

Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann Thuaidh
North Tipperary County Council



TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME 2009 – 2013
ADOPTED BY NORTH TIPPERARY COUNTY COUNCIL APRIL 20TH 2009

**COUNTY MANAGER,
CIVIC OFFICES,
LIMERICK ROAD,
NENAGH,
COUNTY TIPPERARY.**

*"We commit ourselves, in partnership with all stakeholders, to improve the quality of
the economic, social and cultural life of our communities"*

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Introduction

The Traveller Accommodation Programme (2005 - 2008) was adopted by North Tipperary County Council on April 18th 2005. The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 requires North Tipperary County Council to adopt a new Traveller Accommodation Programme to replace the existing plan which expires on December 31st 2008. The new accommodation programme will be for a period of five years, from January 1st 2009 to December 31st 2013.

The Annual Count of Traveller Families at November 30th 2007 identified one hundred and seventy Traveller Households in North Tipperary. Of these, one hundred and sixteen families were living in Standard Local Authority Housing, Group Housing and Private Rented accommodation. A further nineteen families were accommodated in Halting Sites located in Nenagh and Roscrea.

The statistics used in this plan have been informed by an Assessment of Housing Need carried out in accordance with the Housing Act 1988 at March 31st 2008 and ongoing Traveller needs updates prepared for meetings of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee. A Review of the Traveller Accommodation Programme (2005 – 2008) carried out in 2007 noted that the numbers seeking accommodation can change during the duration of a programme due to factors such as inward and outward migration and changes in household circumstances.

In preparing this programme North Tipperary County Council consulted with the Travelling Community and other interested parties through fora such as the North Tipperary Traveller Network, Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee, and Housing Strategic Policy Committee. The views of Members of the Council and relevant bodies such as Statutory Agencies, Town Councils, adjoining Local Authorities, and interested community, voluntary and non-profit bodies were also considered. The Council also placed advertisements in local newspapers seeking written submissions from interested parties.

It is envisaged that, over the course of the five year programme, the existing and projected accommodation needs of the Travelling Community of North Tipperary will be addressed. The Council will also continue to assist other agencies in their work with the Travelling Community and participate in the Integrated Traveller Strategy.

The interagency initiative involves key public service providers developing coordinated Action Plans for the delivery of traveller specific services at a local level. The local County Development Boards are responsible for the development of these plans.

Policy

The Traveller Accommodation Programme (2009 – 2013) 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 local and national policies and departmental guidelines and circulars. The proposals outlined in the Department's Strategy on Housing Policy (February 2007) 'Delivering Homes – Sustaining Communities' promotes Tenant Support and Community Sustainment. This is central to the delivery of the programme.

It is the policy of North Tipperary County Council to work with Traveller representatives to encourage greater acceptance of future accommodation proposals. As stated in the County Development Plan (2004), the design and layout of such accommodation will continue to be undertaken in conjunction with members of the Travelling community. The Council will have regard to the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 and to Department of Environment, Heritage, & Local Government Guidelines such as Residential Caravan Parks for Travellers, Basic Services and Facilities for Caravans Pending the Provision of Permanent Accommodation, Guidelines for Group Housing for Travellers, Guidelines for Accommodating Transient Traveller Families, and Guidelines on Consultation for Traveller Specific Accommodation Projects.

In order to progressively implement the programme, the accommodation needs and preferences of individual families can be met through:

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- House Purchase Programme
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Applicants for accommodation will be assessed and considered in the context of this programme and the Council's Scheme of Letting Priorities. The policy of providing accommodation of preference for Travellers will continue under this plan. Where it is not possible to meet the accommodation preference of individual families in the short term, an interim solution may be provided.

The ability of the Council to meet the preferences of families will also be determined by the availability of funding from the Department of Environment, Heritage, & Local Government. The County Council will ensure that applications for funding from the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government will be made and the Traveller Accommodation needs will be included in the Housing Action Plan for North Tipperary County Council.

Other social housing options available for Traveller Households include:

- Shared Ownership Scheme
- Affordable Housing Scheme
- Caravan Loan and Grant Scheme
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- Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme for People with a Disability
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The following strategies for the provision of accommodation will be pursued:

(A) PERMANENT ACCOMMODATION

Provide permanent type accommodation to our indigenous families by the provision of:

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Emergency/temporary services will not normally be provided if a reasonable offer of accommodation is refused or to families who already have been accommodated or who have the resources to provide their own accommodation, however each case will be considered on its merits.

The Homeless Persons Centre in North Tipperary can also assist in providing temporary housing solutions to those experiencing homelessness.

Indigenous families, as referred to at (a) and (b) above, are those who originally come from the County-at-large area of North Tipperary and have been continually resident in the area for twelve months or more prior to application. North Tipperary County Council and the three Town Councils of Nenagh, Thurles and Templemore, in considering applications for accommodation, will have regard to the above clause.

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(c) EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION

Emergency accommodation will continue to be provided by the Council where the need arises but only where a bona fide emergency situation exists. Section 24 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 allows the Manager of a local authority to carry out necessary works for the provision of a reasonable standard of

accommodation in an emergency situation using powers under the Local Government Act 2001.

(D) TRANSIENT ACCOMMODATION

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 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. Ensuring that permanent accommodation is provided for all Travellers in need of same will also minimise the potential difficulties that could arise in the use of transient sites by families waiting to be permanently accommodated, which is not the intended use of such facilities.

Given the numbers and pattern of movement of transient families in recent years the provision of a transient site in each of the population centres in the county 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.

(E) PROVISION OF BACK-UP, TRAINING AND SUPPORT

The Council recognises the need for on-going training and support, especially for Traveller families at the initial stages of accommodation. The Council will continue to liaise with other statutory services such as the Health Service Executive, Mid-Western Area (especially Public Health Nurse, Community Welfare Officer, Money Advice and Budgeting Service) as well as local voluntary organisations and support groups.

The Health Service Executive funded the position of a Family Support Worker. This has greatly benefited the families who have used this service.

(F) TRAVELLER HEALTH ISSUES

Research continues to show that while improvements have been made in the general health of the Travelling population, the community continues to under perform across a number of key health indicators. The County Council is committed to assisting in the implementation of the Regional Strategy Statement and Action Plans. The Council also acknowledges the constraints that unsatisfactory living conditions can have on Health Promotion and preventative healthcare.

The Council would like to draw attention to the positive work being carried out by the Primary Health Programme in North Tipperary and reaffirm its commitment to the upcoming All-Ireland Study into Traveller Health.

However, the Council believes that it is essential there continues to be inter-agency co-operation in order to tackle the long standing and persistent inequalities of health facing the Travelling Community of North Tipperary.

(G) TRAVELLER NEEDS

While the Act refers to the need to take account of traditional economic activities of Travellers, these must be balanced against the rights of occupants of adjoining properties and the overall management of facilities or estates generally. The existing tenancy rules for our Halting Sites preclude the keeping of livestock and other animals. Dogs which are considered dangerous can not be kept on site, or in the vicinity of the site. Domestic animals must be kept under control at all times and tied up at night. Official licences must be held for any dog kept on the site.

This programme recognises the existence and requirements of the Bye Laws made under the Control of Horses Act 1996 and adopted by the Council on May 11th 1998. Tenants who own or have control of horses must ensure that they are kept away from the site and must comply fully with the Bye Laws above mentioned.

(H) ILLEGAL CARAVAN PARKING

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 creates a new offence of criminal trespass and enforcement is a matter for An Garda Síochána.

Strategy Statement

(A) IDENTIFICATION OF IMPLEMENTING AUTHORITY

Under the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 North Tipperary County Council is the relevant housing authority for the county. Nenagh, Thurles and Templemore Town Councils are implementing authorities for relevant elements of the Traveller Accommodation Programme.

As the implementing authorities play a major role in the successful delivery of the programme, co-operation between them is of utmost importance. Co-ordination will be achieved through direct dialogue with the relevant authorities involved.

(B) RESOURCES

The implementation of the programme is based on the assumption that the necessary capital funding to complete the programme and to maintain the facilities is available from central funds.

(C) PROVISION OF ACCOMMODATION

North Tipperary County Council and the Town Councils of Nenagh, Thurles and Templemore will continue to provide accommodation for Traveller households. The Council will promote and co-operate with approved Voluntary Bodies where opportunities arise to provide suitable accommodation.

(D) CONSULTATION

Where appropriate, the Council will implement the programme based on consultation with individual families, voluntary organisations, statutory agencies, Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee, and other relevant bodies. The

Council will at all times respect the confidentiality of individuals and have regard to its statutory obligations.

Where appropriate, Liaison Committees may be established where Traveller specific accommodation (Halting Sites and Group Housing) and any other Traveller Accommodation is located, to facilitate the integration process. Liaison Committees could include representatives of the local Traveller community, the Settled community, relevant statutory and support groups, and Local Authority staff.

The Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee was established in accordance with the provisions of Section 21 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998. The Committee normally meets on a quarterly basis or as is deemed necessary by its members. The operation of the Committee reflects the Guidelines for the Operation of Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees (April 2001) published by the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government and National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee. The role of the Committee is to advise on the provision and management of accommodation for Travellers and the preparation and implementation of accommodation programmes. It also provides a forum for liaison between Travellers and members/ officials of the local authority.

The Committee currently consists of three Traveller representatives, four elected members, two officials of the County Council, Coordinator of Travellers Services (HSE), and three representatives of Community organisations. The members of the committee are Mr. Bernard Doyle, Ms. Patricia Doyle, Mrs. Teresa McInerney, Cllr. Jim Casey (Chairperson), Cllr. Seamus Hanafin, Cllr. John Hogan, Cllr. Tom Berkery, Mr. Eamonn Brennan (Senior Executive Officer, North Tipperary County Council), Mr. Pdraig Ryan (Senior Social Worker, North Tipperary County Council), Ms. Mary Kennedy (Coordinator of Traveller Services, Health Services Executive), Sister Mary Moloney (Templemore Community Services), Ms. Imelda Reidy (Roscrea 2000), and Breada Ryan (Thurles Action for Community Development).

Where appropriate, accommodation proposals will have to fulfil the requirements of Part VIII of the Local Government (Planning & Development) Regulations 2001. This allows for consultation on a broader basis. The Council will also have regard to the Consultation Guidelines for Traveller Specific Accommodation Projects developed by the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.

(E) STRUCTURES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACCOMMODATION PROPOSALS

The proposed accommodation programme is outlined on an annual basis at Paragraph (G) hereunder and grouped by area in Section 3. Progress on the implementation of the plan is reviewed by the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee on an ongoing basis. Under Section 17 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 North Tipperary County Council is also required to review its Traveller Accommodation Programme at least once in each three year period.

(F) MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF ACCOMMODATION AND PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH PROBLEMS ARISING

The effective management and on-going maintenance of all Traveller Accommodation is crucial to the success of an Accommodation Programme. Travellers accommodated on sites will be encouraged to develop a sense of "ownership" and, where feasible, to participate fully in the site management.

Letting agreements setting out the terms and conditions of tenancies will be required for all tenancies. These will clearly state the rules/conditions which tenants are obliged to adhere to.

A caretaker will be provided for each permanent site to ensure proper management and maintenance of the facility.

Tenant committees will be established where practicable, to ensure effective estate management and participation by residents.

There is on-going liaison between relevant housing staff of the County Council, voluntary organisations and tenants of the sites to ensure effective management.

Problems encountered in the proper management of sites will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of relevant legislation.

Where appropriate, the Council will apply to the Department of Environment, Heritage, and Local Government for funding under the Housing Management Initiative Grants in order to promote Resident Participation projects.

North Tipperary County Council has developed a Policy Statement on Anti-Social Behaviour (May 2005). The Council is committed to promoting a safe and secure environment for all residents. The Council will use the powers contained in the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1997 and Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 to deal with incidents of anti-social behaviour. Under Section 15 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1997, the Council can request information from another Housing Authority, the Criminal Assets Bureau, a member of the Garda Síochána, the Minister for Social Welfare, a health board, and other approved bodies seeking information on anyone that the Council suspects may be engaged in anti-social behaviour. The County Council will use this information in determining the suitability of an applicant for accommodation.

(G) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME

North Tipperary County Council has responsibility for the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme.

Applicants for accommodation will be assessed and considered in the context of this programme and the Council's Scheme of Letting Priorities.

In order to implement the programme in relation to the provision of rural housing, the Council will consider the purchase of rural houses or the allocation of casual vacancies in rural houses where appropriate. Specific locations can not be cited as these depend on individual family requirements. The ability of the Council to meet these preferences will also be determined by its own financial resources and the availability of funding from the Department of Environment, Heritage, & Local Government.

While successful implementation will usually be measured by the number of housing units delivered, as against the targets in the Plan, Integration of tenanted Traveller families into the community is an integral and essential part of the implementation process. In this regard, consultation with the Traveller and settled community and any other interested voluntary and statutory agencies may be necessary, to achieve same.

The implementing authorities will actively involve members of the Travelling Community and relevant support groups in the planning and design of Traveller specific accommodation, and meetings will be held with appropriate personnel.

The Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee will receive a report at each meeting on progress made in implementing this accommodation programme.

Under Circular TAU 7/08 the Minister for Environment, Heritage & Local Government has directed that a review of this programme shall be carried out no later than December 31st 2011.

The annual targets for the provision of accommodation are detailed below:

Year	Accommodation	Housing Authority
2009	5 Standard Houses	North Tipperary County Council
	2 Standard Houses	Nenagh Town Council
	1 Standard House	Templemore Town Council
	1 Standard House	Thurles Town Council
Total	9 Units	

Year	Accommodation	Housing Authority
2010	5 Standard Houses	North Tipperary County Council
	2 Bays	
	2 Standard Houses	Nenagh Town Council
	1 Standard House	Templemore Town Council
	2 Standard Houses	Thurles Town Council
Total	12 Units	

Year	Accommodation	Housing Authority
2011	5 Group Houses	North Tipperary County Council
	6 Standard Houses	
	2 Standard Houses	Nenagh Town Council
	1 Standard House	Templemore Town Council
	1 Standard House	Thurles Town Council
Total	15 Units	

Year	Accommodation	Housing Authority
2012	5 Standard Houses	North Tipperary County Council
	1 Standard House	Nenagh Town Council
	1 Standard House	Templemore Town Council
	1 Standard House	Thurles Town Council
Total	8 Units	

Year	Accommodation	Housing Authority
2013	3 Bays	North Tipperary County Council
	5 Standard Houses	
	1 Standard House	Nenagh Town Council
	1 Standard House	Templemore Town Council
	1 Standard House	Thurles Town Council
Total	11 Units	
Overall Total	55 Units	

The targets set out above are based on the current need for accommodation. These targets may alter as the accommodation preference of Traveller families can change. It is estimated that a further twenty-nine units of accommodation may be required to meet future need during the term of the programme. Where possible, the Council proposes to provide this accommodation in line with the preference of the applicants when same becomes known to the relevant Housing Authority.

Measures for Implementation

The four main population centres for Traveller households in North Tipperary are Nenagh (including Borrioskane, Newport, Ballina and Toomevara), Roscrea, Templemore, and Thurles (including Littleton and Borrisoleigh). A breakdown of the current and estimated future need and accommodation preference is detailed below by area.

(A) NENAGH

	Standard Housing	Rural Housing	Group Housing	Serviced Site	Estimated new Family Formations	Total
Current Need	10	2	0	5	5	22

There is one location of Traveller Specific Accommodation in the Nenagh area, namely Ballyvillane Halting Site. The residents on the site have expressed a preference for a change in their accommodation. Some of the residents have a preference for standard and rural accommodation, while others want the site converted into a Group Housing Scheme. North Tipperary County Council will work with the residents in the coming years in order to achieve these preferences where possible.

In line with the County Development Plan (2004) North Tipperary Council will continue to look for an appropriate site to accommodate existing Traveller families in the town of Ballina.

Nenagh Town Council and North Tipperary County Council will be the implementing authority and responsible for meeting the need for standard accommodation in the area.

(B) ROSCREA

	Standard Housing	Rural Housing	Group Housing	Serviced Site	Estimated new Family Formations	Total
Current Need	8	0	0	0	14	22

There are three locations of specific Traveller Accommodation in Roscrea. Twelve families are housed in two halting sites in Parkmore and Ashbury. A six unit Group Housing Scheme is also located in Ashbury.

The residents of Parkmore are also seeking a change to their current accommodation. Some of the residents are seeking standard accommodation, while others would prefer Group Housing.

North Tipperary County Council is the implementing authority for the Roscrea area.

There is a projected need for fourteen units to cover new family formations in the Roscrea area. The high number is the result of a large number of young people who will be eligible to apply for housing in the next five years. Roscrea is unique to other areas, as there are two Haltings Sites and one Group Housing Scheme.

(C) TEMPLEMORE

	Standard Housing	Rural Housing	Group Housing	Serviced Site	Estimated new Family Formations	Total
Current Need	5	5	0	0	4	14

A three unit Group Housing Scheme was completed in the Templemore in 2008.

Both Templemore Town Council and North Tipperary County Council are the implementing authorities for the area.

(D) THURLES

	Standard Housing	Rural Housing	Group Housing	Serviced Site	Estimated new Family Formations	Total
Current Need	6	9	5	0	6	26

Thurles Town Council and North Tipperary County Council are the implementing authorities for the Thurles area.

Following extensive consultation over a prolonged period with the families in Cabra, Thurles it was agreed that the County Council would build a five unit Group Housing Scheme. This project is now at the Planning Part VIII Stage and should come to fruition in the early part of the programme.

Conclusion

Since the first Traveller Accommodation Plan (1999), over ninety units of accommodation have been provided to Traveller families in North Tipperary. The Traveller Accommodation Plan (2005 - 2008) identified a need for thirty-nine units during the term of the programme. Thirty-two units of accommodation were provided by the end of the current Plan. Twenty-four households who were included in the Traveller Accommodation Programme (2005 - 2008) were accommodated.

North Tipperary County Council is eager to build on this progress and has set a target of fifty-five units of accommodation to be provided by December 31st 2013. The plan also includes a provision for new family formations (estimated at twenty-nine units) and the Council hopes to meet these accommodation needs as they become known.

It is important to note that there can be difficulty in forecasting future need. The Review of the Traveller Accommodation Programme (2005 – 2008) noted that by April 2007, eighteen households who were not on the Assessment in 2004 had applied for

Local Authority housing in North Tipperary. Eight households who were accommodated in this period had previously lived in North Tipperary, but were not resident in the functional area when the Assessment took place. This reflects the transitory nature of many indigenous Traveller households, who move between counties.

While North Tipperary County Council will endeavour to meet the personal preferences of families on the Waiting List, it may be constrained by the resources that are available to it. The Council is also aware of an increasing trend for residents who live in Traveller Specific accommodation to seek alternative accommodation in Standard and Rural Housing. The Council will also try to meet these preferences; however this is dependent on the availability of resources.

In a submission by Pavee Point the issue of mainstreaming Traveller employment was raised. The submission notes that Traveller accommodation is part of a wider context of interrelated issues that impact on the employment opportunities available to members of the Travelling Community. Pavee Point noted that Local Authorities should explore ways in which they can take positive action initiatives to increase Traveller participation and reduce exclusion from the labour market. North Tipperary County Council supports the work of the Integrated Traveller Strategy, which proposes an integrated programme of education, training and employment provision and mentoring for those Travellers that wish to avail of it. It is hoped that this programme will help tackle the barriers that prevent Travellers entering the workforce.

A submission by the Irish Traveller Movement noted that the Traveller Accommodation Programmes should be based on respect for Traveller culture. North Tipperary County Council believes that respect for this culture is essential if the Travelling Community is to have access to employment opportunities, education, and health services.

North Tipperary County Council is committed to working in partnership with other agencies through fora such as the Intergrated Traveller Strategy, Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee, and North Tipperary Traveller Support Network in order to meets the targets in the programme and the wider needs of the Travelling Community in North Tipperary.

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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 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. Ensuring that permanent accommodation is provided for all Travellers in need of same will also minimise the potential difficulties that could arise in the use of transient sites by families waiting to be permanently accommodated, which is not the intended use of such facilities.

Given the numbers and pattern of movement of transient families in recent years the provision of a transient site in each of the population centres in the county 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.

(E) PROVISION OF BACK-UP, TRAINING AND SUPPORT

The Council recognises the need for on-going training and support, especially for Traveller families at the initial stages of accommodation. The Council will continue to liaise with other statutory services such as the Health Service Executive, Mid-Western Area (especially Public Health Nurse, Community Welfare Officer, Money Advice and Budgeting Service) as well as local voluntary organisations and support groups.

The Health Service Executive funded the position of a Family Support Worker. This has greatly benefited the families who have used this service.

(F) TRAVELLER HEALTH ISSUES

Research continues to show that while improvements have been made in the general health of the Travelling population, the community continues to under perform across a number of key health indicators. The County Council is committed to assisting in the implementation of the Regional Strategy Statement and Action Plans. The Council also acknowledges the constraints that unsatisfactory living conditions can have on Health Promotion and preventative healthcare.

The Council would like to draw attention to the positive work being carried out by the Primary Health Programme in North Tipperary and reaffirm its commitment to the upcoming All-Ireland Study into Traveller Health.

However, the Council believes that it is essential there continues to be inter-agency co-operation in order to tackle the long standing and persistent inequalities of health facing the Travelling Community of North Tipperary.

(G) TRAVELLER NEEDS

While the Act refers to the need to take account of traditional economic activities of Travellers, these must be balanced against the rights of occupants of adjoining properties and the overall management of facilities or estates generally. The existing tenancy rules for our Halting Sites preclude the keeping of livestock and other animals. Dogs which are considered dangerous can not be kept on site, or in the vicinity of the site. Domestic animals must be kept under control at all times and tied up at night. Official licences must be held for any dog kept on the site.

This programme recognises the existence and requirements of the Bye Laws made under the Control of Horses Act 1996 and adopted by the Council on May 11th 1998. Tenants who own or have control of horses must ensure that they are kept away from the site and must comply fully with the Bye Laws above mentioned.

(H) ILLEGAL CARAVAN PARKING

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 creates a new offence of criminal trespass and enforcement is a matter for An Garda Síochána.

Strategy Statement

(A) IDENTIFICATION OF IMPLEMENTING AUTHORITY

Under the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 North Tipperary County Council is the relevant housing authority for the county. Nenagh, Thurles and Templemore Town Councils are implementing authorities for relevant elements of the Traveller Accommodation Programme.

As the implementing authorities play a major role in the successful delivery of the programme, co-operation between them is of utmost importance. Co-ordination will be achieved through direct dialogue with the relevant authorities involved.

(B) RESOURCES

The implementation of the programme is based on the assumption that the necessary capital funding to complete the programme and to maintain the facilities is available from central funds.

(C) PROVISION OF ACCOMMODATION

North Tipperary County Council and the Town Councils of Nenagh, Thurles and Templemore will continue to provide accommodation for Traveller households. The Council will promote and co-operate with approved Voluntary Bodies where opportunities arise to provide suitable accommodation.

(D) CONSULTATION

Where appropriate, the Council will implement the programme based on consultation with individual families, voluntary organisations, statutory agencies, Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee, and other relevant bodies. The

Council will at all times respect the confidentiality of individuals and have regard to its statutory obligations.

Where appropriate, Liaison Committees may be established where Traveller specific accommodation (Halting Sites and Group Housing) and any other Traveller Accommodation is located, to facilitate the integration process. Liaison Committees could include representatives of the local Traveller community, the Settled community, relevant statutory and support groups, and Local Authority staff.

The Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee was established in accordance with the provisions of Section 21 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998. The Committee normally meets on a quarterly basis or as is deemed necessary by its members. The operation of the Committee reflects the Guidelines for the Operation of Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees (April 2001) published by the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government and National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee. The role of the Committee is to advise on the provision and management of accommodation for Travellers and the preparation and implementation of accommodation programmes. It also provides a forum for liaison between Travellers and members/ officials of the local authority.

The Committee currently consists of three Traveller representatives, four elected members, two officials of the County Council, Coordinator of Travellers Services (HSE), and three representatives of Community organisations. The members of the committee are Mr. Bernard Doyle, Ms. Patricia Doyle, Mrs. Teresa McInerney, Cllr. Jim Casey (Chairperson), Cllr. Seamus Hanafin, Cllr. John Hogan, Cllr. Tom Berkery, Mr. Eamonn Brennan (Senior Executive Officer, North Tipperary County Council), Mr. Pdraig Ryan (Senior Social Worker, North Tipperary County Council), Ms. Mary Kennedy (Coordinator of Traveller Services, Health Services Executive), Sister Mary Moloney (Templemore Community Services), Ms. Imelda Reidy (Roscrea 2000), and Breada Ryan (Thurles Action for Community Development).

Where appropriate, accommodation proposals will have to fulfil the requirements of Part VIII of the Local Government (Planning & Development) Regulations 2001. This allows for consultation on a broader basis. The Council will also have regard to the Consultation Guidelines for Traveller Specific Accommodation Projects developed by the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.

(E) STRUCTURES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACCOMMODATION PROPOSALS

The proposed accommodation programme is outlined on an annual basis at Paragraph (G) hereunder and grouped by area in Section 3. Progress on the implementation of the plan is reviewed by the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee on an ongoing basis. Under Section 17 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 North Tipperary County Council is also required to review its Traveller Accommodation Programme at least once in each three year period.

(F) MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF ACCOMMODATION AND PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH PROBLEMS ARISING

The effective management and on-going maintenance of all Traveller Accommodation is crucial to the success of an Accommodation Programme. Travellers accommodated on sites will be encouraged to develop a sense of "ownership" and, where feasible, to participate fully in the site management.

Letting agreements setting out the terms and conditions of tenancies will be required for all tenancies. These will clearly state the rules/conditions which tenants are obliged to adhere to.

A caretaker will be provided for each permanent site to ensure proper management and maintenance of the facility.

Tenant committees will be established where practicable, to ensure effective estate management and participation by residents.

There is on-going liaison between relevant housing staff of the County Council, voluntary organisations and tenants of the sites to ensure effective management.

Problems encountered in the proper management of sites will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of relevant legislation.

Where appropriate, the Council will apply to the Department of Environment, Heritage, and Local Government for funding under the Housing Management Initiative Grants in order to promote Resident Participation projects.

North Tipperary County Council has developed a Policy Statement on Anti-Social Behaviour (May 2005). The Council is committed to promoting a safe and secure environment for all residents. The Council will use the powers contained in the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1997 and Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 to deal with incidents of anti-social behaviour. Under Section 15 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1997, the Council can request information from another Housing Authority, the Criminal Assets Bureau, a member of the Garda Síochána, the Minister for Social Welfare, a health board, and other approved bodies seeking information on anyone that the Council suspects may be engaged in anti-social behaviour. The County Council will use this information in determining the suitability of an applicant for accommodation.

(G) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME

North Tipperary County Council has responsibility for the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme.

Applicants for accommodation will be assessed and considered in the context of this programme and the Council's Scheme of Letting Priorities.

In order to implement the programme in relation to the provision of rural housing, the Council will consider the purchase of rural houses or the allocation of casual vacancies in rural houses where appropriate. Specific locations can not be cited as these depend on individual family requirements. The ability of the Council to meet these preferences will also be determined by its own financial resources and the availability of funding from the Department of Environment, Heritage, & Local Government.

While successful implementation will usually be measured by the number of housing units delivered, as against the targets in the Plan, Integration of tenanted Traveller families into the community is an integral and essential part of the implementation process. In this regard, consultation with the Traveller and settled community and any other interested voluntary and statutory agencies may be necessary, to achieve same.

The implementing authorities will actively involve members of the Travelling Community and relevant support groups in the planning and design of Traveller specific accommodation, and meetings will be held with appropriate personnel.

The Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee will receive a report at each meeting on progress made in implementing this accommodation programme.

Under Circular TAU 7/08 the Minister for Environment, Heritage & Local Government has directed that a review of this programme shall be carried out no later than December 31st 2011.

The annual targets for the provision of accommodation are detailed below:

Year	Accommodation	Housing Authority
2009	5 Standard Houses	North Tipperary County Council
	2 Standard Houses	Nenagh Town Council
	1 Standard House	Templemore Town Council
	1 Standard House	Thurles Town Council
Total	9 Units	

Year	Accommodation	Housing Authority
2010	5 Standard Houses	North Tipperary County Council
	2 Bays	
	2 Standard Houses	Nenagh Town Council
	1 Standard House	Templemore Town Council
	2 Standard Houses	Thurles Town Council
Total	12 Units	

Year	Accommodation	Housing Authority
2011	5 Group Houses	North Tipperary County Council
	6 Standard Houses	
	2 Standard Houses	Nenagh Town Council
	1 Standard House	Templemore Town Council
	1 Standard House	Thurles Town Council
Total	15 Units	

Year	Accommodation	Housing Authority
2012	5 Standard Houses	North Tipperary County Council
	1 Standard House	Nenagh Town Council
	1 Standard House	Templemore Town Council
	1 Standard House	Thurles Town Council
Total	8 Units	

Year	Accommodation	Housing Authority
2013	3 Bays	North Tipperary County Council
	5 Standard Houses	Council
	1 Standard House	Nenagh Town Council
	1 Standard House	Templemore Town Council
	1 Standard House	Thurles Town Council
Total	11 Units	
Overall Total	55 Units	

The targets set out above are based on the current need for accommodation. These targets may alter as the accommodation preference of Traveller families can change. It is estimated that a further twenty-nine units of accommodation may be required to meet future need during the term of the programme. Where possible, the Council proposes to provide this accommodation in line with the preference of the applicants when same becomes known to the relevant Housing Authority.

Measures for Implementation

The four main population centres for Traveller households in North Tipperary are Nenagh (including Borrioscane, Newport, Ballina and Toomevara), Roscrea, Templemore, and Thurles (including Littleton and Borrisoleigh). A breakdown of the current and estimated future need and accommodation preference is detailed below by area.

(A) NENAGH

	Standard Housing	Rural Housing	Group Housing	Serviced Site	Estimated new Family Formations	Total
Current Need	10	2	0	5	5	22

There is one location of Traveller Specific Accommodation in the Nenagh area, namely Ballyvillane Halting Site. The residents on the site have expressed a preference for a change in their accommodation. Some of the residents have a preference for standard and rural accommodation, while others want the site converted into a Group Housing Scheme. North Tipperary County Council will work with the residents in the coming years in order to achieve these preferences where possible.

In line with the County Development Plan (2004) North Tipperary Council will continue to look for an appropriate site to accommodate existing Traveller families in the town of Ballina.

Nenagh Town Council and North Tipperary County Council will be the implementing authority and responsible for meeting the need for standard accommodation in the area.

(B) ROSCREA

	Standard Housing	Rural Housing	Group Housing	Serviced Site	Estimated new Family Formations	Total
Current Need	8	0	0	0	14	22

There are three locations of specific Traveller Accommodation in Roscrea. Twelve families are housed in two halting sites in Parkmore and Ashbury. A six unit Group Housing Scheme is also located in Ashbury.

The residents of Parkmore are also seeking a change to their current accommodation. Some of the residents are seeking standard accommodation, while others would prefer Group Housing.

North Tipperary County Council is the implementing authority for the Roscrea area.

There is a projected need for fourteen units to cover new family formations in the Roscrea area. The high number is the result of a large number of young people who will be eligible to apply for housing in the next five years. Roscrea is unique to other areas, as there are two Haltings Sites and one Group Housing Scheme.

(C) TEMPLEMORE

	Standard Housing	Rural Housing	Group Housing	Serviced Site	Estimated new Family Formations	Total
Current Need	5	5	0	0	4	14

A three unit Group Housing Scheme was completed in the Templemore in 2008.

Both Templemore Town Council and North Tipperary County Council are the implementing authorities for the area.

(D) THURLES

	Standard Housing	Rural Housing	Group Housing	Serviced Site	Estimated new Family Formations	Total
Current Need	6	9	5	0	6	26

Thurles Town Council and North Tipperary County Council are the implementing authorities for the Thurles area.

Following extensive consultation over a prolonged period with the families in Cabra, Thurles it was agreed that the County Council would build a five unit Group Housing Scheme. This project is now at the Planning Part VIII Stage and should come to fruition in the early part of the programme.

Conclusion

Since the first Traveller Accommodation Plan (1999), over ninety units of accommodation have been provided to Traveller families in North Tipperary. The Traveller Accommodation Plan (2005 - 2008) identified a need for thirty-nine units during the term of the programme. Thirty-two units of accommodation were provided by the end of the current Plan. Twenty-four households who were included in the Traveller Accommodation Programme (2005 - 2008) were accommodated.

North Tipperary County Council is eager to build on this progress and has set a target of fifty-five units of accommodation to be provided by December 31st 2013. The plan also includes a provision for new family formations (estimated at twenty-nine units) and the Council hopes to meet these accommodation needs as they become known.

It is important to note that there can be difficulty in forecasting future need. The Review of the Traveller Accommodation Programme (2005 – 2008) noted that by April 2007, eighteen households who were not on the Assessment in 2004 had applied for

Local Authority housing in North Tipperary. Eight households who were accommodated in this period had previously lived in North Tipperary, but were not resident in the functional area when the Assessment took place. This reflects the transitory nature of many indigenous Traveller households, who move between counties.

While North Tipperary County Council will endeavour to meet the personal preferences of families on the Waiting List, it may be constrained by the resources that are available to it. The Council is also aware of an increasing trend for residents who live in Traveller Specific accommodation to seek alternative accommodation in Standard and Rural Housing. The Council will also try to meet these preferences; however this is dependent on the availability of resources.

In a submission by Pavee Point the issue of mainstreaming Traveller employment was raised. The submission notes that Traveller accommodation is part of a wider context of interrelated issues that impact on the employment opportunities available to members of the Travelling Community. Pavee Point noted that Local Authorities should explore ways in which they can take positive action initiatives to increase Traveller participation and reduce exclusion from the labour market. North Tipperary County Council supports the work of the Integrated Traveller Strategy, which proposes an integrated programme of education, training and employment provision and mentoring for those Travellers that wish to avail of it. It is hoped that this programme will help tackle the barriers that prevent Travellers entering the workforce.

A submission by the Irish Traveller Movement noted that the Traveller Accommodation Programmes should be based on respect for Traveller culture. North Tipperary County Council believes that respect for this culture is essential if the Travelling Community is to have access to employment opportunities, education, and health services.

North Tipperary County Council is committed to working in partnership with other agencies through fora such as the Intergrated Traveller Strategy, Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee, and North Tipperary Traveller Support Network in order to meets the targets in the programme and the wider needs of the Travelling Community in North Tipperary.