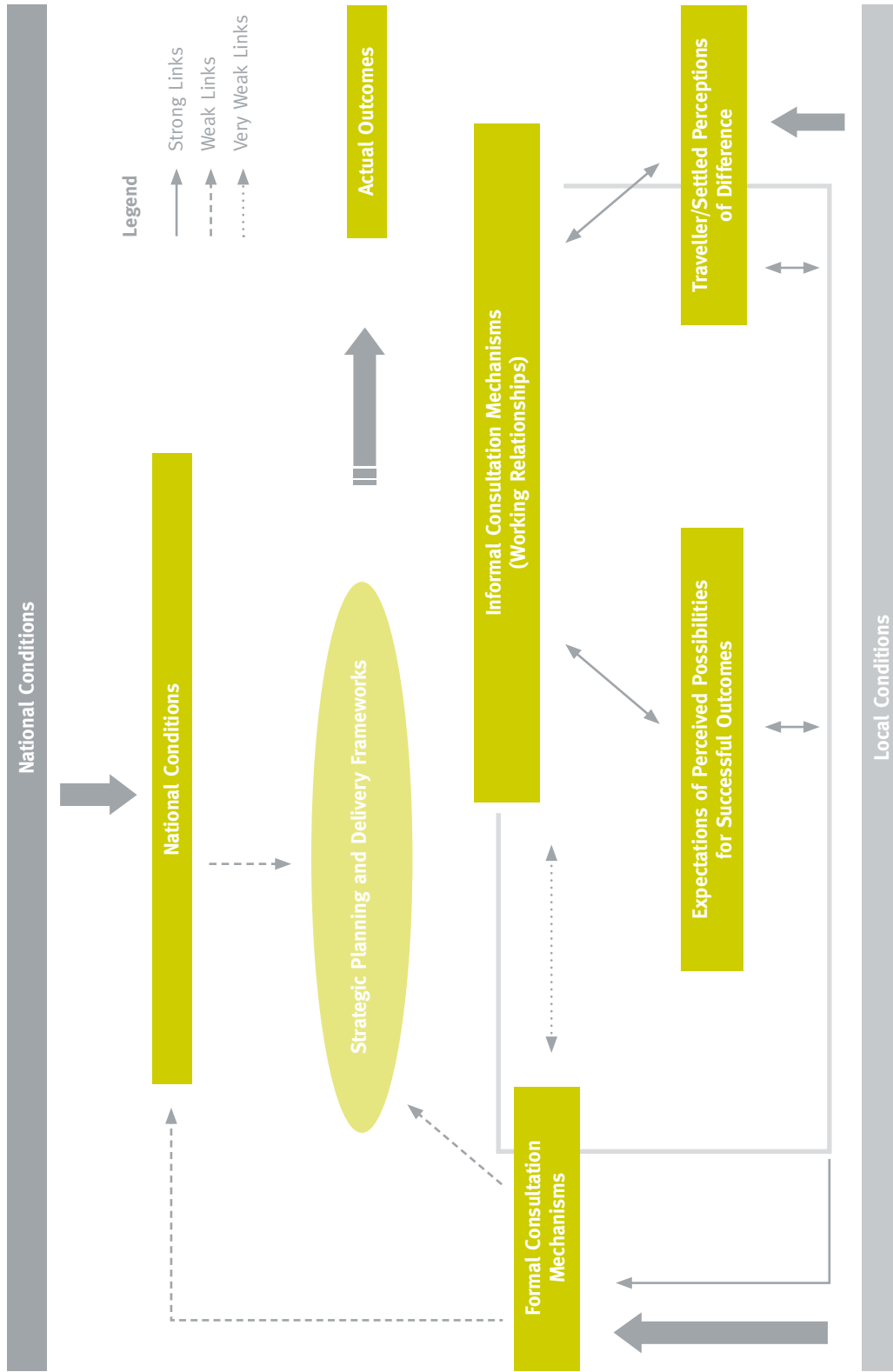
- Traveller accommodation needs have not always been accurately assessed or prioritised. A number of local authorities have drawn up their own databases and methods for assessing Traveller accommodation, and/or conducted their own needs-analysis. However, there were difficulties associated with these developments. Many Travellers, and Traveller organisations in particular, have raised concerns about the level and effectiveness of consultation with Travellers regarding these assessments.
- Long-term sustainable outcomes have not been accurately measured. Many respondents acknowledge that there have been some improvements. This is particularly so in relation to the 'crisis' aspects of Traveller accommodation, such as the number of Travellers living on the roadside and a general improvement in the quality and standards of accommodation. However, there is considerable divergence on how much this represents genuine 'progress' in meeting accommodation needs (for example, overcrowding in bays).
- Monitoring is underdeveloped. There is an absence of robust indicators to demonstrate successful outcomes, such as the satisfactory long-term accommodation of any given family. It can be extremely difficult to sign-post or validate any, even partial successes – or highlight persistent obstacles – with respect to meeting targets. In addition, Travellers sometimes refuse their accommodation offer or may accept this offer but leave the accommodation after a short period of time. It is important to record and examine the reasons for the refusal of the accommodation offer or the decision to leave the accommodation once it has been provided.

2.8 Conclusion

The research findings in this section identified a variety of local approaches to Traveller-specific accommodation. Figure 2.1 maps out in summary form the key elements shaping local practice and delivery. It shows that the role of policy directives and national conditions, as strong strategic frameworks for and guidance on practice and delivery at local level, often do not operate as intended. They are in fact weak drivers of local contexts, allowing for the establishment of considerable, local level variability in Traveller-specific accommodation.

Consultation mechanisms become the drivers for local practice and delivery, but informal consultation mechanisms play a stronger role than formal ones. These informal mechanisms are then key determinants of actual Traveller accommodation outcomes, leading to difficulties in terms of trying to achieve consistency of approach or result.

Figure 2.1 Key Elements shaping Local Practice and Delivery of Traveller Accommodation



SECTION THREE
Design and Provision



3.1 Introduction

This section explores issues relating to the design and provision of Traveller-specific accommodation. The influence of these issues on the management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation is also examined.

Five main aspects of design and provision of Traveller-specific accommodation are discussed:

- the role and influence of national conditions
- the role and influence of local conditions
- the characteristics and preferences of the Traveller population
- opportunities for design and provision options
- issues around achieving and sustaining design and provision outcomes

3.2 The Role and Influence of National Conditions on Design and Provision

There are multiple factors influencing Traveller-specific accommodation design and provision. At a national level this includes governmental policies, coordinated strategic planning provisions and inter-agency working. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community (Task Force, 1995)
- The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998 and associated legislation
- The Report of the High Level Group on Traveller Issues (DoJELR, 2006)

However, despite the various policies and national institutional approaches to Traveller accommodation, research findings from this study suggest that national policy directives, as intended, do not strongly shape design and provision at local level. Instead many local authorities proceed on a case-by-case basis to advance design and provision options that may, or may not, meet the needs of any given family or achieve the targets set out under the Traveller Accommodation Programmes.

The limited provision of transient sites was indicated as a key example of the weak influence of national policies. The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998 requires the provision of transient sites as part of Traveller Accommodation Programmes. However, it was reported that:

Even though it is part of legislation some local authorities have explicitly stated that they will not be providing transient sites at all ... most people have recognised that the legislation is not strong enough, there are no built-in sanctions or penalties if local authorities do not implement their Traveller accommodation programmes. (TR)

The weak influence of policy directives can also add to tensions between perceptions of what can and should be done with regard to design and provision options. In relation to transient sites, most local authorities agree in principle with the provision but identify numerous obstacles in the actual delivery of such sites. Many Traveller respondents felt that transient sites, while intended as ‘come and go’ sites, actually become ‘come and stay’ sites. There was also the added uncertainty that those moving onto transient sites may well be Traveller families not familiar to existing local Traveller families. In addition, many respondents working within Traveller organisations expressed frustration that the government and local authorities failed to meet their obligations in this regard.

Feedback from local authority officials suggest that the mandate of providing transient sites usually is perceived as an undesirable or unsustainable option. It was also suggested that these sites are particularly difficult to manage.

A transient site has been a long-standing objective here but practicalities of this especially in terms of transience and management is extremely problematic. It's absolutely crucial to devise a good management strategy for the control and operation of such a site. (LAO)

In addition, there are concerns about whether they can be provided, and more importantly, whether they are wanted by most members of local Traveller populations. This raises concerns about the appropriateness and desirability of transient sites as a design and provision option in the current context.

3.3 The role and Influence of Local Conditions on Design and Provision

Local conditions are an important influence on the design and provision of Traveller-specific accommodation. As mentioned above, national policy directives often have a weak role in local Traveller accommodation design and provision. This research found that stronger factors in determining design and provision priorities and solutions are often the individual practices of service providers and the dynamics of consultation mechanisms. Perceptions of ‘reasonable’ expectations, possibilities for success, and different rationales behind Traveller accommodation all shape receptiveness to design and provision options.

The research found that local Settled populations’ attitudes to and perceptions of existing sites/ group housing schemes have considerable influence on their receptiveness to new Traveller-specific accommodation options. These characteristics are also shaped by local political, economic, social and geographical climates. For example, where historical relationships between the Settled and Traveller communities have been good, the receptiveness to new sites/ group housing schemes is also generally positive. Anecdotal evidence from interviews suggests that local Settled residents are also more receptive to Traveller-specific accommodation if Travellers already have such accommodation in their locality, particularly where sites are well maintained. Opposition is much stronger in places that do not have such existing sites/ group housing schemes. This is supported by previous research by McKeown and McGrath (1996) which found a reduction in negative attitudes to Traveller-specific

accommodation once it was up and running. Interviews with service providers identify a number of instances where the intended design and provision of new Traveller-specific accommodation, and/or the renovation of existing Traveller-specific accommodation sites, was significantly altered by local opposition.

Local Institutional Conditions

Local institutional conditions impact on the design, provision and management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation. Local institutional conditions include:

- organisational and related staff concerns
- use of social workers

Organisational and Related Staff Concerns

Qualitative research findings show that intra-organisational support networks and sharing of best practice between different sections (including within housing departments) and Traveller accommodation staff is often infrequent, although informal contact does occur more often. In some instances, it was reported that the responsibility for certain issues could not be agreed upon. For example, in relation to illegal dumping it is often not clear if this responsibility lies with the housing section or the waste management section. Feedback from interviews indicated that many more authorities could take forward intra-organisational and inter-agency methods currently promoted by the recent housing policy statement Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities (DoEHLG, 2007). The potential to provide a 'unified face' regarding the design and provision of Traveller accommodation was a common theme.

Use of Social Workers

Social workers were often used to deliver highly technical design issues and/or manage complex financial and related tasks, in the context of Traveller accommodation. Often these roles were outside their professional competencies. While familiarity, learning and experience all helped to address at least some of these issues, anecdotally they also contributed to frustration, burnout and high staff turnover. The use of social workers drew criticisms from some Traveller representative respondents.

Often it is social workers doing the job of the accommodation officer. It strikes me that that really should be an accommodation officer. It implies that every Traveller requires a social worker. (TR)

Others felt these staff were absolutely essential, not least because they were perceived as potential advocates for Traveller clients.

Economic and Social Change and Local Institutional Response

Local institutional responses to Traveller accommodation are made in a changing economic and social context. The changing nature of the Traveller population over time is an example of such change. The younger age profile, age at marriage and higher fertility rates signify a continuing and growing need for Traveller accommodation into the future. The increasing scarcity of land and the increasing urbanisation of both Settled and Traveller populations are other relevant economic and social changes that impact on the design and provision of Traveller-specific accommodation and need to be addressed.

3.4 Traveller Preferences within Given Design and Provision Options

A number of long-standing Traveller traditions shape preferences for design and provision options and expressed needs within those options. These include:

- Travellers' nomadism and patterns of mobility
- Traveller economic traditions
- Traveller family dynamics

These traditions are now discussed in turn.

Travellers' Nomadism and Patterns of Mobility

Nomadism is often cited as the central defining characteristic of the Travelling Community (see, for example, Donahue et al, 2003). Patterns of full nomadism are generally being replaced by more periodic (seasonal, family or other context-dependent) patterns of mobility. Traveller preferences for given types of accommodation are strongly shaped by their patterns of mobility. Local authorities may also face considerable challenges in accommodating families who may not necessarily travel within the confines of a single authority area.

Traveller respondents' experiences of being evicted/ moved-on, amount of travel, perceptions of ease of travel, and patterns of movement/nomadism all appear to support perceptions that patterns of mobility are much less frequent than in the past, and that when Travellers do travel it is generally for short set periods throughout the year.

The TAS indicator systems results revealed that of 42 Traveller respondents:

- twenty-eight respondents stated they did not travel at all
- ten of the remaining 14 respondents who did travel replied they travelled once a year
- thirty-four felt it was very difficult to travel if they wanted to

Traveller respondents highlighted the following difficulties they felt were faced by nomadic Travellers: the effects of trespass laws, lack of appropriate spaces to pull-up in, and discrimination faced when some respondents attempted to stay at standard caravan parks. The apparent reduction in mobility patterns has implications both for design and provision options, and for management and maintenance concerns. If more Travellers are sedentary in Traveller-specific sites that are not designed for long-term, permanent accommodation, responses and practice will need to take appropriate account of this.

Traveller Economic Traditions

Providing for Traveller economic activities, such as scrap metal recycling and horse dealing, is one of the most difficult and contested issues to emerge from research findings. Local authorities have to consider if it is possible to design and build-in, for example, sufficient storage, appropriate entrance and access points, and traffic calming measures for these activities. If local authorities co-ordinate with Travellers and other public agencies on how to best manage Traveller economic traditions and encourage ownership and responsibilities on sites/ group housing schemes, it is possible that there may be positive management and maintenance implications in the future. These may include:

- possibilities for resident-led programmes to assist in management and maintenance tasks and waste management
- the presence of health and safety precautions
- reduction of environmental hazards
- animal control in the case of facilities provided for horse dealing

Traveller Family Dynamics

Thirty-one of Traveller respondents had family members (usually extended) living on the same site/ group housing scheme. When asked to list their most favoured elements of their accommodation 8 of the 42 Traveller respondents reported presence of family members. The preference to be accommodated with extended family has implications for housing in terms of seeking to provide accommodation for a number of extended family members together in one location. The possibility for extended Traveller families to be accommodated together is often affected by two key determinants:

- First, the identification of housing need in the Traveller Accommodation Programmes works on the basis of individual families and/or households. It could not always accurately reflect how extended family networks might affect housing need.
- Second, local knowledge and good working relationships with local authority officials did help to facilitate the actual provision of accommodation that matched Traveller families' preferences. However, these do not always prove sustainable or successful over the long term for reasons related to family dynamics. These included lack of available bays, rapidity of new household formation and intra-family tensions.

Preferences for Alternative Accommodation

For this research, 24 out of 42 respondents answered 'yes' when asked if they would prefer alternative accommodation. However, it is important to note that many respondents did not give a yes or no answer to this question. It was more common for Travellers to give qualified answers to this question. Examples of these are:

I would be happy to stay here if they did something about the site

or

I would like to move around but you just can't anymore, so I'm happy to stay here.

However, of the 24 respondents who did express a preference for alternative accommodation, group housing schemes were the most popular choice (11); once-off rural housing (5) and halting sites (4) were also named by respondents (see Table 3.1 overleaf).

Table 3.1 Description of Preferred Alternative Type of Accommodation

Preferred Type of Accommodation	Number
Permanent Halting Site	4
Group Housing Scheme	11
Local Authority Housing	2
Private Rented Accommodation	1
Once off Rural Housing	5
Other	1
Total	24

Furthermore, the research findings consistently highlighted the importance of, and the need to take into consideration, differences within local Traveller communities and families as these shape preferences for accommodation options. Such factors include historical accommodation profiles, numbers of school-going children, health considerations, age and gender differences, different economic activities and/or mainstream employment.

3.5 Opportunities for Design and Provision Options

Despite local variability, design and provision approaches to accommodate Travellers, whose stated preference is Traveller-specific accommodation, tend to be funnelled into three possibilities:

- deliver new sites/schemes
- refurbish and maintain existing sites
- provide alternative options

Delivering New or Renovated Traveller-Specific Accommodation

The construction of new Traveller-specific accommodation is the best possible scenario to meet identified housing need. This is supported by policy directives and policy development, by the expressed preferences of Travellers and by some receptiveness from local stakeholders, including service providers. However, in practice, the provision of new sites/ group housing schemes is highly contested. Land use, planning and density changes and local opposition contribute to difficulties in finding appropriate and acceptable locations. Demographic and other social and economic changes within the Traveller community make it difficult to gauge present or future needs.

In addition, many of the service providers interviewed indicated that even though funds for new build/rebuild, and indeed for general refurbishment, are adequate, procedures for drawing-down such funds can contribute to significant delays in implementing these programmes. In some instances, such delays can mean that proposed projects do not go ahead – despite the fact that plans for such projects might be at an advanced stage. These difficulties contribute to a perception, acknowledged by many respondents, that:

... the local authority is not providing the housing ... there are plans out there, which are approved, they have planning permission and everything, and they are still not being built. (TR)

Refurbish and Maintain Existing Sites

In the face of such difficulties, local practitioners, Traveller residents and other stakeholders often turn to ‘interim’ or short-term responses, at least until new sites/ group housing schemes can be provided. The first of these short-term responses is to refurbish and maintain existing sites/ group housing schemes. This usually involves carrying out works while residents continue to live on-site or providing a temporary site while the existing site/ group housing scheme is being refurbished.

Two considerations are important here – the need for refurbishment and why refurbishment is less than the ideal solution to addressing design and provision difficulties. Evidence from the literature, as well as anecdotal evidence from respondents, suggests that historically the provision of Traveller-specific accommodation was seen as a stop-gap option. Consequently, much provision was poorly designed and fell short of general standards.

Some local authority officials suggested that local Traveller residents inadvertently (for example through the prevalence of larger family sizes) or deliberately (for example through acts of vandalism) can contribute to greater management and maintenance requirements for given accommodation options. They argued that these factors, combined with historical and local factors, means that many existing halting sites are in decline and in need of refurbishment.

Findings from the TAS indicator systems, used to gauge the standards and state of repair of facilities on some Traveller-specific accommodation, reflect the poor design and standards outlined above. Table 3.2 shows that 8 sites/ group housing schemes covered by the TAS systems had half or less of their facilities in good working order. However, the general improvement of sites/ group housing schemes is also reflected with 18 sites/ group housing schemes having all facilities in good working order.

Table 3.2 Management and Maintenance – State of Repair of Facilities by Accommodation Type

Type of Accommodation	50% Facilities in good working order (N)	75% Facilities in good working order (N)	All facilities in good working order (N)	Total (N)
Permanent Halting Site	4	2	7	13
Temporary Halting Site	0	1	3	4
Transient Halting Site	0	0	2	2
Group Housing Scheme (no bays)	2	3	2	7
Group Housing Scheme (with permanent bays)	0	4	4	8
Unauthorised Sites/ Roadside Encampments	2	2	0	4
Total	8	12	18	38

Note: This was not applicable on two unauthorised sites/ roadside encampment
 N means number of sites/group housing schemes
 Facilities included, e.g. laundry facilities, toilets/showers, kitchen/cooking (for full list see Appendix 3)

Results comparing standards as laid out in Departmental guidelines and actual standards on Traveller-specific accommodation also show why refurbishment is so often necessary.

- Of four environmental standards listed in Departmental guidelines (considerations for light, space, wind shelter and optimisation of sunlight), 14 of the sites/ group housing schemes fulfilled none or only one of these criteria.
- Ten sites/ group housing schemes were rated as having poor or very poor architectural standards (as based upon comparisons of Departmental guidelines and observations of site standards in the field by researchers).
- Twenty-seven out of the sites/ group housing schemes have no criteria met as per Departmental guidelines for adaptability to create special needs provision.

Furthermore, the general provision of infrastructure on a quarter (10) of existing sites/ group housing schemes (including good sewerage and drainage, paving/tarmacing of bays, public lighting and road safety measures) is poor or non-existent, while only 13 out of the 40 sites/ group housing schemes had very good provision of such infrastructure (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3 General Provision of Infrastructure

Provision of Infrastructure	Number
Little or no provision	5
Very poor provision	5
Average provision	9
Good provision	8
Very good provision	13
Total	40

Note: Infrastructure included good sewerage and drainage, paving/tarmacing of bays, public lighting and road safety measures.

Research results also show that group housing schemes appear to be in better condition and to have better overall standards than permanent halting sites. The reasons for this may be because group housing schemes are usually newer than existing sites and may have benefited more from the input of recent guidelines and circulars about good standards. It may also be that group housing schemes are similar to standard housing and, as such, local authorities have greater familiarity with designing and providing this type of accommodation.

Concern was raised by service providers about the sustainability, appropriateness and cost-effectiveness of refurbishment. Dealing primarily with existing sites does not remove the factors associated with poor location in the first place. Moreover they may not meet future needs such as responses to demographic changes.

The financial and human resources required to pursue and manage and maintain these 'short-term' responses were considerable. There was general consensus that the provision of temporary sites and the refurbishment of existing sites/ group housing schemes typically resulted in problems with cost control and cost effectiveness and particularly value-for-money.

The research findings suggest that local opposition shapes the location of Traveller-specific accommodation. As such, many sites/ group housing schemes are often located in out-of-the-way places, perpetuating design and provision limitations. In addition, measures of proximity to environmental hazards and the presence of other hazards also limit scope for suitable land for development. Table 3.4 shows that the majority of sites were close to some form of environmental hazard, with more than half close to one or two hazards.

Table 3.4 Presence of Specific Environmental Hazards (Rivers, Electricity Pylons, etc)

Presence of Hazards	Number
5 or 6 Hazards Nearby	1
4 Hazards Nearby	1
3 Hazards Nearby	7
1 or 2 Hazards Nearby	24
No Specific Hazards Nearby	7
Total	40

Note: Environmental hazards included electricity pylons, telephone masts, dumps, major roads, pollutions (industrial pollution) and other.

Provide Alternative Accommodation

In the face of difficulties in providing new or substantially renovated sites/ group housing schemes, providing alternative accommodation was the third option pursued by service providers and other stakeholders. Most Traveller respondents viewed such provision as another temporary response. However, the findings of this study indicate that Travellers’ preferences for once-off rural housing and for standard housing signals that at least some of this alternative provision may become long-term preferences. Even if and when these alternative options are expressions of genuine choice and change by Travellers themselves, a number of difficulties remain.

The provision of once-off rural housing is not technically part of the portfolio of policy directives and rarely part of the general customary procedures of local authorities. Although such options seem to be successful for many Traveller families, many practitioners are concerned that if these become long-term trends they will not be sustainable or make it possible to meet the needs of the entire Traveller population in any given area. There are also concerns that providing such options may contribute to perceptions by the Settled community of ‘special treatment’ and lead to resentment and opposition to Traveller accommodation, in particular Traveller-specific accommodation.

Private rented accommodation, especially for younger Travellers in large towns and in urban areas, appears to be increasing. In 2002, only 162 (2.6 per cent) of 6,289 Traveller families were accommodated in the private rented sector. By 2007 this figure had increased significantly, with 1,143 (14.1 per cent) of 8,099 Traveller families accommodated in this sector (DoEHLG, various years). There are mixed views about this development. Some Traveller respondents felt that such accommodation could be a positive step, allowing young families to get a ‘taste’ of living in a house while not being tied into standard local authority housing. Other Traveller respondents took a particularly negative view of living in flats/apartment accommodation. Concern was raised about discrimination by landlords and difficulties in securing leases. A commonly mentioned issue was that prospective Traveller tenants often had to lie about family sizes in order to secure private rented accommodation.

In general, many respondents expressed concern about the long-term implications of such alternative accommodation. Nearly all respondents stressed that differences within the Travelling community required that a range of accommodation options, including Traveller-specific, need to be provided over the long term.

3.6 Design and Sustainable Traveller Accommodation

As discussed in Section Two, the variance in consultation methods at a local level has led to varying design and provision achievements and some short-term successes. However, considerations of long-term sustainability must be discussed as an important element in design and provision.

The Irish Government's housing policy Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities (DoEHLG 2007) emphasises the need to create sustainable communities for the future. Housing policy and provision is a key element in creating these communities. Sustainable communities have a high quality natural and built environment, with a dynamic and innovative economy, good transport, supportive community and voluntary services and are environmentally sound. The Bristol Accord³ defines sustainable communities as places 'where people want to live and work, now and in the future'. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are 'safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, offer equality of opportunity and good services for all' (DoEHLG, 2007).

The design and provision of good quality, appropriate and sustainable Traveller-specific accommodation options are in line with this thinking. Achieving and maintaining sustainable communities takes time, effort and expertise.

Tenancy Sustainability

An important consideration in creating sustainable Traveller accommodation is the challenge to support local responsiveness and flexibility while, at the same time, instituting clear and transparent systemic practices and procedures. Getting the balance right is crucial for ensuring that Traveller residents have stability of tenure and satisfaction with their accommodation, while at the same time establishing fair and just design and provision parameters that achieve best possible solutions for all stakeholders.

Like any group, Traveller tenants' circumstances and accommodation preferences will change over time. However, Travellers' nomadic traditions can also contribute to even more fluidity in their accommodation. The mindset of mobility means that when some Traveller families accept accommodation they may not stay there if it is deemed inappropriate (for example because of poor location).

Research evidence also suggests that refusal of accommodation offers appears to be more frequent for Traveller tenants. The financial and demographic survey designed for this study attempted to quantitatively gauge the level of refusals, which interview data originally identified as an issue. However, very few local authorities kept detailed records of the number of refusals, or indeed the reasons for refusals.

³ The accord was agreed at a two-day informal meeting on the theme of 'Creating Sustainable Communities in Europe', hosted by Bristol City Council and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister as part of the U.K's Presidency of the EU.

It is difficult to determine if in fact Traveller tenants do have a higher rate of refusals than other tenants, or if so why. Anecdotal evidence from interview data suggests that the reasons for such refusals are usually poorly understood, or are perceived as (negative) expressions of Traveller differences and of 'special treatment' service delivery models.

Perceptions of 'Special Treatment'

Traveller-specific accommodation is currently posed as a special needs category in Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities. Inherent in this argument is that Traveller differences should and do have greater weight than Settled 'differences' in identifying and meeting accommodation needs. Settled service providers argued that the negative perceptions of 'special treatment' seriously impacted on:

- the receptiveness of the Settled community to Traveller-specific accommodation options
- perceptions of 'reasonable' Traveller expectations and
- willingness to overcome obstacles by Settled stakeholders

Service providers mentioned, as a matter of some small concern, that through this special treatment of Traveller accommodation needs the boundaries of responsibility would be blurred. There was a need for tenants in general, as well as specifically Traveller tenants, to take ownership of their tenure. There would possibly be a need for short-term supports to be in place. For example, tenancy sustainment provision could facilitate the transition into new forms of accommodation.

The research identified a number of different approaches that attempted to reconcile multiple perspectives of Traveller and Settled differences. These approaches shared a number of common features such as fostering independence, ownership and delineating clear roles and responsibilities for Settled service providers and Traveller residents. Examples of such approaches include:

- introduction of pre-tenancy courses
- estate management principles and residents' associations set up by local authorities
- community development work by Traveller organisations

3.7 Conclusion

Well-intentioned but ineffective strategic planning and delivery frameworks, limited policy guidance on design and provision options and the dynamics of wider national and local-level change, all affect efforts to provide appropriate Traveller-specific accommodation.

Current lack of systemic guidance contributes to responses that are situation, family or individual-specific. As such, few universal approaches – which are necessary for achieving sustainable Traveller accommodation outcomes – can be identified.

To provide these parameters, this study suggests that the use of national standards and the uptake of systemic good practice that explicitly works from quality of life indicators for both local authority staff and Traveller residents be developed and implemented.

SECTION FOUR
Direct Management and Maintenance



4.1 Introduction

This section examines management and maintenance issues and practices. It also discusses responses to these issues by service providers, Travellers, and other stakeholders. The research indicated that most local authorities face similar issues in relation to management and maintenance concerns.

Five broad universal trends are identified as contributing to long-standing management and maintenance concerns:

- service delivery
- revenue and income streams
- design and provision issues
- societal and cultural contexts and perceptions
- direct management issues

4.2 Service Delivery

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Research findings from this study highlight the nature of staff roles and responsibilities in the management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation:

- Twenty-six of the 40 sites/ group housing schemes covered by the TAS indicator systems used caretakers hired directly by the local authority.
- On an additional 5 of the sites/ group housing schemes Travellers on-site or independent contractors were employed as caretakers.
- Four of these caretakers were off-site unless contacted, with an additional 13 available for 6 hours or less on-site.
- In addition, a number of local authorities said they occasionally or frequently hired security firms, particularly to assist in evictions and to supervise basic management and maintenance tasks.
- Dedicated Traveller Accommodation Units were common in local authority areas with larger urban populations and/or larger Traveller populations. In areas with smaller populations, most staff operated under the broader aegis of housing departments, and sometimes with multiple roles and responsibilities.
- Estate management, residents' associations, and other associated measures of resident-led management and maintenance roles and responsibilities were evident in only a few sites/ group housing schemes.

Caretakers

Table 4.1 demonstrates that in the majority of sites/group housing schemes caretakers were employed to provide management and maintenance services for Traveller-specific accommodation. In addition, it is important to note that 5 of the 9 sites/ group housing schemes that did not have a caretaker were unauthorised sites/ roadside encampments. In about two-thirds of cases, the caretaker was hired directly by the local authority.

Table 4.1 Caretaker or Other Site Manager Provision

	Number
Hired directly by Local Authority	26
Traveller living on-site	2
Independent contractor	3
None	9
Total	40

Respondents' perceptions of appropriateness and effectiveness of staff roles and responsibilities, especially around caretakers and around the need for dedicated Traveller Accommodation Units within local authorities, varied considerably.

At one extreme, it was argued that caretakers were only provided for special needs/ sheltered housing and Traveller-specific accommodation. The implication was that Traveller-specific accommodation was perceived as a kind of 'special' category of local authority housing and that, by extension, Traveller residents were somehow unable or unwilling to carry out basic management and maintenance tasks on their own accommodation. This could contribute to perceptions of special treatment and perpetuate negative perceptions of Traveller differences.

Traveller representatives and organisations frequently raised the issue that the use of caretakers works against efforts to build communal identity and ownership of accommodation. Traveller representatives also suggested that the use of caretakers can perpetuate the negative perceptions of Travellers as a 'difficult' client group and may effectively become an obstacle to good management and maintenance practices.

Amongst service providers and other officials the general consensus was that having dedicated caretakers or in a number of instances, private security staff, was extremely important in the general upkeep and management of the site/ group housing. This remained the case, even if and when problems with these staff did arise. Other service providers noted, for example, that the presence of private security had worked quite well in maintaining control on certain sites/ group housing schemes. However, a number of respondents also noted that it was local opposition to sites/ group housing schemes that led to the provision of private security. This suggests the possibility that such security becomes a form of surveillance to respond to Settled concerns about Traveller-specific accommodation, rather than to provide or facilitate better programmes of management and maintenance. In addition, it was reported that the employment of caretakers on Traveller-specific accommodation is an expensive cost that is not provided in other standard local authority housing.

Traveller residents varied considerably with respect to their views on caretakers. Only 1 of the 42 respondents specifically cited the caretaker as one of the best things about their accommodation in the TAS indicator systems. Four respondents cited general site upkeep, management and maintenance or related issues, in which caretakers would have a role, as one of the best things about their accommodation.

Some Traveller respondents felt that the caretaker was crucial in managing and maintaining their site/ group housing scheme; others felt that the caretaker was not visible on the site/ group housing scheme. Respondents from one case study site universally felt that the caretaker was essential in acting as a 'buffer' when conflicts between residents arose. He was considered a facilitator for solving problems, while at the same time being clear about everyone's roles and responsibilities around these issues.

Recruitment of Caretakers and Scheduling of their Work

Determining who should carry out management and maintenance tasks has a number of implications. Employing a Settled person may facilitate conflict resolution between families on-site by acting as an independent mediator. It may, however, also exacerbate issues around trust, respect and ownership of sites/ group housing schemes.

Employing Traveller caretakers or allowing families to informally take on these duties may facilitate a sense of ownership and independence, but may also contribute to inter-family tensions and/or a de facto role in the allocation of bays to families. These concerns emerge because of perceptions that a particular site/ group housing scheme is effectively run by certain members, which may deter others from accepting accommodation in that site/ group housing scheme.

If caretakers are employed for the management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation, there is a need to examine when their duties are carried out. A number of respondents noted that caretakers were able to manage and maintain sites/ group housing schemes efficiently during weekdays. At weekends, however, often a range of issues would emerge that would have to be dealt with in the following week such as dumping or fly-tipping of rubbish, the cutting of barriers, moving in of extra caravans, and other improper uses of facilities.

In common with all local authority programmes of management and maintenance, there is a question of response times. Some argue that slow response times contribute to:

- a sense of frustration
- perceptions that certain conditions are tolerated in order to deal with more pressing concerns
- an expression of an unwillingness or inability to deal with the full array of issues arising from Traveller-specific accommodation

Caretakers' Workloads and Duties

The TAS indicator system included a measure of caretakers' workloads. This serves as a measure of relative priorities in management and maintenance tasks operating on sites/ group housing schemes. Duties examined included, for example, basic upkeep, waste management duties, grounds-keeping, repairs, monitoring anti-social behaviour, tenant liaison, and access to services on-site.

Table 4.2 summarises results from this indicator. It reveals that 24 of the 31 caretakers had limited or extremely limited duties, for example basic waste management duties only. This suggests that whether respondents had positive or negative views of the roles and responsibilities of caretakers, their actual responsibilities on sites/schemes covered by the TAS indicator systems were not extensive.

Table 4.2 Workload of Caretakers in Terms of Number of Duties

	Number of Caretakers
Extremely Limited Duties	14
Limited Duties	10
Average Duties	3
Considerable Duties	3
Substantial Duties	1
Total	31

Note: Duties examined included: basic litter control, tidying, monitoring of vacant bays, repairs, painting, upkeep of vacant bays, estate management, tenant liaison, monitoring of anti-social behaviour, access to barriers, emergency services and communal facilities.

Further analysis comparing the presence and workloads of caretakers and the need for repairs and maintenance works shows that:

- the one instance of ‘substantial duties’ by a caretaker relates to no evident need for significant repairs or maintenance works (for example, construction work in progress, no derelict bays/houses etc)
- 12 of the 31 sites/ group housing schemes with a caretaker reported little evidence of repairs or maintenance works, an additional 17 sites/group housing schemes reported limited evidence of repairs works or maintenance and 1 site showed some evidence of repairs/maintenance work

Comparing the presence and workloads of caretakers with dumping/fly-tipping reveals that:

- of those 24 sites/ group housing schemes which caretakers had reported having limited or extremely limited duties, 17 also reported moderate or no evidence of fly-tipping
- twelve of the 31 sites/group housing schemes had no evidence of fly-tipping or illegal dumping, while 11 had light evidence, 4 had moderate evidence and an additional 4 had substantial evidence of fly-tipping or illegal dumping in or close to the site/ group housing scheme. In contrast two-thirds (6) of the 9 sites/ group housing schemes with no caretaker did have substantial or moderate evidence of illegal dumping. However, as mentioned above, 5 of these 9 sites were unauthorised sites /roadside encampments with usually limited or no waste facilities.

This suggests that where caretakers have extremely limited duties the majority of these duties are around waste management, to the detriment of other duties. Informal discussions with caretakers from case study sites/ group housing schemes suggest that many felt they had to pull back from at least some duties, because of time pressures, safety and security concerns or general perceptions that such duties were too much for one person.

Traveller Accommodation Units

Research findings suggest that dedicated Traveller Accommodation Units in local authorities could help facilitate appropriate roles and responsibilities around management and maintenance programmes, procedures and practices. However, perceptions among all respondents of the appropriateness of these dedicated units within local authorities varied considerably.

The reported benefits of having a dedicated Traveller Accommodation Unit include:

- helping to facilitate strategic frameworks and plans of action
- assistance in more precise identification of housing need and better allocation procedures
- coordination of financial resources more effectively
- dedicated staff time to Traveller accommodation issues, including management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation

Reported potential drawbacks of Traveller Accommodation Units include:

- the possibility that smaller local authorities and/or with smaller Traveller populations may not financially benefit from a dedicated unit
- insufficient staff numbers and difficulties in recruitment
- the requirement for staff to have both financial and technical skills along with awareness of the opportunities and challenges of working on Traveller accommodation
- the inadvertent promotion of perceptions of special treatment of Travellers

4.3 Revenue and Income Streams

Revenue and income streams for carrying out management and maintenance tasks was a key issue to emerge from the research. Determination and collection of rents, and effects of different payment methods, was raised in both interview data and by TAS data collection tools.

The difficulties with revenue and income streams affected and, at times, limited:

- what could be done on sites/schemes
- scope of responsiveness
- the upkeep of standards

They also helped to drive the need for interim responses of periodic refurbishment, contributed to widespread perceptions amongst service providers about the limited possibilities for better management and maintenance programmes and practices, and also contributed to dissatisfaction of Traveller families with standards on sites/ group housing schemes.

Rent Determinations

The difference in rent determination for Traveller tenants in group housing compared to Traveller tenants in halting site bays was raised as an issue by some respondents. Rents for social-rented tenants are calculated on the basis of the income-related schemes established by each local authority (referred to as 'differential rents'). According to the DoEHLG guidance in this area, these schemes must take account of household characteristics when determining the rent payable. This rent, in turn, should be used to meet the costs of the management and maintenance of the housing stock.

These schemes are used to determine the rent payable by Traveller tenant households accommodated in group housing schemes. However, tenants in these schemes are likely to be assessed for a substantially lower rent than their counterparts in standard social rented housing, even though the same rent determination mechanism is applicable to both (see Table 4.3).

These rent determination schemes do not appear to be used when calculating the weekly rent payable for Traveller households accommodated in bays on halting sites. Local authorities tend to use flat-rate charges rather than an income-related scheme in determining the amount payable. Consequently, the weekly charge tends to be very low – particularly when compared to the rents payable by other tenants in the same local authority operational area – and does not take cognisance of the means of the tenants. Many local authority respondents stated that they did not charge the same level of rents as other tenants, at least in part because of concerns that certain sites/ group housing schemes were due for refurbishment or should be targeted for refurbishment.

Table 4.3 Average Weekly Rent Levels for Traveller-Specific Accommodation and Standard Local Authority Housing, 2005

	Standard	Traveller-Specific Accommodation			
	Local Authority Housing €	Halting Site Bay €	% Difference	Group Housing €	% Difference
City Councils					
Cork	38.6	6.4	-83.5	17.5	-54.6
Dublin	Nav	14	Nav	23	Nav
Limerick	Nav	13	Nav	16.5	Nav
County Councils					
Kilkenny	42.5	5	-88.2	Nav	Nav
Clare	36.7	15	-59.2	30	-18.3
Donegal	32.7	6.3	-80.7	25	-23.6
Louth	35.0	8	-77.1	35	0.0
North Tipperary	26.0	5	-80.8	34.2	31.5
Roscommon	33.0	5	-84.8	11	-66.7
Westmeath	36.0	10	-72.3	20	-44.5
Wexford	Nav	13.5	Nav	Nav	Nav

Note: Nav means not available

Rent Collection

Table 4.4 sets out the levels of rent collection that could be gauged from the TAS survey. It shows the proportion of rent collected varies considerably between the local authorities who responded to this question. When low proportions of rent are collected it is likely to place significant strain upon the ability of local authorities to effectively carry out good programmes of management and maintenance, and to help provide for new or better programmes in any new or refurbished sites and schemes.

Table 4.4 Rent Collection Rates for Traveller-Specific Accommodation 2005

	Rent Due €	% Collection Rate
City Councils		
Dublin City	233,187	89.4
County Councils		
Clare	77,354	84.5
Roscommon	24,773	85
Westmeath	12,180	68

Rent Arrears

Rent arrears were an issue in several local authorities. Results from the TAS survey show that where arrears do occur, these tend to be long-term in nature. Table 4.5 reveals that the majority of rent arrears were for 12 months or more in the local authority areas that provided such information on the TAS survey. As a result of this, many of the authorities surveyed also reported a high level of arrears written-off for Travellers. It would appear that there is a higher incidence of this phenomenon for rents from Traveller-specific accommodation than from standard social-rented stock.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that Travellers' perceptions about local authority willingness to write off arrears, combined with general dissatisfaction with provision on sites/ group housing schemes, can reinforce difficulties in determining and collecting appropriate rent from some Traveller tenants in a timely fashion.

Table 4.5 Breakdown of Rent Arrears by Duration 2005

	>4 Weeks	>4-6 Weeks	>6-12 Weeks	>12 Weeks +
City Councils				
Cork City	4.84	0	23.09	72.07
Dublin City	Nav	Nav	Nav	44.11
County Councils				
Clare	8.77	6.07	8.13	85.16
Donegal	0	0	0	100
Westmeath	0	0	0	100

Note: Nav means not available

Payment Systems for Rents

Results from the TAS survey show that local authorities employ a range of payment systems for rents from Travellers. The most popular of these is the use of the 'Household Budget' payment option. This option is available to those on social welfare and involves deduction of rent directly from the social welfare payment to the local authority.

Consistency in these payment methods across local authorities could help to standardise and facilitate better rent collection efforts and reduce the incidence of arrears. In particular, there is scope for using ESB meter cards (a direct debit type payment) on more sites/ group housing schemes.

However, in relation to ESB meter cards care must also be taken to avoid the abuse of the ESB supply by some residents. The provision of electricity is supplied communally on many halting sites, with the local authority and not an individual Traveller family being the customer. This has created difficulties of some families 'tapping' into the electricity supply. In these instances, even if only one individual is 'tapping' into the supply it can affect other families on-site. For example, as there is only one electricity box on-site, if one family is not paying for electricity there is little incentive for the other families on-site to do so either. Consequently, it was suggested that in the design for new halting sites electricity supply should be individualised.

4.4 Design and Provision Issues

Design and provision effects on long-standing management and maintenance concerns fall into four areas:

- housing needs, allocations, and conditions for occupancy
- upkeep of general standards
- access to services and officials
- the Caravan Grants and Loan scheme

Housing Needs, Allocations and Conditions for Occupancy

Traveller housing needs and preferences were discussed earlier in the report. The interview data suggest that in at least some cases Travellers feel that local authorities are able to allocate preferred accommodation options regardless of other tenants' circumstances. This can lead some Travellers to refuse alternative options, without fully appreciating the constraints that may prevent the allocation of preferred accommodation.

At the same time, some Travellers expressed frustration that their apparently self-evident housing needs cannot be met. Others have argued that given the relatively small Traveller population it should, in theory, be quite feasible to meet their needs. Service providers cited any number of obstacles to progress, and many also raised concerns about special treatment, positive discrimination, and/or related issues, to the detriment of other tenants.

These difficulties highlight general concerns about the conditions of occupancy for many Traveller tenants and the level of supports that are needed to facilitate interim responses and to address changes in accommodation. These create management and maintenance concerns, such as:

- supports for families moving from Traveller-specific accommodation to standard housing and/or the private rented sector
- difficulties in managing and maintaining occupancy in Traveller-specific accommodation if and when tenants do not want to stay there
- dissatisfaction with current accommodation leading to a greater number of vacant or even derelict bays, which also have to be managed and maintained
- difficulties in filling bays in some sites, both because potential tenants cannot be found and because of, for example, family incompatibility

Furthermore, it was reported that for the most part in local authorities there was a lack of clear and transparent procedures for the letting of Traveller-specific accommodation. It was suggested that the lack of transparent allocation procedures could be contributing factors to conflict and intimidation in some Traveller-specific

accommodation. It was reported that, in some cases, dominant families have a veto over the letting of bays to prospective tenants.

On the basis of the need for transparent allocation criteria, Dublin City Council, in consultation with Pavee Point, established a point-based pilot letting scheme of priorities for Traveller accommodation in 2004. Feedback from Traveller representatives suggested that despite initial problems associated with moving from an informal to a formal system, the scheme allows for transparent procedures in Traveller-specific rented accommodation.

Box 3 below provides an example of the difficulties associated with managing the occupancy and allocation of accommodation.

Box 3 Management of Vacant Bays

In one case study site of 11 bays, families in seven of the bays expressed preferences for alternative accommodation. Two other bays were vacant and could not be filled. Local authorities often filled vacant bays with families who had been living on the roadside. This contributed to tensions due to family incompatibility, and required greater on-site management to address these tensions.

In another site, bays vacated for the summer by families with a long tenancy on site, had been filled by families who, in the interim, had pulled up on the roadside and then were accommodated on the site. Two of these previously resident families had at the time of visiting the site moved onto the roadside, at least two of the bays in the site had been completely vandalised and a caravan had been burnt out. These events occurred over the space of a weekend.

The volatility of this situation illustrates that there is a need to manage conditions of occupancy and allocation of accommodation extremely well, and to have in place clear procedures for 'emergency' situations or for new families moving into an area and pulling up on the roadside. Failure to have such procedures in place can have significant consequences for the management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation.

Upkeep of General Standards of Traveller-Specific Accommodation

The research findings raise questions about the maintenance of the standards of facilities and infrastructure of Traveller-specific accommodation across local authorities. The research showed that:

- Eighteen of the sites/group housing schemes had all facilities in good working order, however 8 sites/group housing schemes had half or less of facilities in good working order.
- Thirteen sites/group housing schemes were rated as having very good provision of infrastructure, but 10 also as having very poor, little or no provision.

In addition, there was poor compliance with aspects of Departmental guidelines for general standards on sites/group housing schemes. The findings below relate to 'quality of life' standards:

- Only 2 sites/group housing schemes had communal access to phone services. The rest had either no services or no working services.
- Nine sites/group housing schemes had free access to emergency equipment, whereas 31 of sites/group housing schemes had no, or out-of-date, equipment.

- Sixteen sites/group housing schemes had no provision for green areas, and an additional 19 had such areas but these were not in use. The remaining 5 sites/ group housing schemes had green areas in use, however, only one of these were extensively used.

Access to Services

Location of Traveller-specific accommodation and access to services and officials are all inter-related aspects of the provision of management and maintenance services. The TAS indicator systems generated some findings on these.⁴

- Thirty-five of the sites/ group housing schemes had access to essential services (i.e. a range of services including GP, schools, local shops, public transport, etc. were located in close proximity to site).
- Fifteen had access to non-essential services (i.e. a range of 'non-essential' services including other shops, churches, social and community support networks, etc. were located in close proximity to the site).
- Only 3 respondents specifically cited access to services as one of the best things about the site/ group housing scheme.
- An additional 9 respondents cited proximity to town/urban centres and 3 respondents stated schools as one of the best things about the site/ group housing scheme.
- Just 6 respondents cited poor location as one of the worst things about the site/ group housing scheme.
- Most respondents did not report difficulties with neighbours and 3 cited good neighbours as one of the best things about the site/ group housing scheme.

The Caravan Grants and Loans Schemes

Under the terms of the Caravan Grant scheme, a local authority can provide a once-off grant to first-time purchasers. This is based on 10 per cent of the purchase price of the caravan – subject to a maximum of €640 in 2005 – and where relevant, will be offset against the loan amount repayable.

Of the 17 respondent local authorities to the TAS survey, only 13 provided any data in relation to this grant. Of those 13 local authorities, only 6 provided any grants in 2005. These grants were provided to 19 Traveller households at a cost of €61,990. This implies an average grant of €3,263 per household in 2005 (or 410 per cent in excess of the maximum stipulated). The principal drivers of this divergence are Clare County and Dublin City councils as shown in Table 4.6:

Table 4.6 Provision of Caravan Grants, 2005

	€	Number	Average Grant €
Cork	3,695	6	616
Dublin	35,300	4	8,825
City Councils	38,995	10	3,900
Clare	20,000	4	5,000
Donegal	480	1	480
Offaly	1,905	3	635
North Tipperary	610	1	610
County Councils	22,995	9	2,555
Grand Totals	61,990	19	3,263

⁴ Respondents could provide multiple responses to the question relating to the best/worst aspects of the accommodation. A total of 77 responses were recorded for the worst and 73 responses for the best features of the accommodation.

A second scheme, a caravan loans scheme, is funded by the DoEHLG and administered by the local authorities. Under this scheme, a local authority can provide a loan to a maximum value of €6,350 in 2005 for the purchase of new or second-hand caravans. These loans must be repaid over a period ranging from 1 to 5 years and are subject to a number of conditions.

In 2005, caravan loans were provided to 34 applicants in the respondent local authorities. The average loan was almost €5,400. The majority of recipients were resident in county council operational areas where the value of the loan amounts was approximately 20 per cent higher than in their urban counterparts (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7 Provision of Caravan Loans, 2005

	Total Value of Loan €	Number of Loans N	Average Value of Loan €
Cork City	36,950	6	6,158
Dublin City	5,681	3	1,894
Limerick City	-	0	N/A
City Councils	42,631	9	4,737
Donegal	4,800	1	4,800
Fingal	76,840	13	5,911
Kilkenny	9,300	2	4,650
North Tipperary	-	0	N/A
Offaly	31,975	6	5,329
Westmeath	17,000	3	5,667
County Councils	139,915	25	5,597
Total	182,546	34	5,369

Note: N/A means not applicable

As Table 4.8 (overleaf) reveals, €243,205 in loan repayments was due to be collected by these authorities in 2005. Given the quality of the returns provided by local authorities to the research, it is not possible to determine the actual amounts repaid.

There appears to be a significant variation across local authorities in terms of the collection rate. For instance, Limerick City Council collected 100 per cent of all amounts due. This is compared to a low of just 22 per cent by Westmeath County Council. It is not possible to accurately discern the extent to which any of these arrears may be long-term in nature. However, it would appear from the data available, and supported by the views of the local authority officials interviewed, that the majority of these arrears are of more than one month in duration.

Table 4.8 Collection of Caravan Loan Repayments, 2005

	Amounts Due 2005 €	Collections Rate 2005 %
Cork City	4910	Nav
Limerick City	2340	100
Dublin City	1475	78
City Councils	8725	Nav
Offaly	52551	50
Donegal	29666	42
Kilkenny	9833	58
North Tipperary	24245	70
Roscommon	103491	Nav
Westmeath	14695	22
Fingal	Nav	Nav
County Councils	234480	Nav
Total	243205	Nav

Two local authorities who have ceased to participate in this scheme are Roscommon and Clare County Councils with cessation since 2004 and 2002 respectively. Reasons for cessations included high level of loan arrears; and the fact that caravans funded in this manner were likely to be taken out of their operational area.

Ten of 17 local authority respondents for the survey noted that the useful economic life of a caravan is likely to be less than five years. This, in turn, implies that 'top up' loans are likely to be needed on a regular basis rather than in exceptional circumstances only.

Previous research raises a number of concerns relating to the Caravan Grants and Loan schemes:

- Travellers on the roadside or in unofficial sites are excluded.
- Restrictions imposed on where caravans can be purchased takes buying power away from the Travelling community; for example, a VAT registered caravan dealership must be used and a designated area is prescribed in a minority of instances.
- The requirement for a 10 per cent deposit can create difficulties for low-income households. (Quinn and McCann, 2001)

The impact of the administration of the Caravan Grants and Loans schemes on the comfort and standards of Travellers accommodation was also explored during this study. Table 4.9 summarises key findings.

- Fourteen of 27 respondents specifically residing in caravans on sites stated their accommodation was comfortable or very comfortable.
- Eleven of the 27 residents on sites rated their caravan as uncomfortable or very uncomfortable.
- The remaining two respondents rated their caravan as neither comfortable nor uncomfortable.

It is important to note here that in determining the comfortableness of caravans, and satisfaction with accommodation in general, a level of habituation can occur and tenants may become used to and accepting of poor housing over time.

Table 4.9 Ratings of Comfortableness of Caravans/Group Houses

	Halting Sites & Unauthorised Roadside Sites Housing Scheme	Group Housing Scheme (no bays)	Group Housing Scheme (with permanent bays)	Total
Very Uncomfortable	1	0	0	1
Uncomfortable	10	0	1	11
Neither Comfortable or Uncomfortable	2	0	0	2
Comfortable	10	2	7	19
Very Comfortable	4	3	2	9
Total	27	5	10	42

4.5 Social and Cultural Contexts and Perceptions

This report has previously discussed how perceptions of difference by Traveller and Settled stakeholders, long-standing Traveller traditions and social and political developments shape management and maintenance processes. These perceptions vary at local level and, consequently, so does local authorities practice.

Local authorities' responses to Travellers' economic activities or mobility provides an example. In the course of this study, some local authorities expressed considerable willingness to tolerate some level of these activities and to support some mobility. Bays were held open during the summer months in anticipation that families would return to these in the autumn. Such responses could technically run counter to the letter of tenancy agreements that did not allow long-term absences. Respondents suggested that the knock-on management and maintenance effects of inflexibility could be much worse than having more flexible approaches.

The provision of transient sites is partly characterised by service providers' perceptions of potential management and maintenance issues on these sites. These include perceptions also identified by Traveller residents such as how to cope with family incompatibility. In this instance, perceptions of the scale and range of potential management and maintenance tasks actually contributes to closing down the scope of viable responses for Traveller-specific accommodation.

A third area of impact on social and cultural contexts and perceptions is stakeholders' perceptions of Traveller differences and openness to given accommodation options. Interview data from service providers suggest that this creates pressures on local authorities and other service providers to manage and maintain sites/ group housing schemes well. If there are perceptions that sites/ group housing schemes are not adequately managed and maintained, this may lead to greater confrontation and local opposition to accommodation options. In this context, the provision of private security appears to be an implicit stipulation for accepting new Traveller-specific accommodation. Respondents also pointed out that cultural misunderstanding may

lead to Settled residents complaining more quickly to the Gardaí. This expands the scope of management and maintenance issues more than would be the case for other local authority accommodation.

Three specific aspects of social and cultural contexts and perceptions are further discussed:

- impact of family dynamics
- control of horses and dogs
- interaction and proximity of Settled and Traveller residents and management and maintenance implications

The Impact of Family Dynamics

This research found that almost all respondents accepted that family dynamics dictated how, and how well, Traveller-specific accommodation could be managed and maintained. No respondents suggested alternatives to Traveller-specific accommodation that did not take into consideration families' compatibility.

However, not all respondents seemed to fully appreciate complicating factors such as incompatibility within family networks, demographic characteristics that signal rapid and significant household formation into the future, and the potential knock-on effects of accepting family compatibility as one of the few universals to Traveller-specific accommodation.

Consequences of Prioritising Family Compatibility

Prioritising family compatibility could contribute to some residents' perceptions that sites/ group housing schemes effectively 'belonged' to certain families. In extreme cases this led to some families effectively controlling allocation of bays and access to sites/ group housing schemes. It was suggested that sub-letting of bays by existing residents occurred on some sites, implying that these were let to compatible families to the exclusion of other families.

The research also identified unexpected events that could contribute to sudden increased demand for hands-on management and associated maintenance tasks. These included:

- the unexpected arrival of extended family members of families already on-site
- the allocation of a bay to a family not previously resident and who had just pulled up onto the roadside

Traveller preferences for specific locations within a local authority area, determined at least in part by historical patterns of congregating with existing family members, was also identified as creating management and maintenance issues such as overcrowding and uneven densities of Traveller accommodation and/or families.

Family Size

Typical Traveller family sizes are generally larger than in the Settled community, with 41.6 per cent of Traveller families with 6 or more persons in the household compared to 5.2 per cent of the total Irish population in 2006 (CSO, 2007). The relevance of this to the management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation includes:

- increased general wear and tear of accommodation
- the use of halting site service bays as alternative accommodation, e.g. for sleeping in because of insufficient space in caravans
- overcrowding

Overcrowding was also reported to be a particular issue in some Traveller-specific accommodation. For example, it was reported that on one halting site/ group housing scheme with 25 bays, there was in excess of 60 families inhabiting the site/ group housing scheme. However, it was argued by some Traveller representatives that overcrowding is not only a result of larger family sizes. It was reported that there has been an increase in the number of families 'doubling up' since the introduction of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2002, which criminalises trespass on public and private land. Conversely, the number of Traveller families sharing accommodation increased from 249 in 2002 to 437 in 2007 (DoEHLG, various years). It was argued that overcrowding in accommodation can have serious health and safety implications and puts pressure on families, which can result in tensions and conflict.

Family Incompatibility

Family incompatibility may generate local effects on-site. Conflicts can lead to several families within an extended family network leaving a site/ group housing scheme at the same time. This will have obvious consequences for managing and maintaining empty bays and/or group houses.

Many respondents, from service providers to Traveller residents, suggested that one individual or one family could create difficulties for all others on-site. In extreme instances this could lead to the abandonment of the site/ group housing scheme by most residents, and destruction of vacant bays by remaining residents. It is acknowledged that disruptive behaviours are not exclusive to the Travelling community.

Box 4 Family Compatibility

Failure to recognise, or at the very least be able to respond to family compatibility in gauging and preparing for future need, appears to be a significant issue in the determination of demand for Traveller-specific accommodation and for associated management and maintenance concerns.

For example, one respondent recounted how a site recently refurbished at considerable costs had, for a couple of years, adequately met the accommodation needs of a particular family. However, several members of that family had now formed their own households and were looking to be accommodated on site with the rest of their family – but there was not enough space to do so. If family compatibility is to be facilitated here, either the site has to be upgraded again or alternative accommodation has to be found. It was felt that this may potentially contribute to dissatisfaction if the family are not accommodated together and could even lead to the extended family leaving previously acceptable accommodation.

The Control of Horses and Dogs

The control of horses and dogs, arising from Traveller economic and social traditions, is another societal and cultural effect on management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation. Service providers generally identified the control of horses and dogs as a significant management and maintenance issue in many, but not all, sites/ group housing schemes. Traveller respondents' views varied. Some kept horses and large numbers of dogs regardless of what provisions were made for them. It was reported by service providers that only a minority of Traveller respondents co-ordinated with local authorities to provide alternative spaces. A few expressed no interest in keeping horses or numerous dogs. Consequently, 11 of the 40 sites/group housing schemes had no horses and dogs.

There was a high number of horses and/or dogs on those sites/ group housing schemes who did report the presence of such animals.

- On the 14 sites/group housing schemes that did report the presence of horses, 5 of these had a high or very high number of horses.
- Nine of the 29 sites on which dogs were present had a high or very number of dogs.
- Only 5 of the 40 sites/ group housing schemes had provisions for horses on-site, an additional 3 had off-site provisions and 10 of the sites/ group housing schemes had unbounded/unofficial areas on or close to the site. Twenty-one of the sites had no provisions for horses.
- Thirty-seven sites/ group housing schemes had limited or no programmes to manage horses.

This suggests that the control of dogs/horses has less to do with the extent of their presence across sites/ group housing schemes, and more to do with the density of these animals when present on specific sites/ group housing schemes, and the use of facilities as ad hoc stables on these sites/ group housing schemes.

Interaction and Proximity of Traveller and Settled Residents

Patterns of interaction and co-location of Traveller and Settled residents are also relevant to the management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation. The importance of informal contacts, historical and current relationships between the two communities, and a number of related local factors all help to shape how successful Traveller-specific accommodation is in an area.

As a way of indirectly determining the effects of such patterns of interaction, the TAS indicator systems included a number of indicators on proximity to Settled and Traveller residents and Traveller respondents' rating of difficulties with other Traveller and Settled residents. The research results show that 19 of the 29 Traveller respondents in close proximity to non Traveller-specific housing expressed a desire to stay on-site.

Such an indicator provides a measure of the sustainability of current locations of sites/ group housing schemes. It also suggests potential links between proximity of neighbours and more positive patterns of interaction when Traveller and Settled residents are closer together.

Interview data and anecdotal evidence support this view. These data suggest that when local opposition to Traveller-specific accommodation is not as strong, or is overcome, relationships between the two communities can help to reduce tensions and promote positive, sustainable outcomes with good quality of life for all. Although it is difficult to identify direct causal implications, good relationships and patterns of interaction will contribute to generally positive local conditions. These, in turn, have the potential for a more supportive atmosphere for all stakeholders to address management and maintenance responsibilities and concerns.

4.6 Resident-Led Management Programmes

One positive recent development is that many Travellers are gaining greater awareness of the possibilities for resident-led management, through estate management, tenant participation and residents' associations.

Increasing a sense of 'ownership' of sites/ group housing schemes and increasing active participation in consultation mechanisms are also part of the positive effects of recent change. Traveller organisations in particular are investing considerable efforts to promote community development principles. Some social workers in case study sites have also taken on board community development and other proactive principles, by involving tenants directly in resident-led management and maintenance tasks such as caretaking.

Despite these positive effects, the research evidence suggests that, at present, these have had little impact for many Travellers. The promotion of resident-led management efforts, and willingness to participate in these, depends on:

- proactive service providers
- supportive local institutional settings
- positive relationships between local Settled and Traveller populations
- characteristics within the local Traveller community

On the basis of interview data and observation of case study sites/ group housing schemes, resident-led management programmes were evident in a few places. Very few of these were in halting sites. Most were in group housing schemes. One local authority respondent noted that neighbourhood watches had been established in a number of sites/ group housing schemes.

Very few Traveller residents stated that they had organised, for example, clean-up of sites/ group housing schemes. Occasionally, some service providers organised joint clean-ups or other management and maintenance tasks on-site. In almost all cases, however, such efforts rarely had long-term effects.

Resident-led programmes appear only to be in the initial stages. A particular concern is that few existing sites/ group housing schemes have communal facilities to foster at least some resident-led management and maintenance programmes. Most sites/ group housing schemes had limited or no provision of such facilities (Table 4.10).

Table 4.10 Scale of Provision of Communal Facilities

Provision of Communal Facilities	Frequency
Little or no provision of communal facilities	31
Limited provision of communal facilities	4
Some provision of communal facilities	3
Considerable provision of communal facilities	2
Total	40

4.7 Management Concerns/Issues

[On some sites] they manage us, we don't manage them. (LAO)

The 'control' of Traveller-specific accommodation featured, almost universally, in the research findings. This was expressed in two ways:

- the struggle to maintain control of anti-social behaviour and related activities
- the effects of loss of control on service providers and on residents

The research suggests that the issue of 'control' is a consequence of a number of developments. These include:

- more reactive service delivery approaches, in response to increasing complexities within the Traveller accommodation arena
- negative expectations and perceived possibilities for success
- tensions between perceptions of what should and what can be done in the context of recent political, social, geographical and related changes
- the ongoing effects of historical issues, especially around management and maintenance concerns
- trying to manage what are often perceived as less than ideal, temporary 'solutions' and the greater provision of alternative accommodation and associated difficulties

These temporary responses also appear to contribute to a reduction of perceptions of freedom of choice and therefore frustration and dissatisfaction with current accommodation. Differences within the Traveller community also add to complexities in practice and delivery concerns.

Interview data suggest that these factors appear to be contributing to the reported lack of control and the subsequent rise of anti-social behaviour, vandalism and related activities on many sites/ group housing schemes. These can have serious implications for the quality of life of other residents in Traveller-specific accommodation.

These issues also create safety and security concerns amongst many staff and other service providers. In short, respondents' views on these issues across local contexts, almost universally, emphasise the need to 'control' these activities and 'properly' manage and maintain affected sites/ group housing schemes.

Problems are more likely to be reported in areas with large, older and/or poorly maintained sites/ group housing schemes, and most often in urban areas. These sites/ group housing schemes often had poor or even negative reported working relationships. Local historical and current factors and local institutional settings also made it difficult to pursue more creative approaches.

Anecdotally, it also appeared that these affected sites/ group housing schemes and local authority areas had more mobile Traveller populations, and often the presence of significant Traveller economic activities and strong family dynamics. Current conditions on at least some sites/ group housing schemes led one Traveller respondent to suggest it was 'the survival of the fittest' on these sites/ group housing schemes and that at least some Travellers felt it was necessary to fight to get acceptable and appropriate accommodation. Precise causal factors are difficult to determine – What starts these activities? What perpetuates them? And what practices and procedures make them worse, or better?

The TAS indicator system included indicators to help clarify the scope and scale of these anti-social and related activities, identify key concerns and gauge responsiveness to these issues. The following issues were identified:

- four of the 40 sites/ group housing schemes showed evidence of considerable toleration of certain behaviours such as dumping near sites/ group housing schemes and open spaces being blocked by mounds of dirt or boulders (bouldering)
- twenty-one of the 40 sites/ group housing schemes showed poor or no evidence of general, day-to-day maintenance
- thirty of the 40 sites/ group housing schemes had little or no evidence of anti-social behaviour (for example, evidence of graffiti/vandalism, joyriding)
- two respondents cited safety and security concerns as one of the three worst things about the site/ group housing scheme
- thirty-seven sites/ group housing schemes did not have CCTV
- twenty-eight sites/group housing schemes had all public lighting working
- other proxy measures of safety and security show that 24 sites/ group housing schemes have little or no defensible spaces (For example, no communal areas of sites/ group housing schemes overlooked alternative entrance or exit points)
- twenty-eight have barriers to entering the site/ group housing scheme; of the remaining 12 sites/ group housing schemes that did not have entrance barriers four were unauthorised/ roadside encampments

Many service providers, especially, raised concerns about safety and security on-site. In extreme cases, some would not go on-site without a Gardaí presence. Reports of anti-social behaviour by Traveller residents and by Settled service providers appear to revolve around one or two families on-site. Efforts to manage, maintain and ‘control’ sites/ group housing schemes often came down to efforts to remove these families, or contain the damage of their activities. This is sometimes to the detriment of other management and maintenance concerns and/or other residents. This in turn could lead to greater frustrations and dissatisfaction amongst these residents.

Different service delivery models and the nature of working relationships contributed to good practices here and to better collective efforts to solve problems. For example, some service providers, while acknowledging that they had been the subject of threatening behaviour, worked to address conflicts in proactive ways. Others temporarily withdrew services and involved the Gardaí to help evict those exhibiting anti-social behaviour. Pavee Point, for example, has set up a mediation service specifically to facilitate the resolutions of these and related issues, which has proved successful in many instances.

While not unique to the Travelling community, awareness of these ‘control’ issues, particularly as raised in the media, raises the profile and visibility of Traveller-specific accommodation within the Traveller and Settled communities. This also adds to more pressures to successfully maintain and manage what can be extremely difficult and contentious issues.

4.8 Conclusion

This section has reported evidence on the perception and objective measurement of issues related to management and maintenance issues. These have included service delivery issues, design and provision issues, social and cultural issues and new developments such as resident-led management and 'control' of Traveller-specific accommodation.

The challenge for instituting good systemic management and maintenance practices is to get the balance right between perceptions of issues and objective evidence of these. This can enhance the potential to address the management and maintenance issues identified in the study through facilitating the development of:

- Traveller-led management programmes
- appropriate roles and responsibilities for Settled and Traveller stakeholders in relation to management and maintenance
- appropriate workloads and tasks for local authority staff
- acceptable accommodation design
- acceptable provision of accommodation solutions
- improved relationships between Settled and Traveller stakeholders.

SECTION FIVE
Conclusions and Recommendations



5.1 Summary of Key Factors Affecting the Management and Maintenance of Traveller-Specific Accommodation

This study has highlighted the complexity of the Traveller accommodation arena and the number of factors impacting upon the current context of the management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation. It has also explored the extent of context-dependent variability in practices, procedures and outcomes at local level. To guide the discussion of this variability and its effect on management and maintenance, this study has focused on three key dimensions: planning and delivery; design and provision; and direct management and maintenance. Although not treated as a separate dimension, Traveller and Settled societal and cultural effects have also been highlighted.

Strategic Planning and Delivery Effects

Policy directives and wider national-level conditions should create strong strategic frameworks to drive practice and delivery at local level. However, evidence suggests that in fact these are weak drivers of local practice and delivery, allowing for the establishment of many different local contexts and of consultation mechanisms as the primary driving force for these contexts. Within those local contexts, wider local conditions and differences in perceptions of appropriate concerns for practice and delivery influence how Traveller-specific accommodation is delivered and managed.

Informal mechanisms, particularly working relationships, emerge as the dominant force driving practice and delivery of actual outcomes. This is in part because of difficulties within formal mechanisms, and in part because of current Traveller preferences not to work through such mechanisms. This study notes that while these can be positive, there are questions about the potential for long-term successful and sustainable outcomes. Such relationships may also inadvertently contribute to perceptions of special treatment and/or to issues of dependency. Moreover, poor working relationships – which still may serve as the principal mechanism for practice delivery – can be identified.

A number of wider staff and service delivery concerns also come into play in the management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation. Some of these are common housing management issues. In addition there are a number of factors that are specific to Traveller accommodation, for example in Traveller differences and traditions. Particularly problematic is the lack of good data collection or evidence-based working, especially in such a complex arena.

Design and Provision Dimensions

The weak guidance of policy directives allow for service providers to provide on a case-by-case, trial basis to advance accommodation. Despite differences in procedures and in local variability generally, three potential design and provision options can be identified:

- pursue new build and/or substantial renovation
- refurbish and maintain existing sites
- provide alternative accommodation

How these possibilities are realised into actual outcomes largely relies upon informal and formal consultation mechanisms. Societal and cultural issues, internal differences amongst the Traveller community and changing preferences for accommodation also add to complexities in achieving outcomes.

Direct Management and Maintenance Concerns

Different service delivery models and financial management concerns and revenue streams shape how management and maintenance issues are defined and delivered in the many different local contexts. Apparent differences and even contradictions between respondents' perceptions of key issues and more objective measures of these were particularly apparent with management and maintenance concerns. While individual good practices can be identified, there are a number of challenges for instituting systemic good practices. Recognising the complexity of factors and the many different positions of key stakeholders present challenges to be overcome for long-term solutions.

Quality of Life Concerns

Debates and discussions on considerations for quality of life in Traveller-specific accommodation may be a way to productively progress systemic good practice and delivery concerns. They can help to define the parameters of what constitutes 'good' practices for management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation. They can also provide the baseline of appropriate expectations, based upon a broad range of factors rather than a 'lowest common denominator' approach that can be seen in many situations in the current context.

5.2 Recommendations

A key objective of this research is to make recommendations to improve the management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation. Based on the findings of this study the recommendations are grouped into three categories:

- The current policy framework
- Strategic planning and delivery approaches
- Local authority practices in relation to the management and maintenance of Traveller-specific accommodation

1. The Current Policy Framework

1.1 Apply Sustainability Principles to Traveller Accommodation

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government should apply the sustainability principles outlined in the Housing Policy Statement Delivering Homes: Sustaining Communities to address below standard Traveller-specific accommodation, where it exists.

1.2 Develop National Standards for Traveller Accommodation Practice and Delivery

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government should develop, in consultation with stakeholders, agreed national standards for Traveller accommodation. The indicator system developed for this study to examine standards of management and maintenance should be used as a basis for the development of these standards.

1.3 Standardise Service Delivery Approaches and Support Good Practice

The large degree of local variability in service delivery approaches identified in this study is a barrier to the development of good practice in this area. While recognising the importance of local-area responses to local needs, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government should consider methods to encourage a more common approach to service delivery and to sharing of good practice.

1.4 Improve Evidence Based Working and Data Collection

More systematic data collection and use of data to inform planning and service delivery is required. The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government should review and up-date the data requirements for evidence-based policy making and good practice development. The research tools developed for this study should be used as a base for this review. The Department should also undertake a national audit of the standard of Traveller-specific accommodation.

2. Strategic Planning and Delivery Approaches

2.1 Implementing Traveller Accommodation Practice and Delivery as part of the Sustainable Communities Framework

Local authorities should apply the Sustainable Communities framework to implement better practice and delivery at local level. Guiding principles here include:

- addressing persistent problems
- overcoming obstacles
- implementing systemic good practice
- creating supportive local institutional settings
- promoting evidence-based working
- ensuring that all aspects of the practice and delivery of Traveller accommodation is transparent and sustainable

Local authorities should use the national standards and guidance from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, as recommended above, to ensure that there are clear parameters around what design and provision options are to be delivered. Robust strategic planning frameworks to deliver these options should be established, including considerations for sustainable community proofing.

2.2 Implementing Systemic Good Practice and Achieving Sustainable Outcomes

Local authorities should implement systemic good practice, by:

- drawing upon the knowledge and expertise of their own, and other, local authority staff
- identifying and implementing appropriate training and development
- addressing organisational and staff issues

Local authorities may want to consider an internal audit of their current practice and delivery contexts, for example by drawing upon the methodologies and documents developed for this study. In common with broader housing management reforms, local authorities should implement good practice from other sources.

2.3 Address Organisational and Staff Issues

Local authorities should consider ways of advancing intra- and inter-agency approaches to improve communication, facilitate the transfer of skills and learning, and support relevant staff. Local authorities may also want to consider establishing dedicated Traveller Accommodation Units, keeping in mind the benefits and drawbacks of these identified in this study.

2.4 Address Design, Provision and Delivery Barriers

Lack of clarity and the complexity of factors affecting the practice and delivery of Traveller accommodation can create design, provision and implementation barriers. Local authorities should use departmental guidance to facilitate overcoming these barriers. Local authorities should also investigate, and have clear parameters for, assessing housing needs and allocation procedures. Defined timetables for delivery and procedures to deal with refusals of offers, including an assessment of reasons for refusal, are especially important. Good data collection and evidence-based working is essential here.

2.5 Explore the potential role of other service providers and stakeholders

There is a need to examine and develop a model for Traveller-specific accommodation that explicitly engages with community development and estate management principles. To achieve sustainable outcomes it is necessary for Traveller tenants to be proactive in the management of the accommodation.

The voluntary housing sector should be encouraged to further develop and facilitate programmes for the delivery of Traveller accommodation, including Traveller-specific accommodation. The establishment of a Traveller Voluntary Housing Association, with the support of Traveller representative groups, should also be considered.

3. Local Practices in Relation to the Management and Maintenance of Traveller-Specific Accommodation

3.1 Develop More Strategic Management and Maintenance Practices

Research evidence suggests that current management and maintenance practices are often reactive and crisis-oriented. Management and maintenance staff should avail of opportunities to positively learn from experiences and to actively apply them to new situations/families. Furthermore, in common with all management and maintenance programmes, efforts should be made to keep up standards, respond to issues in a timely fashion, institute cyclical repairs and maintenance, and other principles of general good practice, as everyday practice (see Centre for Housing Research Good Practice Guidelines on a range of topics).

3.2 Adopting Systemic Good Practice and Addressing Local Variability

The research revealed that stakeholders' perceptions and approaches to issues relating to Traveller-specific accommodation varied considerably. In contrast to more objective measures, this can reinforce the current difficulties with local variability and present challenges for instituting systemic good practice. There is a need to recognise the real effects of such varied perceptions on Traveller accommodation, but also use good data and evidence to ensure that perceptions/attitudes do not define all management and maintenance practices and delivery.

A substantial challenge is to move the positive aspects of informal working relationships into systemic good practices that can be supported and sustained by all stakeholders. Key principles here include:

- supportive national and local institutional settings
- good relationships and dialogue with local Settled and Traveller populations
- a commitment to collectively progress sustainable outcomes through existing or new consultation mechanisms

3.3 Defining and Delivering Management and Maintenance Tasks

The research evidence highlights a number of difficulties around defining and delivering management and maintenance tasks. There is need to clearly define roles and responsibilities, particularly for caretakers, and have clear procedures in place for handing over routine tasks to tenants. Pre-tenancy training outlining the roles and responsibilities of tenants can assist here. Long-term, there may be a need to re-examine the role and effectiveness of caretakers. Balancing Traveller-specific concerns with universal concerns in common with all local authority tenants is one way of ensuring greater clarity, transparency and fairness in defining and delivering appropriate tasks.

3.4 The Role of Traveller Differences in Management and Maintenance Practices

This research has found that good service delivery outcomes for Traveller-specific accommodation are often based on a good understanding and appreciation by service providers of family dynamics within the Traveller Community. This is particularly clear when the impact of family incompatibility is considered. Often nuanced responses are required of service providers, which requires skilled and experienced staffing. But family dynamics does have implications for a range of day-to-day management and maintenance concerns such as stability of tenure, overcrowding and quality of life. There is a need to recognise the importance, and the crucial management and maintenance implications, of Traveller traditions and differences while also considering broader management and maintenance concerns.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

List of organisations interviewed

- Athy Traveller Support Group
- Belfast City Council, Northern Ireland
- Carlow County Council
- Clare County Council
- Cork City Council
- Conference of Religious in Ireland (CORI)
- Donegal Travellers Project
- Department of Education and Science
- Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
- Exchange House, Dublin
- Fingal County Council
- Galway City Council
- Galway Traveller Support Group
- Garda Racial and Intercultural Office
- Irish Council for Social Housing
- Irish Travellers Movement
- Kildare County Council
- Kildare Traveller Action Ltd. (formerly Kildare Traveller Network)
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- Pavee Point
- Respond Housing Association, Waterford
- South Tipperary County Council
- Traveller Visibility Group, Cork
- Waterford County Council
- Westmeath County Council
- Wexford County Council

Appendix 2

Questionnaire to local authorities

i. Context

At End 2004 and as of Census, November 2005

Local Authority Area		N	% Total
Total Stock of Local Authority Social Rented Housing	2004		
	2005		
Total Population ⁵ in Local Authority Social Rented Housing	2004		
	2005		
Total Stock of Other (Voluntary and Co-operative) Social Rented Housing	2004		
	2005		
Total Population in Other Social Rented Housing	2004		
	2005		
Total Stock of Bays (official encampments)	2004		
	2005		
Total Stock of Bays (temporary encampments)	2004		
	2005		
Total Stock of Bays (transient encampments)	2004		
	2005		
Total Numbers in unofficial and roadside encampments	2004		
	2005		
Total No of Indigenous Travellers @ end 2004 in locality	2004		
	2005		
Total No of Non-indigenous Travellers @ end 2004 in locality	2004		
	2005		

Calculation for Total Population: (please tick all that apply)

- Principal Earners
- Secondary Earners
- All those aged 18 over eligible for social welfare benefits
- Dependents
- Number of Households

5 Total population to include all principal and secondary earners and/or those over 18 eligible for social welfare benefits – giving a total population as number of individuals – or on the basis of number of households, depending on the methods of data collection. If it is possible to include number of dependents, please do so within the box.

1. *What type of database systems are used to record: housing data; financial data; any other data (e.g. Aggresso, Technipoint, etc.)?*

Housing Data:

Financial Data:

Other Data (please specify):

2. *Was this system developed in-house or bought off the shelf?*

3. *In terms of usefulness and efficiency how would you rate these systems overall?*

- Very Good
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

ii. Traveller Occupancy Rates
At End 2004 and as of Census, November 2005

Total Housed		
Number of Travellers at end 2004	2004	
	2005	
Number in Standard Local Authority Social Rented Housing	2004	
	2005	
Number in Other Standard Social Rented Housing (e.g. Voluntary)	2004	
	2005	
Number in Group Housing	2004	
	2005	
Number in Bays (official encampments)	2004	
	2005	
Number in Bays (temporary encampments)	2004	
	2005	
Number in Bays (transient encampments)	2004	
	2005	
Other	2004	
	2005	
Target number of Travellers to be accommodated under current Accommodation Plan (in 2004) [i.e. TAP 1]		
Number accommodated (in 2004) [j.e. under TAP 1]		
Number accommodated as % of Target (in 2004)		
Number of accommodation offers made to Travellers (in 2004)		
Number of accommodation offers refused (in 2004)		
Target number of Travellers to be accommodated under 2005-2008 Accommodation Plan [i.e. TAP 2]		

iii. Staffing Profile
As Of Current Date

	N/WTE	% Of All Housing Staff in Local Authority
Number of total staff in Traveller Accommodation Section (Whole-time)		
Number of total staff in Traveller Accommodation Section (Part-time only)		
Number of social workers in Traveller Accommodation Section (Wholetime Equivalent (WTE) ⁶		
Number of caretakers or other specialist staff in Traveller Accommodation Section (WTE)		
Number of other staff in Traveller Accommodation Section (WTE)		
Number recruited in 2004 (WTE)		

⁶ For example the WTE of a staff member working solely in Traveller accommodation is 100%. Please give numbers for all staff working in the area either on whole or part time. Please also give the cumulative whole time equivalents of each category/grade of staff.

iv. Financial Profile
At end 2004

Revenue Expenditure	€	% Of Total Housing Expenditure
Total Housing Expenditure in 2004		
Budgeted expenditure on all LA Housing except Traveller-specific Accommodation in 2004 ⁷		
Actual expenditure on all LA Housing except Traveller-specific Accommodation in 2004		
Actual expenditure on maintenance and management of all LA Housing except Traveller-specific Accommodation in 2004		
Budgeted expenditure on Traveller-specific Accommodation in 2004		
Actual expenditure on Traveller-specific Accommodation in 2004		
Actual expenditure on maintenance and management of Traveller-specific Accommodation in 2004		
Expenditure recouped from the DoELG in 2004		
Expenditure recouped from other sources (e.g. ESB, rent) in 2004		
Capital Expenditure	€	% Of Total Housing Expenditure
Total Housing Expenditure in 2004		
DoELG-approved expenditure on all LA Housing except Traveller-specific Accommodation in 2004		
Actual expenditure on all LA Housing except Traveller-specific Accommodation in 2004		
Actual expenditure on maintenance and management of all LA Housing except Traveller-specific Accommodation in 2004		
DoELG-approved expenditure on Traveller-specific Accommodation in 2004		
Actual expenditure on Traveller-specific Accommodation in 2004		
Actual expenditure on maintenance and management of existing Traveller-specific Accommodation in 2004 [i.e. less any new developments]		

⁷ If there are separate budgets for Travellers in standard LA housing please give the relevant figures for these as well as for Traveller-specific accommodation.

**v. Management of Tenancies and Stock for Travellers
At End 2004 and as of Census, November 2005⁸**

	N	% Of All Tenants
Total number of Travellers (family units) accommodated on facilities provided by the Local Authority [i.e. in Traveller-specific accommodation]	2004	
	2005	
Number of Travellers (family units) accommodated by the Local Authority – as renting tenants (exc. Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS)) [i.e. in standard LA housing]	2004	
	2005	
Number of Travellers (family units) accommodated under the CAS [i.e. in voluntary/co-operative housing]	2004	
	2005	
Number of Travellers (family units) accommodated in Private Rented Accommodation	2004	
	2005	
Number of Travellers (family units) on the Housing Waiting List (HWL)	2004	
	2005	
Change in number of Travellers (family units) on the HWL	2003/2004	
	2004/2005	
Number of new Traveller applications for HWL	2004	
	2005	
Total Numbers on the HWL	2004	
	2005	
Total Numbers of Travellers evicted or moved on	2004	
	2005	
Expressed preference for Traveller-specific accommodation	2004	
	2005	
Number of non-assessed or pending assessment cases in 2005 for Travellers		

⁸ If both sets of data available.

vi. Voids and Re-Lettings

At End 2004 and as of Census, November 2005⁹

	N		% Of All [Local Authority units, Complaints, Repairs]
Number of vacant standard social housing	2004	2005	
Average time taken to re-let standard social housing	2004	2005	
Average time taken to re-let a vacated bay	2004	2005	
Average time taken to re-let group housing	2004	2005	
Number of vacant bays	2004	2005	
Number of vacant group housing units	2004	2005	
Total number of complaints for maintenance in 2004	standard la Housing		
	Traveller-specific Accommodation		
Usual response times in 2004	< 1 week	Standard LA Housing	
		Traveller-specific Accomd.	
	2-4 wks	Standard LA Housing	
		Traveller-specific Accomd.	
	> 4 wks	Standard LA Housing	
		Traveller-specific Accomd.	
Total number of complaints for maintenance in 2005	standard la housing		
	Traveller-specific Accommodation		

⁹ If both sets of data are available.

		N	% Of All [Local Authority units, Complaints, Repairs]
Usual response times in 2005	< 1 week	Standard LA Housing	
		Traveller-specific Accomd.	
	2-4 wks	Standard LA Housing	
		Traveller-specific Accomd.	
	> 4 wks	Standard LA Housing	
		Traveller-specific Accomd.	
Total cost of repairing vacated bays or other Traveller-specific Accommodation		2004 2005	

vii. **Rent and Rent Collection**
At End 2004 and as of Census, November 2005¹⁰

Differential Rents		€	% Of Total Housing Income
Total rent due to be collected	2004 2005		
Average Rent Paid for Standard Social Housing	2004 2005		
Average Rent Paid for Bays	2004 2005		
Average Rent Paid for Group Housing Units	2004 2005		
Rents from Travellers due to be collected	2004 2005		
Rents from Travellers collected as % of amount due	2004 2005		
Arrears in Rents due from Traveller-specific Accommodation in 2004	< 4 weeks 4 – 6 weeks 6 – 12 weeks > 12 weeks		
Arrears in Rents due from Traveller-specific Accommodation in 2005	< 4 weeks 4 – 6 weeks 6 – 12 weeks > 12 weeks		
Arrears written off (rents never collected)	2004 2005		

What methods of Rent Collection do you use?

On-site collection

If on-site, how often?

Household Budget/Post Office

ESB Meter Cards

Other (please specify)

¹⁰ If both sets of data are available.

viii Loans and Grants
At End 2004 and as of Census, November 2005¹¹

1. *How do you operate your loan and grant schemes?*

- Any VAT registered caravan dealership (subject to inspection)
- Any VAT registered caravan dealership within specified radius/area (please specify radius/area)
- Any Local Authority registered caravan dealerships (please go to Q2)
- Any LA registered caravan dealerships within specified radius/area (please specify radius/area) (please go to Q2)
- Do not operate any such schemes (please go to Q4)

2. *How many caravan dealerships are registered?*

3. *In your opinion, is the useful economic life of a caravan greater or less than the maximum term of the caravan loan (e.g. do caravans need to be replaced prior to the associated loan being repaid)?*

4. *Are Travellers on the roadside excluded from the loan scheme?*

5. *Are Travellers on unofficial sites excluded from the loan scheme?*

6. *Are applicants required to provide a deposit; if yes, what is the % deposit required?*

7. *Why do you not operate these schemes?*

- Insufficient Staff resources
- Arrears too great/Loans never paid off
- Caravans were taken out of LA area
- Other (please specify)

8. *When did you cease operating these schemes?*

11 If both sets of data are available.

Loans for Caravan Purchase		€	Number
Number of Travellers family units currently participating (with loans outstanding)			
Value of outstanding loans	2004		
	2005		
Number and value of approved applications	2004		
	2005		
Total loan repayments due to be collected	2004		
	2005		
Loans collected as % of amount due	2004		
	2005		
Arrears	1 month	2004	
		2005	
	2 – 3 months	2004	
		2005	
	> 3 months	2004	
		2005	
Grants for Caravan Purchase		€ amount	Number
Number and value of approved grants		2004	
		2005	

ix. Other Schemes

At End 2004 and as of Census, November 2005¹²

Other Schemes		€	Number
Value and number of Traveller family units participating in the Mortgage Allowance Scheme (MAS)	2004		
	2005		
Value and number of all approved applications	2004		
	2005		
Cost of MAS	2004		
	2005		
Value and number of Traveller family units housed under the Rental Subsidy Scheme (RSS)	2004		
	2005		
Value and number of all approved applications	2004		
	2005		
Value and number of Housing Associations assisted under RSS [where Travellers are tenants]	2004		
	2005		

¹² If both sets of data are available.

Other Schemes		€	Number
Cost of RSS	2004 2005		
Value and number of Low Cost Sites provided	2004 2005		
Value and number of Traveller family units housed under a Shared Ownership arrangement	2004 2005		
Value and number of all applications approved	2004 2005		
Value and number of housing loans (mortgages) to Travellers outstanding	2004 2005		
Value and number of these loans approved	2004 2005		
Value and number of all housing loans outstanding	2004 2005		
Value and number of all approved applications	2004 2005		
Total loan repayments due to be collected from Travellers	2004 2005		
Loans collected as % of amount due from Travellers	2004 2005		
Arrears in 2004 from Travellers	1 month 2 – 3 months > 3 months		
Arrears in 2005 from Travellers	1 month 2 – 3 months > 3 months		

x. Maintenance Costs
At End 2003 and End 2004

	2003	2004
Cost of property maintenance services per permanent bay		
Cost of estate management services per permanent bay		
Planned, cyclical and major repairs cost per permanent bay		
Voids maintenance costs per permanent bay		
Reactive maintenance costs per permanent bay		
Capitalised expenditure on planned maintenance / improvements per permanent bay		
Cost of property maintenance services per temporary bay		
Cost of estate management services per temporary bay		
Planned, cyclical and major repairs cost per temporary bay		
Voids maintenance costs per temporary bay		
Reactive maintenance costs per temporary bay		
Capitalised expenditure on planned maintenance / improvements per temporary bay		
Cost of property maintenance services per Group Housing unit		
Cost of estate management services per Group Housing unit		
Planned, cyclical and major repairs cost per Group Housing unit		
Voids maintenance costs per Group Housing unit		
Reactive maintenance costs per Group Housing unit		
Capitalised expenditure on planned maintenance / improvements per Group Housing unit		
If Present		
Cost of property maintenance services per transient bay		
Cost of estate management services per transient bay		
Planned, cyclical and major repairs cost per transient bay		
Voids maintenance costs per transient bay		
Reactive maintenance costs per transient bay		
Capitalised expenditure on planned maintenance / improvements per transient bay		

xi. Other Grants and Costs
At End 2004

Other Grants	€	Number
Grants for Communal facilities in 2004		
Number of Traveller family units housed under the CAS		
Number of approved applications in 2004		
Number of Housing Associations assisted under the CAS in 2004		
Cost of CAS in 2004		
Special one-off grants to Travellers for purchase or construction of a house in 2004		
Any other special one-off grants for purchase of Traveller-specific accommodation (e.g. mobile home, caravan) in 2004		
1.1.1.1 Other Costs ¹³	€	Number carried out 2004
Costs per unit for enforcement of tenancy licensing agreements in standard local authority housing		
Costs per house for anti-social behaviour offences (including evictions) in standard local authority housing		
Costs per bay for enforcement of tenancy and licensing agreements in halting sites		
Costs per bay for anti-social behaviour offences (including evictions) in halting sites		
Costs per unit for enforcement of tenancy and licensing agreements in group housing schemes		
Costs per unit for anti-social behaviour offences (including evictions) in group housing schemes		
Costs per site for anti-social behaviour offences and/or evictions in unauthorised and roadside encampments		

¹³ Please give best-guess estimate if specific data is not available. Please note if details are estimates or are recorded figures in data management databases.

xii. Profile of Traveller Clients
At End 2004 and as of Census, November 2005¹⁴

Age Profile

		N	% of Total Population
Children	2004		
	2005		
Working Age (e.g. 16 – 65 years)	2004		
	2005		
Pensioners	2004		
	2005		

Household Type

		N	% of All Households
One Person Household	2004		
	2005		
Lone Parent Household	2004		
	2005		
Married or Cohabiting Couple with Dependent Children	2004		
	2005		
Married or Cohabiting Couple with no Dependent Children	2004		
	2005		
Pensioner Household	2004		
	2005		
Other	2004		
	2005		

¹⁴ If data is available

Economic Activity

Active		N	% Of All Economically Active
Total	2004 2005		
Employed	2004 2005		
Self – Employed	2004 2005		
Average Income	2004 2005		
Inactive		N	% Of All Economically Inactive
Total	2004 2005		
Unemployed	2004 2005		
Student	2004 2005		
Retired	2004 2005		
Looking After Family (Home Duties)	2004 2005		
Sick and/or Disabled	2004 2005		

CATEGORY ONE
Physical Conditions

Indicator 1UA:
Adherence to Minimum
Basic Provisions (Guidelines)

For Unauthorised/Temporary sites only

i. Provision of Basic Services

- Portable Water Supply
- Portable Toilets
- Local Domestic Waste Removal/Skip

ii. Quality/Standards of Provision of Basic Services

- Very Good
- Good
- Average
- Bad
- Very Bad

Indicator 1:
General Amenities
and Facilities

A. Layout

i. Centrality

- In Centre or Equidistant from all Bays
- 50 to 100 yards of Most Bays/Houses
- 100 yards
- 150-100 yards
- Far end of Site

ii. Accessibility

- Free Access at any Time
- Access During Working Hours
- Limited Access (Open for a few hours per day)
- Extremely Limited Access (Caretaker required for access)
- Entrance Blocked/Overcrowded

iii. Concentration

- One Block per Bay/House
- One Block per 2-3 Bays
- One Block per 3-4 Bays
- One Block at Either End of Site
- One Block per Site

B. Standards and Design

i. Physical Standards

Standard	Laundry	Shower/Bath	Cooking	Other
Heating				
Insulation				
Walls and Floors Tiled				
No Visible Signs of Dampness				
Easy Access Layout				
Plumbing (hidden and pipes lagged)				
Other				

C. Management and Maintenance

i. State of Repair

- All Facilities in Good Working Order
- 75% in Good Working Order
- 50% in Good Working Order
- 25% in Good Working Order
- All Facilities Broken/in Need of Repair

ii. Cleanliness

- All Toilets Working/No Blockage
- Laundry Facilities Tidy
- Shower Room Clean
- Cooking Facilities Clean
- No litter/Rubbish in Facilities
- Other _____

D. Provision

i. Facilities Available

- Cold Taps
- Hot Taps
- Electricity
- Laundry Facilities
- Phone Boxes
- Toilets and Showers
- Kitchen/Cooking Facilities
- Hosing and Cleaning Equipment
- Provision for Clothes Drying
- Recycling Facilities
- Other _____
- _____
- _____

**Indicator 2UA:
Evidence of Management and
Maintenance on Site**

For Unauthorised/Temporary sites only

- Up to Standards of an Official Site
- Intended to be Brought up to Standards of an Official Site (Presence of some permanent structures, taps etc.)
- Some Evidence of Design/ M+M (Presence of some permanence e.g. tarmac/hard surfaces, rubbish facilities)
- Minimal Evidence of Design/M+M (Presence of basic services/provisions, but no permanent structures or hard surfaces)
- Ad Hoc/ No Design/M+M (No presence of permanent structures or basic provisions e.g. field)

**Indicator 2:
Design of Site Corresponding
to Guidelines**

i. Density of Caravans/houses

- More than 6m between Caravans/Houses
- 6m between Caravans/Houses
- 4m between Caravans/Houses
- 2m between Caravans Houses
- Less than 2m

ii. Architectural Standards

- Very Good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Very Poor

iii. Special Needs

- Ramps/Wide Front Doors to Service Units
- Accessible Toilets
- Extra-Wide Caravans and Space for these

- Age-Specific/Impaired Mobility
- (No steep steps, toilets on ground floor,
- room on ground floor to be converted)
- Adaptability to Create these Provisions

iv. Size of Bays

Capable of Accommodating:

- More than 2 Caravans and 1 Motor Vehicle
- 2 Caravans and 1 Motor Vehicle
- 2 Caravans
- 1 Caravan and 1 Motor Vehicle
- 1 Caravan

v. Environmental Standards

- Light Considerations
- Space Considerations
- Wind Shelter
- Optimisation of Sunlight

**Indicator 3UA:
Planning of Site**

For Unauthorised/Temporary sites only

- All Spaces within Site Planned and Organised (Provided by LA with a view towards making it an official site)
- Considerable Evidence of Planning and Organisation (Site is temporary but functions effectively in the short-term)
- Some Evidence of Planning and Organisation (Site functions as not ideal but best-case scenario in current circumstances)
- Little Evidence of Planning and Organisation (Site originally established by Travellers and temporarily facilitated by LA)
- Site is a Stop-Gap Measure for Moving Travellers off the Roadside

**Indicator 3:
Physical Layout and Design
of Bays/Group Housing**

i. Provision of Extra Spaces

- Provision for Horses
 - Provision for Traveller Economy
 - Provision for Extra Caravans
 - Other Extra Spaces
(Green Area)
-

ii. Entrance and Access Points

- Wide Entrance
- No Barriers/Gates/Cow gates
- Provision for Parking
- Appropriate Turning Points

iii. Isolation from Neighbours

- No Boundary around Bays/Houses
- Low Boundary (Below 4 Foot)
- Average Boundary (4 Foot)
- High Boundary (6 Foot)
- Very High Boundary (Over 10 Foot)

iv. Type of Boundary

- Concrete Wall
- Earthen Wall
- Fencing
- Bushes/Hedges
- Other (Chain-link or poles)

CATEGORY TWO
Geographical/Spatial Issues:
Built Quality Environment

Indicator 4:
Access to Services

Service	Presence	Distance
Schools		
G.P/Doctor		
Local/Corner Shop		
Grocery Shop		
Public Transport		
Urban/ Town Centres		
Other Statutory Services		
Other Shops and Related Amenities		
Churches		
Social and Community Support Networks		
Other		

Indicator 5:
Proximity to Settled Community

Settled Community	Presence	Distance
Private Housing Estate		
Local Authority Housing Estate		
Other		

Indicator 6:
Proximity to Other Traveller
Specific Accommodation

Unofficial Sites	Presence	Distance
Unofficial Site		
Other Traveller-Specific Accommodation		

Setting of Bay/Group Housing:

- Urban
- Large Town
- Rural

**Indicator 7:
Provision of Infrastructure**

- Good Sewage and Drainage
- Paving of Bays and Related Areas (Tarmaced not earth)
- Roads and Access Points (Footpaths and roads tarmac not chippings)
- Public Lighting
- Road Safety Measures (Speed ramps and signage)

**Indicator 8:
Are Adjoining Lands Suitable for Residential Development**

i. Nearby Presence of:

- Commercial/Industrial Activities
- Railways
- Wasteground/Swampy Grounds
- Rivers
- Other Physical Manmade/Natural Boundaries

ii. Environmental Hazards:

- Electricity Pylons
- Telephone Masts
- Dumps
- Traffic/Major Roads
- Pollution (e.g. run-off water from dumps/mines, industrial pollution)
- Other _____
- _____

**CATEGORY THREE
Safety and security**

**Indicator 9:
Evidence of Anti-Social Behaviour**

- Graffiti
- Vandalism
- Joyriding/Burnt out Cars
- Litter/Dog/Horse Dirt
- Drug Activities
- Crime
- Other _____
- _____

**Indicator 10:
Public/Private Spaces**

A. Monitoring of Spaces

i. C.C.T.V

- Full Coverage of Site
- Coverage of 75% of Site
- Coverage of 50% of Site
- Coverage of 25% of Site
- Not Present

ii. Working Lighting

- All Lighting Working
- 75% of Lighting Working
- 50% of Lighting Working
- 25% of Lighting Working
- Not Present

B. Provision and Use of Green Areas

- Extensively Used
(adults and kids using it)
- Present/Moderately Used
(few kids kicking ball/hanging out)
- Present as Thoroughfare Only
(or for children hanging out)
- Present/Not Used
(just for horses/rubbish)
- Not Present

C. Defensible Spaces

- Public Spaces Overlooked
- No Back/Side Alleys
(exit/entrance can be monitored)
- Presence of Speed Ramps/
Bollards/Gates
- No Unobserved/Multiple/Isolated
Entrance/Exit Points
- Back Gardens Backed onto Each Other
(Not roads)

**Indicator 11:
Access to Emergency Services**

i. Barriers

- No Barriers
- Allows for Lorries/Fire Trucks
- Allows for Ambulances/Vans
- Car Access Only
- Locked/No Free Access to Key

ii. Location of Barriers (if Present)

Nearest Point to Bays

Furthest Point to Bays

iii. Phone Services

- Free/Communal Access
- Requires 24hr On Site
Caretaker to Access
- Requires Off Site Caretaker to Access
- Present but Not Working
- Not Present

iv. Fire Safety/Medical Equipment

- Free/Communal Access
- Requires 24hr On Site
Caretaker to Access
- Requires Off Site Caretaker to Access
- Not Working/Out of Date
- Not Present

v. Distance to Nearest Hospital

- Under 5 miles
- 5-10 miles
- 10-15 miles
- 15-20 miles
- Over 20 miles

CATEGORY FOUR
Management and Maintenance

I. Housing Management

Indicator 12:
Presence of Caretaker or Other
On-Site Manager

i. Is there is a Caretaker or Other On-Site Manager: If so who is it?

- Hired Directly by Local Authority
- Traveller Living On-Site
- Independent Contractor
- None
- Other _____

ii. Presence on-site

- On Site 24 Hours
- On Site 12-24 Hours
- On Site 6-12 Hours
- On-Site 6 Hours or Less
- Off Site Unless Contacted

iii. Duties [check all that apply]

- Access to Emergency Services
- Access to Barriers
- Access to Basic Communal Facilities
- Basic Maintenance/Upkeep [e.g. basic litter control, tidying, monitoring of empty bays etc.]
- Advanced Maintenance/Upkeep [e.g. repairs on-site, painting and groundskeeping, upkeep of empty bays, etc.]
- Estate Management [contact point for other services; tenant liaison; advice, info]
- Monitoring of Anti-Social Behaviour/ Dealing with Conflicts
- Other _____

Indicator 13:
Evidence of 'Toleration'/ Tradeoffs

- No Evidence
- Little Evidence (e.g. 1 or 2 of below)
- Some Evidence (e.g. 2 or 3 of below)
- Considerable Evidence (e.g. 3 or 4 of below)
- Substantial Evidence (e.g. all 5 of below)

Evidence includes: (Circle All That Apply)

- Areas of site maintained while others are not
- Significant numbers of nearby unauthorised halting sites/roadside encampments (more than a few caravans), especially for long durations and if official site is underutilised
- Presence of horses roaming free
- Amount and length of duration of nearby waste
- Bouldering: Evidence of nearby entrances to car parks, industrial sites or open spaces being blocked by mounds of dirt or boulders

Other _____

II. Maintenance

Indicator 14: Evidence of Repairs and Improvement Works

- Construction Work in Progress
- Presence of Repair Vehicles/
Local Authority Vehicles, etc.
- No Vacant (but maintained)
Bays/Houses (if yes how many)

No Derelict (vacant and not maintained)
Bays/Houses (if
yes how many)

Other Evidence

iii. Frequency of Collection [Fullness of bins obviously dependent on when you visit – might be collection day]

- Frequent
(weekly or greater;
skips/bins not very full)
- Quite Frequent
(either 1-2 weeks or skips/bins
approx 50% full)
- Moderately Frequently
(either every 2-3 weeks or
skips/bins 75% full)
- Infrequently
(either 3-4 weeks or
skips/bins quite full)
- None or Very Infrequent
(either less than once a month
or skips overflowing)
- When is collection day?

Indicator 15: Waste Management and Collection

i. Illegal Dumping/Fly tipping [Observable by asking, or by observing types of rubbish]

- None
- Moderate to Light, Any Distance
- Moderate, Close to Site
- Substantial, Greater than _ to
1 Mile from Site
- Substantial, Close to Site

ii. Facilities on Site

- 1 Rubbish Bin and/or Skip per Bay
- Numerous (at least 2) Skips
and Multiple Rubbish Bins
- 2-3 Skips
- 1 Rubbish Bin and/or Skip per Site
- None

Indicator 16: General Management/ Maintenance

i. Day-to-Day Upkeep: Evidence of..

- Groundskeeping
- No Litter/Tidiness
- No Waste/Rubbish
(specifically mounds of)
- Painting and General Maintenance

ii. Overcrowding

Extra Caravans	Number of Houses/Bays
0	
1	
2	
3	
4	
4+	

iii. Pest Control

Pest	Presence	Scale of Problem V. Bad, Bad, Moderate, Low, V. Low
Rats		
Horses		
Dogs		
Insects		
Other		

III. Estate management

Indicator 17: Communal Facilities

i. Provision

- Play Facilities
- Arts/Leisure/Recreation
- Creches/Childcare
- Spaces for Traveller Economy
- Evidence of Civic/Community Activism
- Other

ii. Use and Quality of Present Facilities

- All Frequently Used
- Some Frequently Used
- All or Some Weekly
- Used Less than Weekly
- Never Used

iii. Upkeep of Present Facilities

- Very Good Upkeep
- Good Upkeep
- Neither/Average Upkeep
- Poor Upkeep
- Not Kept Up

**Indicator 18:
Management of Horses**

i. Provision for Horses

- Large Bounded Area on Site
- Small Bounded Area on Site
- Allowed Off Site Provision (e.g. separate stables or fields)
- Not Bounded/Unofficial Site (e.g. unbounded field next to site, or even within site)
- None

ii. Programmes for Managing Horses

- Removal of Horses
 - Managing Waste
 - Safety and Security Separated from site/ Cannot roam free)
 - Involves Travellers Themselves
- Other _____

**CATEGORY FIVE
Quality of Life**

**Indicator 19:
Perceptions of Quality of Life**

i. What are the three best things about this site?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

ii. Do these things make you want to stay here?

- Yes
- No

iii. What are the three worst things about this site?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

iv. Do these things make you want to leave here?

- Yes
- No

v. Who do you go to for information if you have a problem with your accommodation?

- Local Authorities
 - Public Health Nurse
 - Traveller Organisation
 - Social Worker
 - Religious Official
- Other _____

vi. Who do you go to for advice and support if you have a problem with your accommodation?

- Local Authorities
- Public Health Nurse
- Traveller Organisation
- Social Worker
- Religious Official
- Other _____

vii. Have you ever had any trouble from the Settled Community while living here?

- Not at all
- Once or Twice
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Very Frequently

viii. Have you ever had any trouble from other Travellers while living here?

- Not at all
- Once or Twice
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Very Frequently

ix. How comfortable is your caravan/house?

- Very Comfortable
- Comfortable
- Neither Comfortable nor Uncomfortable
- Uncomfortable
- Very Uncomfortable

**Indicator 20:
Patterns of Movement/ Nomadism**

i. Do you travel at all now?

- Very Frequently (go to ii.)
- Frequently (go to ii.)
- Sometimes/Occasionally (go to ii.)
- Rarely (go to ii.)
- No (go to iii.)

ii. How often do you travel?

- Every Few Years
- Once a Year
- Twice a Year
- More than 3 Times a Year

iii. When was the last time you travelled?

- 3 Months
- 3-6 Months
- 6-12 Months
- 1-2 Years
- 2 Years or More

iv. If you did want to travel how easy do you think it would be?

- Very Easy
- Easy
- Neither Easy nor Difficult
- Difficult
- Very Difficult

v. What was the reason for the last time you travelled?

- Work
- Religious Occasion
- Family
- No Reason
- Eviction
- Other _____

vi. How long do you think you will stay here?

- No Plans to Leave
- Few Years
- One Year
- 6 months – One Year
- 3-6 months
- Less than 3 Months
- As Soon As Possible

QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS AND NOTES
Profile

Gender

- Male
- Female

i. What age group are you in?

- under 18
- 18-30
- 30-40
- 40-50
- 50-60
- 60 +

ii. What is your marital status?

- Single
- Engaged To Be Married
- Married
- Separated
- Widow

iii. Do you have any children?

- Yes (go to iv.)
- No (go to iv.)

iv. How many children do you have?

v. How long have you been on this site?

- Less than 3 Months
- 3-6 Months
- 6-12 Months
- 1-2 Years
- 2-5 Years
- 5-10 Years
- 10-15 Years
- More than 20 years

vi. Do you have any members of family on this site?

- Parent(s)
- Siblings and their families
- Other Extended Family Members and their families

II Interaction with Housing and Management and Maintenance

i. What type of accommodation have you lived in?

- Roadside Encampments (go to ii.)
- Temporary Halting Site (go to ii.)
- Permanent Halting Site
- Group Housing
- Local Authority Housing
- Private Rented Accommodation

Other _____

ii. Have you ever been moved on from somewhere?

- Yes (go to iia.)
- No (go to iii.)

iia. Where did this happen?

iib. When did this happen?

iii. Are you happy with what is provided here?

- Very Happy
- Happy
- Neither Happy nor Unhappy
- Unhappy
- Very Unhappy

iv. How happy were you with your previous accommodation?

- Very Happy
- Happy
- Neither Happy nor Unhappy
- Unhappy
- Very Unhappy

v. Would you like to get or be nearer to more services?

- Would like to be much nearer a lot more services
- Would like to be quite a bit nearer some more services
- Would like to be near a couple of more services
- Would like to be nearer/ have more access to a particular service (which one?)
- No

vi. Do you get visits from:

Local Authorities

How Often?

- Yes _____
- No _____

Public Health Nurse

- Yes _____
- No _____

Social Workers

- Yes _____
- No _____

Traveller Organisations

- Yes _____
- No _____

vii. Would you like to see more of these people?

- A lot More
- More
- A Bit More
- More Access to a Particular Official
- (Which One?) _____
- No

viii. When was the last time you or a family member visited the doctor?

- Within the Last 2 Weeks
- Month
- 1-3 Months
- 3-6 Months
- 6-12 Months
- 12 Months or More

ix. *When was the last time you or a family member visited the hospital?*

- Within the last 2 Weeks
- Month
- 1-3 Months
- 3-6 Months
- 6-12 Months
- 12 Months or More

x. *Do Ambulances/Emergency Services Call Out?*

- Always
- Most of Time
- Sometimes
- For Specific Emergencies
- Never

xi. *Are you happy to stay here or would you prefer another type of housing/accommodation?*

- Happy to stay here

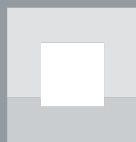
(if yes, end of questions)

(if no, go to following options)

- Permanent Halting Site
- Temporary Halting Site
- Group Housing
- Local Authority Housing
- Private Rented Accommodation
- None of the Above

Other _____

Price €15



**Centre for
Housing Research**

Centre for Housing Research
Ionad Taighde ar Thithíocht

E chr@ipa.ie
W www.chr.ie

Training and Administration 57–61 Lansdowne Road, Dublin 4
T 01.240 3600 **F** 01.668 9135

Research and Director's Office Floor 2, Block 4, Irish Life Centre
Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1 **T** 01.889 8250 **F** 01.872 6818