**Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee**

**Thursday 08th February 2024 Housing Conference Room.**

**In attendance:**

Cllr Guss O’Connell (Chair), Elaine Leech (A/Director of HSCD), Cllr William Carey, Cllr Shane Moynihan, Cllr Teresa Costello, Cllr Dermot Richardson, Patrick Nevin (TTCDP), Emily Smart (CTDG), Mary Cassidy (TTCDP), Mary Connell (A/SEO HSCD), Niamh Carton (A/AO HSCD), Sean Logue (Senior Social Worker HSCD), Steven Masterson (A/SSO HSCD) Fionnuala Keane (SSO HSCD) Seán Barron (SO HSCD).

**Pre-Meeting Discussion:**

E. Leech proposed to Cllr. O’Connell that the meeting should focus on the new TAP to ensure all members are aware of the new guidelines. The new TAP will be brought to full Council for adoption by the new Council in October 2024.

Cllr. O’Connell welcomed S. Masterson to the meeting.

**Minutes of the last meeting**

* The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

**Matters Arising**

* E. Leech advised that the playground at Owendoher Haven is complete. There will be an official launch in March by Mayor, Cllr. Alan Edge. An invitation will be sent to the Chair of the LTACC, its members and elected members from the Templeogue-Rathfarnham LEA.
* N. Carton advised the TAU is meeting with Libraries to create a project to celebrate Travellers in our county. It was suggested that this could coincide with Traveller Pride Week 2024.

**Annual Estimate of Accommodation for Traveller Families 2023**

* S. Masterson gave a presentation on the findings following completion of the Annual Estimate of Traveller Families.
* The TDG’s raised concerns on the accuracy of some figures presented, the number of Travellers living in standard accommodation in the County. N Carton advised that the information collated was based on the information available. E. Leech advised that it’s beneficial for SDCC if people who identify as a Traveller inform of same as it gives better and more accurate information. E. Leech also reassured that identifying as a Traveller does not preclude anyone from applying for any type of accommodation or restrict them to Traveller specific accommodation only.
* M. Cassidy queried about Traveller families in overcrowded accommodation and discussion followed. E. Leech advised if members are familiar with individual cases, they can be good starting point in recording figures.

**TAP Progress Report November 23 - Feb 24**

* N. Carton delivered the report. Since the last LTACC meeting only 1 halting site bay was allocated due to a number of delays and that two families from a site who had accepted have withdrawn their interest.
* There has been 1 offer of standard housing to a family from Old Castle Park and is awaiting allocation.
* Re-let works are currently underway in 2 Group Houses (Daletree) and 4 Bays (Stocking Hill)
* N. Carton and E. Smart are consulting with families in Oldcastle Park to discuss redevelopment.
* N. Carton advised of the delays with the progress on Owendoher Haven as it is difficult to temporarily relocate families.
* Cllr. Moynihan queried if the works at Clonburris will affect Kishogue Park. E. Leech confirmed same and advised that the families who live there have to be temporarily relocated and were given the option of modular / mobile homes. They have opted for Mobile Homes.

**TAP 2025 - 2029**

* M. Connell gave a presentation about the new TAP and emphasised that there was a tight timeframe for submissions to the new TAP. A months’ notice was given by SDCC for submissions and to-date, only 1 submission was received, which came from DLR. The deadline for submission is 08/02/2024.
* P. Nevin & E. Smart advised they have prepared a joint submission.
* M. Connell ran through other key dates outlined in the TAP.
* An Assessment of Need is to commence next following closing date for submissions and M. Connell ran through the summary of actions to be completed in the Assessment of Need. E. Leech stressed the need to improve our recording of statistics as these will inform the TAP and that consultation with LTACC is key.
* E. Leech proposed setting up different focus groups of young Travellers and older Travellers to consult on their housing needs and queried if P. Nevin and M. Cassidy would be interested in same.
* M. Cassidy supported the idea but raised concerns that it might create false expectations for younger Travellers about securing accommodation.
* P. Nevin suggested that if there are to be focus groups, they need to be an ongoing process and to some extent led by SDCC. E. Leech advised that SDCC would be happy to engage an independent facilitator who is non-SDCC / Tallaght Traveller Group / Clondalkin Traveller Group to run the focus groups.
* E. Leech raised the topic about future proofing homes for older Travellers and rightsizing and feels the need to do a wider consultation than just the LTACC.
* E. Leech queried with members are they aware of the interest levels Travellers have for the different types of accommodation and would Travellers opt for modular housing instead of mobile home? Discussion followed about modular homes.
* Cllr. O’Connell raised concerns over waiting times for Traveller specific accommodation, M. Cassidy agreed and suggested that all Traveller families should be supported by Traveller Accommodation Unit, in standard and Traveller Specific Accommodation.
* M. Cassidy also suggested that young Travellers living on sites could be trained to carry out maintenance / repair works. E. Leech advised that staff recruitment and training falls under SDCC’s HR programme but that any posts advertised are open to all applicants and that South Dublin County Council is an Equal Opportunities Employer.
* Cllr. Costello suggested more advertising of vacancies in SDCC within the Traveller community.
* E. Leech to forward on information on a recently advertised training scheme for General Operatives to M. Cassidy and advised of a rolling recruitment for Clerical Officers within SDCC.
* E. Smart stressed the difficulty and amount of work involved in assisting Travellers finding employment and suggested an internship programme E. Leech advised that the primary focus of the group is Traveller Accommodation and can’t commit to bringing in internship programs as that is under the remit of HR and would bring this suggestion to the Director of HR.
* SDCC will return to LTACC after carrying out the Assessment of Need and recording the accommodation preferences families and housing applicants have made. Preparation of TAP should be complete by end of May, and it was stated that it must be consistent with County Development Plan and any Local Area Plans. Cllr. O’Connell highlighted the importance of the involvement of LTACC members in the TAP right up to the deadline as a new council will be elected in June.

**A.O.B.**

* M. Cassidy advised she had asked could another staff member from Tallaght Travellers Development Group represent TTDG at the LTACC, this request had not been accommodated. Discussion followed with contributions from P. Nevin, Cllr. O’Connell and E. Leech. It was agreed that a substitute can attend the meeting once advance notice is given. It was also agreed that guest can attend to present at the LTACC for a particular item if the item is pertinent to their work. E. Leech advised members that a member of the Traveller community must be present at each meeting to have a quorum.
* E. Leech advised that a business case and qualifications and particulars for a Traveller Liaison Post have been submitted to HR, the LTACC will be informed once this position is to be advertised.

**A.O.B. Report**

* Plans for an open day at the play-space in Owendoher are set for 21st February.
* Dumping has been so problematic in Daletree that a tender for cleanup had to be done which delayed re-let works.
* Cllr. Carey advised he and P. Nevin went to Belgard Park to look at how the space could be re-designed and expanded upon and queried if this could be a submission to the TAP. N. Carton to talk to our Property Management Section to establish ownership of the land surrounding Belgard Park and revert to Cllr. Carey on same.
* Regarding focus groups, members agreed that an independent facilitator would be a good idea. N. Carton welcomed suggestions from LTACC members for the independent facilitator and for target ideas of the focus groups.

Meeting adjourned at 16:34.

**Dates for next meeting**

**Thursday 4th April 2024**