

## Theme 1: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Goal: to ensure that older people in Tipperary can access necessary local services with confidence and ease, that they feel safe in their local community while out and about and they have the opportunity to participate fully in the many activities that Tipperary has to offer.

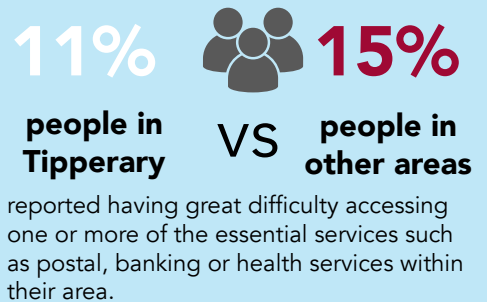
### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT:

The design and maintenance of a community's built environment can make all the difference between a healthy and active lifestyle and a more sedentary one with risks of ill-health. One of the key issues emerging from all the various consultations and plans among the people of Tipperary and particularly older people, is the decline of villages and towns leading feelings of isolation and disconnection. This was particularly reflected in the LECP consultation process with decline expressly linked to feelings of safety and security. The way an area looks and how safe it feels has a big impact on older people's confidence (safety and security is dealt with in Theme 3 – Housing)

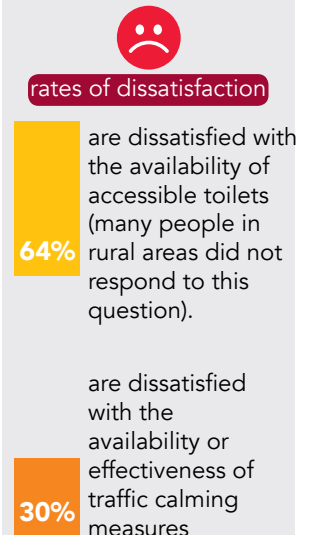
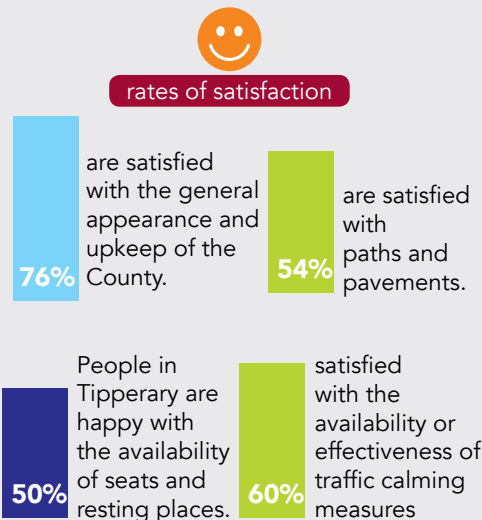
While people see the closure of shops, pubs, post offices as significant in this regard, the other major change is the moving of services from a physical presence in the local community to an online presence. This presents its own challenges for people in the older age bracket and for service providers.

### SERVICES

Where services were available in the local area, some were easier to access than others.



The services that were least likely to be available were cinema or other entertainment (not available for 31%) and the public library (16%). The services with the most widespread availability were postal services (available for 96%) and supermarkets (available for 93%).



The local Community and Social Inclusion Plan that fed into the LECP notes that ‘in reality, not all services can be provided in each community or settlement but it is reasonable for all communities and citizens to expect that they have reasonable access to such services ... whilst it is important that such [services] are available online, it is also important that they can be accessed where necessary by bus or other form of public transport’ (pg. 61).

## KEY ISSUES FROM CONSULTATIONS:

- Rural isolation and loneliness is a key issue fuelled by the withdrawal of services, the decline of infrastructure and an ageing rural population.
- Access to amenities and opportunities to participate in physical activity is important for people with mobility challenges in a way that is affordable and safe (wheelchair access, walking trails, looped walks, public parks, cycle paths).
- Paths are often not wide enough, lighting is poor, pavements/ footpaths are uneven, broken or non-existent in many urban areas leading to a fear of falling among older people.
- Walking on rural roads is particularly dangerous given traffic speed, particularly for people who do not wear high viz jackets. The walking routes/paths in local sports clubs is a great option for rural areas and is often the only local safe resource.
- Cycle lanes are few and far between leading to frustration for both motorist and cyclists. Particular mention was made of the danger of cyclists on footpaths.
- Access to public buildings (including train stations) needs to be improved.
- Speed of traffic through villages and towns is excessive – some of the speed limits are unsuitable and more monitoring is needed.
- Significant lack of public toilets available; one of the obstacles cited around the provision of public facilities by businesses is the opportunity it presents for anti-social behaviour.
- Age Friendly parking (similar to disabled parking) needs to be made available near services.
- The parks and amenities around the county are great but the problem of anti-social behaviour and intimidation is an issue.
- Embrace the Age Friendly Town approach in carrying out the program and review and develop the town infrastructure.

### ACTION 1.1: REVIEW AND DEVELOP VILLAGE/ TOWN INFRASTRUCTURE

Review the physical layout of villages and towns (involving older people) to identify requirements for footpaths, traffic calming measures, pedestrian crossings, seating, lighting, public toilets, bus shelters, convenient older people’s parking spaces, cutting back hedges etc. These reviews should feed into any Capital Improvement Works, Local Area Plans, Town Enhancement Schemes to ensure people are encouraged to get out and about and that they feel safe while doing so. This should be undertaken in line with AFI and the National Disability Authority’s (NDA) recommendations for walk ability audits building on the work done to date by Tipperary County Council in this regard. Particular priority should be given to the towns/ villages with high deprivation levels (RAPID Towns of Tipperary, Clonmel and Carrick-on-Suir among others) and in villages with a significant proportion of older people (Clogheen, Ballyporeen, Toomevara, Borrisokane among others).

<b>Lead Partner:</b>	Tipperary County Council – Planning Section
<b>Support Partners:</b>	Tipperary LCDC Health and Wellbeing Alliance <sup>12</sup> Older Person’s Council Private Sector PPN and Community & Voluntary Organisations Age friendly Ireland Sports Clubs Municipal District Councils
<b>Link to Plans:</b>	LECP; Healthy Tipperary Strategy; County Development Plans

## ACTION 1.2: IMPROVE ACCESS TO RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Review the provision of parks, public gardens, walking tracks and recreational areas in the county to ensure they are available and accessible for older people and others with possible mobility issues (wheelchairs/ buggies) and amend promotional literature accordingly to reflect accessibility. Promote the use of existing recreation and green spaces while addressing the concerns about anti-social behaviour in these public spaces. Encourage participation in existing activity programmes offered through Tipperary Sports Partnership (and others) and this should include promotion of gentle activity programmes for people in long term care facilities and day care centres. Work with sporting organisations to include provision of safe walking routes in grounds, particularly targeting those rural areas where there is no such facility in place.

<b>Lead Partner:</b>	Tipperary Sports Partnership & Tipperary County Council
<b>Support Partners:</b>	Local Development Companies – Rural Recreation, Tipperary Tourism Company Health Service Executive, Sporting organisations, Community and voluntary sector, Older Person’s Council, An Garda Síochana, Coillte, Tipperary Heritage Office
<b>Link to Plans:</b>	Healthy Tipperary; Tipperary Sports Partnership Strategy.

12. The Health and Wellbeing Alliance is a newly established sub-committee of the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) in Tipperary County Council. See Chapter 4 – Implementation and Monitoring for further details.

### ACTION 1.3: ENSURE TIMELY ACCESS TO SERVICES

While it may not be possible to provide services in every community as the Local and Social Inclusion Plan notes above, it is reasonable to ensure timely access to these services. The issue of transport and links with service provision is central here (see action proposed under Theme 2 - Transportation). The sustainability of essential services and the threat of closure or withdrawal is of significant concern for older people (the recent announcement of closure of post offices a case in point). Tipperary LCDC Health and Wellbeing Alliance will work with older people to identify solutions to risk of service loss at local level and identify ways in which to channel concerns and demand for services. This could include devising local solutions such as route planning, awareness raising around service timetables and enabling older people to speak with key stakeholders around service retentions.

<b>Lead Partner:</b>	Tipperary LCDC Health and Wellbeing Alliance
<b>Support Partners:</b>	Tipperary County Council – LCDC Support Staff, Tipperary Older Persons Council, An Post, An Garda Siochana, Financial Institutions, Transport Providers, Business Community, Community and Voluntary Groups, Local Enterprise Office, HSE, Resource Centres
<b>Link to Plans:</b>	LECP
<b>Expected Outcomes:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older people are supported through local community improvements and amenity development to enjoy more active and healthy lifestyles</li> <li>• Older people will feel safe out and about in their local community building their confidence to engage and participate more thereby reducing loneliness and isolation</li> <li>• Retention of essential services particularly in rural areas</li> <li>• Ensure continued access to services by providing catalyst supports such as transport connectivity</li> </ul>