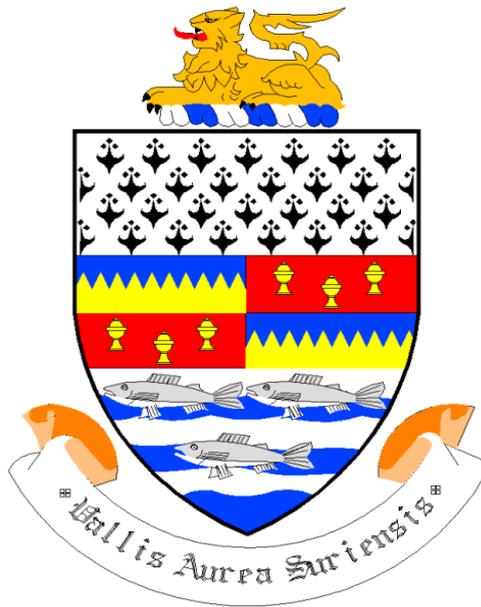


North & South Tipperary Local Authorities



Joint Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014 – 2018

January 2014

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Section One	3
Role of Implementing Authorities	
Section Two	4
Review of Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009 - 2013	
Section Three	5
Legislation and Policy	
Section Four	5
Policy Statement	
Section Five	9
Assessment of Need/Projected	
Section Six	10
Performance, Monitoring and Measurement	
Section Seven	11
Strategy for Implementation	
Conclusion	14
Appendix One	15

Introduction

North and South Tipperary Local Authorities are committed to meeting the housing needs of members of the Travelling Community throughout Tipperary. In order to achieve this objective, a new Joint Traveller Accommodation Programme for the period 2014 – 2018 is being developed. North and South Tipperary County Councils are to merge into Tipperary County Council by June 2014. The new authority will also include Nenagh, Templemore, Thurles, Tipperary, Carrick-on-Suir and Cashel Town Councils and Clonmel Borough Council.

The Annual Count of Traveller Families at November 30th 2012 identified 201 households in North Tipperary. Of this total, 106 families were in permanent accommodation provided by the Local Authority. 27 families were residing in Traveller specific accommodation and 16 families were living on unauthorised sites. In South Tipperary the Annual count showed 139 Traveler Households. 50 families were in permanent accommodation provided by the Local Authority. 24 families were residing in Traveller specific accommodation and 12 families were living on unauthorised sites.

The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 requires that each housing authority adopts a Traveller Accommodation Programme for its functional area. The Act also provided for Local Authorities to prepare Joint Programmes. The Traveller Accommodation Programme outlines the accommodation requirements of the Travelling community over a five year period from 2014 to 2018.

North and South Tipperary Local Authorities in preparing the programme for 2014 – 2018 undertook a consultation process with interested parties through fora such as the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees, Traveller Interagency Committees, and Housing Strategic Policy Committees. The views of Members of the Council and relevant bodies such as Statutory Agencies, Borough/Town Councils, 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.

Section One Role of the Implementing Authority

Role of Implementing Authorities

North & South Tipperary County Councils and Clonmel Borough Council are currently the key statutory agencies with responsibility for meeting the accommodation needs of the Travelling community. Once the merger of all local authorities in Tipperary is completed in June 2014, Tipperary County Council will assume the responsibility for the implementation of programme.

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. Once the merger process is completed, there will be a single LTACC for the County.

Traveller Interagency Strategic Forum

As a result of a High Level Inter Departmental Group initiated by the Taoiseach, all Local Authorities were obliged to draw up a strategic plan for the integration of Traveller services in order to find ways of securing better outcomes for Travellers and improve the use of resources, which are allocated for specific measures. The purpose of the forum is to develop a strategic plan and relevant actions to implement it, with particular emphasis on areas of accommodation, education, health, training/employment, social services and childcare. The interagency forum consists of representatives from voluntary and statutory agencies. After the merger is completed, there will be one forum for Tipperary.

Voluntary Housing/Accommodation Bodies

The voluntary housing agencies also have a role to play in the provision of Traveller Accommodation. North and South Tipperary Local Authorities 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 2009 - 2013

The respective Traveller accommodation programmes for the period 2009 to 2013 were formally adopted by North & South Tipperary County Councils in April 2009. A review of the programmes was carried in 2011 pursuant to Section 17 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998.

The North Tipperary Traveller Accommodation programme identified a need for 55 units. 44 units have currently been provided. Planning has been secured for a six unit Group Housing Scheme in Cabra and the Council is awaiting a decision on a funding proposal from the Department of Environment, Community, and Local Government.

Type of Accommodation						
Year	Standard Housing	Group Housing	Halting Site	Rural Dwelling	RAS/ Lease	Total
2009	10	0	1	0	0	11
2010	3	0	2	0	0	5
2011	3	1	0	3	0	7
2012	4	2	1	1	4	12
2013	4	0	1	0	4	9
Total	24	3	5	4	8	44

The programme for South Tipperary County identified a need for 51 units of accommodation. During the course of the programme 29 households were provided with accommodation.

Type of Accommodation						
Year	Standard Housing	Group Housing	Halting Site	Rural Dwelling	RAS/ Lease	Total
2009	1	4	2	0	1	8
2010	0	0	4	1	0	5
2011	1	0	0	0	1	2
2012	4	0	0	1	0	5
2013	3	0	5	1	0	9
Total	9	4	11	3	2	29

The accommodation provided included 4 Halting Bays at Ballyknock, Cashel, 2 Group Houses and 2 Halting Bays at Waller's Lot, Cashel.

Section Three Legislation and Policy

The Traveller Accommodation Programme for the period 2014 - 2018 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.

It is the intention of both North & South Tipperary County Councils when implementing the Traveller Accommodation Programme that, where possible, agreement by all stakeholders will be achieved. In any event, actions implemented will be on the basis that they meet the accommodation needs of families, having regard to local community needs and circumstances.

Section Four Policy Statement

Accommodation Application

It is the policy of North and South Tipperary County Councils 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 Councils. 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 is a general policy of both Councils not to provide for the needs of young single persons. Such accommodation will however, be considered where special circumstances prevail, in conjunction with the provision of accommodation for other family members.

It will be a policy of the Local Authority, that Travellers families will only be considered for single instance housing in exceptional circumstances - whereby very serious medical concerns exist, or in situations where other forms of Traveller specific or standard accommodation have proven to be particularly unsuitable.

In cases where Traveller families are approved for single instance housing, priority will only be given to those families that will accept and occupy alternative standard, group or halting site type accommodation as a temporary measure pending the provision of the single instance housing.

North and South Tipperary County Councils will implement this programme based on consultation with individual families, members of the public and community based voluntary organisations where appropriate, other statutory agencies, the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee, the voluntary sector and other relevant bodies. Regard will be given at all times to the statutory obligations of the County Councils and to the feasibility of recommendations and suggestions made in relation to the implementation of the programme.

In relation to new Traveller Specific accommodation, it shall be a policy of the Councils to promote a better understanding between the settled community and the travelling community of their differing accommodation needs, accommodation concerns, preferences and constraints.

It is the policy of both County Councils 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.

Travellers who present as homeless will be afforded the supports and services contained in the relevant Regional Homeless Action Plan.

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 Councils' 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 both local authorities, the Councils 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.
- 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 rigorously 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.

- All Travellers will be expected to attend 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 the caretaker, where provided, will be clearly explained to all tenants. It is expected that the tenants of the site will co-operate fully with that individual in the carrying out of their duties.
- It is the policy of the County Councils 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.
- It is the policy of the local authorities that Travellers themselves must take primary responsibility for their economic activities, including horse husbandry and care. Where it is possible and feasible to do so, consideration will be given to supporting Travellers in the pursuit of legitimate economic activities in the context of the Traveller Interagency Strategic Forum.
- 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 By - Laws 1998 and 2013.
- Unauthorised encampments will be dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the relevant legislation as appropriate. Prior to families being asked to move or vacate an area which is not authorised for caravan parking, the Council will investigate the circumstances of the family to establish if they are included in the accommodation programme. 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.

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.

North and South Tipperary County Councils continue 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 North and South 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 both North and South Tipperary to establish the existing and projected accommodation needs for the Travelling Community of County Tipperary.

The requirements for North and South Tipperary are as follows;

	Standard Housing/Including RAS/Leasing	Group Housing	Halting Site	Single Rural Dwelling	Total
North Tipperary	28	6	1	7	42
South Tipperary	26	24	4	3	57
Total	54	30	5	10	99

Group Schemes may include a mixture of houses and halting bays. The areas of significant need are Cabra, Cashel, Cahir and Clonmel.

See Appendix One for breakdown of need per area.

New Family Formations

It is estimated that 46 new families in North Tipperary and 30 new families in South Tipperary with an accommodation need 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 71 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 North and South Tipperary during the Programme.

The tables for North and South Tipperary below 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.

North Tipperary					
Year	Standard Housing	Group Housing	Halting Site	Rural Housing	Total
2014	5	0	1	1	7
2015	5	0	0	1	6
2016	6	6	0	2	14
2017	6	0	0	2	8
2018	6	0	0	1	7
Total	28	6	1	7	42

South Tipperary					
Year	Standard Housing	Group Housing	Halting Site	Rural Housing	Total
2014	6	1	0	1	8
2015	4	1	0	1	6
2016	4	1	0	0	5
2017	4	0	1	0	5
2018	2	1	1	1	5
Total	20	4	2	3	29

Section Seven Strategy for Implementation

North and South Tipperary County Councils will, within the period of this five year programme, endeavour to meet the accommodation targets of applicants as outlined above. Social Work services and accommodation supports such as tenant liaison services and tenancy sustainment service will be provided in an integrated manner that is inclusive and reflects 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 in a temporary or permanent basis.

The accommodation programme will be implemented having regard to the Inter Agency Strategy for Traveller Services.

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.

North and South 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
- Group Housing
- Residential Caravan Sites
- Caravan Loan and Grant Scheme
- Annuity Loans/Traveller Grant for purchase of a house.
- Mobility Aids Housing Grant Scheme
- Housing Aid for Older People
- Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability
- Improvement Works in Lieu of Re-housing
- Affordable Housing Scheme
- Voluntary or Co-operative Housing
- Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) & Lease Arrangements

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.

North and South Tipperary County Council will ensure that applications for funding from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government will be made and that Traveller accommodation needs will be

included in the Housing Action Plan for both authorities. 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.

North and South Tipperary County Councils 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 County Development Board and Traveller Support Groups.

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

Needs will be assessed and prioritised 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 themselves.

The Traveller Accommodation Programme adopted by North and South Tipperary County Councils 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 Environment, Community and Local Government. A review of the programme can be carried out at any time if considered necessary by the Housing Authority.

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

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.

Conclusion

This Traveller Accommodation Programme outlines the existing and projected need for Traveller Accommodation in County Tipperary for the period 2014 to 2018. It outlines the policies in relation to Traveller accommodation, strategy for implementation, targets and the review processes.

North and South Tipperary Local Authorities wish to build on the progress that has been achieved through successive Traveller Accommodation Programmes. While acknowledging the progress that had been made, there still exists a clear need to provide for Traveller accommodation in County Tipperary. It is hoped that the amalgamated Tipperary County Council will assist in meeting existing and projected accommodation needs.

While North and South Tipperary County Councils will endeavour to meet the preferences of families it may be constrained by the resources that are available to it, particularly for Traveller Specific Accommodation.

North and South Tipperary County Councils will work with Travellers, Traveller representatives, local communities and other agencies to deliver the programme and provide suitable accommodation for members of the Travelling community.

The programme is based on consultation and recognition of the needs of the Travelling community, the views of local settled communities and the statutory requirements of legislation. Successful implementation of this programme requires a commitment from all involved to work together and to commit to agreed proposals.

Appendix One

Preferred Options

North Tipperary Areas

Nenagh

13 Households - Standard Housing

1 Household - Halting Site

Roscrea

7 Households - Standard Housing

1 Household - Single Rural Dwelling

Templemore

2 Households - Single Rural Dwelling

Thurles

8 Households - Standard Housing

6 Households - Group Housing Scheme

4 Households - Single Rural Dwelling

OVERALL NEED

28 Households - Standard Housing

6 Households - Group Housing Scheme

1 Household - Halting Site

7 Households - Single Rural Dwelling

It is estimated that there will be **46** new household formations during the lifetime of the Programme.

South Tipperary Areas

Cahir

1 Households	-	Standard Housing
4 Households	-	Group Housing Scheme
1 Household	-	Halting Site

Cashel

7 Households	-	Standard Housing
8 Households	-	Group Housing Scheme

Clonmel

9 Households	-	Standard Housing
9 Households	-	Group Housing Scheme
3 Households	-	Halting Site
1 Household	-	Single Rural Dwelling

FETHARD AREA

4 Households	-	Standard Housing
2 Households	-	Single Rural Dwelling

TIPPERARY AREA

5 Households	-	Standard Housing
3 Households	-	Group Housing Scheme

OVERALL NEED

26 Households	-	Standard Housing
24 Households	-	Group Housing Scheme
4 Households	-	Halting Site
3 Households	-	Single Rural Dwelling

It is estimated that there will be **30** new household formations during the lifetime of the Programme.