

Report on	NIHE – Traveller Provision
Date of Meeting	8 th May 2018
Reporting Officer	Mark Kelso - Director Public Health & Infrastructure

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To update Members on NIHE – Traveller provision within Mid Ulster District Council and progress on site assessment .
2.0	Background
2.1	Members will be aware of travellers who have taken up temporary residence in recent years on unapproved sites in the Toomebridge / Ballyronan area due to the lack of adequate halting site facilities.
2.2	The Northern Ireland Housing Executive have statutory responsibility for assessing and determining the needs and provision of temporary and permanent “halting” sites for travellers under the Housing (NI) Order 1981 – Article 28. Under this legislation, the Executive have a “duty” to provide caravan site facilities where this is deemed appropriate. This duty takes effect when a Needs Assessment confirms that traveller accommodation is required.
2.3	To help progress this work Council appointed a local architect team – Michael Herron – Architects in January of this year to assist with the process and undertake a scoping study of potential available sites in this locality.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Following discussion at the April meeting of Committee a briefing meeting was arranged with NIHE representatives and members to update on the traveller site assessment .
3.2	Michael Herron Architects had engaged discussions with both NIHE officials and Planning Department and prepared a scoping report for consideration (see Appendix 1). This report was presented on 18 th April 2018 in Magherafelt Council Offices where representatives from NIHE, Mid Ulster Council Officers and Elected Members were briefed on the current findings.
3.3	Following the presentation a number of sites were discounted due to location and accessibility. Three sites from the initial scoping work were identified for the NIHE

	Planning and Place Shaping team to review for the purposes of further screening for suitability for their purposes .
3.4	<p>The site options to be considered by NIHE were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitch area , O'Neill Park, Ballymaguigan • Roadside Lay Bys - Aughrim Road / Airfield Road • Traad Point Facility , Shore Road , Ballyronan <p>The Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Place Shaping Team reviewed the summary of information provided on the three sites for the purpose of their feasibility for development as a Traveller Halting site (See Appendix 2) . Following their assessment the NIHE have confirmed that the Council owned Traad Point site is their preferred site to take forward for a further feasibility study, followed by the Aughrim Road / Airfield Road site. It is understood that this facility is under the ownership of the Department for Infrastructure (DfI).</p>
3.5	<p>In light of these findings, it was agreed at the April meeting of Council that Members put forward the Traad Point site for further investigation and liaise with DfI in relation to the site at Aughrim Road / Airfield Road. The NIHE design guide would be used to assess each site. The design guide addresses the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Hard standing or a caravan • Space to park cars and other vehicles • Space for additional caravans to provide for guests • Toilets • Showers or baths • Storage space • A secure mailbox
3.6	<p>NIHE are keen to commence formal feasibility work, which would consider the most suitable location for a possible site within the broad footprint at Traad Point , Ballyronan. NIHE propose to complete this feasibility with a view to the potential submission of a planning application once a suitable site has been identified. NIHE will revert to Council once the feasibility work has been completed to seek agreement from Council in relation to any proposed site and prior to the submission of a planning application.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: ICT Costs to prepare scoping report
	Human: Officer time to liaise with NIHE officials
	Risk Management: N/a

4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/a
	Rural Needs Implications: N/a
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members note the status of the Travellers site provision in the Mid Ulster District Council area and await the outcome of the NIHE Feasibility Study on Traad Point , Shore Road , Ballyronan .
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 – Scoping report by Michael Herron Architects.
6.2	Appendix 2 – NIHE assessment of site options.