

# **Tipperary County Council**



**Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann**  
Tipperary County Council

**Traveller Accommodation**

**Programme 2019 – 2023**

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## **Introduction**

The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 requires that each Housing Authority adopts a Traveller Accommodation Programme for its functional area. The Traveller Accommodation Programme outlines the accommodation requirements of the Travelling Community over a five year period from 2019 to 2023. This policy and its implementation underline the commitment of the County Council to meet the housing needs of members of the Travelling Community throughout the county

In preparing the programme for 2019 – 2023, Tipperary County Council undertook a consultation process with interested parties through fora such as the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees and Housing Strategic Policy Committees. The views of Members of the Council and relevant bodies such as Statutory Agencies, adjoining Local Authorities, and interested community, voluntary and non-profit bodies were also considered. By way of advertisements in the local press, written submissions were sought from members of the public and any other groups that might wish to make a contribution towards the preparation of the programme.

Since the last plan was published the Travelling Community was officially recognized by the Irish State as an ethnic minority (March 2017). Taoiseach Enda Kenny in his address to Dáil Eireann noted that the Traveller Community has their own unique heritage and culture and that it is reasonable to identify as both a Traveller and Irish.

The Annual Count of Traveller Families at November 30<sup>th</sup> 2018 identified 375 Traveller Households in Tipperary. 179 families were living in standard local authority lettings with 30 families living on serviced halting sites. 27 families were living in Group Housing Schemes and 31 families were living on unauthorised sites.

## **Section One      Role of the Implementing Authority**

### **Role of Implementing Authorities**

Tipperary County Council is the key statutory authority with responsibility for meeting the accommodation needs of the Travelling community.

### **Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC)**

Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees were set up under the Traveller Accommodation Act, 1998 and meet quarterly or as deemed necessary by the members. Membership consists of representatives from the Travelling Community, Elected Members, Council Officials and representatives from Voluntary and Statutory agencies. One of the main duties of the LTACC is to regularly review progress and monitor the delivery of the accommodation programme.

### **Voluntary Housing/Accommodation Bodies**

The voluntary housing agencies also have a role to play in the provision of Traveller Accommodation. Tipperary County Council will be seeking to actively co-operate with the voluntary sector for the provision of accommodation for travellers, when opportunities arise.

## **Section Two      Review of Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014 - 2018**

Prior to the merger of North and South Tipperary County Councils a Joint Traveller accommodation programmes for the period 2014 to 2018 was formally adopted by both County Councils. A subsequent review of the programme was carried out pursuant to Section 17 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998.

In the programme, a need for 71 units of accommodation was identified (Please See Table Below);

<b>Year</b>	<b>Standard Housing</b>	<b>Group Housing</b>	<b>Halting Site</b>	<b>Rural Housing</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2014</b>	11	1	1	2	15
<b>2015</b>	9	1	0	2	12
<b>2016</b>	10	7	0	2	19
<b>2017</b>	10	0	1	2	13
<b>2018</b>	8	1	1	2	12
<b>Total</b>	48	10	3	10	71

During the duration of the programme, Tipperary County Council provided 88 units of accommodation (Please See Table Below);

<b>Year</b>	<b>Standard Housing</b>	<b>Group Housing</b>	<b>Halting Site</b>	<b>Rural Housing</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2014</b>	8	1	1	0	10
<b>2015</b>	14	2	4	1	21
<b>2016</b>	17	2	3	2	24
<b>2017</b>	10	0	3	2	15
<b>2018</b>	15	0	0	3	18
<b>Total</b>	64	5	11	8	88

### **Section Three Legislation and Policy**

The Traveller Accommodation Programme for the period 2019 - 2023 has been prepared in accordance with the provisions set out in the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998.

The plan will be implemented having regard to all relevant housing and other legislation and will take into consideration the requirements of relevant policies and departmental guidelines and circulars.

All allocations will be on the based on meeting the reasonable accommodation needs of the applicant, having regard to best estate management practices and the resources available to the Council.

## **Section Four    Policy Statement**

### **Accommodation Application**

It is the policy of Tipperary County Council to provide appropriate accommodation for Traveller families who apply, and who, pursuant to generic housing legislation and the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998 are considered to be in need of accommodation.

All applications will be considered in accordance with the Allocation Schemes and Scheme of Letting Priorities of the County Council. Applications must be made by means of the standard social housing application form. Advice and assistance will be provided to applicants and/or their representatives, if requested by the applicant, to address any difficulties that may arise in completing the application process.

Where feasible, the preferred option in terms of the type of accommodation requested will be considered. If this is not possible, other accommodation options that meet their needs will be considered and may be offered to individual families.

Requests for transfers will be considered where a vacancy occurs within an existing accommodation unit and the transfer will meet the applicant's long term housing needs. Mutual transfers will also be considered.

It will be a policy of the Local Authority, that social housing applicants will only be considered for rural housing in exceptional circumstances.

Following the required public consultation Tipperary County Council will endeavor to implement this programme.

Support will be given to community based initiatives that will facilitate Travellers and Settled Communities to work closely together and will enable Travellers to have an active role in their local communities.

It is the policy of the County Council to adopt an inter-agency approach in the delivery of Traveller services. New accommodation provision and/or support services will be provided as part of the interagency strategic approach to service delivery.

Families will be assisted prior to and after the allocation of accommodation and training will be provided in conjunction with the tenancy training programme. Every attempt will be made through the

support of other agencies, to provide additional appropriate supports where this is deemed necessary and where resources allow.

Travellers who present as homeless will be afforded the supports and services contained in Homeless Strategy for Tipperary.

Housing applicants have a right of appeal to the Director of Service or nominated officer in the event of refusal of housing support.

### **Management and Maintenance of Accommodation**

Traveller accommodation will be managed on the same basis as the Council's policy for the maintenance and the management of its housing stock.

Accommodation provided will be to a high standard and maintenance of this accommodation will be provided in accordance with the Council's policy in relation to the general housing/accommodation stock. The requirements of National Guidelines will be considered in the construction, maintenance and management of Traveller accommodation.

Once accommodation units are provided, it is critical that sufficient supports be given to the tenants to ensure that they can meet the terms of their tenancy in full. Whilst the management of Traveller specific accommodation will remain the primary responsibility of the local authority, the Council will undertake to ensure that:

- Travellers accommodated by the Council will be encouraged to develop a sense of ownership and where feasible, to actively participate in the site management and tenancy committees. The Council acknowledges and will continue to facilitate the important role that outside agencies can play in promoting good estate management in accommodation.
- A Tenancy agreement setting out the terms and conditions of tenancies will be required for all tenancies. In the interests of all tenants living on the site/in the area, the Council will enforce the content of the tenancy agreement and each tenant has a responsibility to ensure that the terms of the tenancy agreement are met in full. Where tenancy Agreements are being broken repeatedly, the Council will implement eviction proceedings against the offender/s. If an eviction order is granted, housing supports will not be available for a period of twelve months.

- All Travellers will be expected to attend pre tenancy training courses irrespective of accommodation type provided.
- The Council will ensure that there is on-going liaison between the relevant housing staff, voluntary organisations and tenants of the sites to ensure effective management.
- The duties of a caretaking/ management service, where provided, will be clearly explained to all tenants. It is expected that the tenants of the site will co-operate fully and comply with instructions relating to health and safety. It is hoped where feasible and if resources are available to expand on existing caretaking/ management services during the course of this programme.
- It is the policy of the County Council that failure on the part of tenants to comply with the requirements of the tenancy agreement, including provisions relating to anti-social behaviour, may lead to such tenants being required to surrender their accommodation. If necessary, legal proceedings may be initiated including an application for an exclusion order. If an exclusion order is granted, housing supports will not be available for a period of twelve months.
- Where it is possible and feasible to do so, consideration will be given to supporting Travellers in the pursuit of legitimate economic activities but in a manner that does not adversely affect the amenities of their own accommodation or that of neighbouring units.
- Persons who own horses are obliged to comply with the requirements of the Control of Horses Act, 1996 and Local Government Act 2001, animal welfare legislation and the Control of Horses Bye - Laws 1998 and 2015. The County Council where possible will support the work of Tipperary Travellers Horse Owners Association.
- Unauthorised encampments will be dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the relevant legislation as appropriate. The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 provides Local Authorities with the power to deal with illegal caravan parking in the vicinity of Traveller specific accommodation (Halting Sites and Group Housing) and any other Traveller Accommodation, and these powers and other legislative provisions will be availed of where necessary. Section 24 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2002 created an offence of criminal trespass and enforcement is a matter for An Garda Síochána. Section 29 of the 1998 Act provides for the provision of basic facilities

at unauthorised sites. These facilities would only be considered in very exceptional circumstances and where appropriate offers of accommodation haven't been refused.

### **Transient Sites**

Under S.10 3(c) of the Act, a relevant housing authority, in preparing an accommodation programme, must take into account the needs of transient Traveller families.

Tipperary County Council continues to believe that the provision of transient accommodation should be pursued on a national basis, with the implementation of standard codes of practice for the development and management of transient sites.

The Council also believe that in order to determine the exact demand for transient sites, the efforts of the Department and Local Authorities should be directed towards accommodating those Travellers who are in need of permanent accommodation.

Given the numbers and pattern of movement of transient families in recent years the provision of a transient site for Tipperary is not considered necessary. The Council may liaise with adjoining local authorities in order to establish if a need for the provision of transient accommodation on a regional basis exists.

### **Section Five Assessment of Need/ Projected Need**

An assessment of housing need was carried out by Tipperary County Council to establish the existing and projected accommodation needs for the Travelling Community of County Tipperary.

The requirements for Tipperary are as follows;

<b>Standard Housing/Including RAS/Leasing</b>	<b>Group Housing</b>	<b>Halting Site</b>	<b>Single Rural Dwelling</b>	<b>Total</b>
58	15	8	9	90

See Appendix One for breakdown of need per area.

### **New Family Formations**

It is estimated that 100 new families Tipperary will be formed during the life of the Programme. It is envisaged that their short term housing need will be met through the private rented sector while their permanent need is being individually assessed.

### **Section Six Performance, Monitoring and Measurement**

It is planned that 90 families will be offered or provided with permanent accommodation during the duration of the programme. In relation to projected need, consideration will be given to all new applicants who apply during the lifetime of the programme. All new applicants must be assessed and will be considered for accommodation if deemed to be in need of assistance. The ability of the local authorities to meet accommodation needs is dependent on the levels of available funding, and suitable vacancies being available or housing provided under RAS/Leasing arrangements. Current funding constraints will reduce the potential delivery of any new Traveller specific accommodation in Tipperary during the Programme.

It is a requirement that all those interested in receiving social housing supports from Tipperary County Council complete an application form and supply the relevant documentation.

The table on the previous page highlights the number and type of accommodation estimated to be provided each year during the lifetime of the programme. The target is based on current need. The need for standard and rural housing will also be met through the Rental Accommodation Scheme and Lease Arrangements.

## **Section Seven Strategy for Implementation**

Tipperary County Council will, within the period of this five year programme, endeavour to meet the accommodation targets of applicants as outlined above. Social Work and Community Liaison services will be provided to assist in meeting the needs of the Traveller community. While the targets reflect the preferred options, the Local Authority will work with applicants to explore other options of meeting their housing need either on a temporary or permanent basis.

Tenant support and community sustainment is a guiding principle in the delivery of social housing/ social accommodation in County Tipperary and will be at the core of implementation of this programme.

Tipperary County Council will actively promote the full range of social housing options for Traveller families which are set out hereunder:

- Standard Housing
- House Purchase Scheme Options Detailed in Rebuilding Ireland
- Group Housing
- Residential Caravan Sites
- Mobility Aids Housing Grant Scheme
- Housing Aid for Older People
- Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability
- Voluntary or Co-operative Housing
- Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)
- Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) & Lease Arrangements

The provision and management of accommodation for Travellers by the voluntary housing sector will be actively encouraged and supported by the Council.

Needs will be assessed and prioritized on a geographical basis within the County, but families will be encouraged to consider areas other than their

first preference with a view to improving the options available to applicants.

The Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee will meet at least four times annually and its business will be regulated by standing orders. Policy issues pertaining to Traveller Accommodation will be considered by the committee and where necessary reports will be presented on these issues to the Housing Strategic Policy Committee.

Tipperary County Council will ensure that applications for funding from the Department of the Housing, Planning and Local Government will be made and that Traveller accommodation needs will be included in the Housing Action Plan. Every effort will be made to progress projects that are at planning stage. These applications will be made subject to Department guidelines and procedures.

The issue of Traveller accommodation and the provisions of this programme will be taken into account when reviewing the County Development and Local Area Plans.

Tipperary County Council, in conjunction with Tipperary Rural Traveller Project (TTRP) will undertake a survey as part of this Plan making t identify the key issues/challenges for Traveller Households around accommodation. The findings will help inform future actions and objectives.

Tipperary County Council will develop and deliver its accommodation programme in an integrated manner and will consult and liaise with other service providers via existing structures such as the Local Community & Development Committee (LCDC) and Traveller Support Groups. This programme also aims to meets the needs identified in the Local Community & Social Inclusion Plan for Tipperary.

The Traveller Accommodation Programme adopted by Tipperary County Council will be reviewed within three years from the time it has been adopted or at any other time as directed by the Minister for the Housing, Planning and Local Government. A review of the programme can be carried out at any time if considered necessary by the Housing Authority.

On the basis of the assessment of need and projected need, proposals will be contained in this accommodation programme with the intention of addressing these needs as far as is possible, bearing in mind the availability of resources to do so, legal requirements and restrictions, co-operation from applicants, and, where possible, community support.

The County Council in consultation with residents will attempt to improve existing Traveller Specific accommodation through remedial works and extensions. These works are dependent on securing funding and support from the relevant parties.

## **Conclusion**

The Traveller Accommodation Programme outlines the existing and projected need for Traveller Accommodation in County Tipperary for the period 2019 to 2023. It outlines the policies in relation to Traveller accommodation, strategy for implementation, targets and the review processes.

Tipperary County Council aims to build on the progress that has been achieved through successive Traveller Accommodation Programmes. While acknowledging the improvements that had been made, there is still a need to provide additional units of accommodation. In order to achieve the targets set out in this plan, cooperation between all relevant parties is essential.

## Appendix One

## Preferred Options

### Nenagh

14 Households - Standard Housing Incl. RAS/Leased

### Roscrea

6 Households - Standard Housing Incl. RAS/Leased

1 Household - Group Housing

3 Households - Halting Site

1 Households - Single Rural Dwelling

### Templemore

2 Households - Standard Housing Incl. RAS/Leased

1 Household - Single Rural Dwelling

### Thurles

14 Households - Standard Housing Incl. RAS/Leased

6 Households - Group Housing Scheme

2 Households - Single Rural Dwelling

### Cahir

2 Households - Standard Housing Incl. RAS/Leased

1 Household - Single Rural Dwelling

### Cashel

6 Households - Standard Housing Incl. RAS/Leased

2 Households - Group Housing Scheme

2 Households - Halting Site

1 Household - Single Rural Dwelling

### **Clonmel**

8 Households - Standard Housing Incl. RAS/Leased

4 Households - Group Housing Scheme

1 Household - Halting Site

1 Household - Single Rural Dwelling

### **FETHARD AREA**

2 Households - Standard Housing Incl. RAS/Leased

1 Household - Single Rural Dwelling

### **TIPPERARY AREA**

4 Households - Standard Housing Incl. RAS/Leased

2 Households - Group Housing Scheme

2 Households - Halting Site

1 Household - Single Rural Dwelling

### **OVERALL NEED**

58 Households - Standard Housing Incl. RAS/Leased

15 Households - Group Housing Scheme

8 Households - Halting Site

9 Households - Single Rural Dwelling

It is estimated that there will be **100** new household formations during the lifetime of the Programme.