



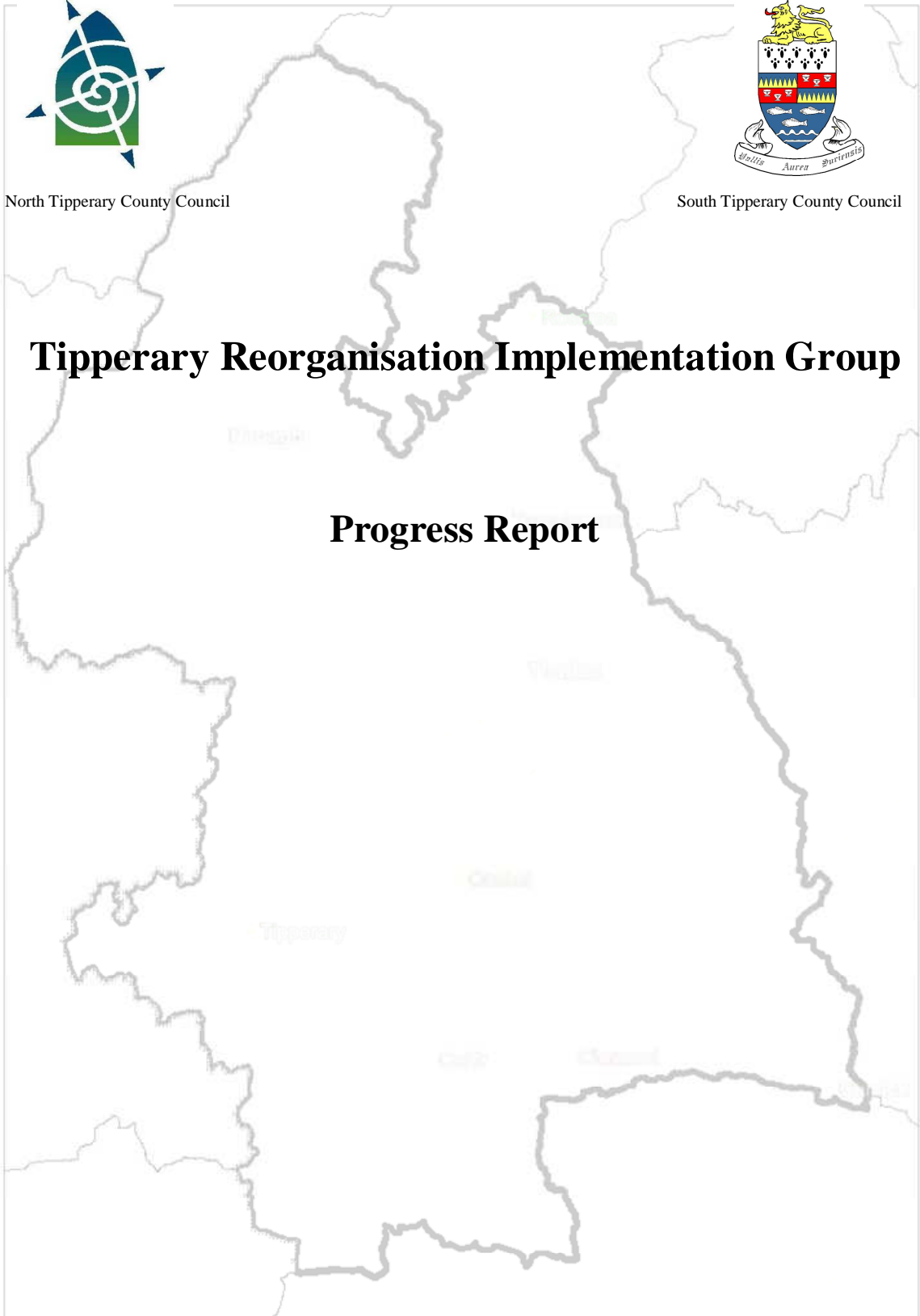
North Tipperary County Council



South Tipperary County Council

# Tipperary Reorganisation Implementation Group

## Progress Report



Submitted to the Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government: November 2011

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## **1. Introduction**

Arising from the Government decision in July 2011 to establish a unified County Council in Tipperary to replace the existing County Councils effective from the local elections in 2014, the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government announced the setting up of the Tipperary Reorganisation Implementation Group (henceforward referred to as ‘the Group’) to progress the merger. It has a general mandate to oversee planning, preparatory work and initial implementation of the reorganisation process.

This progress report to the Minister is prepared in line with the terms of reference of the Group. An Implementation Plan, setting out a clear agenda to inform and guide the establishment of the unitary authority in summer 2014, is to be finalised no later than 31 May 2012.

## **2. Medium term outcomes and beyond**

The merger is a unique opportunity for Tipperary. Key outcomes to be realised are:

- A unified Tipperary County Council with an enhanced capacity to support the economic, physical and social development of the county in an integrated manner.
- A stronger, more cohesive county structure that is better positioned to promote the interests of the county.
- Human resources of the integrated Council effectively deployed
- More streamlined, effective and coherent delivery of customer services across the county
- Reduced administrative costs and overheads
- Significant local government reform delivered
- Streamlining of other existing county structures including the Tipperary Joint Library Committee, County Development Boards, Joint Policing Committees etc.

## **3. Scope of Progress Report**

The purpose of this first progress report to the Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government is to:

- Identify key issues arising in respect of the merger of North Tipperary County Council and South Tipperary County Council
- Note decisions and actions taken to date by the group
- Indicate next steps

#### **4. Early Priority Issues**

##### *Regional Authority alignment:*

County Tipperary as a whole is strategically placed within an axis from Limerick/Shannon in the Mid-West to Waterford in the South-East. This is reflected in the fact that North Tipperary is in the Mid-West Regional Authority and South Tipperary in the South-East Regional Authority. It is considered that the new council should be part of a single regional authority, within which it can most effectively underpin the economic development of the County and the wider region. An alignment that reflects current strengths and draws on the existing strong links between Tipperary, Waterford and Limerick suggests a Munster configuration. The forthcoming Policy Statement on Local Government Reform provides a critical opportunity to address this issue. The framework of working relations by the integrated Council with other public bodies will also be influenced by this decision.

##### *Electoral Areas/Town Councils:*

It is anticipated that the Policy Statement on Local Government Reform will provide for a review of electoral areas and that this is likely to result in a reduced number of such areas in Tipperary.

Electoral areas in both the north and south of the county provide the basis for area delivery of some services. They are also the basis for area committees of the elected members, through which many local decisions are made. Consequently, the review of the electoral areas, in addition to defining the geographic boundaries for the 2014 local elections, will also inform democratic local decision-making and area service delivery. Therefore, it is important that the review of electoral areas in the county be commenced as early as possible in 2012.

Related to this, an early indication in respect of the future of town councils is also desirable. Under current local government arrangements, the new single authority would incorporate six town councils and one borough council.

##### *HQ Issue:*

A particular strength of Tipperary is the prominence of Clonmel and Nenagh as strong economic hubs at either end of the county. Bearing in mind the economic contribution and potential of each town and the major human and financial resources the State has invested in each, the group has decided that both locations should be retained with headquarter status. This is predicated on radical rationalisation of administrative functions in both locations so that no duplication arises. Combined back office functions will operate from a single location

only within the County, e.g. the Finance/Information Technology function in one location, the Corporate/Human Resources function in another. Similarly, it is envisaged that key policy functions will operate from a single location, e.g. housing policy in one location and environmental policy in another. The emphasis will be on integrated and streamlined administrative supports and the provision of services in the most focused and cost effective manner.

The Group has further decided that a location in the centre of the county should be identified for county-wide meetings. This location should not result in any material public expenditure.

*Financial considerations:*

Savings arising from the merger will be maximised. While many of these will be realised in the medium term, it is essential that savings be delivered from now on. However, significant convergence costs will be incurred in the interim. Upfront costs associated with the integration as well as financing options will be identified. Administrative and other savings will also be quantified.

## **5. Other Important Issues**

*Local Government Reform:*

The Programme for Government contains a number of proposals which could have a significant impact on the make-up of the new unified authority. A definitive announcement on these initiatives, including the proposed new water utility (Irish Water), will inform decisions on the most appropriate service delivery models.

*Service delivery and governance issues:*

A joint management team comprising the Directors of Services of the two councils has been established and mandated by the Group to identify key issues in relation to service delivery, governance and other relevant matters. These include for example:

- Amending the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines
- Deciding to which waste management region Tipperary County Council will belong
- Adopting a joint housing delivery model
- Harmonising major Emergency Plans
- Standardising all rules, policies and procedures

A summary of issues is provided at Appendix 7.

*Structural and service reconfiguration:*

A comprehensive review of current structures and services is underway. A new structural and service configuration will be required to maximise the use of resources and deliver an optimal service.

*Communications:*

Ongoing communication with internal and external stakeholders is critical and is underway.

*Legislative issues:*

New or amended legislation will be required to abolish the existing two councils and establish a single entity, as well as to accommodate all other legal aspects of the merger, including the full integration of the Tipperary Joint Library Committee into the new entity.

**6. Next steps**

- Priority and other important issues (detailed at 4 and 5 above), to be progressed by the relevant parties.
- An implementation plan to be completed and submitted to the Minister by end May 2012 as required by the Terms of Reference.

## **APPENDIX No. 1**

### **Terms of Reference**

## **Tipperary Reorganisation Implementation Group**

### **Establishment and Terms of Reference**

Arising from the Government decision to establish a unified county council in Tipperary to replace the existing North and South Tipperary County Councils, the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government has established an Implementation Group consisting of the following members: -

- Mr. Joe MacGrath (Chair) (Manager, North Tipperary County Council);
- Mr. Billy McEvoy (Manager, South Tipperary County Council).
- Mr. Joe Allen (former Principal, Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government); and
- Mr. Gerry Kearney (former Secretary General, Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs).

Mr. Kearney will work as an External Evaluator and will assist the Group in covering all aspects of its mandate in an objective and effective way and with the resolution of any necessary issues in the completion of its work.

The Group has a general mandate to oversee planning, preparatory work and initial implementation of the reorganisation process. Without restricting its scope or flexibility pursuant to its general mandate, and subject to any additional matters that the Minister may require, the functions of the Group will include oversight of, and assuring delivery in relation to, the following matters: -

1. Establishment of effective co-ordination/project management arrangements.
2. Detailed planning and identification of early actions for the amalgamation of the two county councils including: -
  - analysis of income, expenditure, assets, liabilities, staff (numbers/grades and identification of any surpluses), services, procedures and other relevant matters in the two authorities;
  - identification of requirements for service and organisational rationalisation and integration;
  - such other preparatory, transitional, procedural or administrative measures as may be necessary in relation to the existing authorities or their functions, in preparation for the establishment of the unified authority and the effective performance of its functions.

3. Rationalisation of the provision of services not already subject to joint arrangements in preparation for merger of the authorities and establishment of joint arrangements, as appropriate, with a view to orderly transition to the unified authority, while maintaining effective service delivery.
4. Organisational arrangements, including the early establishment of a joint management team to oversee and deliver successfully the implementation of the restructuring process and integration of corporate functions; and organisational rationalisation and integration generally in line with arrangements relating to services (as at 3 above) including consolidation of particular functions in respective authorities, deployment of staff accordingly and rationalisation of local authority offices and other facilities.
5. Action necessary to maximise cost reductions and efficiencies, and arrangements to measure and monitor their achievement, including savings necessary to ensure that the level of the commercial rate in North Tipperary is reduced to the current level in South Tipperary, following the establishment of the unitary authority.
6. Arrangements to support continued effective performance of functions by the elected councils of the two authorities, service to the councils by management and staff in the context of organisational changes; and arrangements to prepare for the effective operation of the unified council, including such matters as committees, procedures and representation on other bodies.
7. Provision of information to, and consultation with, the elected councils, as appropriate, in relation to the reorganisation process, including provision of regular reports to the councils or a joint committee of the elected councils.
8. Measures to ensure adequate balance between the two authorities in the reorganisation process and in their management generally prior to establishment of the unified authority.
9. Action to achieve alignment and convergence between the objectives and policies of the two authorities as part of the transition towards a unitary authority in 2014.
10. Arrangements to merge relevant bodies linked with or related to local government such as the separate County Development Boards, Joint Policing Committees and County Enterprise Boards, and relevant measures to support the alignment of local government and local/community development in line with overall policy in that regard.
11. Identification of measures to maximise the capacity of local government to contribute to the economic development of Tipperary as a whole.

The Group will ensure that Government policy on local government, the public service, the public finances and other relevant matters are reflected, as necessary, in the implementation

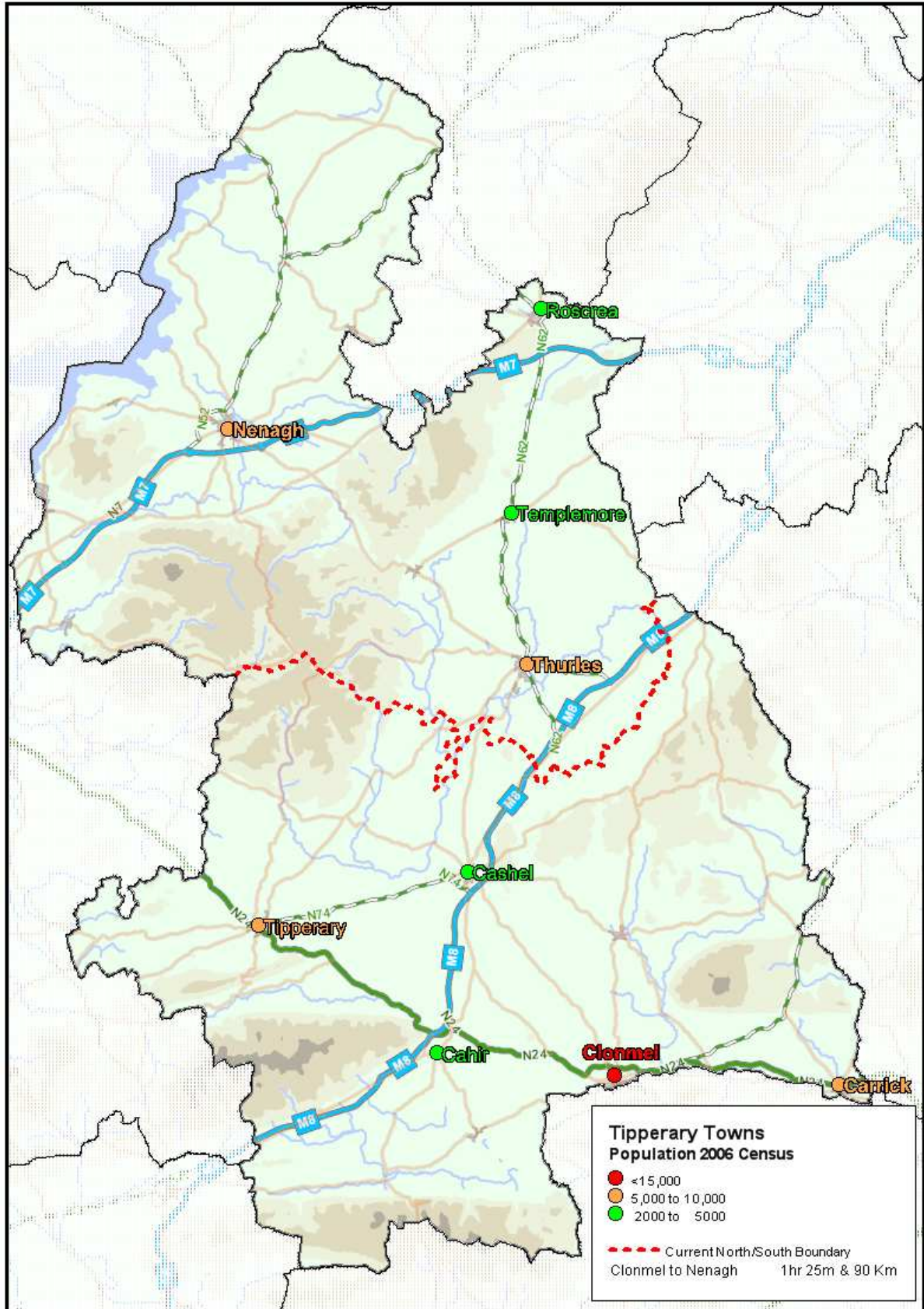
process and that due account is taken of relevant analysis and recommendations in reports such as the Local Government Efficiency Review.

The Implementation Group will provide progress reports to the Minister, as appropriate, with an initial report to be provided not later than **30 November 2011**, which should include a statement of the implications of unification.

Having regard to the foregoing and any other matters considered appropriate, the Group will adopt an Implementation Plan not later than **31 May 2012** to set a clear agenda and guidance for the continuation and completion of the reorganisation process under transitional management arrangements from early 2012 leading to the establishment of the unitary authority in 2014.

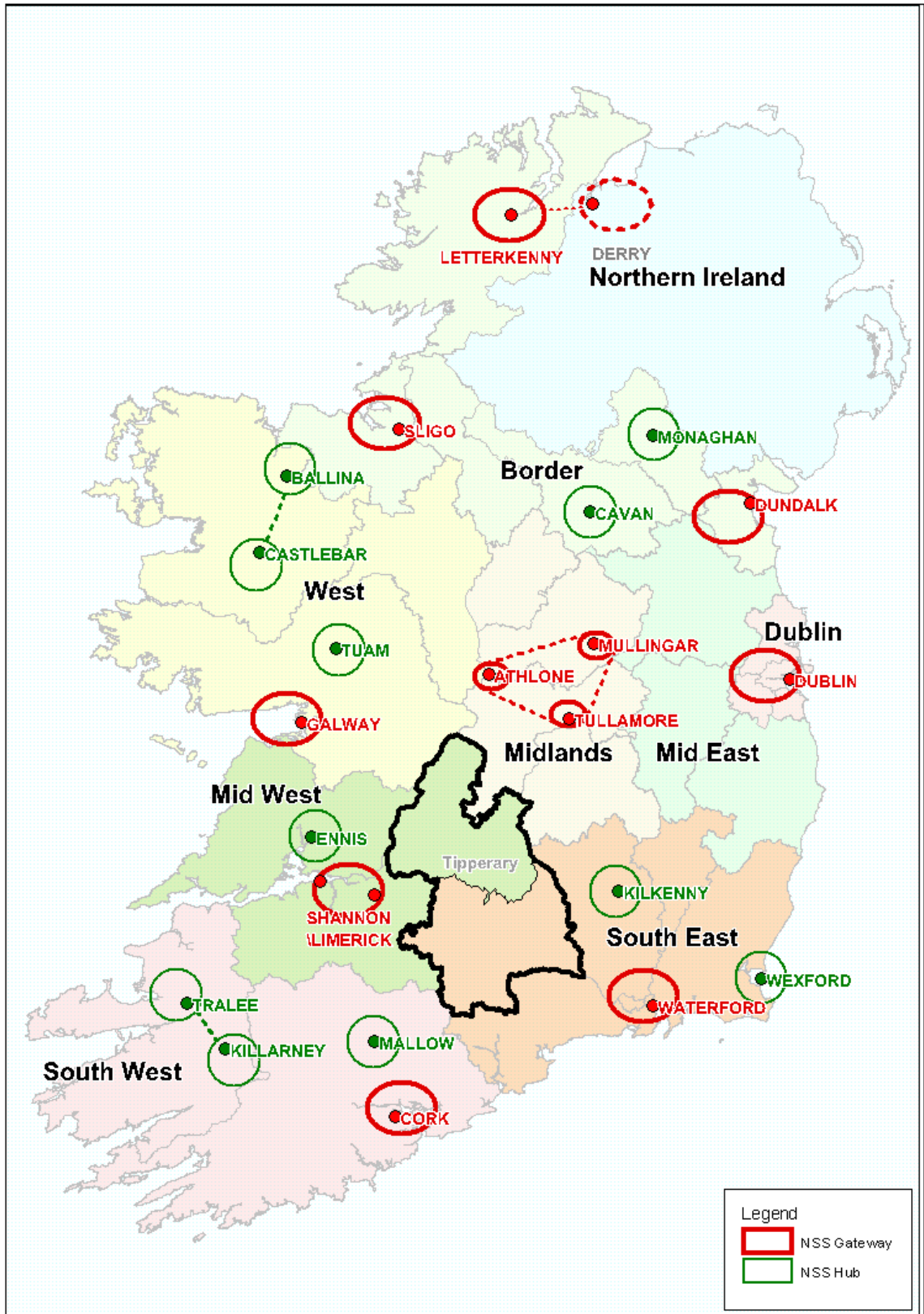
**APPENDIX No. 2**

**Map of County Tipperary**



**APPENDIX No. 3**

**Map of Tipperary within a Regional Context**



**APPENDIX No. 4**

**Fact Sheet on the County and Details in Respect of the Two Existing Councils**

### Fact Sheet on the County and Details in Respect of the Two Existing Councils

	<b>County</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>South</b>
<b>Population (Preliminary 2011 Census)</b>	<b>158,652</b>	70,219	88,433
<b>Revenue Budget 2011 (€ million)</b>	<b>142.30</b>	66.35	75.95
<b>No. of Staff (WTE)</b>	<b>1,140*</b>	500	640
<b>Joint Libraries Staff (WTE)</b>	<b>50</b>	50	
<b>Retained Fire-fighters</b>	<b>131</b>	70	61
<b>Elected Members (No.)</b>	<b>47</b>	21	26
<b>Electoral Areas (No.)</b>	<b>9</b>	4	5
<b>Area (Km<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>4,282</b>	2,024	2,258
<b>Km of Road</b>	<b>5,587</b>	2,728	2,859
<b>Km of water main</b>	<b>3,513</b>	1,413	2,100
<b>No. of Local Authority Dwellings ('09)</b>	<b>4,497</b>	1,724	2,773
<b>Rate (2011)</b>		<b>60.13</b>	<b>56.77</b>

\*The pre-2008 figure was 1,325 whole time equivalents. The reduction to date is therefore 185, or 14%

**APPENDIX No. 5**

**Council Office Infrastructure Nenagh and Clonmel**

## **Council Office Infrastructure Nenagh and Clonmel**

North Tipperary County Council and South Tipperary County Council have invested significant public funds in office infrastructure in Nenagh and Clonmel respectively. Nenagh has seen a consolidation of personnel under one roof in new Civic Offices, opened in 2004. Clonmel saw a major refurbishment of County Hall in the early 1990s; subsequent expansion of office accommodation has included a mix of extensions and new build.

Offices in Clonmel are currently valued for insurance purposes at €14,326,000 and those in Nenagh at €19,120,000.

**APPENDIX No. 6**

**Terms of Reference Worksheet**

<b>Tipperary Reorganisation Implementation Group</b>				
		<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Position at 22/11/11</b>
1.	Establishment of effective co-ordination/project management arrangements	TRIG (Tipperary Reorganisation Implementation Group)	7 <sup>th</sup> October, 2011	Co-ordination/project management arrangements agreed and established.
2	<p>Detailed planning and identification of early actions for the amalgamation of the two county councils including: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- analysis of income, expenditure, assets, liabilities, staff (numbers/grades and identification of any surpluses), services, procedures and other relevant matters in the two authorities;</li> <li>- identification of requirements for service and organisational rationalisation and integration;</li> <li>- such other preparatory, transitional, procedural or administrative measures as may be necessary in relation to the existing authorities or their functions, in preparation for the establishment of the unified authority and the effective performance of its functions.</li> </ul>	JMT (Joint Management Team)	Commenced at Joint Management Team (JMT) meeting on the 14 <sup>th</sup> October, 2011	<p>Assigned to Task Groups at JMT Meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2011.</p> <p>A series of bi-lateral meetings between senior staff from both local authorities have convened to assess:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Impact of amalgamation on service provision.</li> <li>2. Early actions to "kick-start" the amalgamation process.</li> </ol> <p>At JMT meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> November, tasks have been assigned to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. focus on service delivery models, proposed staff structure.</li> <li>2. Assess financial implications of merger across all income streams.</li> <li>3. Assess policy variations in each Directorate.</li> <li>4. Compliance date : end January 2012.</li> </ol> <p>Meeting of County Managers/Project Co-ordinator/HR Officers with Joint Union Group convened on the 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2011. Process for engagement</p>

				between Management and Unions agreed.
3.	Rationalisation of the provision of services not already subject to joint arrangements in preparation for merger of the authorities and establishment of joint arrangements, as appropriate, with a view to orderly transition to the unified authority, while maintaining effective service delivery.	JMT	Commenced at JMT meeting on the 14 <sup>th</sup> October, 2011	Assigned to Task Groups at JMT Meeting on 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2011 and 14 <sup>th</sup> November, 2011
4	Organisational arrangements, including the early establishment of a joint management team to oversee and deliver successfully the implementation of the restructuring process and integration of corporate functions; and organisational rationalisation and integration generally in line with arrangements relating to services (as at 3 above) including consolidation of particular functions in respective authorities, deployment of staff accordingly and rationalisation of local authority offices and other facilities.	TRIG	14th October, 2011	JMT established : Meetings held on 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2011 and 14 <sup>th</sup> November, 2011.  Bi-lateral meetings have been convened.
5	Action necessary to maximise cost reductions and efficiencies, and arrangements to measure and monitor their achievement, including savings necessary to ensure that the level of the	TRIG/Heads of Finance	Commenced at JMT meeting on the 14 <sup>th</sup> October, 2011	Assigned to Task Groups (Finance) at JMT Meeting on 14 <sup>th</sup> November 2011. Compliance date : end January 2012.

	commercial rate in North Tipperary is reduced to the current level in South Tipperary, following the establishment of the unitary authority.			
6	Arrangements to support continued effective performance of functions by the elected councils of the two authorities, service to the councils by management and staff in the context of organisational changes; and arrangements to prepare for the effective operation of the unified council, including such matters as committees, procedures and representation on other bodies.	JMT	JMT meeting on the 14 <sup>th</sup> October, 2011	Ongoing
7	Provision of information to, and consultation with, the elected councils, as appropriate, in relation to the reorganisation process, including provision of regular reports to the councils or a joint committee of the elected councils.	Cathaoirleach/Mayor of Councils and County Managers	Week commencing 10 <sup>th</sup> October, 2011	Cathaoirleach of STCC and Mayor of NTCC have met .Joint Committee of Council established to include Cathaoirleach/Mayor and Party Whips of both Councils.  County Managers/Project Co-ordinator/Joint Secretariat met with the Joint Committee of Elected Members on the 14 <sup>th</sup> November, 2011
8	Measures to ensure adequate balance between the two authorities in the reorganisation process and in their management generally prior to establishment	TRIG	Ongoing	Ongoing

	of the unified authority.			
9	Action to achieve alignment and convergence between the objectives and policies of the two authorities as part of the transition towards a unitary authority in 2014.	JMT	Ongoing	Being considered by JMT/Senior Staff of both Councils.
10	Arrangements to merge relevant bodies linked with or related to local government such as the separate County Development Boards, Joint Policing Committees and County Enterprise Boards, and relevant measures to support the alignment of local government and local/community development in line with overall policy in that regard.	TRIG	Merger to be addressed as part of the convergence process.	Merger to be addressed as part of convergence process.  Submission made to Alignment Steering Group.
11	Identification of measures to maximise the capacity of local government to contribute to the economic development of Tipperary as a whole.	TRIG/JMT (Note ; Importance of regional dimension)	Ongoing	Ongoing (significant Regional Issue)

**Abbreviations:**

**TRIG:** *Tipperary Reorganisation Implementation Group.*

**JMT:** *Joint Management Team*

## **APPENDIX No. 7**

### **Initial Scoping Work by Directors of Service**

#### **Summary of Initial Scoping work by Directors of Service**

The Tipperary Re-organisation Implementation Group (TRIG) requested that Directors of Service from North and South Tipperary meet as Task Groups to exchange information on their common functional areas of responsibility. The meetings (see Appendix 8) resulted in a series of twelve issues papers. The Joint Libraries Committee already has a county-wide remit and its Issues Paper makes for a total of 13. The main issues raised are summarised below.

**Main issues:**

- Decide on regional location for Tipperary County Council
- Re-drawing of electoral boundaries should commence as early as possible in 2012, with input from the Implementation Group on practical boundary issues.
- Early national decision required on local government reform, including town councils (note Cashel town boundary extension and Carrick Civic Offices) and on the role of councils versus Irish Water in provision of water services
- Decide location of HQ/administrative centres
- Decide on Council service delivery model. Early agreement required to determine necessary staffing complement and quantify levels of net savings.
- Funding for the amalgamation process and for the subsequent period
- Amend legislation for transitional purposes, in particular to establish the new legal entity and incorporate the Joint Libraries functions
- Set up system of regular, consistent communication with elected members, staff and unions
- Amend National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines in accordance with new regional structure
- Extend current Development Plans and Local Area Plans to 2016
- Prepare vision document for Tipperary County, to include broad objectives for economic, physical and social development

**Next Steps to end January 2012:**

- Information Technology sections to report on specifics of high speed data link, single data centre and linked telephony
- All Task Groups to compare policies and procedures per functional area and recommend priority early actions with implementation dates, utilising staff resources as required
- Specific Project Group to review service delivery options and report on most appropriate models for the unified authority
- Heads of Finance to recommend steps to achieve common charges, rate in the euro and a unified Agresso system

## **APPENDIX No. 8**

### **Schedule of meetings held to date and main outcomes**

### **Schedule of meetings held to date and main outcomes**

Date	Parties meeting	Outcome
7/10/2011	Tipperary Re-organisation Implementation Group (TRIG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ToR worksheet</li> <li>Project structure</li> <li>Meeting schedule</li> <li>Next steps</li> </ul>
14/10/2011	Joint Management Team (JMT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreement on main issues</li> <li>Duties assigned to task groups</li> </ul>
18/10/2011	Planning Task Group	Issues Paper
18/10/2011	C & E Task Group	Issues Paper
18/10/2011	Environment Task Group	Issues Paper
24/10/2011	Corporate Task Group	Issues Paper
25/10/2011	Fire/Emergency Task Group	Issues Paper
25/10/2011	HR Task Group	Issues Paper
26/10/2011	Finance Task Group	Issues Paper
26/10/2011	IT Task Group	Issues Paper
26/10/2011	Housing Task Group	Issues Paper
1/11/2011	Water Services Task Group	Issues Paper
1/11/2011	Roads Task Group	Issues Paper
1/11/2011	Health & Safety Task Group	Issues Paper
3/11/2011	Project Support Team (PST)	Recommendations on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Admin arrangements</li> <li>Status of November Report</li> <li>Staff communications</li> <li>Elected Members communications</li> <li>Union communications</li> </ul>
7/11/2011	TRIG	Decisions on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Output of Task Groups</li> <li>Layout &amp; draft content of first Progress Report</li> </ul>
14/11/2011	JMT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreement on content of Issues Papers</li> <li>Next steps for Task Groups</li> </ul>
14/11/2011	Managers and Joint Committee of Councillors	Shared understanding of progress to date and main issues to be addressed
14/11/2011	N-S Management and Unions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared understanding of progress to date</li> <li>Agreed communications strategy</li> </ul>
22/11/2011	TRIG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree content of first Progress Report</li> <li>Confirm next steps for Task Groups</li> </ul>