

SECTION 4

SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEEDS

This chapter of the report will look at the nature, level and dispersion of housing needs in North Tipperary. It will examine the needs of particular groups such as Travellers, Older People and Asylum Seekers, and look at projections for social housing need based on current and historic data.

4.1 Analysis of North Tipperary Social 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.

Table 4.1 Categories and Distribution of Housing Need 1999.²

	NT Council	Thurles	T'more	Nenagh	TOTAL
Homeless persons	0	2	0	3	5
Travellers	28	8	0	5	41
Unfit accommodation	37	15	3	5	60
Overcrowded accommodation	69	95	11	49	224
Involuntarily sharing	1	0	0	0	1
Young persons	0	0	0	0	0
Medical or compassionate reasons.	39	0	1	10	50
Elderly persons	3	19	1	7	30
Disabled or handicapped persons	0	3	0	1	4
Affordability	7	0	0	1	8
TOTAL	184	142	16	81	423

While the March 2001 level of housing need is used in Section 4.4 to estimate future need projections, the 1999 Needs Assessment as summarised in Table 4.1 presents a

² The data summarised in this table is available in more detail in Appendix A

valuable analysis of the distribution and profile of those in need of social housing in North Tipperary.

4.1.1 Categories of Need

Based on the information presented in Table 4.1, the total housing need in the County stood at 423 families in 1999. North Tipperary County Council had the highest demand on social housing at 184 families while the most common category of need was on the basis of people living in unfit accommodation. There were no 'Young Persons Leaving Institutional Care Or Without Family Accommodation' registered for housing in the North Tipperary, while only a single individual sought accommodation under the heading 'Persons Sharing Accommodation Involuntarily And Having A Reasonable Requirement for Separate Accommodation'.

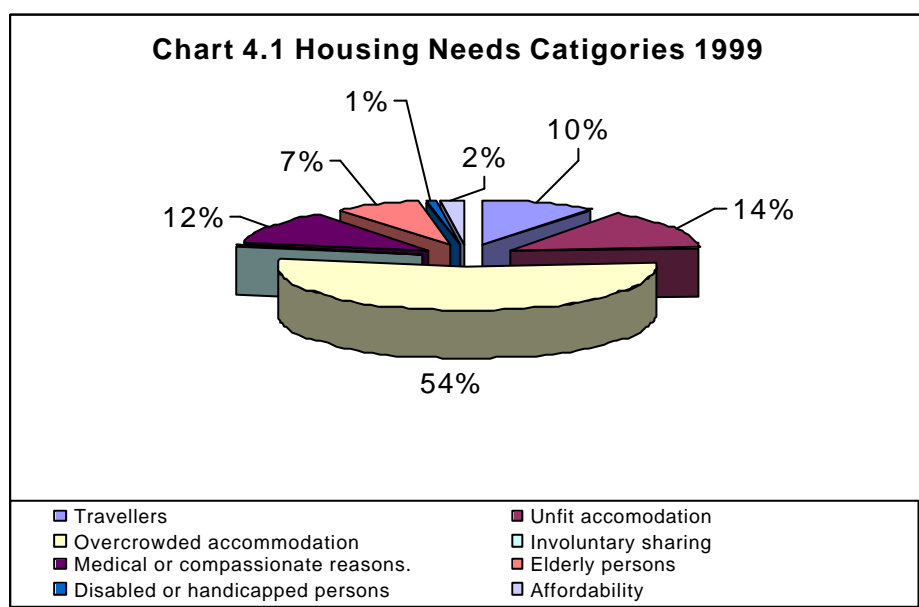


Chart 4.1 further summarises the categories of need presented in Table 4.1. As can be seen from the chart the majority of those in need of housing in North Tipperary were 'Persons living in overcrowded accommodation' which amounted to 54% of the need. Unfit Accommodation accounted for 14% of social housing applicants, with those in need of accommodation because of compassionate reasons and the elderly amounting to 12% and 7% respectively. There were 41 Traveller families in need of accommodation in

1999, of whom the majority, (68% or 28 families) were from outside the three UDC areas i.e. North Tipperary County Council.

4.1.2 Household Size

The information from the housing needs assessment can also be analysed on the basis of family size. This is important in that it further reflects the nature of the housing need particularly in relation to house type. It can be seen from the summaries of the Needs Assessments outlined in Appendix F that while older and disabled persons represent 8% of accommodation needs, 80% of these are single person households and the remaining 20% are two person households. We will deal with the particular needs of older people in Section 4.4.5 it is useful to note at this stage that the demand for housing for older people is not necessarily for family units.

Proceeding on this basis and analysing all other categories of need, the breakdown in numbers of children per household is laid out in Table 4.2. This shows that 55% of households have a single child, while 37% have two or more children. Reviewing the statistics show that the average household on the housing list consists of 3.03 persons which compares to an average household size of 3.08 for the entire population in 1999.

Table 4.2 Family Size on the Housing List

Children per Household	0	1	2	3	4	5
Older people	30					
Number Of Households	29	186	71	24	15	16
Number of Children	0	186	142	72	60	80
Family size as a Percentage	8	55	21	7	4	5

4.2 Distribution of Housing Need

A further analysis of the housing needs in North Tipperary between 1996 and 1999 is summarised in Table 4.3. This indicates that the North Tipperary County Council area has most need with 184 households or 43% of applicants in 1999. It is informative to note that the county region encompassed 75% of the population in 1996 while Thurles, which had 34% of the housing need, has approximately 12% of the population. This highlights the fact that there is greater social housing pressure in the larger urban centres.

The housing needs assessment also shows that in the urban centres overcrowding is the predominant factor in housing need with 60% of cases in Nenagh, 67% in Thurles and 69% in Templemore. On the other hand while overcrowding is still the principal factor in the County Council area it amounts to only 38% of all cases. Table 4.1 also highlights the fact that the overwhelming demand for housing for older and disabled people is from the Thurles area where there are 22 cases of the countywide total of 34 (i.e. 65% of the total need.). The County Council area on the other hand had only 3 older people registered for housing.

Table 4.3 Housing Need by Local Authority Area

	1996	1999	Percentage Housing Need	Percentage population
Tipperary NR.	157	184	43	75
Thurles UDC	142	142	34	12
Nenagh UDC	76	81	19	9
Templemore UDC	19	16	4	4
Total	394	423	100	100

4.3 Housing Location Preference

Table 4.3 outlines the distribution of demand for social housing in 2001. This list shows that the main urban centres of Thurles, Nenagh, (Ardcroney being close to Nenagh) and Roscrea are the main areas of preference. It should be noted that Portroe, Cloughjordan, Borrisoleigh and Borrisokane also have high levels of demand, at 5.8 applicants per hundred population, 3.1 per hundred, 3.0 per hundred and 2.9 per hundred respectively. The table indicates that only 0.2% of the rural population required housing in rural areas, (rural being those areas with populations of less than 100 in 1996). While the demand in the 4 main towns averaged at 2.2% and for the smaller towns and villages was 1.9%.

This concurs with a 1998 study by The Combat Poverty Agency³ that concludes that poverty is most prevalent in towns and villages with a population of less than 3000 while poverty in ‘the open country’ is proportionately lower but less apparent.

Table 4.3 Distribution of Social Housing Demand.

Settlement	1996 Population	Number on Housing List 2001	Percentage of Local pop.	Existing LA Housing
Thurles U.D.	6,603	229	3.5	
Nenagh U.D.	5,645	104	1.8	
Roscrea	4,170	64	1.5	343
Borrisokane	850	25	2.9	80
Portroe	411	24	5.8	47
Templemore U.D.	2,115	18	0.9	
Borrisoleigh	564	17	3.0	70
Cloughjordan	447	14	3.1	26
Newport	873	14	1.6	46
Ardcroney	RURAL	13	0.2 ⁴	
Littleton	544	12	2.2	130
Ballina	598	10	1.7	46

³ ‘Where are Poor Households’ CPA 1998.

⁴ Overall percentage for rural areas

Toomevara	362	8	2.2	44
Holycross	447	7	1.6	30
Templetuohy	293	5	1.7	40
Twomileborris	325	5	1.5	36
Rearcross	RURAL	4	0.2*	24
Bouladuff	RURAL	3	0.2*	10
Clonmore	RURAL	3	0.2*	10
Lorrha	RURAL	3	0.2*	14
Moyne	RURAL	3	0.2*	
Riverstown	RURAL	3	0.2*	10
Clonakenny	RURAL	2	0.2*	11
Kilcommon	RURAL	2	0.2*	
Loughmore	RURAL	2	0.2*	
Rathcabbin	RURAL	2	0.2*	20
Silvermines	202	2	1.0	34
Ballingarry	RURAL	1	0.2*	
Dromdane	RURAL	1	0.2*	
Drom	RURAL	1	0.2*	
Upperchurch	RURAL	1	0.2*	
Demountable Houses		5	N/A	
Pukane				24
Rural	RURAL	19	0.2*	

These figures also reflect an obvious preference for social housing in areas which are serviced and accessible, meaning that social housing demand from rural areas is more likely to manifest itself in the towns and larger villages. It should, however be noted that there is a significant demand for social housing in rural areas.

The table shows that demand is not necessarily high in areas where there is a concentration of established local authority housing for example Littleton, Silvermines and Templetuohy, each of which have concentrations of local authority housing in excess of 13 units per one hundred population. (The concentration of existing Local Authority

Housing in Littleton is 23 units per hundred population compared with the average of approximately 10 units per hundred population in other similar sized settlements.)

4.4 Future Social Housing Needs

The North Tipperary Housing Strategy must ensure that the estimated future social housing needs are provided for. This requires making assumptions regarding the growth in social housing need. Table 4.4 sets out the most recent housing needs assessment and assumes continued growth in social housing demand at close to the trends for the 1996-1999 period and reflected in the growth in the housing waiting list since 1999.

4.4.1 Growth in Social Housing Need

Table 4.4 sets out the projected demand for social housing until 2006. It bases these projections on future demand being an average of the demand experienced over the past nine years.

Table 4.4 Growth in Social Housing Demand

	1993	1996	1999	2001	Average Annual Rate of Growth	Projected need in 2006
North Tipperary Co.Co.	159	157	184	275	18	365
Thurles UDC		142	142	229	22	338
Nenagh UDC	83	76	81	104	7	141
Templemore UDC		19	16	18	0	18

This mirrors the assumption relating to house completions made in Section 3.1 and will need to be reviewed on an ongoing basis. However it may be a conservative estimate in light of the recent growth in both housing applicants and those in receipt of rent allowances from the Health Board as outlined in the next section.

4.4.2 Supplementary Welfare Payments

The role of the health boards in the social housing sector is in the provision of Supplementary Welfare payments through their local community Welfare offices for relief of rents and mortgages. Statistics from the Mid-Western Health board indicate that in 2001 the levels of payments were as shown in Table 4.5. This indicates that while a total of 318 people were in receipt of housing support the majority of them 280 or 88% were receiving rent allowances. This shows that there is a significant amount of rented accommodation providing for the current housing needs in the county.

Table 4.5 Supplementary Welfare Payments May 2001

Payment	Recipient Families
Rent Allowance	280
LAMA ⁵	13
Mortgage Allowance	25
Total	318

Table 4.6 shows the total amount of supplementary payments made in 1999 and in 2000 in North Tipperary. The trend highlighted in this table is a significant reduction in the amount of mortgage relief and a 25% increase in the level of rent allowance being paid. The total increase in supplementary welfare payments of 21% is revealing at a time when most economic indicators have shown unprecedented growth in the national economy.

Table 4.5 Levels of Supplementary Welfare Payments 1999-2000.

Payment	1999	2000	
Rent Allowance	1,769,960.40	2,217,405.50	25.28
LAMA	53,451.30	43,521.80	-18.58
Mortgage Allowance	149,651.16	122,384.60	-18.22
Total	1,973,062.86	2,383,311.90	20.79

The increase in rent allowance payments and the corresponding decrease in the levels of mortgage relief could, in fact, be a consequence of this economic growth. Traditionally mortgage relief would have been sought by homeowners who become unemployed and need support while seeking employment. With increased levels of employment in the region such support is not needed to the same scale as in the past. However, the increased levels of rent allowance indicates that with escalating property prices there are proportionally more families unable to obtain sufficient mortgages and purchase their own homes.

4.4.3 Asylum Seekers

There are currently 49 Asylum Seekers in hostel accommodation the Local Authority area. There is a possibility that some or all of these will require social housing in the

⁵ Local Authority Mortgage Allowance

future. Additionally if future government policy encourages the dispersion of Asylum seekers countrywide on the basis of local populations levels it is likely that North Tipperary may need to make provision for up to 50 families per year. (10,000 applicants equates to approximately 3250 family units and the population of North Tipperary was 1.5% of the national population in 1996.) Such a projection would have a significant impact on the social housing needs in the county however at this stage national policy is directing the nature and extent of accommodation for Asylum Seekers is uncertain.

4.4.4 Traveller Community

Statistics published by the Department of the Environment⁶ show that there were 115 Travellers resident in North Tipperary on 24th November 2000. Table 4.6 provides a breakdown of their circumstances at that time. It shows that while the overall number of Travellers in the County has remained constant the proportion ‘on the roadside’ has been dropping since 1998 with a corresponding rise in the number in Standard Local Authority Housing.

The number of Traveller Families in serviced halting sites has declined slightly over the same period and 3 families have been accommodated in a group scheme.

Table 4.6 Traveller Accommodation

Nature of Accommodation	1998	1999	2000
Indigenous on the Roadside	36	29	27
Transient on the Roadside	7	7	4
Standard LA Housing	57	62	66
LA group housing	0	0	3
Private house assisted by LA	2	2	2
LA halting Site	14	12	12
Voluntary Bodies supported by LA	1	1	1
TOTAL	117	113	115

⁶ Housing Statistics Bulletin 2000

In the Traveller Accommodation Programme published by Tipperary (NR) County Council in October 1999, the opening policy statement outlines that ...'*the resettlement of Travellers would involve the necessity to obtain suitable sites and houses and at the same time, to secure the goodwill and co-operation of the community into which such sites are to be located*'

This programme provides a detailed framework for providing suitable accommodation for Travellers in the County.

4.4.5 Older People

The specific situation relating to older people on the housing list in North Tipperary was outlined in section 4.1. There were 30 older people in need of housing in 1999, 19 (63%) of whom were requesting housing in the Thurles area. 24 of the total (80%) were single person families.

In 1991 and again in 1996 the over 65s represented 13% of the overall population of the county, this corresponded to a figure of 11% for the country as a whole. While some of the housing needs of older people is being met by voluntary housing schemes some will ultimately need to be met by the Local Housing Authorities.

Conclusion

The analysis presented in this chapter shows that there is a higher need for social housing in the main urban centres, while the demand for rural social housing is proportionately lower but significant and distributed throughout the county.

Other than the specific needs of older people on the housing list, (most of whom are concentrated in Thurles), family sizes of those in need of housing reflects the family size of the population in general. This highlights the need for a range of sizes and types of social housing.

Despite the booming economy and the low unemployment rates in the county, there has been a marked increase in the numbers of people applying for social housing. Because of the continuing problems associated with affordability outlined in Chapter 3, it is not anticipated that there will be any decline in the rate of applications over the period of the strategy. This situation is further reflected in an increase in the amount of rent allowance being paid by the Mid Western Health Board in recent years.