

Submission to Offaly County Council by The Irish Traveller Movement 4 - 5
Eustace Street, Temple Bar Dublin 2 Accommodation@itmtrav.ie Re:
Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Offaly County Development Plan
2021-2027 Background to the Irish Traveller Movement Founded in 1990,
the Irish Traveller Movement is the national advocacy and membership
platform which brings together Travellers and representative organisations
to develop collective solutions on issues faced by the community to achieve
greater equality for Travellers. We represent Traveller interests in national
governmental, international and human rights settings. We challenge
racism- individual, cultural and structural which Travellers face and promote
integration and equality. We are led by our grassroots community
membership, deliver expertise in shaping organisations locally and promote
community leadership ensuring Travellers' voices are to the forefront of all
discussions at a national and international level, including through our
membership of structures such as the National Traveller Accommodation
Consultative Committee. Traveller Accommodation There is a crisis in
accommodation nationally for Travellers. Despite statutory requirements
Travellers continue to live in poor conditions throughout Ireland on road
sides, in temporary Halting sites and in overcrowded conditions in standard
and Traveller specific accommodation, with associated health and safety
risks. Notable, in this context, is the recent report by the Ombudsman for
Children's Office 'No End in Site' which highlighted the deplorable
conditions in which Traveller children are living in. Travellers are also
significantly overrepresented within homeless figures nationally, accounting
for as high as 50% of the homeless population in some local authority
areas. The Expert Review on Traveller Accommodation, published in 2019
highlighted the need for Development Plans and Traveller Accommodation
Programmes to be aligned. Below are a series of recommendations to
enhance your current Draft County Development Plan to ensure the
accommodation needs, including culturally appropriate, Traveller specific
accommodation, of Travellers in Offaly County are met during the lifespan
of the Plan. Many thanks for your consideration of these issues.
Recommendations for Offaly County Council Development Plan Traveller
specific accommodation developments completed under the last
development plan period should be outlined in the Development Plan.
National-level planning guidelines for Development Plans set out the
relationship between the Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP), the
Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998 and the statutory
Development Plan. They require that the range and type of housing
required and the land use aspects of the TAP are incorporated into the
Development Plan. The Guidelines also state that this should take the form

of ‘... objectives that clearly set out the approach of the Development Plan in addressing the accommodation needs of the Traveller community and an indication of the specific locations of known Traveller accommodation projects. To support the identification of additional locations for such projects, zoning policies should also be drawn up in a flexible manner to reflect the urgent need to secure additional Traveller accommodation over the lifetime of the plan.’ (Section 4.56 of Development Plans: Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2007). Therefore, projects committed to under the 2019-2024 Traveller Accommodation Programme should be listed as objectives in the Development Plan with clear timelines as per the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 PART III (27) (10) and Sites should be identified and zoning of land for Traveller specific accommodation, including transient accommodation, should be mapped and illustrated in the programme, in line with the Planning and Development Act, (2000) as amended, particularly s10(2)(i). The legislation requires that a Development Plan shall include objectives for: ‘The provision of accommodation for Travellers, and the use of particular areas for that purpose.’ Given the lifespan of the development plan, consideration should also be given for how sites will be identified for the next Traveller Accommodation Programme, including transient sites. A system of monitoring and reviewing at regular intervals the provisions outlined in the Development Plans as they relate to Traveller accommodation should be included in the Development Plan. Section 94 (2) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, sets out that Development Plans should ensure that they counteract undue segregation. With this in mind, sites identified for Traveller specific accommodation should be well located, close to key amenities, and chosen in consultation with the community. Plans should include sufficient green areas and children’s play areas. All developments should be carried out with consultation at every stage of the process, with prospective residents and with the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee. The Development Plan should identify Travellers as a priority group in its plans to address homelessness and identify what tangible steps will be taken to reduce the overrepresentation of Travellers in homeless figures. This should also take into account the high level of hidden homelessness, where families are living in chronic overcrowding, or without basic facilities of their own, or security of tenure, with plans to alleviate this clearly outlined. Appropriate baseline studies on Traveller accommodation needs should be carried out as part of integrated Housing Need and Demand Assessments for Development Plans, if this has not already occurred. Offaly County Council should consider, in this process, how future Development Plans could have

their timelines aligned with the timelines of TAPs, for a more integrated approach, in line with the recommendations of the Expert Review on Traveller Accommodation. The Development Plan should outline Offaly County Council's plans for retrofitting Traveller accommodation and timelines for this. The Development Plan should reference the work being done on a national level to implement the recommendations of the Expert Review on Traveller Accommodation and commit to incorporating the work and decisions of the programme board into its future processes. Many thanks for your consideration of these issues.