Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary County Council

Traveller Accommodation Programme

2025 – 2029

February 2025

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Introduction

The Traveller Community have a unique culture and traditions and are officially recognised as an ethnic minority. The Annual Count of Traveller Families at November 2023 identified 437 Traveller Households in Tipperary. The census for 2022 showed that there is a Traveller population of 1434 in Tipperary (724 females and 710 males). Travellers represent 8.6 per 1000 population.

The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 established the legal requirement for each Local Authority to prepare and adopt a Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP). This is seventh plan that Tipperary County Council (TCC) has prepared (third joint programme since amalgamation). While positive progress has been made, there is still an increasing and significant need that is required to be addressed by this programme. This policy highlights the continuing commitment of Tipperary County Council, not just meeting the housing need of Travellers, but also supporting other agencies when providing services to the Community.

In 2019, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) requested that TCC and all other local authorities to undertake an equality review of Traveller accommodation. In 2022, the IHREC selected TCC as one of seven local authorities to prepare and implement an Equality Action Plan. The TAP reflects the actions outlined in this plan with the objective of promoting equality of opportunity for members of the Traveller Community when accessing both Traveller Specific and wider Council services. The TAP also aims to ensure that the Public Sector Duty is central to the delivery of services. Travellers continue to be amongst the most marginalised groups in Irish society and over the lifetime of the TAP, the Council aims to reflect

the issues that are identified for the Community in the National Traveller & Roma Inclusion Strategy II (2024 – 2028). The TAP will cover the period from January 2025 to December 2029.

Section One Role of the Implementing Authority

Role of Implementing Authorities

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

Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC)

The Traveller Accommodation Act (1998) established Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees, which meets quarterly or as deemed necessary by the members. Membership reflects interested parties involved in the provision of Traveller Services and includes 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

Tipperary County Council works with the voluntary sector for the provision of accommodation for Travellers. Approved housing bodies (AHB) play a vital role in the provision of Traveller Accommodation in Tipperary.

Section Two Review of Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 - 2024

In preparation for the previous TAP, 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 for period 2019 to 2024 were as follows;

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

During the duration of the programme, Tipperary County Council provided 155 units of accommodation were provided.

Standard Housing/Including RAS/Leasing	**Group Housing**	**Halting Site**	**Single Rural Dwelling**	**Total**
114	9	10	22	155

	Thurles	Nenagh	Carrick	Clonmel	Cahir/ Cashel/ Tipperary Town	Totals
2024	6	4	1	2	10	23
2023	15	4	2	1	5	27
2022	11	8	3	1	2	25
2021	7	5	0	1	6	19
2020	8	13	1	4	5	31
2019	14	6	1	4	5	30

During the Programme some of the projects undertaken by the Council include;

- Three houses were extended and renovated and another property was renovated at Waller Lot, Cashel.
- One house was renovated at Knocksaintlour Group Housing, Cashel.
- Four units were renovated with new mobile homes provided at Ballyknock Halting Site, Cashel.
- Four Tigins were renovated and mobile homes were provided at Heywood Road Halting Site, Clonmel.
- Property at Mockler's Hill, Fethard was renovated.
- Property purchased and renovated at Rathordan, Fethard.
- Property purchased and renovated at Lissava, Cahir.
- Property purchased and renovated at Tipperary Road, Cahir.
- Property purchased and renovated at Freighduff, Cashel.
- Six-unit Group Housing Scheme built at Cabragh Group Housing Scheme, Thurles.
- Five extensions provided to existing accommodation at Parkmore Halting Site, Roscrea.
- Extension of Tigin at Ashbury Halting Site, Roscrea.
- Extension property at Rosemount Group Housing Scheme, Templemore.

- Rebuild of property at Ballyhane, Templemore commenced.
- Extension of Property of Ballybeg, Littleton.
- Property extended at Knock, Roscrea.
- Property purchased and renovated at Nenagh.

During the course of the next TAP the County Council has the following plans included in the Capital Works Scheme;

- Extend the Tigins to add bedrooms in Ballyvillane Halting Site, Nenagh.
- Improvements works to unit in Waller's Lot, Cashel.
- Improvement works in Condon's Cross, Clonmel.
- Improvement works in Railway Cottages, Clonmel.
- Refurbishment of Lake Road Halting Site, Tipperary Town.

During the design process the Council will continue to consult with families in order to meet specific needs where appropriate and feasible, in accordance with current building standards.

Section Three Legislation and Policy

The Traveller Accommodation Programme has been prepared in accordance with the provisions set out in the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998. The Act provides a comprehensive legislative framework which requires Local Authorities to meet the accommodation needs of Travellers within their functional area. It also plays an integral role in promoting social inclusion and equality for the Travelling Community.

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 the Allocation Policy, Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, Tenant Handbook & Housing Maintenance Policy, and the resources available to the Council. These policies are available to view on the website of Tipperary County Council.

Housing for All Strategy is a multi-annual and multi-billion plan which aims to improve the Irish Housing System and deliver more homes of all types for people with different housing needs. The Council will work within the policies outlined in this Strategy.

Section Four Policy Statement

In 2017, the Travelling Community were officially recognised by the Irish State as an ethnic minority. Tipperary County Council recognises Travellers as an indigenous ethnic minority community which has their own unique heritage and culture and that it is reasonable to identify as both a Traveller and Irish.

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. Where the applicant has particular family circumstances or a disability, the Housing Section will consider such issues when carrying out the assessment of housing need. Advice and assistance will be provided to applicants and/or their nominated 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.

The range of housing options that are available to Travellers include, Standard Social Housing, Traveller Group Housing, Traveller Halting Site, Private House Ownership (Affordable Housing & Cost Rental), Housing Assistance Payment Scheme, Long Term Leasing, Loans and Grants. It is the policy of the Local Authority, that social housing applicants will only be considered for rural housing in exceptional circumstances.

The Homeless Persons Service will also assist those experiencing homelessness and cases will be managed with the assistance of the Homeless Action Team. Travellers who present as homeless will be afforded the supports contained in the South East Region Homeless Action Plan.

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 are a target group under the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programmes. SICAP can provide supports to Traveller Community Groups and individuals seeking return to work and employment. SICAP is implemented in Tipperary by South Tipperary Development Company and North Tipperary Development Company.

Housing applicants have a right of appeal to the Senior Executive Officer or nominated officer in the event of refusal of housing support.

Management and Maintenance of Accommodation

Well maintained accommodation and estates enhance the quality of life for tenants. 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 appropriate remedies up to and including 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.

- A tenancy agreement outlining the terms and conditions for all tenancies and are subject to the payment of differential rent.

- 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.

- Where there is an unauthorised encampment or temporary dwelling the Council will investigate the circumstances and act where appropriate to do so in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Transient Sites

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

In the equality plan, Tipperary County Council committed to undertaking research to explore the need and feasibility of a transient site in Tipperary.

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 assessment identified 89 families have been identified as having an existing need. While some families would like to remain living in Traveller Specific Accommodation, the majority prefer standard housing. In order to encourage households to formally apply for housing the Housing Section through the LTACC will be setting up a sub group to tackle this issue.

Traveller support workers from North Tipperary Development Company have carried out research and found that households living with extended family have been reluctant to register for Social Housing Support as they fear their living arrangements are breaching tenancy agreements and being asked to leave by the County Council.

The County Council has also noted an increase in presentations to their Homeless Services amongst younger Traveller families. The difficulty is securing private rented accommodation has contributed to this. Under the Equality Plan, the Council has committed to undertaking research into the reasons for these presentations and outcomes.

The requirements for Tipperary are as follows;

Standard Housing/ Including Leased Accommodation	**Group Housing**	**Halting Site**	**Single Rural Dwelling**	**Total**
93	5	7	5	110

The assessment of need estimates that there are 923 children living in Tipperary under the age of eighteen. Between the start and the end of the programme the Council estimates that 210 of the children will be eighteen or over. It is proposed that the County Council would house 21 new families during the term of the TAP. The overall target for the Council is an additional 110 units of accommodation to be provided for existing and new family households during the course of the TAP, with an annual target of 22 units.

It is expected that new families Tipperary will be formed during the life of the Programme.

Section Six Performance, Monitoring and Measurement

It is planned that 110 households 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 need 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 Leasing arrangements.

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 implementation of the programme will be monitored on an ongoing basis. In house meetings will be held on a regular to ensure that targets are being achieved. Annual returns are also made to the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage. Progress reports are also prepared for the LTACC, with a mid-term review of the TAP in accordance with the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 carried out.

Section Seven Strategy for Implementation

Tipperary County Council will, within the period of this programme, endeavour to meet the accommodation targets of applicants as outlined above. Social Work, Tenancy Support 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 Housing for All
- 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)
- Lease Arrangements
- Caravan Loan Scheme

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 Choice Based Letting Scheme allows families to bid on properties outside of their areas of choice.

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, Local Government & Heritage 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 considered when reviewing the County Development and Local Area Plans.

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 assist in meeting 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.

The County Council has established an Education Project for young Travellers in Cashel. There are over a hundred Travellers under eighteen living in Cashel. The project is being funded directly be the County Council and through the Dormant Funds. The aim is to improve educational outcomes and promote Traveller culture and heritage. Financial assistance has been provided to schools to carry out educational assessments and a fully furnished educational space allows partner agencies a space to carry out educational and cultural activities with children.

Conclusion

The Traveller Accommodation Programme outlines the existing and projected need for Traveller Accommodation in County Tipperary for the period 2025 to 2029. It outlines the policies in relation to Traveller accommodation, strategy for implementation, targets and the review processes.

There has been an increase in younger Traveller families seeking assistance from the County Council. There is a large cohort of young Travellers who are either eligible or will be eligible for Housing by the end of the TAP. This represents a serious challenge for the County Council into the future.

The majority of Travellers prefer standard social housing and this has been reflected in the allocations in the previous plan. There is a rolling Capital Plan that is designed to refurbish existing accommodation and provide new units for the Community.

The Council has also developed processes to improve data collection and reporting. It is also hoped to further promote Traveller advocacy on the LTACC and establish forums where the Traveller voice can be heard. This will involve regular surveys of the Travelling Community. The Housing Section will also be providing its staff with anti-discrimination training.

The County Council is committed to its Public Sector Duty and will use the Equality Strategy and TAP to meet not just the accommodation needs of the Community but also the wider needs. The Education Project that is being led by the Council is an example of the commitment to the

Community, but also highlights the need for collaborative work between voluntary agencies, public sector and the Travelling Community.