



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary County Council

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
ACT 2003
LANGUAGE SCHEME**

From 2021 - To 2024

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

The Official Languages Act 2003 provides for the preparation by public bodies of a language scheme detailing the services which they will provide:

- through the medium of Irish,
- through the medium of English, and
- through the medium of Irish and English

and the measures to be adopted to ensure that any service not currently provided by the body through the medium of the Irish language will be so provided within an agreed timeframe.

In accordance with section 14(3) of the Act, language schemes remain in force for a period of 3 years or until such time as a new scheme is confirmed by the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media whichever is the later.

1.2 Preparation and Content of the Scheme

In the preparation of this scheme, due regard has been given to the Guidelines issued by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. In addition, there has been a comprehensive process of consultation with relevant stakeholders.

Tipperary County Council is guided by the principle that the provision of Irish language services should be based on:

- the underlying level of demand for specific services in the Irish language,
- the importance of a proactive approach to the provision of such services, and
- the resources, including human and financial resources, and the capacity of the body concerned to develop or access the necessary language capability.

This scheme complements the principles of Quality Customer Service and our Customer Charter. It has been formulated with the intention of ensuring that all relevant obligations under the Official Languages Act by Tipperary County Council will be fully addressed on an incremental basis, through this and future schemes.

1.3 Commencement date of the Scheme

This Scheme has been confirmed by the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. It commences with effect from and shall remain in force for a period of 3 years or until a new scheme has been confirmed, whichever is the later.

Chapter 2: Overview of Tipperary County Council

With a geographical area of 4,282 sq.km and a population of 159,553 Tipperary is the sixth largest of the 32 counties by area and the eleventh largest by population. The region is part of the central plain of Ireland, but the diversified terrain contains several mountain ranges: the Knockmealdown, the Galtee, the Arra Hills and the Silvermine Mountains. The southern portion of the county is drained by the River Suir; the northern by tributaries of the Shannon which widens into Lough Derg. No part of the county touches the coast. The centre is known as 'the Golden Vale', a rich pastoral stretch of land in the Suir basin which extends into counties Limerick and Cork.

The county is traversed by key national arterial routes such as M7, M8, N24 as well as train lines from Dublin to Cork and Limerick, and Waterford to Limerick. The County has a diverse settlement pattern with Clonmel as the largest town (pop. 17,908), Nenagh (pop. 8,439), Thurles (pop. 7,933), Carrick on Suir (5,886).

2.1 Mission and Objectives

Mission

Tipperary, a vibrant place where people can live, visit, and work in a competitive and resilient economy, a sustainable environment and an inclusive and active community.

Objectives

Our four Strategic themes are:

- Our Economy – make Tipperary resilient by supporting innovation, enterprise growth and sustainable employment. Support a diverse and skilled workforce to enhance and develop our County.

- Our Environment – further develop Tipperary’s reputation as a green and sustainable environment achieved through future proofing our communities to be energy efficient and climate change ready. Support our citizens in protecting our environment for current and future generations.
- Our Community- continue to develop Tipperary as an attractive place to live with sustainable and sensitive development. Build strong and confident communities with a sense of pride that are inclusive, equal and informed. Support the Arts and Lifelong learning, to create a rich and diverse heritage and culture.
- Our People – build on the capacity and capability of our dedicated workforce by providing training and development opportunities that seek to fulfil both organisational and personal goals. Recruit people with the appropriate knowledge and skills that will add further value to the delivery of high quality public services.

2.2 Main Functions

The principal functions and services of Tipperary County Council are classified into eight Programme Groups:

- Housing and Building
- Road Transportation and Safety
- Water Services
- Development Incentives and Control
- Environmental Protection
- Recreation and Amenity
- Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare
- Miscellaneous

2.3 Key Services

Housing

Road Transportation & Safety

Water Services

Planning & Development

Environment

Community & Economic Development

Local Enterprise Offices

Corporate Services

Finance

Motor Tax

Fire Services

Civil Defence
Human Resources
Library Services
Museum Services
Information Systems

2.4 Customers and Clients

Our customers and clients are as follows:-

- The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications
- Other Government Departments
- Citizens/Residents/Visitors, Elected Members and Oireachtas members.
- Public Participation Network (PPN)
- State Agencies
- Social Partners
- Southern Regional Assembly
- Other Local and Regional Authorities
- Organisations of the European Union
- Local Development Agencies/LEADER Groups
- Private Sector
- Local Community Development Committee
- Strategic Policy Committee sectoral representatives
- Local and National Media

Chapter 3: Details of services currently being provided in English only or bilingually

Details of services currently being provided in English only or bilingually in Irish and English.

Current Provision of Services		
Services (General)	In English only	Bilingually, in English and Irish
Housing	✓	
Road Transportation & Safety	✓	
Water Services	✓	
Planning & Development	✓	
Environment	✓	
Community & Economic Development	✓	

Local Enterprise Offices	✓	
Corporate Services	✓	
Finance	✓	
Motor Tax	✓	
Fire Services	✓	
Civil Defence	✓	
Human Resources	✓	
Library Services	✓	
Museum Services	✓	
Information Systems	✓	

Chapter 4: Enhancing the provision of Irish Language Services

The provisions shaded in grey in the table below are **mandatory requirements** under the Official Languages Act 2003.

Means of communication with the public		Commitment	
Recorded Oral Announcements		<p>The following recorded oral announcements will be in Irish or bilingual:</p> <p>(a) Recorded oral announcements provided on the telephone when the offices of the public body are closed;</p> <p>(b) Recorded oral announcements transmitted by a public address system;</p> <p>(c) Recorded oral announcements created and transmitted by means of a computerised messaging system or a computerised telephone answering system.</p> <p>This provision relates to 'recorded' announcements</p>	Mandatory

		rather than 'live announcements'.	
		Where a Placenames Order is in force, a public body is required to use the Irish language version of the placename specified in that Order in recorded oral announcements made by it or on its behalf.	
Written Communication	Letters and Electronic Mail	All written communication will be responded to in the official language in which it was received.	Mandatory
	Stationery	Headings of stationery, including notepaper, compliment slips, fax cover sheets, file covers and other folders, labels and envelopes are provided in Irish or bilingually.	Mandatory
Signage	Signage	All signage placed by Tipperary County Council or on its behalf must be in Irish or bilingually, in accordance with the regulations (S.I. No.391/2008).	Mandatory
Publications	Publications	Documents setting out public policy proposals, audited accounts or financial statements, annual reports and strategy statements will be published simultaneously in Irish and English.	Mandatory
	Circulars/Mailshots	Where a public body communicates in writing or by electronic mail with the general public or a class of the general public for the purpose of furnishing information to the public or the class, the body shall ensure that the communication is in the Irish	Mandatory

		language or in the English and Irish languages.	
An Ghaeltacht	Gaeltacht Placenames	The official placenames of Gaeltacht areas will be used by the public body.	Mandatory

Means of communication with the public		Commitment	Timeline By end Yr 1/ Yr 2 / Yr 3
Oral Communication	Reception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception staff will be familiar with and regularly use basic greetings in Irish. • The names of the members of staff who are able to communicate in Irish will be advertised in the various sections of the offices of the public body and at reception. • Seeking services in Irish at reception will not cause any undue delay. Arrangements will be put in place to put members of the public in touch speedily with the relevant official(s) responsible for providing the service required through Irish. • A service through the medium of Irish will be available 	Year 1

		<p>from the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrick On Suir Municipal District • Community & Economic Development • Corporate Services (Archives/Customer Services Desk/Property) • Environment • Finance • Fire Services • Information Technology • Local Authority Waters Programme • Library Service • Nenagh Municipal District • Planning • Roads • Water Services • The choice of language of the customer will be 	<p>Year 1</p>
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		<p>established and he/she will be directed to the appropriate official. If the official is unavailable, the following options will be offered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -calling back when an Irish speaker is available, -conducting business through another member of staff providing a translation service, or -continuing to conduct business in English. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For all other Sections the following options will be offered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -conducting business through another member of staff providing a translation service, or -continuing to conduct business in English. 	
	Face to Face/Counter Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An up to date list of staff members who can provide a service through Irish will be made available. 	Year 1

	Switchboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Services Desk staff will be familiar with and regularly use the basic greetings in Irish and will then be able to transfer the call to another member of staff who can speak Irish. • Customer Services Desk staff will be provided with an up to date list of staff members who can provide a service through Irish. • The names of the members of staff who are able to communicate in Irish will be advertised in the various sections of the office and at reception. • Suitable arrangements will be put in place so that Customer Services Desk staff can put members of the public in touch, without delay, with the office or officer responsible for offering the service 	Year 1
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new information leaflets and application forms produced by Tipperary County Council will be fully bilingual and produced within one cover (except where it is not feasible because of the nature, size or layout of the material). <p>Each new brochure produced will contain a 10% element of bilingualism. This percentage will be increased gradually over time.</p> <p>Brochures or information leaflets may be in English only if they relate to an initiative specific to the English language (e.g. English language drama/writers groups, etc.)</p> <p>In the case of any brochures, information leaflets and application forms used by Tipperary County Council but issued by another body, bilingual versions will be requested.</p>	<p>Year 1</p>
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	Application Forms	As above.	
	Other		Year
Media	Press Releases	Publish 10% of press releases bilingually.	Year 1
	Media Spokespersons		Year
	Speeches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A short introductory paragraph of Irish content will be provided in addresses made by An Cathaoirleach, where relevant. • The prayer before Council meetings is in Irish. 	Year 1 In Place
	Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The name of Tipperary County Council is bilingual on all Council advertisements. 	In Place
Information Technology	Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will publish a dedicated email address for queries in Irish on our website. • Standard email messages such as disclaimers will be bilingual 	Year 1
	Websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Introductory pages will be translated for each Service Homepage and Municipal District. 	Year 1

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All translated documents published by the Council will be on the Councils website. 	
	Computer Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Official Languages Act section of the Intranet will be expanded as a support and resource for staff. 	Year 2
	Interactive Services		Year
	Other		Year
Gaeltacht	Meetings		Year
	Other		Year

Chapter 5: Improving Language Capability

5.1 Recruitment

Our recruitment policy, which is subject to the framework of agreed national recruitment procedures, will have regard to the need to improve Irish language capability on an incremental basis.

All new staff will be provided with an induction pack containing a copy of our agreed scheme in order to ensure that they are made aware of our commitments under the legislation.

5.2 Training and Development

Tipperary County Council is committed to making available opportunities for staff to attend appropriately accredited Irish language training courses, as resources permit. All staff will be advised of facilities/opportunities to improve their competency in Irish.

		Commitment	Timeline By end Yr 1/ Yr 2 / Yr 3
Improving Irish Language Capability	Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The needs of sections in relation to being able to provide a high quality service through Irish to be taken into account when placing or moving staff. The Human Resources Section to review recruitment policy taking into account the need for proficiency in the Irish language (both written and oral) – this to be addressed in line with National Recruitment Policy. 	<p>Year 1</p> <p>Year 1</p>
	Training and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council will ensure that all Staff are given equal encouragement and opportunity to improve their Irish language skills through training and development courses subject to available 	Year 1

		<p>resources and budgetary constraints.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will include language awareness and training as part of the suite of Customer Services training courses. The Council will seek volunteers to provide Irish language services across the organisation. • The Council will ensure that staff volunteering to provide services through Irish will be given appropriate support. • Irish language awareness/training will be incorporated into the Council's Annual Training Programme subject to available resources and budgetary constraints. 	
	Participation in language promotion activities /Provision of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will seek to identify opportunities/activities/resources in order to further promote awareness and use of Irish amongst Council staff and the general public. 	Year 2
	Other		

Chapter 6: Monitoring and Review

The implementation of the scheme will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis by Corporate Services. The contact person for the scheme will be David Coleman, Administrative Officer, Corporate Services Section *Phone: 0761 06 5000 e-mail: david.coleman@tipperarycoco.ie*

A formal system for monitoring requests for services through Irish will be available and recorded in our Annual Report.

Chapter 7: Publicising of Agreed Scheme

This scheme will be publicised both internally and externally, through a press release initially. A bilingual version of the scheme will be made available on our website and circulated to all staff and appropriate agencies. Other means to publicise the scheme may also be used.

In addition, we will take every opportunity in our day to day interaction with customers to promote and publicise the services we provide in Irish through the following means:

- directly informing customers on a proactive basis of the option of conducting business with us through Irish, for example, by the display of notices at reception areas indicating the Irish language services that are available;
- prominently listing these services on our website;
- signifying on selected guidelines, leaflets and application forms that these documents are also available in Irish, unless presented bilingually;
- Giving equal prominence to Irish and English language materials.

A copy of the agreed scheme will be forwarded to the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga.