

CHAPTER 5 HOUSING



5. HOUSING

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5.0 Introduction

The settlement strategy for the County for the period 2010 to 2016 was set out in Chapter 3. This Chapter will address the Council's housing policy towards the achievement of the settlement strategy and should be read in conjunction with the *North Tipperary County Housing Strategy 2009-2016*.

While it would have been anticipated that much of the social housing requirement could have been achieved through Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, the current economic downturn and the significant decrease in the numbers of housing units being constructed in residential development is likely to result in limited numbers being provided through Part V in the early years of this Plan.

5.1 Housing– Key Principles

The housing policies set in this chapter are based on the following key principles:

- *Balanced communities through a range of housing types.*
- *High quality living environment.*
- *Efficiency of infrastructure provision and investment returns.*
- *Adequate community facilities.*
- *Viable rural settlements from a commercial and social viewpoint.*
- *Concentration of investments by other state and semi-state agencies.*
- *Protection of the rural landscape.*
- *Safeguarding a balanced rural population.*
- *Safeguarding the social and cultural needs of rural communities.*

The following policies provide an integrated approach towards meeting the housing needs of the County that is realistic, robust and sustainable.

5.2 Housing Policies

A central function of this Plan is to ensure that new residential developments present a high quality living environment for its residents, both in terms of the individual dwelling units and in terms of the overall layout and appearance of the scheme. The design and layout of new residential areas shall provide high quality houses and neighbourhoods, which provide a range of social functions and facilities, including a hierarchy of open spaces for a range of age groups. The Planning Authority will take into account the guidance document published by the DoEHLG in 2008, entitled 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities', and its accompanying Urban Design Manual.

The Council, in conjunction with the Mid West Regional Authority, has developed a sustainable matrix which should be completed as part of all planning applications. This matrix highlights to applicants the key issues which should be addressed (energy, transport, materials etc) and presents opportunities for off setting poorer aspects of the development against those aspects which achieve high standards e.g. A rated dwelling versus increase transport use or use of local resources versus no use of renewables. A copy of the sustainability matrix is included in Appendix 8.

Policy HSG 1: Sustainability Matrix

It is the policy of the Council to seek to implement and to have all developments assessed against the Sustainability Matrix contained in Appendix 8 of this Plan.

5.2.1 Housing in Urban Areas

Policy HSG 2: Housing in Urban Areas and on the Urban Fringe

It is the policy of the Council to encourage/support new housing on land zoned for residential development or for a mixture of residential and other uses in towns and villages based on the neighbourhood concept, as follows:

- a) to ensure the provision of a wide range of house types and sizes to meet the needs of different sections of the population;
- b) to conform with the DoEHLG 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities' and the accompanying Urban Design Manual
- c) to provide suitable and supervised amenity areas for children, teenagers and adults;
- d) to retain, where possible, man-made and natural heritage features within their boundaries or environs, that are designed in a manner which is sympathetic to the natural or heritage aspect concerned (e.g. attractive stands of trees, mature hedgerows, stone walls, protected structures, archaeological sites, street furniture, recorded monuments, etc.); and
- e) to provide high quality residential layouts that are traffic calmed by design.

The neighbourhood concept is based on the principle that people should be able to find many of the requirements for daily living within easy reach of their home. It ensures that new housing and service provision, in the form of schools, shops, community and recreation facilities, are mutually supportive and provide for sustainable and pleasant living environments.

5.2.2 Village Housing

As set out in Chapter 3, Primary Service Centres, Secondary Service Centres/Market towns, District Service Centres, Local Service Centres and villages are an integral part of the rural environment. The way such settlements fit into the landscape and rural character of

the area are important features to be maintained. Meeting local needs and maintaining 'quality of life' in such settlements are also important considerations. Overall the County Development Plan needs to achieve and maintain an appropriate balance between conservation and development within the different rural parts of the County. The Council recognises that many urban centres within the County have been suffering from a decline in population and that there remains a 54/46, rural/urban split in the County.

The Council recognises the essential role that villages perform in sustaining rural communities in North Tipperary. They are the hub of community life in many areas of the County and provide the essential services to sustain community life in rural areas.

The Council also recognises that in making a decision on where to live many people choose to live in rural areas. The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines (DoEHLG) both acknowledge that persons from an urban area may seek a rural lifestyle, although both emphasise that small towns and villages have a key role in catering for such demand.



To this end the County Development Plan will provide for and support the planned expansion of the villages through village plans in accordance with policies HSG 3-6 and the Settlement Plans as outlined in Volume 2. See Map below for all villages with Settlement Plans.

However, many people who need to live in rural areas do not have direct access to land, and may not be in a financial position to purchase a site on the open market. It is, therefore, important that affordable housing is provided in rural areas to ensure that all sections of the community are accommodated.

Policy HSG 3: Village Land Zoning

It is the policy of the Council to identify village boundaries as set out in Volume 2 (Settlement Plans), and lands within these boundaries are zoned for both:

- Residential use; and
- a mixture of residential and other uses.

Within all villages the Council will consider parcels of land for residential development in accordance with the sequential test approach with village centres sites given priority. Where land, which is zoned for residential development under this Plan, is not developed for that purpose during the lifetime of this Plan, the Council will consider de-zoning it under the review of the Plan in 2016.

All lands within villages apart from Social and Public, Amenity and Educationally zoned lands will be open for consideration for business and employment purposes subject to normal sustainable planning and development criteria.

Policy HSG 4: Village Housing

It is the policy of the Council to strengthen and consolidate existing settlement centres where services and community facilities already exist. Housing developments will be designed to accord with policy HSG 3, HSG4a and HSG5. Where a village boundary exists, the Council will seek to ensure that all multiple house developments take place on a suitably phased basis, and within the boundary, and that residential developments of a multiple house nature are restricted outside of these village boundaries.

Policy HSG 4a: Village Housing

All applications for developments in villages comprising 5 or more dwellings,

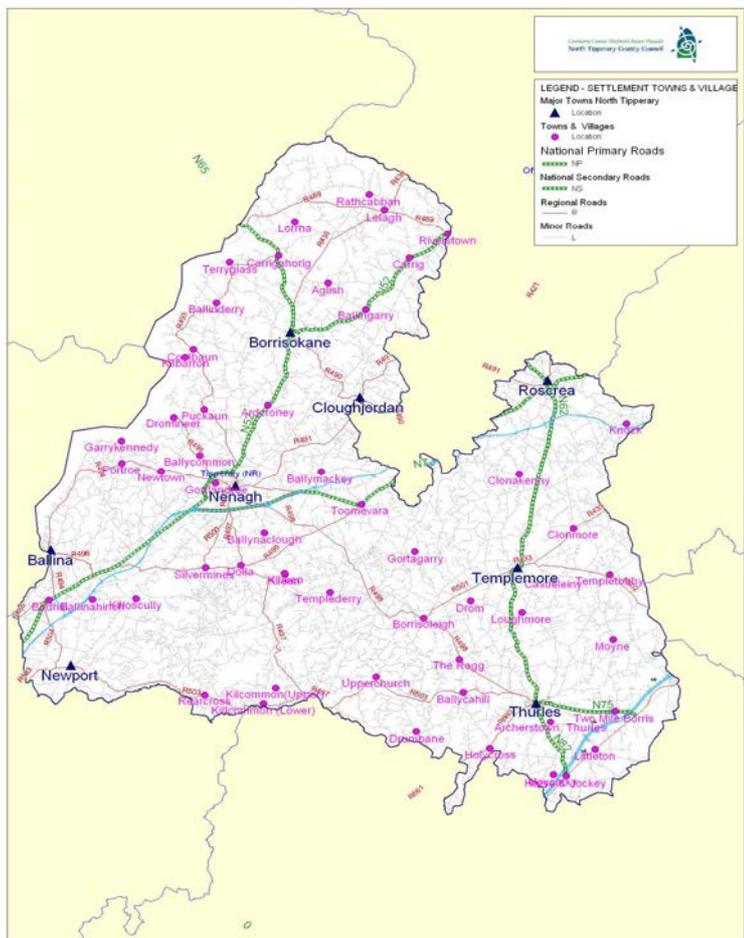
shall be accompanied by a design statement, prepared by a suitably qualified professional (belonging to a recognised Chartered organisation). Such statements should indicate the reasons for choosing the design(s), the design cues from which ideas were taken and how it is considered that the design(s) chosen are compatible with their immediate environs. Regards should be had to the context and cues provided by the existing development and to the Council’s policy to maintain attractive, appropriately scaled and well designed rural settlements.

- Shop where deemed necessary
- Streetscape improvement
- Landscape planting, particularly on village edges
- Adequate provision of community and social infrastructure
- Footpaths and lighting.



Policy HSG 5: Village Facilities
 It is the policy of the Council to seek improved village facilities as part of new housing development, including:

- Overlooked open space/village green
- Crèche



Villages with Settlement Plans

Policy HSG 6: Serviced Sites in Villages

It is the policy of the Council that in appropriate locations within villages, proposals for dwellings on large sites will normally be accommodated. This is to create a viable alternative to one-off houses in the rural countryside, and may be achieved by the provision of single dwellings, groups of fully serviced sites as stand alone developments or as constituent part of other developments.

Policy HSG7: School Capacity

It is the policy of the Council to require applicants for housing developments to demonstrate as part of planning applications, that adequate school places exist within a sustainable driving distance from the proposed development to cater for school going children, in line in with the DoEHLG and DoES Guideline Document, 'The provision of Schools and the Planning System'.

**Specific Objectives**

H1 The Council will seek financial and other incentives, including developer contributions, towards improving village services that are required to enhance the viability of village life.

H2 The Council intends to acquire lands in villages in order to provide serviced land for sites and cluster housing in order to stimulate growth in villages and to meet the rural housing requirements of the County where resources permit.

H3 The Council will seek streetscape and roadside improvements as part of new development that contribute to traffic

calming and improvement in the visual appearance of villages.

H4 The Council will support the sustainable expansion and improvement of existing recreation and community facilities in villages, through the Development Contribution Scheme and through the Tidy Towns programme.

5.2.3 Rural Housing

The Council recognises that in order to sustain rural communities there is a need to retain rural population. This is particularly the case in parts of the county that are subject to population decline. However, some rural areas are under development pressure particularly from scattered urban generated housing. The Government published "Sustainable Rural Housing" Guidelines for Planning Authorities (April 2005), and this Plan will have regard to the Guidelines in determining applications for housing in rural areas.

The Council will, through the policies set in the County Development Plan, provide for the preservation of the viability of rural communities while preserving the character of rural areas and preventing degradation of the rural landscape

In considering any planning applications for one-off dwellings in rural areas, the Planning Authority shall ensure, that except in exceptional circumstances, these applications shall comply with national policy on access onto motorways, national primary and national secondary roads as set out in the National Roads Authority document 'Policy Statement on Development Management and Access to National Roads'.

The Planning Authority is working to bring the elected members, officials, the wider public and interest groups together in building ownership over the Development Plan and its implementation, particularly in the area of settlement policy. The identification of trends in settlement patterns and pockets of pressure areas within the stronger rural areas (open countryside) are set out in the County Plan.

5.2.3(i) Local Need

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS-Nov 2002) and the Rural Guidelines state that it is “normal in policy terms” to distinguish between ‘rural-generated’ housing and ‘urban-generated’ housing. Also highlighted is the importance to maintain the distinction between towns and the countryside (to prevent further erosion of both urban and rural areas), by putting in place strategies to, *inter alia* prevent urban sprawl, and reduce the loss of agricultural and other land to urban areas. This will help to protect rural identity and reduce disruption to farming by keeping rural-urban distinctions as clear as possible, but it will also help to strengthen existing urban areas and settlements.

The Council will, through the policy objectives set out in the County Development Plan, seek to retain the rural population of North Tipperary and to support rural communities and their services.

1) Persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community: Such persons will normally have spent substantial periods of their lives living in rural areas as members of the established rural community. Examples would include farmers, their sons and daughters and/or any persons taking over the ownership and running of farms, as well as people who have lived most of their lives in rural areas and are building their first homes. Where applicant’s family landholding is subject to trans-boundary issues between pressure areas, amenity areas or open countryside, the Council may take account of such issues provided that the landholding is historical and local housing need requirements are met.

2) Persons working full-time or part-time in rural areas: Such circumstances will normally encompass persons involved in full-time farming, forestry, inland waterway or aquatic related occupations, as well as part time occupations where the predominant occupation is farming/natural resource related. Such circumstances could also encompass persons whose work is intrinsically linked to rural areas such as teachers in rural schools or other persons

whose work predominantly takes place within rural areas. Note: In satisfying ‘rural house need’ planning applications will also be subject to satisfying normal planning considerations relating to siting, and design (such as those outlined in the Rural House Design Guidelines) and housing need.”

3) Persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community, living permanently in the rural area but whose work requires them to be away from the family home for a number of days each week.

5.2.3(ii) Ribbon Development

In assessing applications under policies HSG8 - 13 the Council will take account of the planning history of the landholding and the future family needs of the landowner and will resist ribbon development on rural roads and, therefore, will take account of the existing pattern of development in the area. The Council will resist further development where there exist/permitted 5 houses, in total, along any continuous 250 metres of roadway which covers the proposed site. The 250m will be measured from the point to point of development within the 250m, i.e from site boundary to site boundary. At the earliest possible stage in the planning application process landowners should clearly outline what provision they wish to make for family members on their landholding. This provision will form part of the assessment of current / future applications by the Planning Authority.

Exceptions will be made to the above to allow a sixth dwelling provided the application conforms to the other policies in the Plan, in the following circumstances:

- A. To allow the subdivision of a cottage plot or equivalent (minimum size of 1 acre and owned prior to 2004) for a direct family member of the owner and which can be sited without detracting from the rural character and appearance of the area or causing a reduction in amenity due to backland development or;
- B. To facilitate a landowner (who derives some income from farming and owns the land prior to 2004) selling a site

where a site was not disposed of from the landholding previously or;

- C. To facilitate a direct family member of a family who purchased a site prior to 2004; or
- D. To facilitate a direct family member of a residential landholding where a site was not sold from the landholding where no opportunities exist on the landholding to set back the site from the road,

And

Exceptions will be made to allow an entrance (where five dwellings exist/permitted) provided the application conforms to the other policies in the Plan in the following circumstances:

- E. To facilitate direct family member of a farming landholding where the site can be set back sufficient distance to be screened from the road (minimum 50m, except in exceptional circumstances), sited without causing a negative impact on the landscape or causing a reduction in amenity due to backland development, and where there is no other options on the family landholding or;
- F. To facilitate a landowner (who derives some income from farming and owns the land prior to 2004) selling a site where a site was not sold from the landholding where the site can be set back sufficient distance to be screened from the road (minimum 50m, except in exceptional circumstances), sited without causing a negative impact on the landscape or causing a reduction in amenity due to backland development, and where there is no other options on the family land holding.

And

Exceptions will be made to allow an entrance/dwelling (where six dwellings exist/permitted) provided the application conforms to the other policies in the Plan in the following circumstances:

- G. To facilitate a landowner (who derives some income from farming and owns the land prior to 2004) selling a site where a site was not sold from the landholding where the site can be set back sufficient distance to be screened

from the road (minimum 50m, except in exceptional circumstances), sited without causing a negative impact on the landscape or causing a reduction in amenity due to backland development, and where there is no other options on the family land holding or;

- H. To facilitate a direct family member of a farming landholding where the site can be set back sufficient distance to be screened from the road (minimum 50m, except in exceptional circumstances), sited without causing a negative impact on the landscape or causing a reduction in amenity due to backland development, and where there is no other options on the family landholding or;
- I. To facilitate direct family member of a residential landholding where a site was not sold from the landholding where no opportunities exist on the landholding to set back the site from the road or,
- J. To allow the subdivision of a cottage plot or equivalent (minimum size of 1 acre and owned prior to 2004) for a direct family member of the owner, and which can be sited without causing a negative impact on the landscape or causing a reduction in amenity due to backland development or;
- K. To facilitate a direct family member of a family who purchased a site prior to 2004.

And

Exceptions will be made to allow an entrance/dwelling (where seven dwellings exist/permitted) provided the application conforms to the other policies in the Plan in the following circumstances:

- L. To facilitate a direct family member of a farming landholding where the site can be set back sufficient distance to be screened from the road (minimum 50m, except in exceptional circumstances), sited without causing a negative impact on the landscape or causing a reduction in amenity due to backland development, and where there is no other options on the family landholding or;
- M. To facilitate a direct family member of a farming landholding where a site was

- not sold from the landholding where no opportunities exist on the landholding to set back the site from the road or;
- N. To allow the subdivision of a cottage plot or equivalent (minimum size of 1 acre and owned prior to 2004) for a direct family member of the owner and which can be sited without causing a negative impact on the landscape or causing a reduction in amenity due to backland development;
- O. To facilitate a direct family member of a family who purchased a site prior to 2004.

Note 1: Where an existing ribbon development exists and where exemptions A to O above do not apply, the Planning Authority will consider allowing, in exceptional circumstances and where no other opportunity exists on the landholding and subject to Note 2 below, a single additional roadside site for a direct family member of a farming landholding. This will be subject to the remainder of the land within the landholding, with road frontage, being included as part of a Section 47 Agreement.

Note 2: Subject to Exemptions A to O above, the Planning Authority will not accept more than five dwellings along any one side of the road along any continuous 250 metres of roadway which covers the proposed site.

Note 3: This definition is in compliance with the Sustainable Rural Housing – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (April 2005). The Council will monitor changes to this definition either at a National or Regional level.

5.2.3(iii) Identifying Rural Area Types

The Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines stress the importance of research and analysis being carried out into population and development trends in rural areas before Planning Authorities initiate the process of drafting the written statement. This analysis should include the identification of the location and extent of the rural area types set out in Section 5.3.2 of the National Spatial Strategy.

For the review of the County Development Plan, the Planning Authority carried out a detailed assessment in accordance with the approach outlined in the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines. The assessment has been carried out for a period in which the 2004 County Development Plan has been operating, namely from October 2004 – April 2008. This has involved:

- Mapping the location of all planning applications for one off rural housing including mapping the decisions of each (grant and refusal) based on the Planning Departments I-Plan and I-Map Intranet Planning System;
- Mapping the changes in population numbers and density from the 2006 Census and comparing them against the 2002 Census figures;
- Looking at the proximity and influence of Limerick City and its environs on the Newport Electoral Area and the resulting pressure for rural housing;
- Examining the pressure for urban generated rural housing around the main urban centres in the county i.e. Nenagh, Thurles, Roscrea and Templemore;
- Examining the pressure for urban generated rural housing and second homes in scenic areas of the County, especially close to Lough Derg.

Examining the pressure for rural housing accessing out onto important routes within the County i.e. Motorways, National and Secondary Roads, Class 1A, and Class 1 Regional Roads

This analysis has identified a number of area types for the purposes of the County Development Plan which are presented on the designation map. The policy for each area is outlined below together with brief descriptions of the areas, defining the key characteristics associated within each ‘rural area type’, the geographic location of the specific areas within the county and the critical issues facing the area type. See Map Ref G to G6 in Volume 5 for the County Designations.

5.2.3(iv) Housing Policy in the Open Countryside

Changing trends in the agricultural sector have led increasingly to farmers looking for different ways of supplementing their farm

incomes. However, many farmers experiencing financial difficulties are forced to offer land for housing. This trend has been fuelled by a growing demand for houses, particularly in the countryside. Between January 2004 and April 2008, there were 1,847 houses granted planning permission in the rural countryside of North Tipperary. The 2004 Development Plan has been successful in ensuring that those who are local to an area and are in need of a dwelling are generally accommodated. Without having the strong local need policies of the 2004 Plan in place, North Tipperary would have continued to see the levels of speculative development experienced during the period up to 2004 when the Plan came into effect. It is proposed that continuing with strong local need policies will allow those who are local and in need of a dwelling, to find suitable sites and remain in their locality, thereby contributing to the continued vitality and viability of their rural community.

To allow the speculative sale of sites to return would inevitably result in locals being priced out of the market and being forced to move away from their locality, which would inevitably lead to a deterioration in the rural environment, would undermine the viability of some farm holdings, and would have a negative impact on North Tipperary as a place to live and as a tourist destination.

This area type is to be found in mainly rural areas within the triangle between Nenagh, Thurles and Roscrea, with pockets elsewhere in the County. This area is under more moderate pressure for one off housing development than the Pressure Areas. The key challenge to be addressed in this area is to maintain a reasonable balance between development activity in the extensive network of smaller towns and villages and housing proposals in the wider rural area.

Policy HSG 8: Rural Housing on the Open Countryside

It is the policy of the Council to permit new houses in the open countryside where:

- a) The application is being made by a person whose primary employment is in agriculture, horticulture, forestry or bloodstock industry; or
- b) Persons who were born within 10km of the proposed location or lived in a rural area within 10km of the proposed location for any 10 year period of that person's life or;
- c) Direct family members seeking to live on the family farm where the primary residence is part of the farm holding; or
- d) A person engaged in a small agricultural/rural business based on established need and demonstrating a history of such business activity; and
- e) The house is for that person's own use; and the applicant can demonstrate that he/she is eligible under the above criteria.

Note 1: The definition of 'Rural' under Policy HSG 8 shall include small villages and the rural countryside, but will exclude the following urban settlements - Nenagh, Thurles, Roscrea, Templemore, and the smaller settlements of Ballina, Newport, Borrisokane, Borrisoleigh, Littleton and CloghJordan. (However, those living within these smaller settlements prior to 1990 will benefit from rural location under Policy HSG 8)

Note 2: Direct family member includes son or daughter. Where a farmer does not have a direct family member the Council will take account of the next of kin or person(s) who have inherited the farm and intend to live there or a dwelling for a niece or nephew where the land owner does not have children.

Note 3: The Council may require a legal agreement in exceptional circumstances with a landowner to restrict or regulate the further development of land by sterilisation in accordance with the provisions of Section 47 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000. The Council in requiring such an agreement may exclude direct family members from the sterilisation. This will, however, depend on the extent of development in the area and the planning history of the landholding.

Note 4: Policy HSG 8 is designed to ensure that the application for a dwelling is made by a person who genuinely needs to live in the area, and to prevent the speculative sale of sites. The Council may attach a condition to a grant of permission for a house in the countryside that stipulates that the house should be occupied as a place of permanent residence by the applicant or by a member of the immediate family for a minimum of seven years.

Note 5: The Council discourage the development of second homes or the development of new dwellings following the sale of a primary residence. Policy HSG 8 is designed to meet those with genuine housing need. Where the existing home is owned for a period of 5 years and the applicant can demonstrate a genuine need and is upsizing by a minimum of 100 sq.m over the size of their existing home, or where an elderly person may wish to downsize by virtue of the existing dwelling being too large, or in exceptional circumstances, the Council will consider facilitating either up-sizing or down-sizing once.

Note 6: The Council will only consider exceptional health circumstances where applications are supported by relevant documentation from both an appropriate Disability Organisation and a registered medical practitioner, subject to relevant planning policies. Where a Disability Organisation does not exist to support the particular health circumstances of the applicant the Planning Authority will consider the application having regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Note 7: The Council will discourage the development of second homes, or the development of new dwellings following the sale of a primary residence. Policy HSG 8 is designed to meet those who genuinely need to live permanently in the Open Countryside and persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community, living permanently in the rural area but whose work requires them to be away from the family home for a number of days each week.

Note 8: Criteria under (b) may be relaxed where the applicant was born or

has lived for 10 years within the same parish as the proposed site but outside the 10km.

Policy HSG 8 is designed to control the volume of new housing built in the open countryside. It is also designed to facilitate a substantial portion of the population who genuinely need to live in rural areas because it is necessary for work purposes or for family reasons. Many sites are acquired from parents and the Council recognises the importance of maintaining local communities that are now subject to rapid change.

Applicants that meet the criteria set out in Policy HSG 8 shall comply with the following design criteria:

- (a) With the exception of active farm yard entrances, new dwellings shall be accessed, where practicable, from existing entrances and/or access roads;
- (b) Where several members of a family are to be accommodated on a single landholding, there shall be only one access road, and houses shall be clustered and set back a minimum distance of 50 metres from the main road;
- (c) Where possible, the existing hedge rows shall be maintained;
- (d) The land between the roadside and the houses shall be planted with trees as set out in the Rural House Design Guidelines prepared by the Council in 2009.

5.2.3(v) Rural Housing in Special Landscape Zones



Significant areas of land within the county are made up of elevated and scenic

landscapes. Under the County Development Plan 2004-2010, a specific objective to prepare a 'County Landscape Character Assessment' was included, and in April 2009, the LCA was adopted by the Council. The LCA makes it clear that areas zoned as Special Landscape Zones are capable of accommodating new development, where such development is sited, designed and landscaped such that it protects and enhances the surrounding landscape. While the Council will seek appropriate development within these locations given their sensitivity, the Council also recognises the economic difficulties and population decline within these areas.

Policy HSG 9: Rural Housing in Special Landscape Zones:

It is the policy to permit housing in special landscape zones provided that the following criteria are met:

- (a) the location, siting and orientation of the house, including natural surrounding vegetation, would integrate the house successfully into the landscape; and
- (b) the design of the house accords with the Rural Housing Guidelines 2009 prepared by the Council in 2009.

Note 1: Where Policy HSG 8: Rural Housing in the Open Countryside overlaps with Policy HSG 9: Rural Housing in Special Landscape Zones, Policy HSG 8 will predominate. However, such houses will need to accord with the design, siting and orientation issues set out in Policy HSG 9.

Note 2: Where Policy HSG 10: Housing Policy – Structurally Weak Areas overlaps with Policy HSG 9: Rural Housing in Special Landscape Zones, Policy HSG 10 will predominate. However, such houses will need to accord with the design, siting and orientation issues set out in Policy HSG 9.

5.2.3(vi) Rural Housing in Structurally Weak Areas

Chapter 3 of the Plan has identified that the rural areas of the County are growing faster than urban areas. However, there are parts of the County, both urban and rural, that are experiencing significant decline. In order to balance the population growth and

overall settlement pattern of the County the Council will seek to redress the decline of these areas that include: Ballycahill, Ballymurreen, Foilnamon, Glenkeen, Redwood, Lackagh, Templeberry, and Upperchurch. These areas had a fall or a stagnation in population between 2002 and 2006.

The key challenge in this area is to arrest population and economic decline with a focus on the role of smaller rural villages in tandem with rural areas.

Policy HSG 10: Housing Policy – Structurally Weak Areas

It is the policy of the Council to provide for new housing in areas subject to significant decline, provided that:

- a) New housing shall, where practicable, share existing entrances and access roads
- b) The proposed site area shall conform to guidelines set out in Section 8.4.1 on plot sizes;
- c) Existing hedge rows shall be maintained where practicable; and
- d) The design and siting of the dwelling shall conform to the guidelines set out in Chapter 10 and Rural Housing Design Guide 2009.

Note 1: Where Policy HSG 10: Housing Policy – Structurally Weak Areas overlaps with Policy HSG 9: Rural Housing in Special Landscape Zones, Policy HSG 10 will predominate. However, such houses will need to accord with the design, siting and orientation issues set out in Policy HSG 9.

Note 2: The Council may require a legal agreement in exceptional circumstances with a landowner to restrict or regulate the further development of land by sterilisation in accordance with the provisions of Section 47 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000. The Council in requiring such an agreement may confine the sterilisation to the selling of sites and exclude direct family members from the sterilisation. This will, however, depend on the extent of development in the area and the planning history of the landholding.

5.2.3(vii) Rural Housing Clusters

Policy HSG 11: Rural Cluster

It is the policy of the Council to facilitate cluster housing within Structurally Weak Areas, Open Countryside and Pressure Areas. Such housing will be accommodated in the following circumstances:

- a) Adjacent to existing villages and rural clusters;
- b) Adjacent to existing rural landmarks such as school, church, or pub;
- c) Within or adjacent to a formal farmyard or courtyard not in active use; and
- d) Where the natural landform provides for safe access, good screening, suitable ground conditions in accordance with the 'Guidelines for Rural Housing'; and
- e) The development will provide a minimum of one unit for affordable housing.

Policy HSG 11 is designed to provide a more sustainable option to single houses dotted along the roadside. Developments considered under Policy HSG 11 shall:

- (a) Provide a common entrance and access road,
- (b) In the first instance the sites should be sufficiently large enough to be serviced by individual treatment systems, and have an adequate outfall or suitable ground conditions for percolation,
- (c) Provide a common courtyard or open space,
- (d) Be set in a well-landscaped setting, and should integrate well with existing hedgerows and landscape features.
- (e) Should be accompanied by a detailed design statement to cover all dwelling designs, landscaping, heights, materials, etc.

In areas under pressure for one-off housing in the county the Council recognise that there are small pockets of the county where there are difficulties accommodating those with genuine local housing need. This has largely occurred because these areas are becoming, or are now, saturated with housing and/or where the topography mitigates against further expansion of linear 'ribbon' housing development. In

view of the above it is an objective of the Council, during the life of the Plan, to:

- a) Identify the roads that are considered saturated;
- b) Identify suitable locations for a cluster to accommodate the un-met local housing need requirement.

Proposed clusters shall conform to criteria (a) – (e) in Policy HSG 11.

Note 1: Saturation occurs when the number of houses in an area exceeds that which would enable new houses to be accommodated either for reasons of ribbon development, traffic safety, environmental reasons resulting from accumulation of septic tanks or topography.

Note 2: The designation of suitable sites for clusters will be a matter for the Planning Authority in conjunction with the Elected Members and will be considered in Structurally Weak Areas, Open Countryside and Pressure Areas. Rural Clusters in these areas shall provide for 50% local need, except in Structurally Weak Areas. The Planning Authority shall resist clusters on Class 1 Regional Roads other than to accommodate direct family members on the farming landholding.

Rural clusters may be proposed as outline applications and accommodate five to seven dwellings in areas identified under HSG 11 (b) and (c) depending on location, impact on the landscape and site conditions. Within areas identified under HSG 11 (a), clusters of 5 to 10 dwellings may be considered dependent on normal planning policies.

Key advantages of clustering rural dwellings include opportunities for:

- shared-transport and car pooling;
- joint energy saving systems;
- rainwater harvesting systems;
- common open space will require organised maintenance, thus creating sharing of responsibility and community involvement;
- sharing of responsibility and management of joint infrastructure such as access road and open space and potential maintenance of sewage treatment plants and natural treatment

such as constructed wetlands, reed beds or peat systems.

5.2.3(viii) New Housing in Pressure Areas

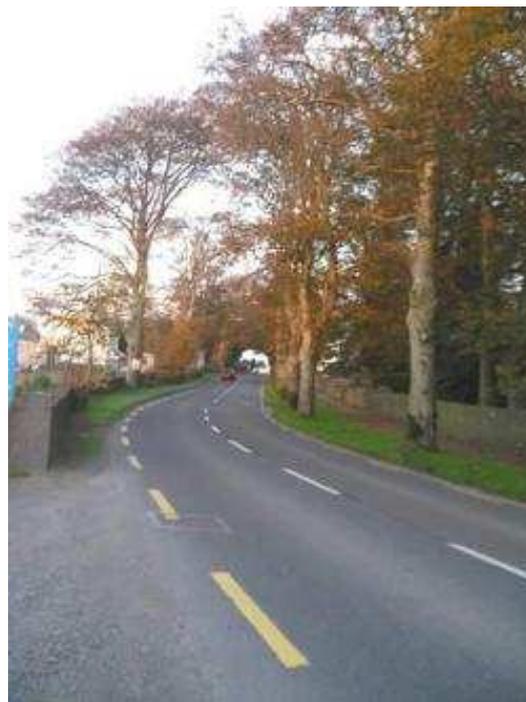
There are several areas within the County that are considered to be unsuitable for further sporadic development for a number of reasons:

Important Roads: Motorways, National Primary and National Secondary Roads occupy less than 7% of the road network in the County, they carry over half of the traffic. Class 1A and Class 1 Regional Roads, as identified in Policy TRANS 4 (Section 7.4.2 Table 7.3) provide important links between settlement centres of the county. It is therefore imperative that these roads are protected from further development that may reduce the carrying capacity and safety of Primary, Secondary and Key Regional Roads.

Areas of Primary Amenity, Special or Sensitive Landscape: These areas include land in close proximity to the lake, mountains and exposed landscapes.

Pressure Areas around urban centres: Proximity to Limerick has resulted in pressure for houses within the commuter belt of Limerick, as well as within the areas under strong urban influence such as the commuter belts around Nenagh, Thurles and Roscrea.

Approach Roads: Almost all of our urban centres have been subject to linear development on the approach roads to towns and villages. This is an inefficient use of land that results in landlocked areas to the rear, unnecessary extension of urban areas into unserviced areas of the rural countryside, and causes detrimental harm to the character of the countryside.



Policy HSG 12: Rural Housing in Pressure Areas

It is the policy of the Council to resist one-off houses in the following pressure areas:

- a) Areas of Primary Amenity or identified as unsuitable for houses in the County Landscape Character Assessment;
- b) Motorways, National Primary, National Secondary, Class 1A and Class 1 Regional Roads (Refer to Policy TRANS 7)
- c) Pressure Areas around Limerick, and
- d) The radial routes around the urban centres of Nenagh, Thurles, and Newport and the Regional Road Radial Routes around Roscrea, Templemore, Borrisokane, Cloughjordan and Birr Environs as identified on the County Designations Map.

Policy HSG 12 will be strictly enforced in pressure areas, however, exceptions (E) may be made to Policy HSG 12 as follows:

- E1 The applicant's primary employment is working the family farm. The application is for an individual house, is made by a direct descendant of the landowner, it is not possible to locate the house within the family landholding and outside the pressure area, and the design, siting and orientation of the house is in accordance with the guidelines in Chapter 10 and Rural House Design

- Guide prepared by the Council in 2009;
- E2 On Class 1A Regional Roads outside of (d) above where the applicant's primary employment is working the family farm. The application is for an individual house, is made by a direct descendant of the landowner, it is not possible to locate the house within the family landholding and outside the pressure area, and the design, siting and orientation of the house is in accordance with the guidelines in Chapter 10 and Rural House Design Guide prepared by the Council in 2009;
- E3 On Class 1 Regional Roads outside of (d) above (Section 7.5.2 Table 7.4), the Council will permit houses for a son or daughter, provided that such development can be accommodated via the existing entrance or via a maximum of one additional entrance on to the Regional Road.
- E4 In the Pressure Area around Limerick and the non-radial routes in the pressure areas around towns, the Council will permit houses in the following circumstances:
- E4.1 The application is being made by a person whose primary employment is in agriculture, horticulture, forestry or bloodstock industry; or
- E4.2 Persons who were born in the pressure area and within 10km of the proposed location, or lived in the pressure area within 10km of the proposed location for any 10 year period of that person's life or;
- E4.3 Direct family members seeking to live on the family farm where the primary residence is part of the farm holding; or
- E4.4 A person engaged in a small agricultural/rural business based on established need and demonstrating a history of such business activity; and
- E4.5 The house is for that person's own use; and
- E4.6 The applicant can demonstrate that he/she is eligible under the above criteria.
- E5 On radial routes outside of (b) above (Section 7.5.2 Table 7.3 and 7.4), the

Council will permit a house for a direct family member of the landowner who has derived some farming income from the landholding since 2000, provided that such development can be accommodated via the existing entrance or via a maximum of one additional entrance. Onto the Class 1 Regional Road the Council may consider one additional entrance onto a radial route where no other opportunity exists to provide an access.

Note 1: The Council will discourage the development of second homes, or the development of new dwellings following the sale of a primary residence. Policy HSG 12 is designed to meet those who genuinely need to live permanently in the Pressure Area and persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community, living permanently in the rural area but whose work requires them to be away from the family home for a number of days each week.

Note 2: Applicants inheriting land that require a dwelling, and conform to local need as defined in Policy HSG 12, will be confined to a single dwelling only through legal agreement set out in Note 4.

Note 3: The definition of 'Rural' under Policy HSG 12 shall include small villages and the open countryside, but will exclude the following urban settlements - Nenagh, Thurles, Roscrea, Templemore, and the smaller settlements of Ballina, Newport, Borrisokane, Borrisoleigh, Littleton and CloghJordan. (However, those living within these smaller settlements prior to 1990 will benefit from rural location under Policy HSG 12).

Note 4: The Council may require a legal agreement in exceptional circumstances with a landowner to restrict or regulate the further development of land by sterilisation in accordance with the provisions of Section 47 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000. The Council in requiring such an agreement may confine the sterilisation to the selling of sites and exclude direct family members from the sterilisation. This will, however, depend on the extent of development in the area and the planning history of the landholding;

Note 5: The Council will attach a condition to a grant of permission for a house in the countryside that stipulates that the house should be occupied as a place of permanent residence by the applicant for a minimum of seven years.

Note 6: Houses in the Pressure Area will be single storey and two-storey or dormer style buildings will only be considered where there is established screening and the natural topography lends itself towards the integration of such buildings. Applicants preparing housing designs under Policy HSG 12 shall have regard to the Rural Housing Design Guidelines prepared by the Council in 2009.

Note 7: The Council will only consider exceptional health circumstances where applications are supported by relevant documentation from both an appropriate Disability Organisation and a registered medical practitioner, subject to relevant planning policies. Where a Disability Organisation does not exist to support the particular health circumstances of the applicant the Planning Authority will consider the application having regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area

Note 8: The Council discourage the development of second homes or the development of new dwellings following the sale of a primary residence. Policy HSG 12 is designed to meet those with genuine housing need. Where the existing home is owned for a period of 5 years and the applicant can demonstrate a genuine need and is upsizing by a minimum of 100 sq.m over the size of their existing home, or where an elderly person may wish to downsize by virtue of the existing dwelling being too large, or in exceptional circumstances, the Council will consider facilitating either up-sizing or down-sizing once.

Note 9: Criteria under (E4.2) may be relaxed where the applicant was born or has lived for 10 years within the same parish as the proposed site but outside the 10km.

5.2.3(ix) Lough Derg High Amenity Area

The Lough Derg High Amenity Area is one of the most attractive areas of the county.

The land in close proximity to the lake and within clear visibility of the lake is both a sensitive and vulnerable landscape, and has limited environmental capacity to accommodate further development. In assessing applications under Policy HSG 13 the Council will require that no detrimental harm is caused to the views to or from the lake, or to the amenity of the area.

Policy HSG 13: Housing in the High Amenity Area

It is the policy of the Council to resist houses in the High Amenity Area except for the following:

- (i) Persons who were born in the rural High Amenity Area and within 5km of the proposed location or lived in the rural High Amenity Area within 5km of the proposed location for any 10 year period of that person's life or;
- (ii) Direct family members seeking to live on the family farm where the primary residence is part of the farm holding;
- (iii) The proposed development does not interfere with views to or from the lake; and
- (iv) The siting, design and layout will not detract from the character or uniformity of the landscape;
- (v) The house is for that person's own use; and
- (vi) The applicant can demonstrate that he/she is eligible under the above criteria.

Note 1: The Council will discourage the development of second homes, or the development of new dwellings following the sale of a primary residence. Policy HSG 13 is designed to meet those who genuinely need to live permanently in the High Amenity Area and persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community, living permanently in the rural area but whose work requires them to be away from the family home for a number of days each week.

Note 2: Applicants inheriting land that require a dwelling, and conform to local need as defined in Policy HSG 13, will be confined to a single dwelling only through legal agreement set out in Note 4.

Note 3: The definition of 'Rural' under Policy HSG 13 shall include small villages and the open countryside, but will exclude the following urban settlements - Nenagh, Thurles, Roscrea, Templemore, and the smaller settlements of Ballina, Newport, Borrisokane, Borrisoleigh, Littleton and CloghJordan. (However, those living within these smaller settlements prior to 1990 will benefit from rural location under Policy HSG 13).

Note 4: The Council may require a legal agreement in exceptional circumstances with a landowner to restrict or regulate the further development of land by sterilisation in accordance with the provisions of Section 47 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000. The Council in requiring such an agreement may confine the sterilisation to the selling of sites and exclude direct family members from the sterilisation. This will, however, depend on the extent of development in the area and the planning history of the landholding;

Note 5: The Council will attach a condition to a grant of permission for a house in the countryside that stipulates that the house should be occupied as a place of permanent residence by the applicant for a minimum of seven years.

Note 6: Houses in the High Amenity Area will be single storey and two-storey or dormer style buildings will only be considered where there is established screening and the natural topography lends itself towards the integration of such buildings. Applicants preparing housing designs under Policy HSG 13 shall have regard to the Rural Housing Design Guidelines prepared by the Council in 2009.

Note 7: The Council will only consider exceptional health circumstances where applications are supported by relevant documentation from both an appropriate Disability Organisation and a registered medical practitioner, subject to relevant planning policies. Where a Disability Organisation does not exist to support the particular health circumstances of the applicant the Planning Authority will consider the application having regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Note 8: The Council discourage the development of second homes or the development of new dwellings following the sale of a primary residence. Policy HSG 13 is designed to meet those with genuine housing need. Where the existing home is owned for a period of 5 years and the applicant can demonstrate a genuine need and is upsizing by a minimum of 100 sq.m over the size of their existing home, or where an elderly person may wish to downsize by virtue of the existing dwelling being too large, or in exceptional circumstances, the Council will consider facilitating either up-sizing or down-sizing once.



5.2.3(x) Reuse or Replacement of Existing Dwellings in the Countryside

Policy HSG 14: Replacement of Existing Dwellings in the Countryside

It is the policy of the Council that in considering the replacement of existing dwellings in the rural countryside the Council will have to be satisfied that:

- a) The existing structure was last used and/or is suitable as a dwelling;
- b) The roof, external and internal walls are substantially intact but the building is unsuitable for modern use;
- c) The proposed dwelling will be designed strictly in accordance with the guidelines contained in Chapter 10 and Rural House Design Guidelines prepared by the Council in 2009;
- d) The proposed floor area shall accord with guidelines on plot sizes as set out in Chapter 10;
- e) The development will not result in the creation of a serious traffic hazard.

- f) For application within Pressure Areas or High Amenity Areas, that the applicant(s) comply with the local need criteria set out in Policies HSG12 and HSG13.

Note: In pre-application consultations under policy HSG 14 the Council will seek refurbishment of old buildings rather than replacement, where practicable. In the case of existing houses on substandard site areas the Council will require that the dwelling conforms to the requirements set out in the EPA guidelines for domestic wastewater treatment systems.

Policy HSG 14(a): Reuse of or Extension to Existing Dwellings in the Countryside

It is the policy of the Council that in considering the reuse / extension of existing dwellings in the countryside the Council will have to be satisfied that:

- a) The existing structure was last used and/or is suitable as a dwelling;
- b) The development will not result in the creation of a serious traffic hazard;
- c) The roof, external and internal walls are substantially intact but the building is unsuitable for modern use;
- d) The proposed extension will be designed strictly in accordance with the guidelines contained in Chapter 10 and in the Rural Housing Design Guidelines prepared by the Council in 2009;
- e) The proposed floor area shall accord with guidelines on plot sizes as set out in Chapter 10 and in any case be not greater than 240sqm or twice the existing floor area (which ever is greater).

Note: In pre-application consultations under policy HSG 14(a) the Council will seek the sympathetic refurbishment of old buildings rather than replacement. In the case of existing houses on substandard site areas the Council will require that the dwelling conforms to the requirements set out in the EPA guidelines for domestic wastewater treatment systems.

5.2.3(xi) Other Issues

It is important to note that considerations under the single rural house in the countryside policy represent only one element in the assessment of an application

for dwelling(s) in the open countryside. The principles of the development relating to siting, design, environmental, heritage, amenity and traffic considerations, are of paramount importance in the consideration of such development.

North Tipperary County Council's policy on rural housing is therefore in accordance with the broad objectives on 'sustainable rural settlement policy framework' as outlined in the National Spatial Strategy, whilst also having particular regard to the DOEHLGs 'Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines'. It addresses the need to achieve an appropriate balance between the protection of the open countryside, to retain and strengthen rural population levels and to meet the housing needs of individuals with a connection and/or requirement to live in the rural area.

5.2.4 Commercial Uses on Residential sites

The Planning Authority recognises that certain commercial activities can be accommodated in villages adjacent to residential areas, particularly those that contribute to local service provision. However, there is a growing trend of self-employed and small-scale industrial and commercial activity locating adjacent to and/or within the curtilage of existing houses in the rural countryside, particularly on sites where the operator of the activity is living in the adjacent house. Such activities include workshops, car parking for articulated trucks and buses can have a detrimental impact on amenities of adjacent residents and the rural character of the area. The Council will therefore seek to balance the need to provide for rural diversification against the impact that such proposals have on existing residential amenities and the rural character of the area.



Policy HSG 15: Commercial Uses on or adjacent to Residential Sites in Rural Areas

It is the policy of the Council that proposals for new small scale rural enterprises or extensions to existing small scale rural enterprises will be permitted only where it can be clearly demonstrated that:

- a) they are of a scale in terms of number of employees, site area and building size, which is suitable for the location;
- b) the use proposed is appropriate to the area and that it will not have a negative on the surrounding area in terms of nuisance, noise, odours or other pollutants;
- c) they would not result in adverse transport effects;
- d) they would not have a detrimental effect on the surrounding area or on the amenity of adjacent nearby occupiers nor result in the loss of actively managed agricultural land;
- e) the proposed development is not for a type of use for which land is allocated elsewhere in the plan area and there is no reasonably alternative available for development in such an area;
- f) developments in visually sensitive areas address their surroundings;
- g) the site is suitable in size such that the housing and commercial activity can be separated, serviced and landscaped accordingly; and
- h) the development does not exceed the plot size ratio for commercial uses on or adjacent to residential sites as set out in Chapter 10 .
- i) the development is in line with national policy on access onto national primary and secondary roads.

The applicant should be aware that in granting new development up to the maximum plot size ratio set out in Chapter

10, that the Planning Authority will be indicating that any subsequent expansion of the development will not be encouraged.

There are a considerable number of people living in rural areas that require to park a commercial vehicle within the curtilage of their dwelling. Where the occupant of a rural dwelling requires to provide a hard standing to park a single rigid commercial vehicle within the curtilage of the site the Council will permit such development provided that it does not detract from nearby residential amenity.

Proposals to house commercial vehicles will be considered against the suitability of the site, the impact on residential amenity and the rural character of the area.

Table 5.1: Rural Housing – Suitability Matrix

Rural Housing Policies									
	Open Countryside HSG 8	Special Landscape Area HSG 9	Structurally Weak Area HSG 10	Clusters HSG 11	Primary Amenity HSG 13	National Primary & Secondary Road HSG 12	Class 1 Regional Rd HSG 12	Pressure Areas other than around radial routes HSG 12	Radial routes in urban pressure areas HSG 12
Person full time farming	O	O	O	O	O ₃	O ³	O ⁴	O	O ²
Direct family member	O ²	O ²	O	O	O ₃	O ³	O ⁴	O ²	O
Local Need	O ¹	O ¹	O	N/A	O ₅	X	X	O ⁵	X
Non Local Need	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X

X – Not allowed

O – Open for consideration

N/A – Not Applicable

O¹ - Person who was born within 10km of the proposed location or lived in a rural area within 10km of the proposed location for any 10 year period of that persons life

O² – Direct family member seeking to live on the family farm where the primary residence is part of the farm holding

O³ – Direct family member whose primary employment is working the family farm.

O⁴ – Direct family member making an application for an access onto a Class 1 Regional Road where no other opportunity exists for an access.

O⁵ – Persons born in the pressure area and within 10km of the proposed location or lived in the pressure area within 10km of the proposed location for any 10 year period of that person's life

Note 1: The matrix is to act as a guide only to the suitability of applications for housing across the county. In all cases the written policy will supersede the content of this matrix and as such the matrix should be read in conjunction with the identified policies.

5.2.5 Social/Affordable Housing

In accordance with its statutory requirements, the Council will endeavour to meet the needs of those requiring accommodation through its own house building programme and a range of social housing options. The Corporate Plan for North Tipperary Local Authorities has the following strategic goal with regard to Housing:

“To ensure that all persons in the County have affordable accommodation suitable to their social and personal needs”

Social housing is defined as rented accommodation provided either by the local authority, or a voluntary or co-operative housing body whilst affordable housing is defined as owner occupier housing provided at a price below market value. Current Housing Policy is set out in “Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities: Statement on Housing Policy” DoEHLG February 2007 and Associated Guidelines “Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities” DoEHLG 2007. The overall aim of housing policy is to enable every household to have available an affordable dwelling of good design, suited to its needs, in a good environment and, as far as possible, at the tenure of its choice. Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities’ has been endorsed by the social partners in Towards 2016.

The general strategy for realising the strategic objective is that those who can afford to do so should provide housing for themselves, through the range of options available to them, and that those unable to do so would have access to social housing provided by the Local Authority.

Further to the national policy documents above, the Council will, *inter alia*:

- Acquire land or buildings for the purposes of future housing and community facilities in areas where services exist or are planned.
- Make sites available in serviced areas for the purpose of housing

development by persons in need of housing.

- Rehabilitate its own housing stock where necessary, and encourage and facilitate similar rehabilitation of existing private housing.
- Ensure the provision of a wide range of house types and sizes to cater for the different needs of the population, including the provision of sheltered housing for the elderly.

In line with national trends, the numbers on the Council’s housing waiting list have not decreased (See Table 5.2).

Area	Numbers
North Tipperary County Council	447
Roscrea	156
Newport	38
Borrisokane	18
Borrisoleigh	29
Ballina	39
Portroe	15
Toomevara	13

Figures as of May 2009

The Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) commenced in May 2006 in North Tipperary on foot of a Government decision to transfer to Housing Authorities the responsibility for the long term housing needs of Supplementary Welfare Allowance Rent Supplement recipients. The Scheme is an initiative introduced to cater for the accommodation needs of persons who are in receipt of rent supplement, starting with those in receipt of supplement for 18 months or more. The scheme will provide an additional source of good quality rented accommodation for eligible persons to enhance the response of local authorities to meeting long-term housing need.

The main features of the scheme are that local authorities enter into contractual arrangements with accommodation providers to secure the medium to long-term availability of private rented

accommodation for RAS. The property must meet standards for private rented accommodation and the tenancy must be registered with the Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB).

In North Tipperary at present, there are 330 people approximately in receipt of Rent Supplement for 18 months or more. 176 private rented RAS contracts have been completed to date, and 42 contracts in respect of tenants in Voluntary Housing accommodation.

5.2.5(i) North Tipperary Housing Strategy

The overall pattern of growth in the number of persons resident and in households constructed in North Tipperary and the three Town Councils has been set out in Chapter 3 'Settlement Strategy'. The Settlement Strategy included a household and population projection for the period of the Development Plan and up to 2022. The Housing Strategy and policies contained within it will play a significant part in seeking to realise the Settlement Strategy, aiming in particular to ensure that sufficient zoned and serviced lands are available to provide the projected number of households and facilitate the integrated expansion of Key Settlements, which shall include a balance in social composition.

The North Tipperary County Housing Strategy 2009-2016, was prepared during a period of unprecedented change in the housing, construction, employment and income sectors, of not only people in North Tipperary, but at a Country wide level. The objectives of the Strategy were as follows:

- To ensure that adequate land is available to meet the housing needs of the County
- To facilitate the reservation of adequate land for social and affordable housing
- To assist in the formulation of a social housing policy
- To ensure a distribution of housing that reflects the needs of

the community and the demands of sustainability

- To ensure that the policies of the Government are reflected in the policies adopted.
- To assist the formulation of relevant planning policies with regard to the provision of housing

The Housing Strategy concludes the following –

1. Housing provision has been strong in the county over the past number of years. However, in line with national and international trends this provision has dropped markedly in the immediate past. Given the volatile nature of the world economic situation at present it is difficult to predict the level of construction in the immediate future.
2. The population of the county will continue to grow at rates beyond those attributable to natural increase alone reflecting a net in-migration to the county. This prediction is made in line with the policies of the National Spatial Strategy and the current regional population predictions of the CSO, the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government and the Mid West Regional Authority.
3. The distribution of provision will continue to reflect the overall urban/rural balance of the county.
4. The situation regarding the availability of zoned land has improved considerably as has the provision of services in the smaller centres. In most of the major settlements the availability of land should not be an inhibiting factor for the provision of housing.
5. Despite the downturn in the housing market and the economy in general, very few houses are likely to come on the market at prices less than €160,000 and those that do will require considerable investment to bring them to an acceptable standard.
6. More than 20% of households will not be in a position to provide dwellings for themselves using the 35% of

- disposable income rule and using a medium range mortgage product.
7. The Housing Authorities will use the full range of available supports for the provision of social and affordable housing.

Policy HSG 16: Social/Affordable Housing

It is the policy of the Council to facilitate the implementation of the County Housing Strategy 2009-2016. To address the current imbalance between housing demand and housing supply, the following shall be required by agreement under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended: 20% social¹ and affordable² housing will be required on all sites that are zoned for residential or a mixture of residential and other uses.

In some circumstances a financial contribution in accordance with S3 (b)(vi) of the Planning and Development Act 2002 will be accepted in respect of part or all of a Part V requirement. The decision in respect of the appropriate Part V solution will be taken having regard to the need for social/affordable housing in the area, the type of proposed development, and the availability of funding for purchasing.

The Council will engage in discussions with developers/applicants prior to the formal planning process to negotiate details of the operation of Part V in relation to a specific development.

In respect of cluster development in unzoned areas, as identified in Policy HSG 5, the Council will negotiate with developers to secure a minimum of one unit to be available for affordable housing. This will ensure that all sections of the rural community can gain access to rural housing, if so desired.

Where it is proposed that the site be developed for elderly persons'

¹ Housing for persons referred to in section 9(2) of the Housing Act, 1988.

² Housing or land made available in accordance with section 96(9) or (10), for eligible persons.

accommodation the proportion of the site relating to this use shall be considered to have provided 20% for social or affordable housing. This is to encourage the development of these types of residential units. It should result in "empty nesters", particularly the elderly, having the choice that will enable them to vacate larger units for units more appropriate in size to accommodate their current needs³.

The applicant / developer shall be required to submit details supporting the appropriateness of the design and layout proposed and details of the management of the proposed scheme.

Policy HSG 17: Reservation of Land for the Provision of Social and Affordable Housing

It is the policy of the Council, as required under Section 95 of the Planning and Development Acts, 2000-2006, that 20% of all land zoned for residential use and/or residential and other uses, shall be reserved for the provisions of housing for the purposes of either or both of the following:

- Housing for persons referred to in Section 9(2) of the Housing Act, 1988;
- Affordable housing (as defined in Section 93 of the Planning and Development Acts, 2000-2006)

5.2.5(ii) Social/Affordable Housing Needs

Under section 94(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, in drawing up its Housing Strategy a Planning Authority shall have regard to the most recent Housing Needs Assessment made under section 9 of the Housing Act 1988.

The following is the housing needs assessment drawn up by the North Tipperary Local Authorities in 2008.

³ Maximum site size relating to elderly persons accommodation is 1 hectare.

TABLE 5.3 – Summary of Housing Needs Assessments North Tipperary

2002	2005	2008	% change 2005-2008
639	653	937	+284 (+43%)

It will be noted that these figures suggest that there has been a considerable increase in those on the housing list since 2002 and, indeed, since 2005. This is despite the significant increase in housing provision that has taken place over recent years by the Council. For example, between 2004 and 2006 the County Council provided an average of 211 units per year of social and affordable housing. This compared with an average of about 147 per year over the previous 10 years.

Based on the information presented above, the total housing need in the County stood at 937 families in 2008.

It is envisaged that there will be an increased demand for social housing during the lifetime of this Plan.

Policy HSG 18: Social Housing

It is the policy of the Council to provide, subject to availability, social houses through a combination of mechanisms including direct build, 'Part V', turnkey and the acquisition of housing through purchase and / or leasing in accordance with the Council's settlement hierarchy to meet identified needs. Social housing will be allocated on the basis of the Council's adopted scheme of letting priorities.

Policy HSG 19: Affordable Housing

It is the policy of the Council to appropriately manage the provision of affordable housing and sites provided by the Council within the County.

5.2.5.1 Council Land Strategy and Future Uses

Subject to funding it is the intension of the Council to develop the lands identified below for appropriate purposes, during the lifetime of the County Development Plan 2010-2016.

Table 5.4 – Summary of Council Lands

Location	Size of Land [ha.]	Zoning Status
Borrisoleigh	2.68	Town Centre/ Residential
Portroe	0.55	Village Centre
Puckane	3.38	Residential
Templetuohy	1.55	Residential
Littleton	3.45	contained within littleton settlement plan
Cabra	0.808	Pressure area
Borrisokane	0.76	Town Centre

5.2.6 Accommodation of the Travelling Community**Policy HSG 20: Accommodation for the Travelling Community**

It is the policy of the Council to facilitate the provision of accommodation for the travelling community in accordance with the North Tipperary County Council Traveller Accommodation Plan, including all Social and Affordable housing options available under the Housing Acts.



An integral part of the Council's policy and programme for housing in North Tipperary is the accommodation of the Travelling Community.

A range of mechanisms will be used to provide for the Traveller community including the mechanisms in the Traveller Action Plan. It is anticipated that the provision of 11 accommodation units per year will be required over the period of the Development Plan.

The North Tipperary County Council Traveller Accommodation Plan (2009 - 2013) indicates the requirements for traveller accommodation based on the statutory assessment of need as at 31st March, 2008. The Annual Count of Traveller Families at November 30th 2007 identified one hundred and seventy Traveller Households in North Tipperary. Of these, one hundred and sixteen families were living in Standard Local Authority Housing, Group Housing and Private Rented accommodation. A further nineteen families were accommodated in Halting Sites located in Nenagh and Roscrea.

Table 5.5: Estimated demand for traveller accommodation to 2013				
Location	Standard Housing	Rural Housing	Group Housing	Serviced Site
Nenagh	8	2	-	3
Thurles	7	9	5	-
Roscrea	9	-	-	-
Templemore Area	5	6	-	-
Total	29	17	5	3

The Council continues to work with traveller representatives and other relevant groups and agencies, in the implementation of its accommodation proposals. The design and layout of such accommodation will continue to be undertaken in conjunction with members of travelling community. The Council will have regard to the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998, and to the 'Revised Guidelines for Residential Caravan Parks for Travellers' issued by the Department of the Environment and Local Government (1997).

5.2.7 Homeless People

Policy 21: Homeless People

It is the policy of the Council to actively promote and facilitate, integrated solutions to address the issue of homelessness within North Tipperary. The Council will continue to work in partnership with the statutory and voluntary agencies to address the accommodation needs of homeless persons who are an intrinsic part of the community in which they are to be housed, or as set out in the North Tipperary Homeless Strategy and Action Plan 2007 – 2009, and the DoEHLG policy document 'The Way Home' – A Strategy to Address Adult Homelessness in Ireland 2008 – 2013.

5.2.8 Community Facilities

Policy HSG 22: Community Facilities

It is the policy of the Council that in assessing new applications for housing the Council will seek, where necessary, services that are required to meet the needs of the community, and/or to impose levies to assist in the provision of community facilities. Where housing is allowed outside principal locations the Council will seek community levies towards the provision of community facilities at the nearest centre.



The Council recognises the important role that community facilities play in the life of the County, and that such facilities should be located close to principal centres. However, where community facilities are provided in principal centres, such facilities are available to the community at large, so it is considered reasonable that all dwellings granted in both urban and rural locations should contribute towards the provision of such facilities.

5.2.9 Childcare Facilities

Policy HSG 23: Childcare Facilities

It is the policy of the Council to encourage the provision of nurseries, crèches or other childcare facilities in association with housing, commercial and industrial development. The Council will give due regard to assessment of need for such services at time of development. The Council will encourage developers to consult with the County Childcare Committee and HSE to ensure compliancy particularly in relation to space ratios and outdoor space. Furthermore it is the policy of the Council to have regard and to implement the Guidelines on Childcare Facilities (2001) DoEHLG.

Policy HSG 24: Childcare

It is the policy of the Council to assist the County Childcare Committee in the implementation of the North Tipperary Childcare Strategy 2007/2010. The Council will also assist the County Childcare Committee to identify priority areas within the County for the provision of childcare facilities.

Childcare is taken to mean full day care and sessional facilities and services for pre-school children and school going children out of hours. While considerable capital investment has taken place in

North Tipperary under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP) 2002/2006 and the current National Investment Childcare Programme (NCIP) there are still some blackspot areas in need of full day childcare services. The demand for full day service has decreased somewhat with the decline in the national economy. The introduction of the new “Early Childhood Care and Education Initiative” in the April 2009 budget may create an increased demand for sessional places for children, in the year before they start school (3ys three months to 4 yrs six months) This new scheme entitles children in this age group on September 1st each year to three hours free preschool each day five days per week .

There is equally a recognition that such provision must be of a suitably high quality. Quality childcare can benefit children, their parents, employers and the community in general. Childcare provision has also been recognised in the National Anti-Poverty Strategy as one measure to address poverty and social exclusion.

The Council, having regard to the National Policy on Childcare, will promote through the planning system and in consultation with the County Childcare Committee an increase in the number of childcare places and facilities available in the County and will seek to improve the quality of childcare services for the community while maintaining existing residential amenity. Such provision shall be implemented in a sustainable manner, compatible with the land use and transportation policies set out elsewhere in the Plan. Appropriate locations for childcare facilities are:

- On appropriately located sites in major new residential developments;
- Industrial estates and business parks and other locations where there are significant numbers working;
- In the vicinity of schools;
- Neighbourhood and village centres;
- Adjacent to public transport routes.

5.2.10 Recreation and Amenity

Please refer to Section 8.3 and Chapter 10, which set out the Council's policies and guidelines in respect of the provision of open spaces, play areas and residential amenities.

5.2.11 Nursing Homes/Elderly Accommodation

Policy HSG 25: Nursing Homes/Elderly Accommodation:

It is the policy of the Council to encourage applications for new nursing homes and retirement homes in villages and towns in the County. Nursing homes in rural areas may also be considered. Where separate dwelling units are proposed adjacent to and within the curtilage of a nursing home, such development should, where possible, be located such that there is access to local services such as church, shop as well as nursing and security facilities. Such units shall be managed in perpetuity as rented accommodation for the elderly and special needs and as part of the overall complex of the nursing home.

Policy HSG 26: Granny Flat and Special Needs Accommodation:

It is the policy of the Council in assessing proposal for granny flats and special needs accommodation to discourage the provision of separate dwelling units. Such units shall be designed so that it may be absorbed into the main dwelling at a later date. Separate units will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and on landholdings in excess of 0.5 ha where it can be demonstrated that both dwellings will be retained as one-planning unit.

Note: Proposal made under Policy HSG25 and HSG26 shall take account of the guidance contained in "Buildings for Everyone".

5.2.12 Libraries

North Tipperary's public library service provides an increasingly important cultural, information, community and outreach role within the County. There

are 6 branch libraries throughout the County, namely:

- Nenagh Branch Library,
- Roscrea Branch Library,
- Thurles Branch Library,
- Templemore Branch Library,
- Borrisokane Branch Library,
- Cloughjordan Branch Library,



Policy HSG27: Libraries

It is the policy of the Council to support the libraries service within North Tipperary and to work towards contributing to the knowledge society, social inclusion, E-Government, local studies and learning, archives and life-long children services to rural communities, the housebound and homes for the elderly.

5.2.13 Subdivision of a Cottage Plot

Policy HSG 28: Subdivision of an existing cottage plot.

It is the policy of the Council to permit the single subdivision of an existing cottage plot provided that the following criteria are met:

- (a) The applicant is direct family member of the current owner, who owns the cottage plot since 2000.
- (b) The new dwelling will be accessed from the existing vehicular entrance to the dwelling, except in exceptional circumstances, which may require the existing vehicular entrance to be permanently and effectively closed up.

- (c) The development complies with the ribbon development criteria as set out in Section 5.2.3(ii).
- (d) The existing dwelling and the new dwelling complies with the plot ratio criteria as set out in Chapter 10: Development Management Guidelines.
- (e) Both wastewater effluent treatment systems shall be designed in accordance with the relevant EPA Wastewater Treatment Codes of Practice as set out in Section 10.2.3.

Note: The Council will attach a condition to a grant of permission for the subdivision of a cottage plot that stipulates that the dwelling should be occupied as a place of permanent residence by the applicant for a minimum of seven years.

Specific Objectives

H5 It is an objective of the Council to seek the development of social and affordable units on a case by case basis, in accordance with existing local needs and special need requirements of the population of the area.

H6 It is an objective of the Council to seek to provide adequate accommodation for Travellers in accordance with the need as identified in the Traveller Accommodation Plan and on-going assessments.

H7 It is an objective of the Council to ensure that an appropriate mix of housing types, designs and sizes are provided within each housing or mixed use development as part of Part V proposals.

H8 It is an objective of the Council that the allocation between social and affordable housing is made on a case by case basis depending on the identified social and affordable needs of the area within which the development is taking place.

H9 It is an objective of the Council to reserve land within settlements and alongside existing educational facilities to allow for the provision of and expansion

to education facilities. Furthermore it is and objective of the Council that the provision of new education facilities are located within existing settlements and to only allow out of town locations in exceptional circumstances.