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LIMERICK Corp.

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VISIT OF TRAVELLING PEOPLE REVIEW GROUP

TO

LIMERICK CORPORATION

ON

FRIDAY OCTOBER 2nd 1981.

FOLDER CONTAINS:

1. Travelling People - Review of Corporation Policy and Progress.
2. Report to Dept. of Environment June 1981.
3. Extract From Limerick City Draft Development Plan.
4. Summary Statement on Census of Travelling Families 1977 - 1980.

SEPTEMBER, 1981.



CORPORATION OF LIMERICK.

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TRAVELLING PEOPLE - REVIEW OF CORPORATION POLICY AND PROGRESS.  
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In November, 1964, there was established in this Region, at the behest of the Limerick City Council, a Joint Committee consisting of Representatives of the Limerick City Council, Limerick County Council, Clare County Council and Tipperary North Riding County Council, to consider the problem of Itinerancy in the Region. The Committee met periodically during 1965 and 1966 and reached the conclusion that a Camping Site should be provided for Itinerants, the cost being shared by the four Local Authorities on the Committee and that the Committee were of the opinion that Knockalisheen Camp was the most suitable location for such a Site. Efforts to obtain the consent of the Department of Defence, the owners of Knockalisheen Camp, to the use of portion of the Camp as a location for the Camping Site for Itinerants, were unsuccessful. The Joint Committee did not meet during 1967 and when it again met in February, 1968, a general view emerged that the ideal solution for the Itinerancy problem was to provide houses for Itinerant Families and to integrate them completely into the Community.

In April, 1968, the Chief Medical Officer to the Corporation reported

"that Limerick Corporation, during the past fifteen years, had housed up to twenty Itinerant Families. These represent Families who were born in or had long associations with the City and as far as the Corporation was concerned, had practically solved the problem here. Of recent years, however, Itinerant Families from many parts of the Country have drifted into the City and camped for longer or shorter periods. I do not consider that the Corporation should

accept responsibility for housing these families whether they are willing to settle here permanently or not".

The views expressed by the Chief Medical Officer were accepted as reasonable by the Corporation.

In 1970, the policy of providing Halting Sites was undertaken and over the next eighteen months, three Halting Sites, namely, Watch House Cross, Clonlong and Rhebogue were constructed and provided with water and sewage services. Four Mobile Homes each were provided on the Clonlong and Rhebogue Sites and a Terrapin Building providing sanitary and washing facilities with hot and cold water was provided at the Watch House Cross. Considerable difficulty was experienced in getting these sites fully occupied for a number of years. The Mobile Homes on both the Clonlong and Rhebogue Sites did not stand up well to wear and tear and the Terrapin Building at Watch House Cross was subject to recurring damage until finally, it was destroyed by fire on the 11th August, 1974.

The policy of providing more durable homes on the Halting Sites was adopted by the City Council on the 27th May, 1974, and it was decided that since two of the Mobile Homes on the Clonlong Itinerant Site had by then been removed, that two System Built Houses be provided instead. The two houses were completed in February, 1975 at a cost of £15,789. One of those continues to be occupied to the present time, while the other has had to be demolished and the site cleared.

In December, 1974, the City Council considered proposals for the erection of a Halting Site at the Dock Road. Further consideration of the proposal was deferred pending consultation with interests in the area. A Deputation Representative of those interests addressed a Meeting of the City Council on the 20th January, 1975, and consequent on the Decision of that Meeting, consultations were arranged and discussions subsequently took place with a large Representative Group

from the City Council, the Limerick Harbour Board, Chamber of Commerce, Representative of Industrial Firms, the Residents in the area and the Itinerant Settlement Committee. The Local Residents, in conjunction with the Commercial Representation, submitted a formal document objecting to the Corporation's proposal for the establishment of a Halting Site as originally envisaged and outlined fully their objections to the location in this area. Their objections did not extend to permanent housing at the Dock Road Site. The City Council, in March, 1975, agreed to the construction of permanent houses on the site. Later, the Itinerant Settlement Committee communicated their reservations about the use of the Site by Itinerants and in November, 1976, indicated that though still having reservations about the proposals, they were reluctantly accepting them, and in January, 1977, a proposal was submitted to the Department of the Environment for sanction for the development of the Site for Houses. In January 1979, sanction was received for the erection of 10 houses in four locations (Rhebogue, Clonlong, Watch House Cross and Dock Road).

A Survey taken up in October, 1977, showed that twelve families were living in Trailers on Authorised Sites and that eight families were living on the roadside of which four were passing through Limerick, while the other four would have connections with the City. In the light of progress up to that time, the policy of improving the accommodation for the Families on the Authorised Sites was undertaken and it was decided to construct four conventional Bungalows on the Rhebogue Site, two on the Clonlong Site and one at the Watch House Cross Site. Work on this Project was undertaken and six Bungalows have been provided, two on Clonlong which are now occupied and four on Rhebogue to which Tenants have been nominated. The costs involved are in the order of £110,000.00.

The appointment of Itinerant Families to the tenancies of houses in the Corporation's general Housing Estate has continued and to date, thirty five, families have been so housed. Of the seven families appointed to Corporation tenancies within the past twelve months, 2 families have given up the tenancy and returned to the open road.

A further review of a Halting Site requirements has been undertaken by the Housing Committee of the City Council in considering the following report:

CORPORATION OF LIMERICK  
HOUSING DEPARTMENT,  
CITY HALL,  
LIMERICK.

11th December, 1980.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND EACH MEMBER OF THE HOUSING COMMITTEE OF  
LIMERICK CITY COUNCIL.

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RE: HALTING SITES.  
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At the Special Meeting of the Committee held on 27th November, 1980, a report was requested on proposals for further possible Halting Sites for development in conjunction with the proposal already circulated for a site at Longpavement. In response to this request, and bearing in mind the points raised at the previous discussions, a further review of proposals has been undertaken and preliminary discussions have taken place with Limerick County Council Officials on the possibility of a joint venture for the establishment of a Halting Site in the environs of the City.

It is considered that overall three sites should be established. Each Halting Site should have a number of parking bays where individual families may park their Caravans, plus a few extra bays to cater for visitors, newly weds or families who are waiting for houses. Each parking bay should measure 30 ft. by 70 ft. approximately. It is not considered advisable to make bays any larger lest it result in disorderly parking or overcrowding. Each bay should be separated from the next, and along the central driveway by low dividing walls and the entire site fenced. A washroom with water supply sink and toilet and a refuse bin should be provided with each bay. It is

desirable to have a Caretaker employed for each site where  
duties should include the allocation of parking bays, the  
handing out of washroom keys to incoming families ensuring  
that washrooms are kept securely locked when not needed and  
general supervision of the site to promote order and clean-  
liness. The entire site should be hard top surfaced. For the  
successful operation of such a site and to have any reasonable  
success in prohibiting random parking of caravans throughout  
the area, it is considered that perhaps 12 to 16 parking bays  
be provided on each site.

The suggested location of sites has been seriously considered  
and particular attention has been paid to the points raised  
in previous discussions. The following locations are  
recommended:-

1. Longpavement.
2. Singland Area.
3. Dock Road - in agreement and in conjunction with Limerick  
County Council.

F. O'Neill,  
HOUSING OFFICER.

The Housing Committee and subsequently the City Council has accepted  
the necessity for Halting Sites but favoured the provision of a number  
of sites simultaneously while the process of selection and identifica-  
tion of particular site locations is proceeding no firm decisions have  
yet been reached.

SEPTEMBER, 1981.

CORPORATION OF LIMERICK.  
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In response to the Department of the Environment the attached report was forwarded for the information of the Travelling People Review Group last June. It touches on the aspect of accommodation, proposals for dealing with remaining situation problems being encountered and General Views.

SEPTEMBER, 1981.

CORPORATION OF LIMERICK.  
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26th June, 1981.

ACCOMMODATION.

Accommodation has been provided in various forms, as follows:-

- (1) Mobile Homes on Sites.
- (2) Pre-fabricated dwelling-houses on sites.
- (3) Standard traditionally-built bungalows on sites.
- (4) Standard housing accommodation in the Local Authority's housing estates.

Both the mobile homes and the pre-fabricated houses have been found, in practice, to be unsatisfactory. None of the mobile homes survived longer than two years and 1 of 2 new pre-fabricated houses built in 1975 had to be demolished in 1980. Although an element of vandalism was a factor in that particular case, the other remaining type of this house has deteriorated, disproportionately, quickly. The Corporation's considered view from experience is that the most satisfactory house-type is a conventionally-built three-bedroomed bungalow, with kitchen, living-room and bathroom, kitchen to provided with a solid fuel range, and living-room to be provided with an open fire.

At present, there are 26 itinerant families living in normal standard houses throughout the Corporation's housing estate. Two new families were housed in 1980, but two of the families previously housed gave up their houses to return to the open road, also in 1980. There are six families living in the conventionally-built bungalows, four on one site at Rhebogue and two at another site at Clonlong. There is also at Clonlong one family living in the only remaining pre-fab bungalow that we have. The Corporation does not now have any mobile homes, nor would have the intention to provide any such in the future. However, there are ten families living in their own mobile homes on authorised sites. The Corporation, maintains three authorised sites, one at the Watch House Cross, one at Rhebogue and one at Clonlong.



With regard to the present position in this area in relation to families not yet accommodated, the most recent count taken on 19th. May, 1981, showed that there were 25 families all in caravans on authorised locations within the city. This varied from the previous count taken on the 8th. May, 1981, in as much as three families counted on the 8th. May had left the city while four new families had come in. Of the 25 families in the count at the 19th. May, 18 were Limerick families or had associations with the city, 2 families were from Mayo, 1 from Derry, 1 from Galway, 1 from Clare and 2 from Co. Limerick. Of the three families who left the city between the 8th and 19th. May, two were Donegal and one, Wexford.

The areas most favoured by the families who do not use authorised sites are mainly newly developed areas on the perimeter of the city e.g. Childer's Road - a new road opened in 1978 - and Southill. Strong concentrations also appear in central city areas designated for renewal e.g. Johnsgate and the Abbey area.

#### PROPOSALS.

At their meeting held on the 8th. September, 1980, the Limerick City Council engaged in a very full debate at which aspects of the Corporation's policy in relation to the Itinerant Community were examined. In his reply to the debate, the City Manager outlined the change occurring in the nature of the problems over recent years and indicated that a full review of the Corporation's policy should be undertaken. Fundamentally, the Council's policy was formed with a traditional itinerant family in mind and evolved towards a definite objective of housing itinerant families and integrating them into the settled community. However, trends have developed within the itinerant community that have tended to isolate this policy as being appropriate only to the needs of a section of the community and have left a deficiency in relation to other sections. The Corporation is satisfied that there are about 20 families for whom housing is not, at present, the solution and after lengthy discussions over a number of meetings between October 1980 and May 1981 the Council has accepted the necessity for

halting sites but favoured the provision of a number of sites simultaneously, The process for the selection and identification of particular site locations is proceeding, but, as yet, no firm decisions on locations have been taken with the exception of ruling out completely certain suggested locations.

Efforts to obtain the consensus on the location of proposed halting sites will continue and preliminary discussions have already taken place with officials of Limerick County Council on the possibility of a joint venture for the establishment of a halting site in the environs of the city,

#### PROBLEMS.

(1) Litigation. At the present time, there are four injunctions of the High Court in existence restraining the Corporation from removing certain named itinerants and their families from specific sites, which are public open spaces in the city, and restraining the Corporation from interfering, in any way whatsoever, with the use or occupation and enjoyment of their caravans on the specific sites by the itinerant families concerned. These injunctions will continue, pending the trial of the actions in the High Court. The Corporation has, of course, entered a defence. The High Court proceedings have, somewhat, overshadowed the Corporation's activities in relation to the itinerant problem over the recent months. Other Problems encountered are the reaction of the settled community who have indicated in deputations that there is poor value for money spent on itinerant sites mainly because the conditions and appearance of these sites goes from bad to worse. There is also severe reaction to the keeping of horses, and particularly goats, by the itinerants. The Corporation are continuing, at the present time, to improve the appearance of the existing sites by the erection of walls and the general improvement of the appearance.

#### GENERAL VIEWS.

The special effort that is being made in relation to school attendance by the itinerant children is vital. Similarly, literacy and craft training for young adolescents is eminently worthy of support. Both these efforts, however, depend on a reasonable degree of settlement of the families. This latter objective has to be considered from three different approaches: (a) the allocation of tenancies to selected families in new estates and particular assistance to these families to overcome the traumatic change in their lifestyle that settlement causes, particularly the feeling of

isolation that they invariably experience;

(b) the settlement of families in good standard housing on specifically designated sites;

(c) the provision of halting sites for families who are not ready for or willing to undertake housing.

Mise, le meas,

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F. O'NEILL,  
HOUSING OFFICER.

CORPORATION OF LIMERICK.  
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The following is an extract from the Draft Limerick City Development Plan:

"I T I N E R A N T S

The National Policy evolved in the 1960's is for the integration of itinerant families into the Community.

The speed with which this policy can be achieved is dependant on many factors, particularly, the readiness of various itinerant families to settle down and the willingness of the Community to accept them.

The Corporation is committed to pursuing National Policy, but progress is dependant on the reconciliation of the seriously diverging interests.

The principal objective of Corporation Policy is for the settlement, of itinerant families who have a clear association with the City and who have an established claim on Corporation services.

To date, some twenty eight itinerant families have been housed throughout the Corporation's Estates.

The Corporation has established a special programme which makes provision for the integration of itinerant families into the community and it shall be the policy of the Corporation to seek to further this programme during the currency of this plan."

SEPTEMBER, 1981.

CORPORATION OF LIMERICK.  
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Summary Statement on Census of travelling families taken in October each year from 1977 to 1980 inclusive.

	1980	1979	1978	1977
No. of families living in standard houses.	26	26	28	26
No. of families living in houses on serviced sites	7	1	2	2
No. of families living in trailers on authorised sites	10	7	12	12
No. of families living on roadside	33	15	20	8
	76	49	62	48

The 33 families parked in unauthorised locations comprised 15 native Limerick families and 18 who were passing through the City and termed 'transient'.

SEPTEMBER, 1981.