

# Northern Ireland Housing Executive Irish Travellers Forum

## Marlborough House and via Webex

20<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 11.30am

### Attendees

Stephen Semple – Irish Traveller Policy Unit  
Manager

Connor Smith – Irish Traveller Liaison Officer

David Glasgow – Irish Traveller Policy Officer

Lisa Hogg – Craigavon Travellers Support

Committee

Colin Caughey – Northern Ireland Human Rights

Commission

Mary Walker – Monaghan County Council

Martin McDonagh – Irish Traveller

Kat Healy – Social Justice Trust

Bernadette McAliskey – STEP NI

### Apologies

Martin Ward – Irish Traveller

Johnny Crumlish – Irish Traveller

Wesley Crumlish – Irish Traveller

Ailbhe Hickey – Assistant Director Land and  
Regeneration (A)

ITEM		MINUTE	ACTION
1	Welcome and Introductions	S. Semple welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.	
2	Previous minutes and actions	<p>Minutes from the Irish Travellers Forum held on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2022 were agreed. Actions were either complete or progressing satisfactorily. Issues of note were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• M. McDonagh invited B. McAliskey to become a member of the meeting. Proposal was accepted and agreed.</li><li>• The meeting agreed that NIHE should continue to chair the meeting and a joint chair would not be appointed at this time. This position would be reviewed in due course.</li><li>• It was agreed that a deputy from each agency could attend the meeting if a member is unavailable. ITPU to update Terms</li></ul>	ITPU

		of Reference to reflect this change.	
3	Irish Travellers Accommodation Strategy Update	<p>S Semple advised the meeting of progress made in the implementation of the Irish Travellers Accommodation Strategy. Key points and actions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S. Semple to arrange an agreed suitable venue for the NIHE Irish Travellers Workshop event. Likely to be around Housing Needs Assessment research</li> <li>• S Semple updated the Forum on progress on the Review of NIHE owned sites. The Forum agreed that the delay in procuring a consultant to design a new serviced site at Ballyarnett was unacceptable and proposed penning a letter to be sent to NIHE CX highlighting this point.</li> <li>• Works on upgrading the amenity units at The Glen Serviced Site, Coalisland are anticipated to be on site March 2023.</li> <li>• ITPU to meet with K. Healy regarding demand for a site in Strabane following the Latent Demand Test which was held in October 2022.</li> </ul>	<p>S. Semple</p> <p>ITPU/All</p> <p>ITPU</p>
4	Discussion on Local Housing Services for Irish Traveller residents/tenants/licencees	<p>S. Semple provided a presentation for discussion. Issues raised are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Traveller support groups were agreed that the current approach was wholly inadequate</li> <li>• B. McAliskey voiced concern that equal opportunity had not been afforded to Irish Travellers which represents a dereliction of duty by the Housing Executive.</li> <li>• K. Healey suggested that a specific approach to the provision of housing services is required for Irish Travellers.</li> <li>• C. Caughey suggested that DfC needs to advocate for more funding for Irish Travellers.</li> <li>• M. McDonagh stated that Irish Travellers were being forced away from their family accommodation</li> </ul>	

		<p>as these locations are full to capacity and there are no vacancies for the younger generation to move into. This is resulting on younger families moving away and a disconnect between younger and older generations who pass down Traveller traditions and skills. S Semple suggested a Latent Demand Test could be arranged for Coalisland.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L. Hogg, B. McAliskey and K. Healy all highlighted communication problems between their agencies and Local Office staff. Contact is only made by the Housing Executive when there is a problem from their end. A more proactive approach to communication from local office staff is required. L. Hogg asked if there could be representation from Local Offices on the Forum.</li> <li>• K. Healy highlighted that there was also a lack of communication between Local Offices and Housing Associations when Group Housing schemes adjoin NIHE sites i.e. Labre Park / Ballyarnett. Better communication would aid housing management of these sites.</li> <li>• B. McAliskey stated that agencies like STEP NI, CTSC etc were having to plug gaps in services left by NIHE without funding to do so.</li> <li>• K Healy informed the meeting about research carried out by Housing Rights which details agencies used and trusted by Irish Travellers which would be useful. C Caughey to share research document with the meeting members.</li> <li>• All agreed that the current housing management arrangements for Irish Traveller in NIHE occupancy is not working and that a different approach is required. ITPU to discuss staffing arrangements to cover local office services to Irish</li> </ul>	<p>ITPU</p> <p>C. Caughey</p> <p>ITPU</p>
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		Travellers with Senior Management	
5	Agree Agenda items for next meeting	No future Agenda items were proposed.	
6	AOB & Date of Next meeting	<p>M. McDonagh told the meeting he has difficulty registering for voting as the addresses at The Glen, Coalisland are not properly registered. C. Smith to contact Council to investigate.</p> <p>Next meeting to be organised by ITPU in 3 months.</p>	<p>C. Smith</p> <p>ITPU</p>