

Foreword

Limerick City Development Board is delighted to be associated with the development of the Limerick City Interagency Action Plan for Traveller Services. Limerick City was chosen, as one of ten pilot areas, to develop a two-year action plan for an interagency approach to the delivery of Traveller specific services at a local level. The Health Service Executive- Mid Western was nominated by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform as the convenor for this process. Limerick City Development Board's unique position as the structure within the city with representation from all state agencies meant that it was ideally positioned to facilitate the interagency consultation process and to pool together the resources necessary to produce this action plan.

This action plan seeks to:

- Be responsive to the needs of Travellers in Limerick City by working to fill gaps in service provision in a strategic way;
- Strengthen Traveller culture in the City by increasing awareness of it among state agency staff;
- Develop the capacity of Travellers in the City to move towards self-governance;
- Improve living conditions and quality of life for Travellers in Limerick City.

The success of the actions contained in this plan are not only dependent on the commitment of the agencies involved to carry out the plan but also on the Traveller community to embrace this opportunity to collaborate with state agencies to work to improve quality of life for Travellers.

Pat Dowling
Director of Service

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List of Abbreviations

ADAPT – About Depression Awareness Prevention Treatment

ADHD – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

ASB – Anti Social Behaviour

CDB – City Development Board

CE – Community Employment

CLVEC – City of Limerick Vocational Education Committee

CTC – Community Training Centre

CWO – Community Welfare Officer

DES – Department of Education and Science

DSFA – Department of Social and Family Affairs

ED – Electoral Division

FÁS – Foras Áiseanna Saothair

GLO – Garda Liaison Officer

GP – General Practitioner

HSE – Health Service Executive

ITLT – Interagency Traveller Liaison Officer

LCC - Limerick City Council

LTDG – Limerick Traveller Development Group

PAUL – People Action Against Unemployment Ltd

PHN – Public Health Nurse

RTT – Resource Teacher for Travellers

S/MWCDSA – Southern Mid West Community Development Support Agency

UL – University of Limerick

Chapter One

The Traveller Community in Irish Society

1.0 Introduction

Travellers have for centuries been recognised as a distinctive minority grouping in Irish society. Their well-established traditions and nomadic lifestyle distinguishes them from the 'settled community'. The *Equal Status Act* (2000) defines Travellers as:

'The community of people who are commonly called Travellers and who are identified (both by themselves and others) as people with a shared history, culture and traditions including, historically, a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland' (*Equal Status Act*, 2000: 7).

The *Report of the Task Force on the Travelling community* (1995) defined Traveller culture as:

'...the package of customs, traditions, symbols, values, phrases and other forms of communication by which we can belong to a community. The belonging is in understanding the meanings of these cultural forms and in sharing values and identity. Culture is the way we learn to think, behave and do things' (*Department of Equality and Law Reform 1995: 74*).

Despite the social and economic advances in recent years, Travellers in Ireland continue to be socially excluded, particularly in the areas of health, education, accommodation, training and employment. The following Statutory Acts are an attempt to redress this imbalance:

- *Child Care Act (1991)*
- *Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act (1998)*
- *Equal Status Act (2002)*
- *Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, Section 24 (2002)*
- *Education and Welfare Act (2000)*

Moreover, many Government Departments are providing significant levels of investment to develop innovative initiatives which complement mainstream service provision and address the inequalities currently experienced by Travellers.

2.0 Background

A High Level Group on Traveller issues was established in October 2003 under the aegis of the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Social Inclusion, which is chaired by An Taoiseach. The membership of this Committee comprises Senior Officials in relevant Departments, Health Service Executive, Local Authorities and other Agencies.

Two Pilot Interagency Projects were established in South Dublin and Co. Clare. Mr. Frank Fahy, Minister for State at the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, requested that a further eight pilot areas be established around the country.

The objective of the Interagency Group on Traveller Services is to involve key public service providers in developing a two year Action Plan for an interagency approach to the delivery of Traveller specific services at a local level. The completion date for the Action Plan is November 2005.

The Health Service Executive- Mid Western was nominated as the convenor for Limerick City. As County Limerick was also a nominated pilot site, an initial meeting was convened with all relevant stakeholders, to explore the merit of a joint approach which would have embraced Limerick City and Limerick County as one. Notwithstanding the close proximity of three Traveller locations on the outskirts of the boundary of Limerick City, agencies in County Limerick decided to pursue a separate Action Plan for the County, as they felt the issues differed significantly to those from Traveller sites in the city. Whilst agencies in the City sought and would have preferred a collaborative approach, this Action Plan concentrates solely on the six Traveller sites within the City boundary.

In recognition of their statutory requirements all the principal public service providers in Limerick city have agreed to participate in this process and are committed to ensuring the objections of the Action Plan are enacted.

Key Service Providers involved on Interagency Group:

- Health Service Executive
- Limerick City Council
- Garda Síochána
- Department of Education and Science
- Limerick City VEC
- PAUL Partnership
- Probation and Welfare Service
- FAS
- Limerick Youth Service
- Department of Social and Family Affairs
- Limerick Traveller Development Group

Chapter Two

The Traveller Community in Limerick City:

Section 1

1.0 Accommodation

Accommodation Status:

The Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government's Annual Count of Traveller Families (25th November, 2005) identified 297 Travellers living in Limerick City (rate 5.5/1000 population). This compares with the figure nationally. 13 Traveller Households are living in standard housing, with 55 (including 1 family on the roadside) households either living on, sharing or adjacent to Traveller specific accommodation.

Table 1

Breakdown of Location of Traveller Households in Limerick City¹

Location	Number of Households	Number of Travellers
Bawney's Bridge	10	42
Childers Road	9	31
Clonlong	16	61
Long Pavement	7	49
Rhebogue	7	16
Toppins Field	5	36
Total²	54	235

Standard Housing*	13	60
Adjacent to Roadside	1	2
Total	14	62

*This figure includes Travellers living in rent supplement supported accommodation; private rented accommodation, rented local authority housing, and housing purchased through local authority ownership schemes such as tenant purchase and shared ownership.

Limerick City Council's Traveller Accommodation Programme (2005-2008) which was adopted in January 2005, noted that at October 2004, 53 Traveller Families were living in Traveller specific accommodation in Limerick City. Out of this 53, 38 families were

¹ Map on page 12 indicates the location of Halting Sites in Limerick City & Environs.

² The focus of this Action Plan will be to concentrate only on households from the six sites

seeking Group Housing, 9 were seeking Halting Site accommodation and 6 were seeking their existing accommodation to be refurbished. LCC estimated that during the lifetime of the plan, an additional 26 new households will need to be provided to cater for new family formations. A proposal in relation to Traveller specific accommodation for Limerick City is outlined in Chapter Four.

2.0 Age Profile

Age Profile of Travellers in Ireland:

The age profile of Travellers in Irish society is predominately composed of young people. While the young Traveller population (aged 0-14 years) accounts for 42.2%, the corresponding proportion for the general population is 21.1%. Older Travellers (those aged 65 years and over) account for just 3.3 % of the total Traveller population compared with 11.1% for the general population. The distinctive age structure of the Traveller community resulted in the median age of 18 years compared with a national median age of 32 years (*CSO: 2002 Census of Population – Principal Demographic Results, p. 30*).

Age Profile of Travellers in Limerick City:

The 297 Travellers residing in the six Traveller sites in Limerick City depicts a similar profile to the national picture. 39% are aged 15 years or less while a further 36.5% are aged between 15 years and 29 years. Older Travellers (**aged over 50 years**) accounted for only 4.5% of the population. The population profile of Travellers for Limerick City indicates that 74.5% of the population are aged 29 years or less.

Fig 1

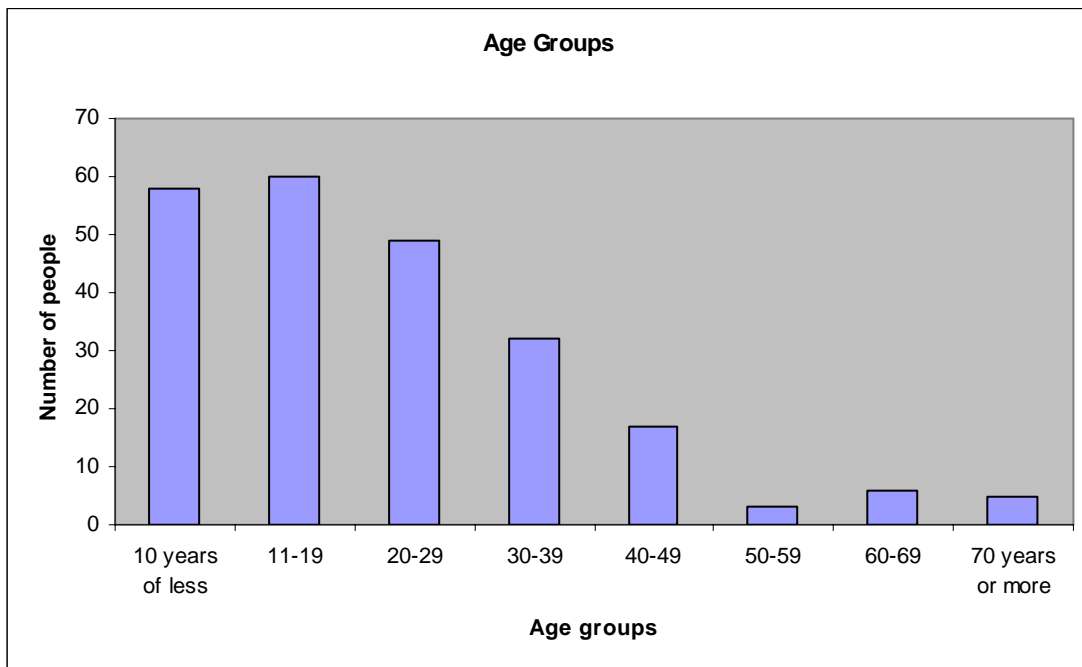


Fig 2

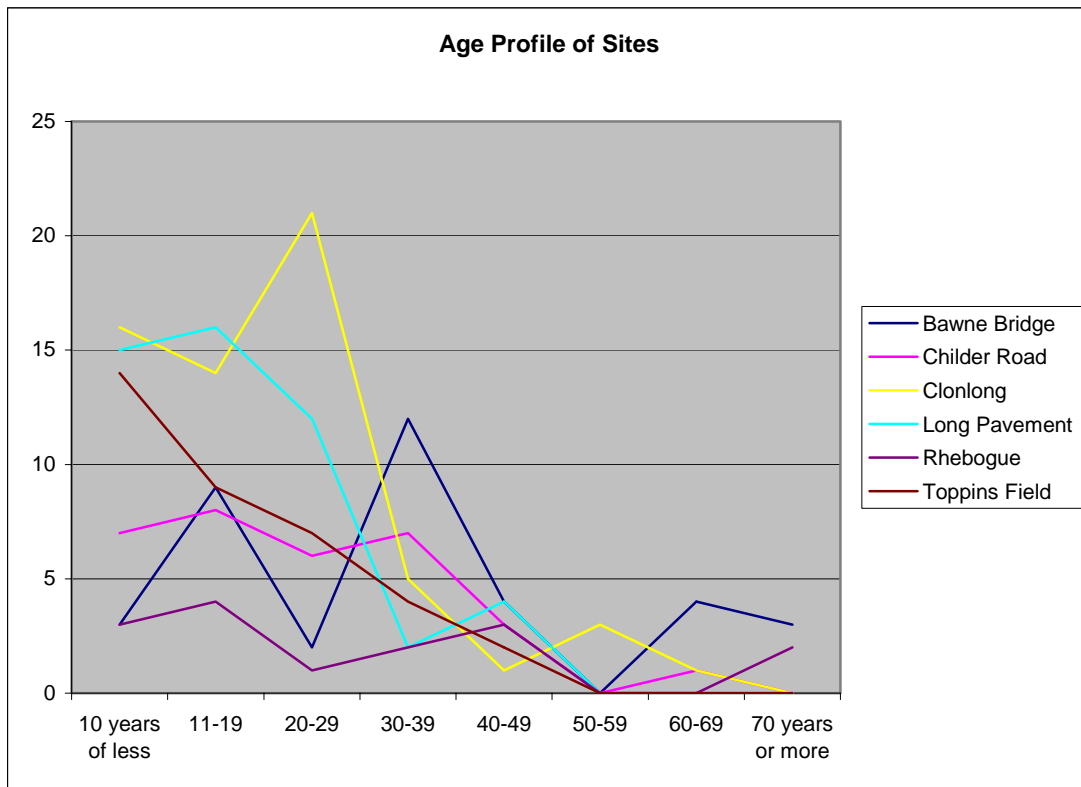
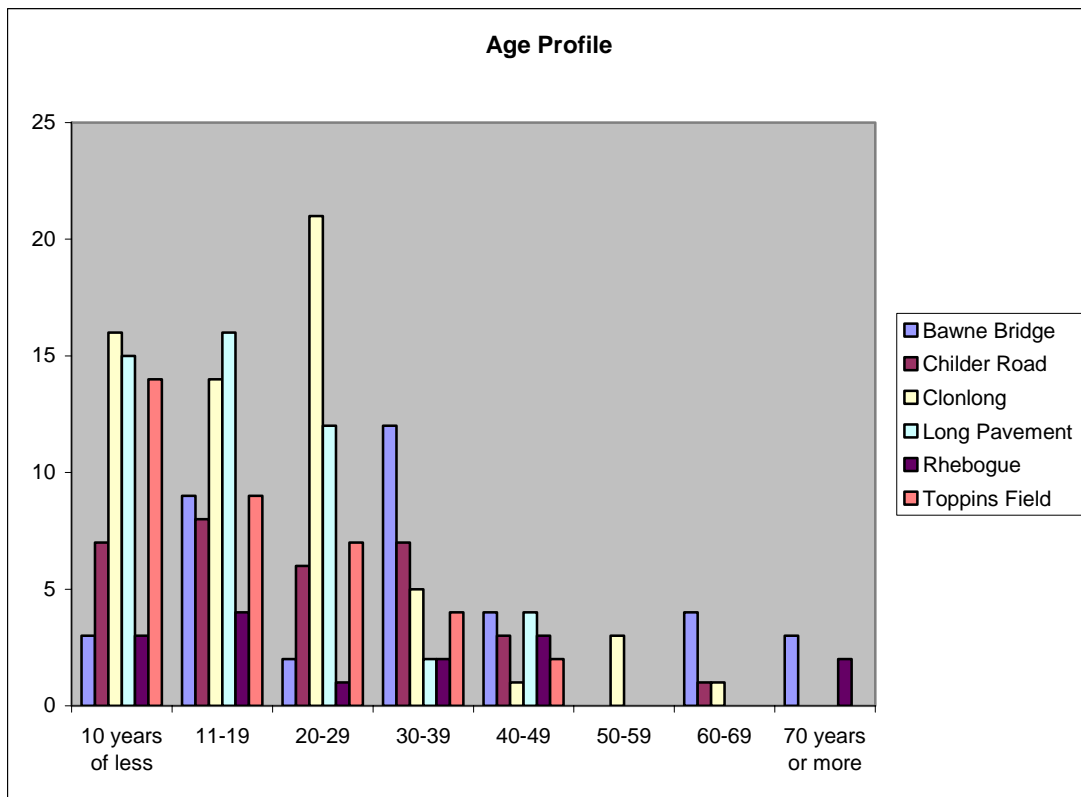


Fig 3



3.0 Health

The health status of Travellers remains poor when compared to the settled community and this is best exemplified by examining health statistics. An examination of the age structure of the Travelling community compared with the general population reveals some marked differences in relation to health status, e.g.:

- Traveller men live on average 10 years less than settled men;
- Traveller women live on average 12 years less than settled women;
- Infant mortality rate is 18.1 per 1,000 live births compared to 7.4 per 1,000 live births in the settled population;
- The still birth rate in the Travelling community is twice the national average;
- The Sudden Infant Death rate is 12 times the national average.

Equality of outcome is inherent in achieving equity in healthcare services. The provision of specialist services and innovative initiatives to complement mainstream services have been developed in an attempt to achieve equality of outcome.

Implementation of the HSE- Mid-Western Regional Traveller Health Action Plan presents many challenges to service providers, internal and external to the health service, and to Travellers and to Traveller Organisations including:

- ◆ The recognition of cultural identity as relevant to health policy and health services;
- ◆ Delivery of services to Travellers in a way that is both culturally and lifestyle appropriate;
- ◆ The promotion of a community development approach to health, incorporating a permanent role for peer-led service provision and the development of new roles for Travellers within the health services (i.e. primary health care programme)
- ◆ Meeting the requirements of real participation and partnership on the part of the community and voluntary sector;
- ◆ Establishing appropriate effective liaison mechanisms with non-health agencies;
- ◆ Measuring, monitoring and evaluating progress during the lifetime of the Strategy.

4.0 Education

While significant improvements have been made in the area of school attendance and retention at primary level, transfer to and retention in post primary school remains an area of concern. Reasons cited by the Traveller community for poor retention include bullying, intimidation, and a curriculum unable to provide for Traveller specific needs. It is hoped that the enactment of the Education and Welfare Board (2002) and the establishment of the National Educational Welfare Board which provides a comprehensive new framework for promoting regular school attendance and tackling the problems of absenteeism and early school leaving will have a positive impact in this area.

The Department of Education and Science is currently involved in the development of a five year Traveller Education Strategy. The main objective of the Traveller Education Strategy will be to ensure equality of outcomes for Travellers from education. It will map out the way forward in relation to Traveller education, taking account of the complexity of the issues involved, the history of provision and existing measures. It will mark out the challenges for the future and clearly identify ways to approach those challenges.

Figure 4

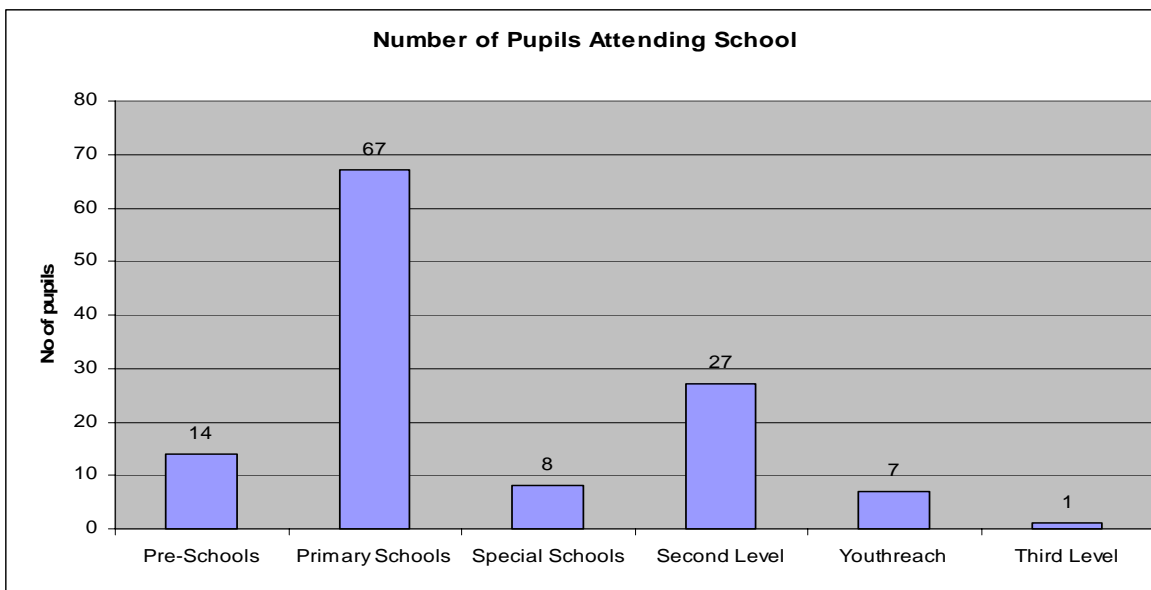


Table 2

	No of Schools	No of Pupils	Junior Cert	Leaving Cert
Pre-Schools	0	14		
Primary Schools	20	124		
Special Schools	3	8		
Second Level	10	27	6	0
Youth Reach	3	7		
Third Level	1	1		

Commentary³

Pre-Schools: 14 children attending Preschools

Primary Schools: 124 Attending at 20 Primary Schools

Special Schools: 8 Attending at 3 Special Schools

Second Level: 27 Attending at 10 Secondary Schools

Youth Reach: 7 Attending at 3 Youth-reach programmes

Third Level: 1 Attending at Third Level

5.0 Employment

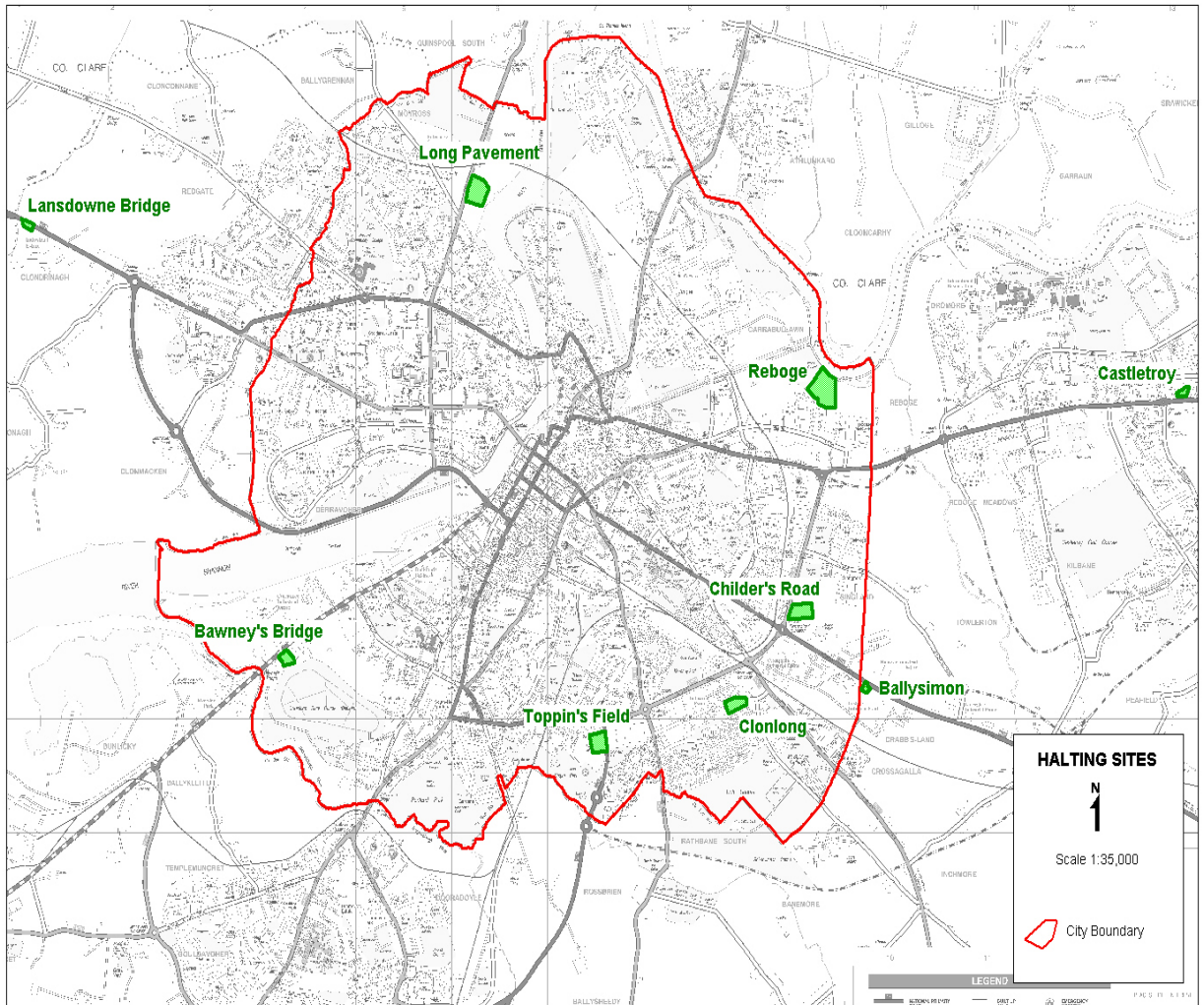
A number of Travellers are employed or are self-employed nationally (e.g. tarmacadam of residential drives, scrap metal merchants and horse trading). Notwithstanding this, there are high levels of unemployment in the Travelling community, which has resulted in the need for support from the social welfare system. It is estimated that in excess of 70% of Travellers over the age of 15 years are unemployed as compared to 5% of the settled population. Accurate and detailed statistics are difficult to ascertain owing to the non-identification of individuals as Travellers on records. High unemployment remains due to a number of inter-related factors:

- i) History of poor retention and attainment of Travellers in mainstream education which impacts on levels of employability and levels of dependency on the social welfare system;
- ii) Limited provision of Traveller specific training programmes;
- iii) The traditional Traveller employment economy has disappeared. Tin products are now replaced with products made of plastic and all Travellers now need to acquire and develop new skills i.e. literacy and numeracy;
- iv) Perception of discrimination on the part of potential employers/agencies;
- v) Inability to meet the costs associated with taking up employment due to loss of benefits.
- vi) Inadequate affordable support services, e.g. childcare.

Section Two of this chapter provides an outline summary of the agencies in Limerick City who employ Traveller designated workers and run programmes which address the needs of the local Travelling Community.

³ Not all children attending school in Limerick City live in the City.

Map 2 - Location of Halting Sites in Limerick City and Environs



Limerick City Council - GIS - 2005

Chapter Two

Section 2

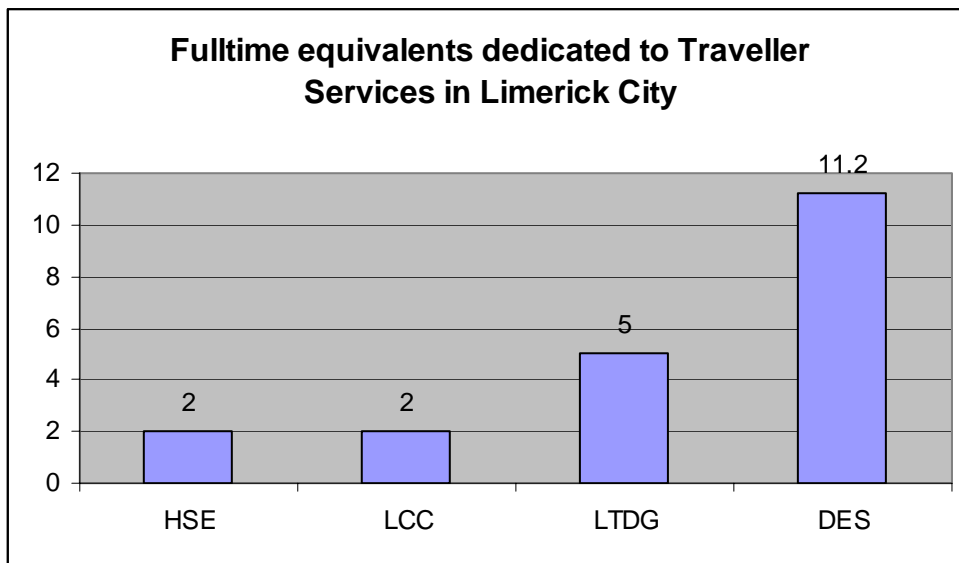
Table 1 SUMMARY OF DESIGNATED WORKERS FOR TRAVELLERS IN LIMERICK CITY

Agency	Limerick City Council (LCC)	Health Service Executive (HSE)	Department of Education and Science (DES)	Limerick Traveller Development Group (LTDG)
Service	<p>Social Worker</p> <p>Traveller Services Co-ordinator</p> <p>LCC has “Resident Caretakers” on each of the Traveller specific accommodation sites.</p>	<p>Designated Public Health Nurse</p> <p>Community Development Worker (.5 wte),</p> <p>Family Support Worker (.5wte)</p>	<p>Visiting Teacher for Travellers (1wte)</p> <p>Resource Teachers for Travellers-Primary (8wtes)</p> <p>Resource Teachers for Travellers-Post Primary (1.2wtes)</p> <p>Traveller Pre-School (1wte)</p>	<p>Project Manager (full time)</p> <p>Drugs Education Worker (part time, funded by VEC)</p> <p>Accommodation Officer (part funded, by LCC)</p> <p>Community Health Development Worker (full time, funded by HSE)</p> <p>Administrator (part time)</p> <p>Community Employment Supervisor (full time, funded by FÁS)</p>
Funding	<p>€106,710 (Staffing costs only)</p>	<p>€6,000</p>	<p>€500,000 (salary for 11.2 teachers)</p>	<p>€260,000</p>

Table 2 ADDITIONAL PROGRAMME FUNDING

Agency	Additional Programme Funding
FÁS	<p>Examples of additional services provided by FÁS include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Career guidance and counselling through Employment Services; ▪ Training and work experience through Training and Community Services. <p>Total Funding: €80,000</p>
Limerick City Council	<p>Examples of site services provided by LCC include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sanitation and Pest Control; ▪ Refuse Collection; ▪ Site Security; ▪ Painting and Decorating. <p>Total Funding: €73,000 (approx)</p>

Fig 5



SUMMARY OF SERVICES FOR TRAVELLERS – ACCOMMODATION, HEALTH, EDUCATION, TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Agency	Accommodation	Youth Services	Education	
	Limerick City Council (LCC)	Limerick Youth Service	Dept of Education & Science	Limerick City V.E.C.
Service	<p>LCC provide the following housing options to the Travelling Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traveller Specific Accommodation; • Caravan Loans • Rented Social Housing; • Private Ownership; • Private Rented Accommodation; • Tenant Purchase; • Shared Ownership; • Improvement works to cater for disabled members of the family or additional persons. <p>LCC also manages and maintains Traveller specific accommodation. Maintenance includes cleansing of the sites, refuse collection, provision of skips, pest control, repairs, painting and decorating and site security e.g. erection of fences and barriers. All of these services are co-ordinated by the Traveller Services Co-ordinator whose role also extends to supervising the Resident Caretaker.</p> <p>LCC promotes responsible Estate Management, this service is co-ordinated by the Social Worker and Traveller Services Co-Ordinator in conjunction with the Resident Caretaker and involves dealing with ASB, litter control and horses.</p> <p>LCC employs a designated Social Worker with responsibility for the social needs of Limerick City's Travellers as well as acting as a liaison between LCC and the Traveller Community.</p> <p>LCC staff also support Travellers in standard housing and those living by the roadside.</p>	<p>Limerick Youth Service operates a number of youth clubs, groups and projects throughout the City, offering after-school, evening and some weekend provision to young people aged between ten and twenty one years.</p> <p>It runs a range of training and development opportunities for adults working with young people including Child Protection, Leadership Training and the UCC accredited Diploma in Youth and Community Work. It offers support, advice and information to individuals and groups wishing to develop services for young people.</p> <p>It runs a wide range of other services and supports including insurance and affiliation, regional programmes and networking and exchange opportunities.</p> <p>The Community Training Centre and Youthreach at Limerick Youth Service offer a flexible programme of activities where learners' needs, interests and capacities are fully taken into account. Full-time vocational training and education programmes are offered in a range of disciplines, with certification in FETAC, ECDL, A+, Junior Cert and Leaving Cert Applied. Individual plans are designed based on individuals learning and other needs and all learners are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular and youth work programmes and opportunities within the Organisation.</p> <p>Currently there are three young travellers</p>	<p>Visiting Teacher for Travellers: The service seeks to provide opportunities for Traveller parents, their children and schools to engage in a process of development that maximises participation and attainment levels and promotes intercultural education for all. The day to day work of the Visiting Teacher Service includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison with families • Liaison with schools and boards of management • Liaison with Department of Education and Science • Liaison with other agencies <p>Resource Teachers for Travellers: The role of the resource teacher for Travellers (RTT) is to support and optimise teaching and learning opportunities to Traveller children with identified supplementary learning needs.</p> <p>Provision of Traveller specific Pre-schools: The Department of Education and Science provides an annual equipment grant for each pre-school and defrays 98% of the costs in relation to tuition and transport.</p> <p>Capitation Grants: Additional capitation grants in the amount of €250 per Traveller pupil under 12 and €427 per Traveller pupil over 12 are paid to primary and post primary schools</p>	<p>The role of the City of Limerick VEC is to create an environment where adult Travellers in Limerick City have real opportunities to become independent life long learners, and in turn, contribute to the development of their communities.</p> <p>City of Limerick VEC supports the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disadvantaged youth grant to Limerick Traveller Development Group (€8,770) • Literacy and Numeracy skills (€2,400) • 1 part time Drug Awareness Worker employed by Limerick Traveller Development Group

		attached to the Youthreach programme and eight learners attached to the Community Training Centre. Two of the CTC learners are living on an unofficial site in County Limerick.		
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Agency	Gardaí	Social Welfare	FÁS An Foras Áiseana Saothair (FÁS) the National Training and Employment Authority	PAUL Partnership
Service	<p>The aim of the Gardaí is to achieve the highest attainable level of personal protection, community commitment and state security to the citizens of Limerick City. There are 3 Youth Diversion Programmes targeting youths critically at risk in the areas of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moyross; • Ballynanty/Thomondgate; • Southill. 	<p>The Department of Social and Family Affairs responds to individual's needs depending on their particular circumstances, (e.g. unemployment, illness, old age, etc.) The Department funds programmes to support families and to encourage individuals to participate in the workforce. This funding can be aimed at programmes designed to tackle needs identified in the Travelling Community.</p>	<p>The principal functions of FÁS as laid down by the Labour Services Act 1987 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and re-training • Designated Apprenticeships • Recruitment Services • Employment Programmes • Placement and Guidance Service • Assistance to Community Groups • Advice for people returning to Ireland and those seeking employment elsewhere in the EU <p>FÁS has statutory responsibility for the organisation and control of apprenticeship training in the designated apprenticeship occupations. It also has responsibility for vocational training and employment of people with a disability.</p> <p>In 2005 funding of €154,000 provided through the LTDG for a CE project with 11 participants and 1 supervisor.</p>	<p>PAUL Partnership works with disadvantaged communities and communities of interest. It assists such communities to develop their organisational and representational capacities and to participate fully in local policy and decision making- structures. It helps develop and sustain partnership-based linkages between public and statutory agencies and community organisations in the pursuit of social inclusion and improved quality of life for the most marginalized people and neighbourhoods in Limerick City.</p> <p>PAUL Partnership embraces the following programmes and projects: Limerick Local Employment Service Network; Limerick Employment Pact; Enterprise Support; Education and Training; Community Development; Community-Based Action Centres; Family Support and Welfare Rights.</p> <p>Responding to Traveller needs falls squarely within PAUL's operational remit and, as a distinct community of interest, the Traveller community has representation on the Board of PAUL Partnership (via LTDG). The range of services has included community development supports, education and training, measures around equality and assistance with access to employment through Limerick Local Employment Service.</p>

Agency	Limerick Traveller Development Group	Probation and Welfare Service	Health Service Executive
Service	<p>LTDG is a Community Development project. It's primary function is the empowerment and participation of Travellers, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of education and training projects which are administrated in a culturally appropriate manner; • To lobby and campaign for Traveller rights; • To actively oppose discrimination; • To research issues, develop ideas and produce reports and documentation. <p>Programme –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Employment, supporting participants to gain qualifications in both English and Maths, training and work experience; • Accommodation to improve the living conditions and accommodation of Travellers in Limerick City ensuring representatives attend accommodation meetings and set up training and support to Train Travellers as Caretakers for their sites; • Women's Development, working with Traveller Women one to one and in support groups to improve the quality of life of Traveller Women and their families; • Peer Led Community Health Service, Training Traveller Women to work as Health Care Workers to deliver health information support and advice to their peers; • Men's Development, Working in partnership with Southill outreach Traveller Men and young Men in the Southill area. One to one support and group work including residential is provided; • Youth Programme, Young Women's and Men's group aged 13-16 after schools project. • Drugs Education, the promotion, design and delivery of Drugs Awareness and Education Programme for Travellers. 	<p>The Probation and Welfare Service does not provide any Traveller specific services. However the service works with Travellers through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision of Travellers in Probation Bonds; • Supervision of Travellers in Community Service; • Working with Travellers who are serving prison sentences; <p>Working with Travellers through Southill Outreach service, which is funded by the Probation and Welfare Service.</p>	<p>The purpose of the HSE is to maintain and improve the health, welfare and quality of life of the community through the provision of appropriate and timely health and personal social services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives have been developed to compliment mainstream service provision where needs have been identified to promote access to services. • Appointment of Designated staff such as Co-Ordinator of Traveller Health, Designated Public Health Nurse, Community Development Workers and a Family Support Worker • Development of appropriate programmes that are responsive to the needs of Traveller including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding of Peer led initiatives - Traveller Cultural Awareness/Sensitivity Training Programme - Establishment of active partnerships - Developing a system for Ethnic Identification <p>Funding of Primary Health Care Programme in Limerick Traveller Development Group (target 10 women)</p>

Chapter Three

Consultation Phase with Service Delivery Agencies & the Traveller Community in Limerick City:

Reported Tendencies, Trends in Service Use and Issues Informing the Action Plan

1 Background & Process

As outlined in Chapter 1, the objective of producing an Interagency Action Plan for Traveller services in Limerick City comes in response both to a specific directive from the Department of the Taoiseach as well as a desire to adopt a more cohesive approach to Traveller needs locally. The process leading to the Action Plan is described below.

1.1 Process:

- 1.1.1* Circulation of questionnaires, by the HSE coordinating team, designed to seek feed-back from public, statutory and local development organisations on the kinds and levels of Traveller-related service delivery.
- 1.1.2* Meeting of heads of lead agencies and agreement of outline process.
- 1.1.3* Interagency meeting, facilitated by Limerick City Development Board, which brought together a number of representatives from the statutory agencies, public bodies and local and community development organisations to begin the process of outlining key issues for the Traveller Community in Limerick City - including gaps in current provision and potential responses.
- 1.1.4* Following agreement at the preceding interagency meeting, a parallel process was initiated in which members of the Traveller community, including the local representative organisation (Limerick Travellers Development Group / LTDG, core-funded under the Community Development Programme) were to be actively canvassed for their perspectives, needs and expectations. These meetings were conducted on a site-by-site basis.
- 1.1.5* Feed-back of consultation outcomes to a meeting of the interagency group. It was agreed that a draft Action Plan would be produced in collaboration between the HSE, PAUL Partnership and the Social Inclusion Unit, Limerick City Council.

- 1.1.6 Presentation of draft action plan to interagency group and discussion around structure, content and actions.
- 1.1.7 Document re-drafted and forwarded to interagency team and Limerick Travellers Development Group for comment.
- 1.1.8 Presentation of action plan to head of agencies for endorsement.

2. Key Process Outcomes

2.1 Interagency Consultations:

There was general agreement that the Action Plan should:

- Incorporate achievable targets and actions enabling tangible results to be produced;
- Incorporate Traveller views;
- Seek to strengthen the self-representation of the local Traveller community;
- Seek common ground / commonality of objectives;
- Be framed in response to Traveller values and culture;
- Clarify mutual, acceptable and sustainable responsibilities;
- Avoid “tokenism”;
- Be based on good communication and continuity of contact and provision.

More specifically, there was a very strong emphasis on:

- The importance of accepting that Travellers constitute a discrete community with a distinctive culture. It was agreed in principle that it was important that this culture is both recognised and respected and that measures designed for Travellers are responsive to cultural imperatives rather than being framed exclusively according to expectations on the part of actors and agencies outside the Traveller community.
- The importance of ensuring that capacity-building is a core objective so that the Traveller community’s ability to represent itself effectively and to assert the needs, values and identity of Travellers within local structures is enhanced. It should be ensured that the local representative organisation, Limerick Travellers Development Group receives appropriate assistance so that it can continue to be a key vehicle for delivering this objective.

- It was agreed that the parallel process of consultation with the Traveller community would take place on a site-by-site basis and three agency-led teams were appointed to liaise directly with the residents of the six Traveller sites within Limerick City (as illustrated in the table, below). It was further agreed that this process would be supported by Limerick Youth Service and PAUL Partnership.

Agency-led Team	Traveller Sites
Health Service Executive – Mid-West Region	Childers Road
	Rhebogue
An Garda Síochána	Toppin’s Field
	Clonlong
Limerick City Council	Bawney’s Bridge
	Long Pavement

2.2 Consultation with the Traveller Community:

- Targeted consultation was facilitated by the three agency-led teams and involved members of the Traveller community from each of the six sites in the City. Discussions were held with:

- 6 Traveller residents from the Childers Road site;
- 2 Traveller residents from the Rhebogue site;
- 8 Traveller residents from the Long Pavement site;
- 1 Traveller resident from the Bawney’s Bridge site,
- 2 Traveller residents from the Clonlong site.

No Toppin’s Field resident was able to attend the meeting arranged.

- In addition, a meeting was held with Limerick Traveller Development Group.
- The process of consultation with members of the Traveller Community developed under eight specific thematic categories, which are also consistent with specific issues highlighted during the interagency consultations. They include:

- Culture and Communication with Agencies and the Settled Communities;
- Health;
- Relations with An Garda Síochána;
- Accommodation & Environment;

- (v) Education & Training;
- (vi) Employment;
- (vii) Young Travellers.
- (viii) Capacity-building and community development;

2.3 Trends and Key Issues:

The following section draws together the most salient current tendencies as well as trends in service use reported by both members of the Traveller community and the interagency group and also highlights the key issues voiced and which should inform responses. These are organised under the thematic categories outlined above and which form the basis of the strategic objectives and related actions in Chapter Four.

3. Reported Tendencies & Trends in Service Use and Key Issues Informing Strategic Responses:

The substantive outcome of the consultation process is detailed, overleaf, in the following format:



Theme 1:

Culture and Communication with Agencies and the Settled Communities

Reported Tendencies & Trends in Service Use

Key Issues Informing Strategic Responses

- It was reported by both Travellers, and acknowledged by a number of agency representatives, that **lack of trust** between the Traveller community and most statutory agencies, poor lines of **communication** and perceived **lack of transparency** in relation to statutory agencies represent significant barriers.
- Agencies agreed that the **lack of external recognition of Traveller values** and the perception that statutory actors do not recognise and respect the cultural imperatives of the Traveller is a barrier to any meaningful interaction and problem-solving (e.g. horses, nomadic life-style);
- Travellers consulted reported that **cultural awareness training** had been very helpful in dealings with statutory staff who had received it.
- The importance of **horse culture** to Travellers (especially young people) was emphasised at all meetings with Travellers as well as at the Agency meeting. In some sites where relocation/refurbishment was under discussion with Limerick City Council concern was raised that there had been discussion around arrangement for the care of horses when new accommodation was provided. Members of one site said they felt that refurbishment of accommodation was dependent on residents getting rid of their horses. At the agency meeting it was recognised that problems were created for local residents by proximity to horses. At more than one site

- Positive examples of localised relationships built up by key personnel could provide the premise for **site-specific inter-agency teams** that work to build trust and an interactive forum. Continuity of personnel is crucial to this.
- **Information gaps and lack of clarity** in key areas was mentioned in several discussions.
- **Trust, communication, transparency and perceived equality of treatment** are vital and should be pronounced where possible.
- Horses are central to Traveller Culture and are the key social and recreational activity for young males in particular. This factor **needs to be incorporated** into responses including those related to accommodation and environment.
- Building up **relations with individuals** was very important to people who attended the meetings: “(Travellers will) *only open up to someone they know*” was how one member of the Traveller community put it.
- The manner in which information is presented is important - especially the need to take into account possible **literacy difficulties**.
- Travellers from more than one site reported that they had difficulties **keeping formal appointments**. Agencies need to be aware of this and to check back by phone prior to appointments.
- **Integration and good relations** with other communities is a pressing

<p>meeting the point was raised that there are a number of horses owned by settled people in the City and concerned was raised whether Travellers and settled people were being dealt with in the same way. LTDG reported that the 1994 Horses Act was problematic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some Travellers reported that, apart from Limerick City Council, people coming to work on sites don't tend to liaise with the caretaker or other residents. ▪ It was felt by some Travellers that there was reluctance on the part of some service providers to come on site. ▪ It was reported by Travellers consulted that dissatisfaction with statutory agencies tends to increase the sense of discrimination felt by Traveller community. 	<p>issue.</p>
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Theme 2: <i>Health</i>	
Reported Tendencies & Trends in Service Use	Key Issues Informing Strategic Responses

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The HSE observed that the Public Health Nurse service was an example of successful interaction with providers. This is attributable to the imperative around infant care, creating common ground and objectives between the service provider and the community. At the same time, there was a feeling amongst some of the Travellers consulted that more could be done to ensure the PHN visited more often and that explanation of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contact, communication and clarity were recurring issues. ▪ Suicide and Bereavement was seen by many across the meetings to be a major problem affecting the whole community. An increase in self-harm among young Traveller women was also reported. It was emphasised at the agency meeting that there as an urgent need for interventions to assist management of bereavement following deaths amongst the community,
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<p>illnesses, diagnoses and treatments were clear and adequate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The HSE reported PHN interaction with local Travellers has exposed some specific areas of need in terms of health: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Congenital disease such as cystic fibrosis; - Other respiratory problems such as asthma, which recur with particular frequency amongst Travellers; ▪ Other specific health related issues highlighted during the consultation include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drug misuse; - Mental health issues - Violence against women - Suicide and- Bereavement. ▪ Some Travellers reported that there was a need for clarification about the role of the District Midwifery Service compared to the PHN service. ▪ Travellers' experiences with GPs was mixed. Negative issues included reluctance to come on site and communication. ▪ LTDG reported good links with the HSE in providing counsellors to respond to instances of suicide and bereavement. However, the shortage of counsellors in the area was also noted. ▪ LTDG reported that it worked closely with the HSE and hoped that employment of the PHC trainees would come about. ▪ Some members of the Traveller community expressed confusion about decision making process in respect of discretionary payments from the CWOs. It was reported that information on entitlements was required. 	<p>including suicide.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mental health was also an issue requiring focus on the part of the service providers. ▪ Alcohol and Drugs: It was suggested by the Gardaí that the use of drugs on Traveller accommodation sites has been increasing. There were mixed reports amongst Travellers consulted as to the prevalence of drug and alcohol abuse. For those at the Traveller consultations who did identify the issue it was reported that while some had sought treatment, others had found it difficult to present themselves for help. It was stated that women were less reluctant to go for treatment than men. Some Traveller men were in addiction services but faced problems again when they returned home. It was reported that heroine, cannabis and ecstasy were all being used. Heavy drinking was also seen as a problem. ▪ Violence Against Women: LTDG reported very good relations with ADAPT House and that a staff member was on their management committee. However, LTDG also noted that ADAPT House had difficulties in coping with the large number of children and that there was consequently pressure to return to the family home. ▪ Chronic health problems, especially congenital and respiratory illness, as well as gastric illnesses created by hygiene problems were reported by HSE. These were confirmed in meetings with Travellers who referred to problems caused by dampness, flooding and poor water supply. ▪ LTDG reported that they receive a lot of enquiries about Social Welfare Payments from Travellers and this places a heavy demand on staff time
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good examples of experiences with Health Centres and with the Regional Hospital were reported but there was also some concern that some mothers were being discharged earlier than they had wanted from the Maternity Hospital and were specifically concerned about bringing neo-natal infants into damp conditions at home. 	
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Theme 3: <i>Relations with An Garda Síochána</i>	
Reported Tendencies & Trends in Service Use	Key Issues Informing Strategic Responses

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both Garda representatives consulted and members of the Traveller community themselves reported that lack of trust between the Gardaí and the community was a problem. There were mixed perceptions of the Garda response to calls with some confident, and others not, that there would be a response to calls. Some respondents also reported that some members of the Gardaí had been involved in the use of pejorative terms. At the agency meeting, representatives of An Garda Síochána reported that much of the direct interaction between the Traveller Community and the police tended to reinforce ongoing levels of distrust by occurring almost invariably in a negative context, for example, following reports of crime, reports of straying horses or in circumstances where news of a death affecting the community needed to be relayed. Gardaí reported some positive experiences where relationships had been built up, over time, by individual Garda. However, it was 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The core issue is clearly lack of trust and a perceived lack of respect for Traveller culture. This was a major problem reported by both members of the Traveller community as well as Gardaí consulted. The positive potential of good relationships built up by individuals Garda is clear but it is also vital to ensure continuity (to avoid problems where personnel are re-assigned). Links between the Gardaí and LTDG need to be strengthened. The issue of illegal money lending was raised at agency meetings but did not arise during meetings with Travellers According to the Gardaí consulted, criminality is a problem for Travellers whose sites are reported by the Guards to be used to accommodate goods stolen by people who do not live there. This invites Garda visits on-site and exacerbation of poor relations.
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acknowledged that these were lost with the movement and re-assignment of personnel. It was suggested by Gardaí consulted that, from the perspective of the Traveller community, there was little **confidence** in the Gardaí, perceived discrimination and reluctance to accept that Travellers' complaints would be taken seriously. As outlined above, these points were confirmed in meetings with Travellers.

- People from some sites were not sure what the system was should they want to make a **complaint** while others reported being comfortable phoning the Gardaí whenever there was a problem and feel confident that the Gardaí would respond.
- **LTDG** reported that there was an absence of strong links between themselves and the Gardaí.
- Some Travellers reported that there was concern over the emergence of what was described as local vigilantism directed against members of the Traveller community.
- Some site residents were keen to confirm the absence of criminal activity on their site. They also expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the Gardaí and stressed that problems stemmed from youths who are coming and going from the site, especially in summer.
- A number of Traveller residents consulted reported that they were satisfied with **CCTV** cameras in position on their site.

Theme 4:
Accommodation & Environment

Reported Tendencies & Trends in Service Use	Key Issues Informing Strategic Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LTDG reported there was a good relationship with City Council. This was confirmed by some of the Travellers consulted. ▪ It was reported that refuse collection is regular. ▪ The care-taker system at individual sites provides a direct, if limited, conduit between external actors and the residents. It was felt by some of those consulted at the agency meetings that there might be potential for widening the role. ▪ Poor lighting at night was raised as an issue in a number of sites. Some people were concerned that lack of adequate lighting and delays in getting lighting repaired presented a safety and security issue, particularly in sites where there are young children outside at night. ▪ Poor living conditions were reported in some sites. Outdoor toilets and showers with bare cement block walls were separate from the living area and were reported as a particular problem in winter. Poor sanitation, blocked drains and water backing up in drains were reported as a health hazard. Damp and wet ceilings in the living areas were also reported. ▪ It was reported at one Traveller meeting that overcrowding was a problem. ▪ Limerick City Council described its principal responsibilities, referring to its remit around provision, up-keep and refurbishment of sites and accommodation. Plans to conduct refurbishments as well as to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For most of the Travellers consulted, quality of accommodation and living conditions was the biggest issue. ▪ Lighting and safety and security, generally, are key issues. ▪ Drugs on-site were also reported as a factor which made things difficult for some residents. ▪ Horses, dogs and illegal dumping on-site were also a problem for some. There were reports of vandalism when people move in or out. ▪ Communication, as in other thematic categories, arose as an issue. ▪ The most difficult issues for the City Council relate to the scarcity of available sites within the borough boundary that would be suitable for permanent, quality accommodation for Travellers. Other connected difficulties were mentioned, such as the need to mediate the often difficult relations between the Traveller community and local residents living adjacent to existing accommodation sites. It was also acknowledged that the importance of horses to Travellers created special problems around both re-housing as well as with control of straying animals. Issues around sanitation and litter management were also highlighted. ▪ Some Travellers reported that moving outside of Limerick City would be an option for them if proper accommodation was available. ▪ Some residents also mentioned the difficulty of moving families off-site and of enforcing eviction – this particularly related to the issue of people

<p>develop new sites to replace some existing ones were also reported.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some site residents reported problems with poor design of plumbing but acknowledged that City Council were always quick to respond to problems. Some Travellers reported that lack of space meant that there was no play area for children. Lack of space means that there is no turning area for vehicles and caravans. Dumping of rubbish on or next to sites was a problem by some members of the Traveller community consulted. <p>Residents also said that they would be reluctant to take temporary accommodation pending an alternative site because they feared that this might become a permanent solution. Concern was also expressed about whether or not they would be consulted on the selection of the new site.</p>	<p>moving into the site in summer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caravan Loans came up as an issue in a number of meetings with members of the Traveller community. Residents reported a lack of understanding over the City Council's position on caravan loans. Some residents also reported that it was difficult for some to pay the 10% deposit required. It was noted that Limerick City Council Social Inclusion Unit was preparing a report on the issue. LTDG felt that the Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee could be more effective. It was also felt that caretakers required more support to be able to participate effectively on the committee. There was a perception that decisions affecting Traveller specific accommodation tended to be driven by the concerns and objections of the settled community rather than by those of the Traveller community.
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Theme 5: <i>Education & Training</i>	
Reported Tendencies & Trends in Service Use	Key Issues Informing Strategic Responses

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was reported that one site was hoping to start an after-school club shortly. Some members of the Traveller community felt that the need for remedial teaching had been identified automatically at school for at least one Traveller child. It was felt by residents of some sites that teachers had 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the agency meeting second-level retention was seen as a key issue generally. At one of the Traveller meetings a reason for early school leaving was that Traveller children had had difficulty managing the transition from primary to post-primary school. It was felt that new subjects and the new system had a greater disorientation and alienation effect on Traveller
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<p>not fully consulted with parents before making decisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some members of the Traveller community expressed satisfaction with remedial teaching given to their children ▪ In several meetings it was reported that Travellers had little or no knowledge of what was available in terms of adult training and education opportunities. ▪ LTDG reported that they had received funding for a Drugs Education Worker from the CLVEC. The CLVEC had also provided Literacy and Computer Tutors. ▪ Retention was seen as an issue, generally, during consultations but there were also reports, by Travellers consulted, of good rates of transfer from primary to secondary school (in one family in particular) and good relations with the local secondary school, where there are currently 4 children from the site. ▪ A mother from one site mentioned lack of transport as a difficulty for her child getting to and from secondary school and that she had had to stop going to school. ▪ Parents of large families, reported the difficulty of delivering and collecting children from 3 different schools. ▪ Residents from one site reported that teachers were sometimes sceptical of the reasons for children's absence from school when this was actually on genuine health grounds. 	<p>children than on others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low levels of literacy remain a major issue for Travellers. ▪ Transport is an issue reported by a number of Travellers. ▪ Bullying was reported to be an issue by some parents in different sites and was discussed at length in one site meeting in particular. It was felt that bullying and the inability to adjust to a particular school environment could result in depression, loss of identity as well leading to disruptive behaviour in the home. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At one Traveller meeting it was reported that while young Traveller women had increasing aspirations to develop skills, childcare was still a big issue for them affecting participation in courses outside of those provided by LTDG. ▪ Some agencies expressed concerns at the impact of the Education and Welfare Service to date;
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Theme 6:
Employment

Reported Tendencies & Trends in Service Use	Key Issues Informing Strategic Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The same concerns were expressed by Traveller CE participants as has been expressed by settled community participants, notably that three years was not an appropriate time frame to achieve job readiness, especially when participants had literacy and numeracy difficulties. ▪ The need for childcare and pre-school support to enable women to access employment was noted in both agency and Traveller meetings. ▪ Residents of one site noted that some young males go to England to look for work. It was suggested that if there were supports available for starting businesses at home then the need to travel would not be felt so much. ▪ Agencies reported there is a real gap between a perceived desire on the part of young Travellers to access employment opportunities and their capacity to engage with the formal avenues towards employment. For instance, young Traveller men who wish to pursue apprenticeships do not have basic skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There was widespread feeling that there was little chance of Travellers being employed on the open labour market because of the experience of multiple disadvantages: mental health, bereavement/suicide, low literacy, education and job-skill levels and discrimination by employers. This also affects links with labour market programmes. ▪ Travellers from most sites expressed a desire for work opportunities within the Traveller environment. For young Traveller women this would include hairdressing. ▪ Childcare and pre-school care are issues for Traveller women wishing to access employment. ▪ Supports for self-employment may widen access to the labour market and also give young Travellers the opportunity to work in Ireland rather than travel to England for employment; ▪ There is a need to identify ways of narrowing the gap between low levels of educational qualification and the desire to access apprenticeships as well as other barriers that exist.

Thematic Category 7:
Young Travellers

Reported Tendencies & Trends in Service Use	Key Issues Informing Strategic Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Success was noted where young people were engaged in projects related to soccer and the Special Olympics; ▪ LTDG had approached Limerick Youth Service for support in setting up clubs/projects. They had received some support from UL. The young women’s group also had good links with UL. ▪ Good links had been developed with Southill Outreach; LTDG mentioned positive experiences with Southill Outreach’s project which included work with young Traveller men living locally. LTDG saw this as a pilot project that might be replicated elsewhere. ▪ LTDG reported that young Travellers had not always been made to feel welcome at youth clubs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As noted above, horses are central to Traveller Culture and are the key social and recreational activity for young males in particular. Responses must take this factor into account. ▪ Travellers from two sites mentioned the lack of clubs for young people on site and LTDG saw access to clubs off-site as being problematic also

**Thematic Category 8:
Capacity-building and Community Development**

Reported Tendencies & Trends in Service Use

Key Issues Informing Strategic Responses

- LTDG reported being very satisfied with the support received from the S/MWCDSA, the organisation with responsibility for supporting the Community Development Projects based in the region, and also acknowledged the support received from **PAUL Partnership**.
- LTDG also acknowledged the contribution to its Board of Management by representatives from **Southill Outreach, Limerick Rainbow Project** and **ADAPT House**.

- It was emphasised by personnel involved in community development methodologies that while these are somewhat successful in attracting women (most women on the various sites were reported to be involved in some kind of related group), they were **not effective mechanisms for engaging men**. There was absence of the kind of **practical and tangible** measures which might be attractive to men;
 - Meetings with Travellers confirmed there is much less **willingness among men to engage with agencies**. As one person consulted put it “*Traveller men never had to deal with anybody till they had to live on sites*”. However, alongside this is the recognition that key decisions on the site are taken by men.
 - There is also a concern from both agencies and Travellers over the scope for **women** to participate. It was suggested that some men might not be inclined to allow women from the family to participate in a mixed environment.
 - Agencies recognised that there is a need to explore ways in which support can be given for Travellers to **represent themselves and assert their needs and values**.

Chapter Four

Strategic Objectives & Actions

The following list of Strategic Objectives and related Actions respond to the key issues identified during consultations with public, statutory and local development agencies and members of the Travelling community in Limerick City. They coincide directly with the eight Thematic Categories described in Chapter 3.

An additional Strategic Objective is added below; since the value of the Strategy will only become evident by introducing a systematic method of measuring its impact. It will be necessary to ensure mechanisms are in place for capturing and recording key information, keeping all stakeholders informed of progress and reporting overall impact. Therefore the following nine Strategic Objectives form the core of the Strategy:

- Strategic Objective 1:** Improve Lines of Communication and Enhance Appreciation for Traveller Culture
- Strategic Objective 2:** Improve Traveller Health
- Strategic Objective 3:** Enhance Relations Between the Traveller Community and An Garda Síochána
- Strategic Objective 4:** Improve Accommodation & Environmental Conditions
- Strategic Objective 5:** Increase Access & Participation in Education & Training
- Strategic Objective 6:** Increase Participation in the Labour Market
- Strategic Objective 7:** Engage & Support Young Travellers
- Strategic Objective 8:** Enhance the Travelling Community's Capacity for Self-Development, Self-Representation & Interaction
- Strategic Objective 9:** Performance Monitoring & Review

The Actions, Lead Agencies and Support Agencies listed under each Strategic Objective facilitate implementation of the Action Plan and these are listed below.

Strategic Objective 1:	Improve Lines of Communication and Enhance Appreciation for Traveller Culture
Rationale:	<p>The consultation process underlined the need to incorporate and enhance an understanding of Traveller culture as a discrete and distinctive set of values in all aspects of service delivery by public, statutory and local development agencies. It was acknowledged that some examples of good practice were already in effect and the aim is to widen the focus of such activities.</p> <p>Equally, it is evident that there is a clear need for improved lines of communication between Agencies, the Traveller community and the wider, settled community. It is vital that this is both coordinated (between agencies and Traveller Representatives) and targeted (the consultation process clearly illustrated the need for localised solutions with important distinctions between the different sites in the city).</p>

Action	Lead Agency	Supporting Agencies	Impact
<p>1.1 Establish Interagency Traveller Liaison Teams to be Assigned on a Site-specific Basis:</p> <p>Each agency will nominate key personnel, trained and experienced in working and interacting directly with the Traveller community, to Interagency Traveller Liaison Teams (ITLTs) dedicated to each of the sites. These will link with site representatives as well as broader representative structures for the Traveller community. The specific function of the ITLTs will be to support individuals and families on-site by providing information and linkages to agency services, provide a point of contact for site-specific issues and feed-back to management and decision-makers in the key agencies.</p>	<p><u>Garda Síochána:</u> Clonlong Group Housing Scheme; Toppins Park Permanent Halting Site;</p> <p><u>HSE:</u> Childers Road Permanent Halting Site; Rhebogue Group Housing Scheme;</p> <p><u>Limerick City Council:</u> Long Pavement Temporary Halting Site; Bawney's Bridge Permanent Halting Site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DSFA, ▪ Garda Síochána, ▪ FÁS, ▪ Youth Service, ▪ LCC, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhance communication between agencies and members of the Traveller community; ▪ Provide direct lines of communication and support for Travellers on a site-by-site basis; ▪ Provide a key mechanism for optimizing service delivery. ▪ Better and more consistent coordination and targeting will impact positively on Traveller quality of life. ▪ Foster better relations between the Traveller community and agencies.
<p>1.2 Ensure Key Staff of all Key Service Delivery Agencies Receive Cultural Awareness Training :</p> <p>Following examples of good practice e.g. HSE Cultural Awareness Programme, and positive feed-back from both Travellers and agency personnel, a coordinated programme of cultural awareness training will be established which aims to enhance the quality of service provision and interaction for Travellers specifically. Members of the Traveller community experienced in the content and delivery of this training will be</p>	<p><u>CDB</u> (Monitoring Role)</p>	<p>All Agencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthen awareness of Traveller culture; ▪ Foster appreciation of Travellers' needs; ▪ Enhance service delivery; ▪ Increase trust and mutual respect. ▪ Create employment opportunities for Travellers to deliver cultural awareness training

<p>closely involved in implementation and front-line staff of key agencies will be targeted to increase knowledge and awareness of Travellers' needs as well as to address perceived discrimination. The HSE model will be tailored to individual agency needs.</p>			
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Strategic Objective 2:	Improve Traveller Health
Rationale:	<p>The consultation process underlined the fact that a significant difference exists between the health status of Travellers and that of the settled population. The influence of living conditions, social exclusion and cultural attitudes all emerged as barriers to health care. The consultations emphasised that the delivery of Public Health Services is highly regarded by the Traveller community. Nonetheless, in many cases Travellers perceive that the existing system fails to meet their specific needs. Innovative approaches to health service provision are required to achieve equality of outcome. The Health Service Executive - Mid-Western has adopted a Regional Traveller Health Action Plan which sets out a clear framework in response to the inequities in Traveller health status. Travellers from Limerick City are represented on the Traveller Health Unit which supports the development and monitors the delivery of health services to Travellers.</p> <p>In order to reduce the deficit in levels of Traveller health, service provision must be coordinated at an interagency level and must focus particularly on accommodation, environmental and cultural issues which tend to reinforce the health deficit.</p>

Action	Lead Agency	Supporting Agencies	Impact
<p>2.1 Design and implement individual health plans for all Travellers in Limerick City:</p> <p>The HSE employs a number of designated staff to complement mainstream service provision, for example, Public Health Nurse, Community Health Worker and Family Support Service. At present the HSE have developed tailored health plans for all individuals at the Childers Road site. This practice will be extended to all Traveller families in Limerick City on a pilot basis.</p>	<u>HSE:</u>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify individual health needs of Travellers and provide information on appropriate use of health services; ▪ Encourage a healthier lifestyle for Travellers; ▪ Promote positive interactions between Travellers and external providers.
<p>2.2 Establish regular community health and welfare seminars for Traveller families:</p> <p>The lack of awareness around health issues – in particular the cause and effect of various illness - and welfare entitlements represent significant challenges for Travellers. Provision of regular interagency information sessions will seek to redress</p>	<u>HSE</u>	DSFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greater understanding, amongst Travellers, of the causes and effects of various illnesses, diagnoses and treatments; ▪ Enhance knowledge of the health and welfare system. ▪ Promote appropriate and timely

“knowledge gaps” and provide for positive long-term improvements in knowledge about health and welfare-related issues.			use of health and welfare services.
<p>2.3 Train Traveller women to become Community Health Workers</p> <p>The Primary Health Care Programme is a training initiative which aims to empower Traveller women and develop their skills to enable them to gain employment as Community Health Workers.</p>	<u>HSE</u>	FÁS, DSFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build capacity and develop the skills of Traveller women to become peer educators and provide community based health services to other Travellers in Limerick City; ▪ Assist in creating dialogue between Travellers and health service providers in Limerick City; ▪ Highlight gaps in health service delivery to Travellers, reducing inequalities in established services.
<p>2.4 Promote positive health</p> <p>Promote positive health amongst Travellers by working in partnership with all key stakeholders. Priority will be given to the issues of Drug Misuse, Violence Against Women, Mental Health and Suicide/Bereavement.</p>	<u>HSE</u>	LTDG, DES, VEC, LYS, Garda Síochána.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greater understanding, amongst Travellers, of the dynamics and effects of Drug Misuse, Violence Against Women, Mental Health and Suicide/Bereavement; ▪ Increase awareness of preventative and treatment services available; ▪ Appropriate and timely use of relevant services.

Strategic Objective 3:	Enhance Relations Between the Traveller Community and An Garda Síochána
Rationale:	The Gardaí are committed to continuing their work towards achieving the highest attainable level of personal protection, community commitment and state security for every citizen of Limerick City. Feedback from the consultations presents the Gardaí with a number of opportunities to bring about real and meaningful change in their engagement with the Traveller community.

Action	Lead Agency	Supporting Agencies	Impact
<p>3.1.1 Establish of a Garda liaison officer for each site:</p> <p>The Gardaí will appoint a Garda Liaison Officer (GLO) to each site before year-end 2005 to deal with site-specific issues as well as informing and supporting Travellers of services provided by the Gardaí.</p>	<p><u>Garda Síochána</u></p>	<p>Limerick City Council HSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build relations between Travellers, LTDG and the Gardaí; ▪ Improve communication between all parties; ▪ Address the perception that Travellers are ‘over policed.’
<p>3.1.2 Establish of a Traveller liaison officer for each site:</p> <p>LTDG will facilitate the nomination of a Traveller to represent each site. The Traveller representative will advocate on behalf of their site with the Garda Liaison Officer.</p>	<p><u>Garda Síochána</u></p>	<p>Limerick City Council LTDG</p>	
<p>3.2 Provide Cultural Awareness Training:</p> <p>The Gardaí will provide cultural awareness and anti racism training for the Garda liaison officers. (This training will be extended within the two-year period to include training for all Gardaí as part of their in-service training)</p>	<p><u>Garda Síochána</u></p>	<p>HSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthen awareness of Traveller culture; ▪ Foster appreciation of Travellers’ needs.
<p>3.3 Engage with young Travellers through the Garda Diversion Programme:</p> <p>The Gardaí in conjunction with the city’s Juvenile Liaison Officer will continue to identify and encourage Travellers to become involved in the Garda Diversion Programme and address the perception that Travellers are not welcome at such projects.</p>	<p><u>Garda Síochána</u></p>	<p>Limerick Youth Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate integration of both Traveller and settled children; ▪ Reduce isolation of teenage Travellers on halting sites.
<p>3.4 Provide regular information seminars to the Traveller Community on safety, security and related issues</p> <p>The Gardaí, in conjunction with other agencies, will organise regular presentations on issues relating to safety and security. Topics proposed include: personal protection and security, domestic violence, suicide and money-lending.</p>	<p><u>Garda Síochána</u></p>	<p>HSE DSFA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve knowledge of the services available to Travellers as citizens; ▪ Contribute to the fostering of relations between Travellers and service providers.

<p>3.5 Address the unique issues identified in Clonlong A concerted interagency effort is required by all relevant agencies to address the unique issues identified in Clonlong.</p>	<p><u>Garda Síochána.</u></p>	<p>LCC HSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve safety, health and living conditions for Clonlong residents
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<p>Strategic Objective 4:</p>	<p>Improve Accommodation & Environmental Conditions</p>
<p>Rationale:</p>	<p>The consultation process identified the immediate provision of improved accommodation for Travellers in Limerick City as a priority affecting the delivery of services for all providers. It emphasised the critical link between improved accommodation for Travellers and better uptake of education, health and employment services. There is consensus that improvement of accommodation and environmental conditions experienced by Travellers is of paramount importance to the alleviation of many of the key difficulties experienced by Travellers. It is acknowledged that this can only be delivered through a coordinated interagency approach.</p>

Action	Lead Agency	Supporting Agencies	Impact
<p>4.1 Improve existing living conditions on all halting sites: Specifically -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clonlong Group Housing Scheme: Identify an alternative site or sites, and prepare plans in consultation with the residents and the wider community for a Group Housing Scheme. ▪ Toppins Park Permanent Halting Site: Provide a five unit Group Housing Scheme on the existing site. ▪ Childers Road Permanent Halting Site: Repair and maintain the existing Tigíns. 	<p><u>Limerick City Council:</u></p>	<p>N/A</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ameliorate range of difficulties raised by existing living conditions; ▪ Improve relationship between the Local Authority, the Traveller community and other agencies;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Long Pavement Temporary Halting Site: In consultation with residents and the wider community provide nine units of accommodation on an alternative site. ▪ Bawney’s Bridge Permanent Halting Site: Provide a nine unit Group Housing Scheme on the existing site. ▪ Rhebogue Group Housing Scheme: Repair the houses in the existing Group Housing Scheme. It is hoped that it maybe possible to provide greater space for residents. 			
<p>4.2 Provide an onsite resource room:</p> <p>Where appropriate, and in consultation with Travellers, provide a resource building as part of Traveller specific accommodation to help in the delivery of services to Travellers.</p>	<p><u>Limerick City Council</u></p>	<p>DSFA HSE VEC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve access to services; ▪ Strengthen service delivery; ▪ Improve on-site infrastructural resources.
<p>4.3 Review the functioning of the caretaker role on sites:</p> <p>LCC recognises the need to examine the existing functioning and support structures provided to on-site caretakers. It intends to promote and expand the role of the care-taking service by establishing a forum which brings caretakers together on a regular basis. The forum will facilitate learning and address any gaps in knowledge or service delivery through the subsequent provision of increased training.</p>	<p><u>Limerick City Council</u></p>	<p>LTDG</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate greater consultation between the Local Authority and Travellers; ▪ Contribute to Empowerment and capacity building for Travellers; ▪ Adds to self-government capacity for Traveller community.
<p>4.4 Implement the recommendations of the review of the Caravan Loans Scheme:</p> <p>LCC to act on the recommendations identified in a report conducted by the Social Inclusion Unit into the operation of the Caravan Loan Scheme by the local authority.</p>	<p><u>Limerick City Council</u></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate ease of application; ▪ Increase “up take” of scheme; ▪ Improve living conditions.
<p>4.5 Explore innovative ways of addressing the accommodation of horses:</p> <p>Agencies will engage with the Traveller community to examine innovative ways of addressing the horse issue in Limerick City.</p>	<p><u>PAUL Partnership</u> <u>LTDG</u></p>	<p>Limerick City Council Garda Síochána</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve relations between agencies and Travellers; ▪ Social benefits for Traveller community as a whole; ▪ Address alienation / isolation of young Traveller men.

Strategic Objective 5:	Increase Access & Participation in Education & Training
Rationale:	<p>The consultations highlighted access and participation in education and training as central considerations which impact upon equality of opportunity for the Traveller community. Specific issues include transition from primary to post primary and retention after first year; access to educational resources such as pre-school, homework clubs and school transport – which would facilitate both transition and integration; incorporation of the family into education; cultural awareness training to teachers and practical courses which recognise Traveller culture and aid transition to employment.</p> <p>The strategy recognises the need for agencies to work together to deliver these measures. It also acknowledges the imminent publication of the “<i>Traveller Education Strategy</i>” (2006) by the Department of Education and Science and that local actions undertaken by the Department will be consistent with this.</p>

Action	Lead Agency	Supporting Agencies	Impact
<p>5.1. Examine how existing School Completion Programmes in Limerick City can link with the development of after school/homework clubs for Travellers:</p> <p>Traveller pupils tend not to have a space in which to study, fully adequate resources or a parent fully in a position to assist them with homework. Consequently they are often at a greater disadvantage than their peers from the settled community. The findings from the consultations highlighted a real need to provide after-school homework support clubs. These could be facilitated by trained women from the Traveller community to help pupils with their homework in a comfortable and supportive setting.</p>	<u>DES</u>	SCP LTDG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assist in retention and progression in school; ▪ Facilitate integration of Traveller pupils. ▪ Improve homework completion; ▪ Build capacity of women from the Traveller community and provides valuable work experience; ▪ Provide positive role models for Traveller children.
<p>5.2 Integrate pre-school education for Traveller children and settled children:</p> <p>The integration of Traveller children into the mainstream pre-school setting serves to help Traveller children socialize and integrate with settled children. This fosters positive relationships with members of other communities at a young age, facilitates friendships and contributes to increased equality of participation for Traveller children.</p>	<u>LTDG</u>	DES LCCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foster integration and friendships between Traveller children and settled children; ▪ Identify at an early stage children with special educational needs; ▪ Facilitate retention at all levels; ▪ Increase equality of participation

<p>5.3 Develop a peer support system in schools to facilitate retention and integration: Encourage schools to investigate the possibility of designating a senior pupil to assist in the integration and retention of Traveller pupils into mainstream education. This action can be achieved through the visiting teacher service.</p>	<p><u>DES</u></p>	<p>Individual Schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate integration of both Traveller and settled children; ▪ Improve understanding of the school system/practices; ▪ Provide a way of addressing intimidation and bullying of Traveller children.
<p>5.4 Promote the Career Planning and Employable Skill Course to Travellers: This course is designed to assist participants in deciding on their Career Plan, provide the skills required, including literacy and numeracy if necessary, to achieve their goals and instill the confidence to put this plan into action.</p>	<p><u>FAS</u></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enable progression into further training or into employment.
<p>5.5 Promote “Connections” Course This programme was designed for people who need assistance and support in order to enter or re-enter the workforce. The course aims to develop new skills, improve personal skills, and develop realistic career plans, so as to enable the participants to enter / re-enter the workforce, or to identify further training needs in order to achieve their goals. The course offers ongoing support on completion where necessary.</p>	<p><u>FAS</u></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training with a clearer outcome; ▪ Tangible employment opportunities; ▪ Enhance the quality of life of the Traveller Community.
<p>5.6 Establish ‘family learning’ initiatives which will support Traveller parents in their own learning, thereby helping to foster a positive approach to learning with their children and families.. This action would be implemented in conjunction with other key partners i.e. DES (through their links with Traveller Teachers and Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinators), HSE (Family Support Personnel) as well as PAUL and the LTDG. Long term aims of the initiative would be to increase parents awareness of the value of education and ultimately support the retention of young Travellers within the formal school system.</p>	<p><u>CLVEC</u></p>	<p>LTDG DES HSE PAUL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase parents’ awareness of the value of education; ▪ Support the retention of young Travellers within the formal school system.

<p>5.7 Undertake a study to ascertain what support mechanisms are needed to ensure retention of Traveller children within mainstream education.</p>	<p><u>CDB</u></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inform the future development of programmes to assist in the retention of Traveller children
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<p>Strategic Objective 6:</p>	<p>Increase Participation in the Labour Market</p>
<p>Rationale:</p>	<p>The consultation process underlined the difficulty Travellers experience accessing mainstream employment. Prominent issues identified by Travellers included perceived discrimination, lack of training, poor educational attainment, and lack of supports e.g. childcare. Moreover, there was a widespread perception that the current system fails Travellers because very few opportunities exist or are created which provide Traveller-specific employment. Specifically, it was felt workshops in “business start up” or training in traditional Traveller occupations, would provide tangible employment, including self-employment opportunities for the Traveller community. It was emphasized during consultations that it is vital to avoid “tokenistic” employment schemes and that the Strategy should provide for sustainable outcomes, skills development and career progression.</p> <p>In order to address some of the issues identified during the consultation process, it was felt agencies need to work closer together, learn from best practice and explore innovative employment opportunities in the medium and long term.</p>

<p>Action</p>	<p>Lead Agency</p>	<p>Supporting Agencies</p>	<p>Impact</p>
<p>6.1 Develop sustainable employment opportunities within statutory organisations Statutory service providers, where possible, in accordance with their recruitment practices, will, explore ways of providing sustainable employment opportunities for Travellers within their organisations. In order to reach the stage where Travellers can be employed in tangible employment and to avoid tokenism, Travellers must have completed the appropriate training to equip them to carry out their duties.</p>	<p>Agencies as appropriate</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop key skills and practical work experience; ▪ Promote good relations between Travellers and potential employers; ▪ Facilitate access to mainstream employment opportunities. ▪ Contribute to sustainability of employment.

6.2 Assist Travellers with enterprise development towards self-employment	<u>PAUL Partnership</u>	DSFA FÁS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foster entrepreneurship; ▪ Increase employment / self employment
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Strategic Objective 7:	Engage & Support Young Travellers
Rationale:	Encouragement and support for young Travellers is seen as necessary to increase engagement in youth clubs and projects. Access to youth services is for all, yet those consulted felt that access needs to be improved as a matter of urgency. This will combat the alienation and isolation of young Travellers that became evident through consultations and will aim to further the integration of young Travellers with their peers in the wider community. There are examples of good practice already in place in Limerick but existing and new links need to be developed and strengthened which enhance individual self-esteem and are culturally appropriate.

Action	Lead Agency	Supporting Agencies	Impact
7.1 Design and deliver programmes focusing on the development of self-esteem for young Travellers.	<u>Limerick Youth Service</u>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitates integration of Traveller and settled young people; ▪ Enables young Travellers to be comfortable expressing and sharing their culture; ▪ Reduced sense of alienation amongst young Travellers.
7.2 Agency coordination aimed at developing and providing integrated responses to the literacy, numeracy and personal development of young Travellers, particularly those who do not successfully transfer from Primary to Post Primary Education. The presence of growing numbers of young Travellers in Vocational Training and Education programmes has highlighted their low levels of literacy and numeracy.	<u>Limerick Youth Service</u>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhanced Literacy and numeracy skills; ▪ Trust building between Travellers and service providers; ▪ Development of self confidence and self esteem.

<p>7.3 Development of an equine care project with young males: The importance of horses to Traveller culture and, to young Traveller males in particular, was universally acknowledged during consultations. This action will seek to develop a method of engaging young males in the context of good equine care. The programme will aim to introduce best practice in horse care, hygiene and health, fitness and exercise as well as personal and social development of the young people involved.</p>	<p><u>Limerick Youth Service</u></p>	<p>Limerick City Sorts Partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engagement of young males; ▪ Care and management of horses; ▪ Increased perceptions of external respect for and understanding of Traveller culture. ▪ Team-work ▪ Integration of young Travellers and young people from settled community; ▪ Links to employment opportunities in the equine industry.
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<p>Strategic Objective 8:</p>	<p>Enhance the Travelling Community's Capacity for Self-Development, Self-Representation & Interaction with Agencies</p>
<p>Rationale:</p>	<p>There was agreement during the consultation process that a strong and representative body for the communication of Traveller perspectives and for participation in policy and decision-making structures was vital. There was a consensus that Limerick Travellers Development Group was the key vehicle for this. There was further agreement that LTDG requires additional support to ensure that it has adequate capacity for self-development and representation and assertion of Traveller values, perspectives and goals.</p>

Action	Lead Agency	Supporting Agencies	Impact
<p>8.1 Ensure that the Traveller Community in Limerick City is adequately supported to provide for self-development and representation and communication of Traveller values and goals in key local policy and decision-making structures.</p> <p>Key community development and local development agencies will work together with representative members of the Traveller community, principally Limerick Traveller Development Group (Community Development Project), to ensure that the voice of Travellers is heard and that Traveller identity and values can be effectively asserted by Travellers themselves.</p>	<p><u>Southern & Midwestern Community Development Support Agency</u> <u>PAUL Partnership</u></p>	<p>FÁS VEC HSE LCC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhance capacity of Limerick Traveller Development Group for representation of the Traveller community in Limerick. ▪ Enhance participation of the Traveller community in policy and decision-making structures. ▪ Increase trust and respect between the Traveller community and agencies.

Strategic Objective 9:	Performance Monitoring & Review
Rationale:	<p>The value of the Strategy will only become evident by introducing a systematic method of measuring its impact. Therefore it will be necessary to ensure mechanisms are in place for capturing and recording key information, keeping all stakeholders informed of progress and reporting overall impact.</p> <p>Additionally, good practice in monitoring and review, dictates that it is important to ensure that the Strategy and its actions are responsive to learning <i>during</i> its implementation by devising if necessary ways in which elements of the Strategy can be modified, by agreement, to increase impact.</p>

Action	Lead Agency	Supporting Agencies	Impact
<p>9.1 Design and implement a system of reporting and information sharing that measures impact and adds value to the Strategy <i>during</i> its lifetime.</p> <p>Agencies will establish a sub group – composed of high level representation from Garda Síochána, HSE, LCC and other relevant stakeholders - to monitor and report on the implementation of the Action Plan. The sub group will make regular reports to the CDB on the full implementation of the plan.</p>	<u>City Development Board</u>	All agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure all stakeholder are fully informed of progress and impact ▪ Ensure a system of coordinated reporting; ▪ Ensure information is shared in an effective and equitable fashion that adds value to the Strategy ▪ Ensure Strategy and actions are modified according to learning <i>during</i> implementation.