



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann  
Tipperary County Council

# A new Tipperary County Development Plan 2022 - 2028

~ Background Paper



## Population and Settlement



# Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	3
2.0	Current Settlement Hierarchy .....	3
3.0	Population, Settlement and Housing.....	6
3.1	County Towns and Villages .....	6
3.2	Housing Need and House Types.....	7
3.3	Community Composition.....	8
3.4	Travel and Commuting .....	10
4.0	National and Regional Planning Frameworks.....	11
4.1	National Planning Framework.....	11
4.2	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.....	12
5.0	Policy Influences and Considerations.....	14
5.1	The Location of Homes.....	14
5.2	Key Towns.....	14
5.3	Towns.....	15
5.4	Rural Villages .....	15
5.5	Open Countryside.....	16
5.6	Housing Needs Demand Assessment .....	17
5.7	Networks.....	18
5.8	Influence of Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans.....	18
6.0	Next Steps.....	20

## 1.0 Introduction

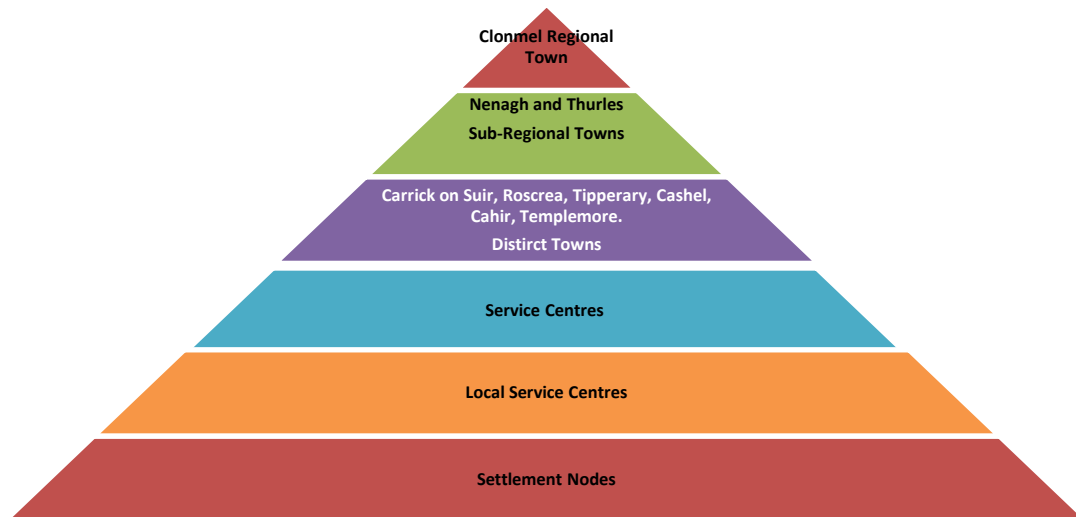
This briefing paper presents national and regional policy and key socio-economic trends that will influence the preparation of a new Tipperary County Development Plan 2022 – 2028. Its function is to support and stimulate public and stakeholder participation in the Plan preparation process.

This paper is one of three papers prepared to help stimulate debate, discussion and input into the plan-making process, these papers should be considered together. The other papers are entitled: ‘Low Carbon Society and Climate Resilience’ and ‘Economy and Employment’.

## 2.0 Current Settlement Hierarchy

The current settlement hierarchy for Tipperary is set out in the North Tipperary County Development Plan 2010 (as varied) and the South Tipperary County Development Plan 2009 (as varied). A Variation of both plans was undertaken in December, 2015 to put in place a consistent planning framework across the new administrative area of Tipperary County Council. This included the preparation of a new county-wide settlement strategy. The Settlement Hierarchy was prepared during a transitional period in national and regional planning, and whereby the Government had commenced the preparation of a new National Planning Framework (NPF). Therefore, regard was made to the National Spatial Strategy (2002) and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the former Mid-West and South Region. The preparation of a new Settlement Hierarchy also sought to reflect a coherent approach to the development of town and villages in Tipperary and to provide a framework for future growth and investment.

The Settlement Hierarchy adopted is presented below. Clonmel is represented as the Regional Town, in a tier above Nenagh and Thurles as sub-regional towns. Six District Towns were identified based on their capacities and ability to support their adjoining rural districts. All other settlements, including the settlements of Newport, Ballina and Fethard, were designated as rural settlements across three tiers.



**Figure 1: Current Settlement Hierarchy**

126 settlements were identified in the county and allocated a place in a hierarchy of settlement 'tiers', which provided an appropriate and tailored framework for investment and growth. These towns and villages are illustrated geographically on Figure 2.

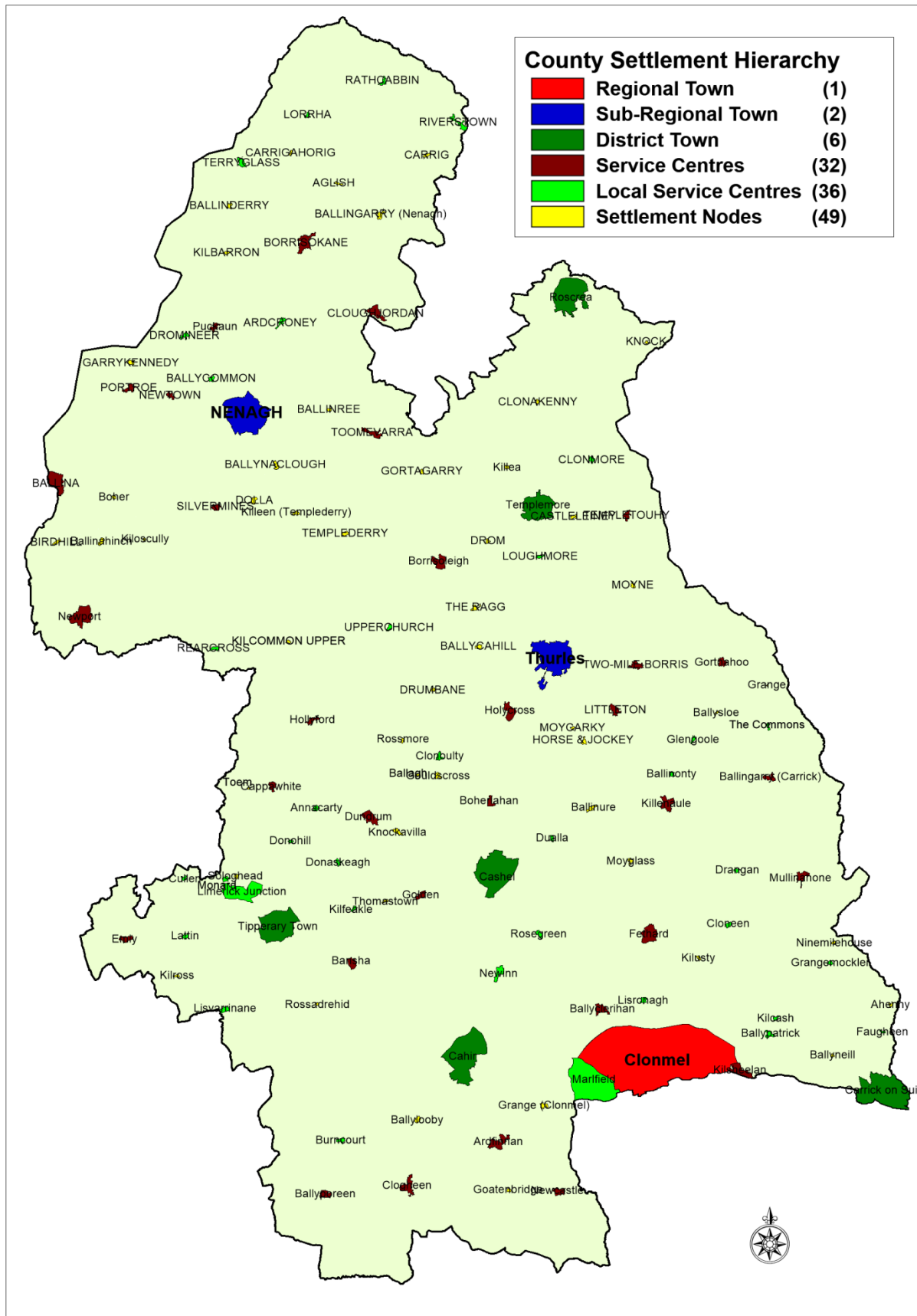


Figure 2: Current Settlement Hierarchy illustrated

## 3.0 Population, Settlement and Housing

### 3.1 County Towns and Villages

Census 2016 identified that county Tipperary had a total population of **159,553**. Between 2011 and 2016 the county population increased by 0.5%, less than the State average growth of 3.78%.

**Table 1: Population change trends in Tipperary**

Census	2002	2006	2011	2016
Total population	140,131	149,244	158,754	159,553
% change	4.9%	6.5%	6.4%	0.5%

Growth in population has occurred within and around the towns of Cashel and Nenagh and to a lesser extent Clonmel, Cahir, Carrick on Suir and Thurles. Table 2 outlines population growth in the towns.

Four settlements recorded a population decrease; these include Clonmel, Carrick on Suir, Tipperary town and Templemore. In such significant towns, poor growth performance needs to be reversed, to maintain the economic and social fabric of these towns. Newport, Cashel and Ballina illustrated the largest increase in the county.

**Table 2: Population change in Tipperary's Urban Areas**

Settlement	Popn 2011	Popn 2016	% Change
Clonmel	17908	17140	-4.48%
Nenagh	8439	8968	5.90%
Thurles	7933	7940	0.09%
Carrick on Suir	5931	5771	-2.77%
Roscrea	5403	5446	0.79%
Tipperary	5310	4979	-6.65%
Cashel	4051	4422	8.39%
Cahir	3578	3593	0.42%
Ballina	2442	2632	7.22%
Templemore	2071	1939	-6.37%
Newport	1806	1995	9.47%
Fethard	1541	1545	0.26%

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) defines urban areas as settlements with a population of 1500 or more, in Tipperary there are 12 such settlements – **Clonmel, Nenagh, Thurles, Carrick on Suir, Tipperary, Roscrea, Cashel, Cahir, Ballina, Templemore, Newport, and Fethard**. Therefore, the remaining 114 settlements of Tipperary are classified as ‘Rural Areas’ as they have populations of <1,500 persons.

The majority of Tipperary’s population lives in the Rural Areas<sup>1</sup>, including the villages under 1500 population, with only 44.5% of the population living in urban areas<sup>2</sup> of Tipperary. The high numbers of medium to small rural settlements in the county results in a unique need for a strong town and village planning framework, with incentives for growth, investment and consolidation, this in turn will ensure that rural areas will have the services and supports they need to flourish.

### 3.2 Housing Need and House Types

Average household size is declining, with the average number of persons living in each private household in Tipperary at 2.68 persons. This indicates that more new dwellings will have to be supplied for the same amount of people, and that much of the new demand may be for smaller units.

**Table 3: Average Number of Persons per Private Household in Permanent Housing**

	2002	2006	2011	2016
State	2.95	2.81	2.73	2.75
Tipperary	2.93	2.79	2.71	2.68

There are 59,276 households in Tipperary, these can be categorised by types of accommodation. 95% of housing was in the form of houses/bungalows, compared to the State average of 86%, with only 3.5% accommodation in flats/apartments compared to the State average of 12%.

**Table 4: Private Households by type of accommodation, 2016 (source AIRO)**

House/Bungalow	Flat/Apartment	Bed-sit	Caravan/Mobile Home	Total
56,129 (95%)	2,078 (3.5%)	50 (0.08%)	205 (0.35%)	59,276

1 Open countryside or in settlements with a total population of less than 1,500 persons (CSO)

2 The term urban area refers to settlements with a total population of 1,500 or more (CSO)

This is representative of the rural nature of the county, and also outlines an emerging need for greater variety in housing type to cater for future population demands, particularly in the larger settlements where higher densities, smaller units and innovative design can be supported and delivered.

There were 208 new dwellings completed in 2018 in Tipperary, compared with 185 completions in 2017, an increase of 12.4%.

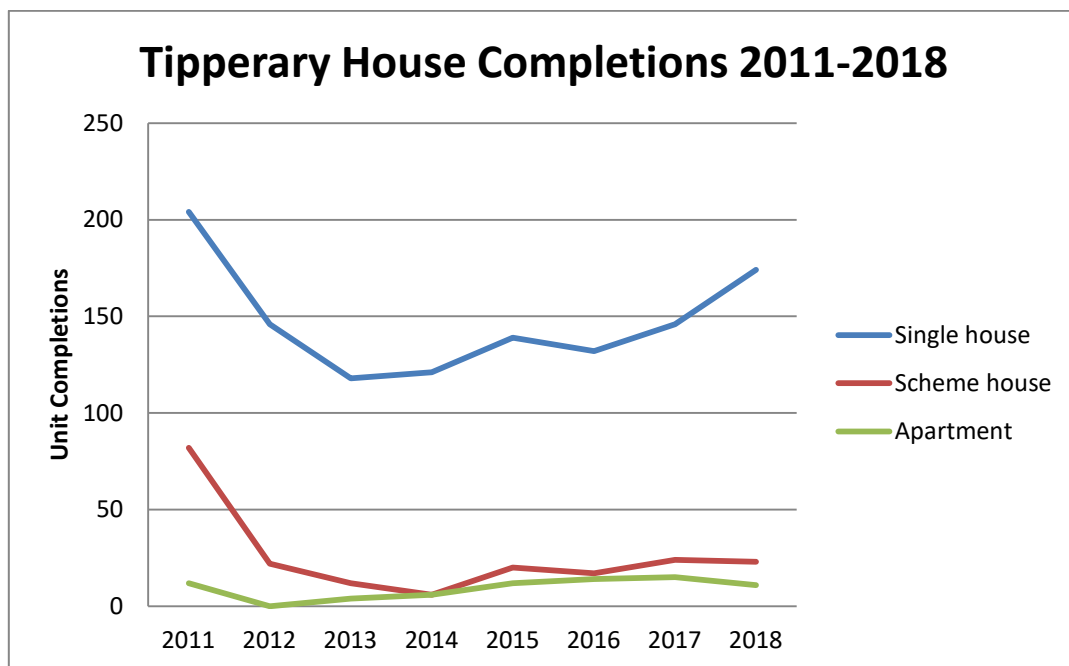


Figure 3: House completions 2011- 2018

However, over this period, only 23 scheme dwellings were delivered, and made up only 11% of all new dwelling completions in 2018 while 83.6% were single dwellings and 5.3% were apartments. This is despite the need for smaller units and adaptable unit types with access to services and amenities to cater for the changing Tipperary population. This trend towards the provision of single housing units reflects the lack of delivery of units in towns and villages areas generally and also the lack of diversity/tailoring to population needs in house type provision.

### 3.3 Community Composition

According to Census 2016, there were 52,341 children and young people residing in Tipperary (0-24 years). This figure represented 32.8% of the total population and was below the State average of 33.2%. According to Census 2016, the Young



Dependency Rate<sup>3</sup> in Tipperary in 2016 was 33.7%, this is close to national average, however, lower than county Meath at 39%, being the county with the highest young dependency ratio.

It is an important consideration that 7 out of 10 households consist of three people or less, with an average household size of 2.75 people. This is expected to decline to around 2.5 people per household by 2040. The average number of children per household in Tipperary is presently 1.4. There are 3,701 Lone Parent families with children aged less than 15 years in Tipperary, representing 20.5% of all families with children in this age group.

The greatest numbers of older people live in the towns. However, around the rest of the county there are many rural settlements such as Clogheen, Ballyporeen, Toomevara etc where the proportion of older people as a percentage of the total population is well over 20%, this is an indicator of short term expected population decline in these settlements. It was also found that the age dependency ratio<sup>4</sup> was higher in the smaller rural towns and villages for example Clogheen (40.8%), Ballyporeen (36.8%), Toomevara (33.7%) etc, where there are high numbers of older persons relative to the local population. The higher the old age dependency ratio, the greater the reliance on public services in these communities e.g. health services, family support etc.

It was also notable in 2016, that nearly 28% of the elderly population lived alone in Tipperary. This reflects the vulnerability of this age cohort and their possible isolation from support and services in rural communities. The National Risk Assessment 2019 states that demographic changes will see the proportion of the population aged over 65 increase from 1 in 8 in 2019, to 1 in 6 in 2030, and the number of people who are 85 or older will double, creating challenges in terms of housing and services provision for the elderly.

Only 8.9% of the Tipperary population are non-Irish nationals compared to the State average of 11.4%, of this, the predominant groups are from UK and Poland.

---

<sup>3</sup> The young dependency ratio is the number of young people aged 0 -14 as a percentage of the population of working age (CSO).

<sup>4</sup> The over 65 year old age group as a percentage of the working population - CSO

Tipperary has a higher number of travellers than the average for the State at 0.66%, with 0.77% or 1,235 persons being part of the travelling community; this was an increase of 6.9% since 2011.

In 2016, 23,593 persons or 14.8 % of the Tipperary population were classified as disabled, compared with a State average of 13.5%. The main forms of disability in the population relate to ‘conditions that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities’ and ‘other disability, including chronic illnesses’. Due to the range of disability types it is difficult to quantify exactly how a disability will affect a person’s housing need; however, addressing the needs of the disabled in terms of housing location, design and ease of access to services are key factors.

The National Disability Authority advocates ‘Lifetime Adaptable Housing’. This is about convenience and safety and has two major characteristics - accessibility and adaptability. The concept is based on the principle that homes should be accessible to all (children, elderly people and people with disabilities) and easily adapted to satisfy changing requirements, such as a temporary or permanent disability, throughout a lifetime.

### 3.4 Travel and Commuting

Only 12% of the Tipperary population travel to work, school or college on foot or by bicycle, despite the fact that most people in Tipperary (42%) travelled under 15 minutes to work, school or college. Having consideration to the predominance of the private car for travel, it is clear that most of these short journeys are by private car.

<b>Journey time</b>	<b>Persons</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Under 15 mins</b>	39,096	41.74%
<b>1/4 hour - under 1/2 hour</b>	24,030	25.65%
<b>1/2 hour - under 3/4 hour</b>	13,330	14.23%
<b>3/4 hour - under 1 hour</b>	4,194	4.48%
<b>1 hour - under 1 1/2 hours</b>	4,335	4.63%
<b>1 1/2 hours and over</b>	2,282	2.44%
<b>Not stated</b>	6,406	6.84%

The location of new residential development is a consideration in terms of its long-term sustainability, and the ability of occupants to access employment, services and amenities in towns and villages using sustainable transport modes including walking, cycling and public transport.

## **4.0 National and Regional Planning Frameworks**

The NPF and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) were adopted in 2018 and 2020 respectively, and these documents will guide and influence the preparation of a new settlement strategy approach for Tipperary.

### **4.1 National Planning Framework**

The NPF identifies regional planning areas; Tipperary is in the Southern regional area and contributes to the framework for this region. The NPF in particular, recognises 'Ireland's Rural Fabric' and also the need for 'Compact Growth'. The following are key objectives to be addressed:

- Reverse town/village and rural population decline, by encouraging new roles and functions for buildings, streets and sites.
- Support the sustainable growth of rural communities, to include development in rural areas.
- Implement a properly planned local authority-led approach to identifying, meeting and managing the real housing needs arising in countryside areas.
- Improve local connectivity to principal communication (broadband), energy, transport and water networks.
- Promote new economic opportunities arising from digital connectivity and indigenous innovation and enterprise as well as more traditional natural and resource assets (e.g. food, energy, tourism), underpinned by the quality of life offering.
- Target a greater proportion (40%) of future housing development to be within and close to the existing 'footprint' of built-up areas.

- Make better use of under-utilised land and buildings, including ‘infill’, ‘brownfield’ and publicly owned sites and vacant and under-occupied buildings, with higher housing and jobs densities, better serviced by existing facilities and public transport.
- Support both urban regeneration and rural rejuvenation through a €3 Billion Regeneration and Development Fund and the establishment of a National Regeneration and Development Agency.

The NPF sets out a new requirement for the integration of a robust methodology to inform policies and funding initiatives around housing and associated land requirements. This is called a Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA). HDNA will be prepared for the New County Development Plan to support the preparation of a housing strategy and all related housing policy outputs.

## **4.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy**

The RSES sets out a planning framework based on the role of the regional cities, supported by a network of strategically located Key Towns, towns and villages and rural areas. The RSES also identifies key networks in terms of settlements in order to capitalise on shared strengths. It is projected that the region will accommodate between 280,000 – 343,500 additional persons by 2031, of this, 20,500 – 24,500 will be located in Tipperary. The RSES sets out settlement typology and identifies Clonmel, Thurles and Nenagh as strategic ‘Key Towns’ in the region. All other settlements must be considered by the Council in terms of their typology, function and capacity and thereafter, allocated an appropriate place in the Settlement Hierarchy of the forthcoming County Development Plan.

Category	Attributes	Place	Policy Level
<b>Cities - Metropolitan Area</b>	Metropolitan Areas – accessible with national and international connectivity, strong business core, innovation, education, retail, health and cultural role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cork</li> <li>• Limerick-Shannon</li> <li>• Waterford</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NPF</li> <li>• RSES</li> <li>• MASP</li> <li>• Development Plan</li> <li>• Local Area Plans</li> </ul>
<b>Key Towns<sup>2</sup></b>	<p>Large population scale urban centre functioning as self-sustaining regional drivers.</p> <p>Strategically located urban centres with accessibility and significant influence in a sub-regional context.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kilkenny</li> <li>• Ennis</li> <li>• Carlow</li> <li>• Tralee</li> <li>• Wexford</li> <li>• Clonmel</li> <li>• Kiltarney</li> <li>• Mallow</li> <li>• Nenagh</li> <li>• Thurles</li> <li>• Newcastle West</li> <li>• Clonakilty</li> <li>• Dungarvan</li> <li>• Gorey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RSES</li> <li>• Development Plans</li> <li>• Local Area Plans</li> </ul>
<b>Towns &amp; Villages</b>	Towns and villages of above 1,500 which provide a housing, employment or service function. The category is broad and ranges from large commuter towns to more remote towns and villages.	To be identified in Development Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Plans</li> <li>• Local Area Plans</li> </ul>
<b>Rural<sup>3</sup></b>	Rural villages less than 1,500 and the wider rural region.	To be identified in Development Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Plans</li> <li>• Local Area Plans</li> </ul>
<b>Networks</b>	Groupings of towns and villages (incl. cross boundary) which share geographic, economic, resources and contribute specialisms which if combined provide a strategic opportunity to drive regional economy.	To be identified in Development Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City and County Development Plan</li> <li>• Local Area Plans</li> </ul>

Figure 4: RSES Settlement Typology

## 5.0 Policy Influences and Considerations

In line with the provision of the NPF and RSES, there are a number of specific considerations and influences in setting out a revised settlement strategy and settlement hierarchy for Tipperary, these are outlined below:

### 5.1 The Location of Homes

The NPF states that; future homes are required to be located where people have the best opportunities to access a high standard quality of life. National Policy Objective 33 sets out to: Prioritise the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development and at an appropriate scale of provision relative to location. It is set out that Ireland's future homes will:

- be located in places that can support sustainable development - places which support growth, innovation and the efficient provision of infrastructure, are accessible to a range of local services, can encourage the use of public transport, walking and cycling, and help tackle climate change;.
- be delivered in our cities and larger towns (where large scale housing demand exists), where homes and the appropriate supporting services can be delivered more efficiently and effectively at less cost to the State in the long-run, and
- still be located in our smaller towns, villages and rural areas, including the countryside, but at an appropriate scale that does not detract from the capacity of our larger towns and cities to deliver homes more sustainably.

### 5.2 Key Towns

The RSES states, in RPO 11, that Local Authorities are supported in targeting a population growth of more than 30% for each 'Key Town' subject to capacity analysis and sustainability criteria<sup>5</sup>. In Tipperary, the RSES identifies 3 key towns – Clonmel, Nenagh and Thurles, however, a distinction is made for Clonmel, and it is stated that

---

<sup>5</sup> Section 3.3 – A Tailored Approach, RPO 2 Local Authority Core Strategies and the sustainable requirements under the sub-sections of RPO 11 Key Towns.

for Clonmel, provision should be made for population growth of more than 30% by 2040, with both Nenagh and Thurles to grow by 30% respectively.

### 5.3 Towns

Section 3.6 - Towns and Villages of the RSES states that *'Local Authorities will categorise settlements and their appropriate growth rates in their development plans to reflect roles, environmental and infrastructural possibilities and limits'*. RPO 26 states that *'Development plans should tailor the appropriate planning response by reference to the scale, nature and location of the settlement, and will identify settlements which can plan an enhanced role at sub-regional level to drive the development of their area'*. It will be a function of the Council to identify a settlement hierarchy of Towns based on their population and roles, environmental and infrastructural possibilities and limits. In this respect, a capacity analysis will be prepared for the towns >1,500 persons (Carrick on Suir, Tipperary, Roscrea, Cashel, Templemore, Ballina, Newport, Cahir and Fethard). This will inform their character, role, capacity and ultimately placement in the settlement hierarchy in terms of their comparative services and capacity.

### 5.4 Rural Villages

The NPF and the RSES are clear in the need for a planning framework that focuses socio-economic and population growth in urban and rural settlements. The NPF identifies challenges for rural towns and villages including:

- Increasing building vacancy,
- Demise of the historic vibrancy of town and village centres,
- Loss of services, including schools, pubs, shops, garda stations and post offices,
- Lack of available sites and services,
- Persistent lack of delivery of new homes in villages, and,
- Preference to live outside settlement.

Tipperary is a large rural county with a heritage of many small rural settlements; the rural villages contribute greatly to quality of life of rural people and the rural character of the county. There is evidence that these settlements are suffering decline in terms

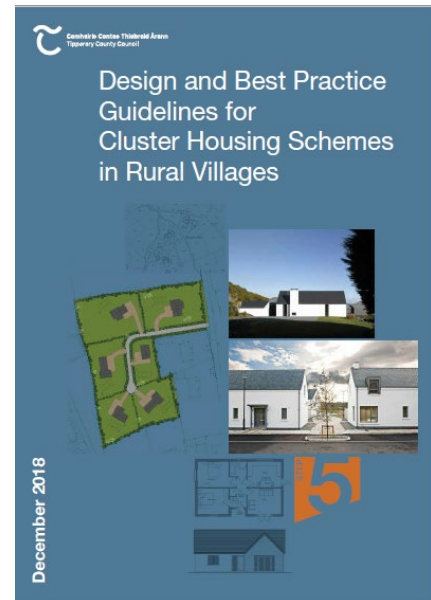
of their overall population, population composition, community services and infrastructural services. The maintenance of the character and survival of these rural villages remains a significant challenge. Measures to encourage flexibility and choice in terms of development and investment will be needed through proactive planning policy in conjunction with capital and social investment.

It is an objective of the NPF (NPO 16) to target the reversal of rural decline in the core of small towns and villages through sustainable targeted measures that address vacant premises and deliver sustainable reuse and regeneration outcomes. Tipperary County Council developed new 'Cluster Guidelines'<sup>6</sup> to help encourage the development of small housing schemes or clusters of up to 6 houses in rural villages to help address this target.

A detailed capacity and service analysis was carried out for all the rural villages of Tipperary as part of the review of rural settlements in 2017. This will be updated and will inform a new settlement hierarchy and review of village settlement hierarchy for the rural villages.

## 5.5 Open Countryside

The NPF recognises that the Irish countryside is, and will continue to be, a living and lived-in landscape focusing on the requirements of rural economies and rural communities, based on agriculture, forestry, tourism and rural enterprise, while at the same time avoiding ribbon and over-spill development from urban areas and protecting environmental qualities. It is recognised that there is a continuing need for housing provision for people to live and work in Ireland's countryside. Careful planning is required to manage demand in our most accessible countryside around towns, focusing on the elements required to support the sustainable growth of rural economies and rural communities. Demand for one-off housing has remained strong over the past 20 years.



<sup>6</sup> <https://www.tipperarycoco.ie/planning/design-and-best-practice-guidelines-cluster-housing-schemes-rural-villages>



The NPF sets out in NPO 19:

Ensure, in providing for the development of rural housing, that a distinction is made between areas under urban influence, i.e. within the commuter catchment of cities and large towns and centres of employment, and elsewhere:

- In rural areas under urban influence, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic or social need to live in a rural area and siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements;
- In rural areas elsewhere, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements.

## **5.6 Housing Needs Demand Assessment**

A Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA) will be developed to support the preparation of a housing strategy and all related housing policy outputs. The HDNA will support the consideration of a number of different scenarios to inform decisions on housing need and supply and will give broad, long run estimate of what future housing need might be. The purpose of the HDNA tool is to:

- Assist local authorities to develop long-term strategic views of housing need across all tenures.
- Provide a robust evidence base to support decisions about new housing supply, wider investment and housing related services that inform an overall national housing profile.
- Inform policies about the proportion of social and affordable housing required, including the need for different types and sizes of provision.

- Provide evidence to inform policies related to the provision of specialist housing and housing related services.

The Tipperary HDNA will need to consider some of the housing trends in Tipperary including, the need to facilitate homes for 1 - 2 person households, student accommodation, housing for the ageing population etc.

## **5.7 Networks**

The RSES states that local authorities should identify and define 'Networks', or interrelated groups of towns or villages, that share assets, specialisms and provide strategic opportunities for the economy, as part of their county development plans. Sustainable infrastructure investment to support the economic role of settlements in these networks should also be identified through the relevant Plan processes. The RSES identifies the role of collaboration and partnership between local authorities in doing this.

In designating rural networks, the influences and potentials of existing and proposed economic programmes and frameworks on settlements may be considered, for example, The Lough Derg Lakelands or the towns on the Butler Trail.

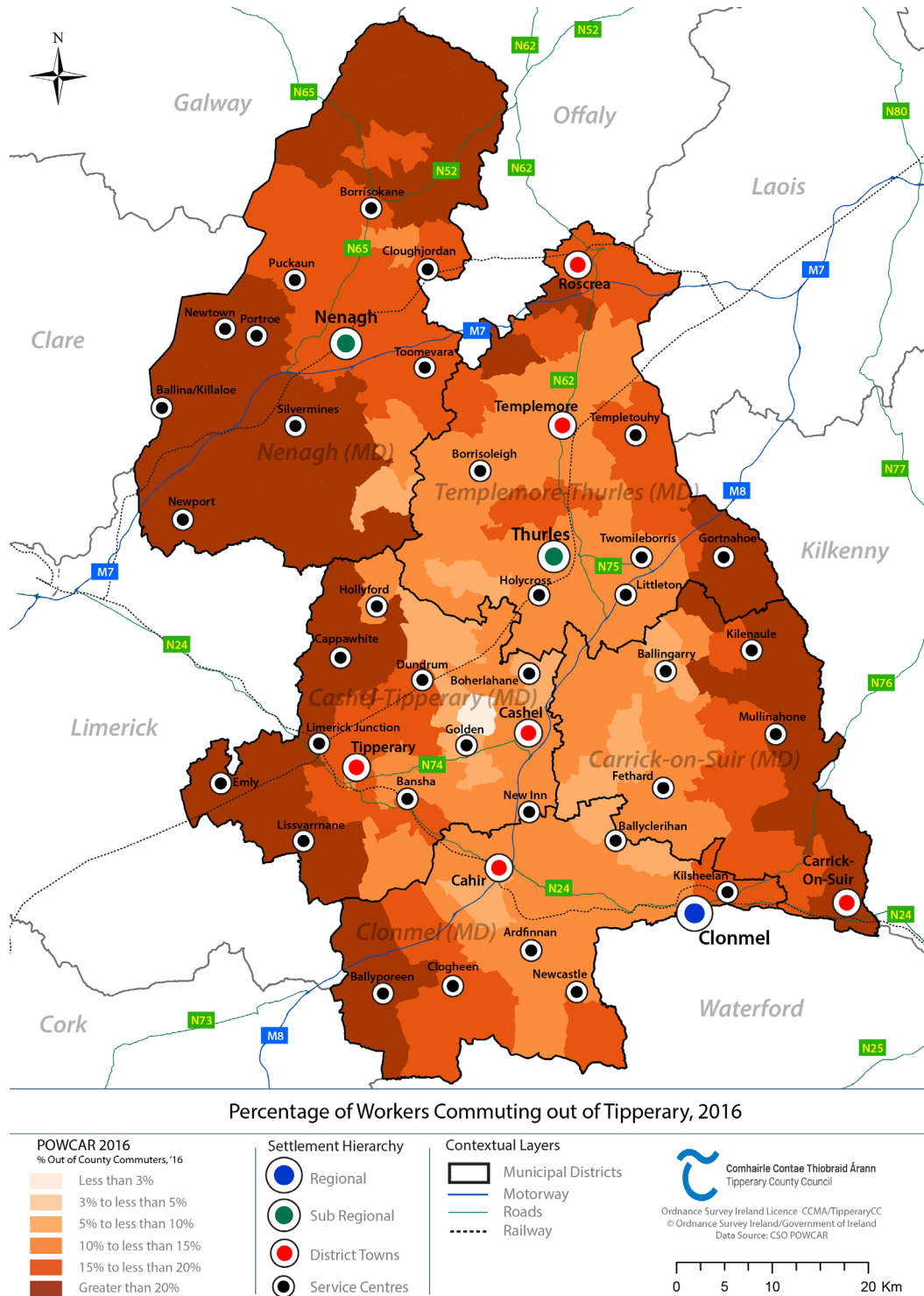
The RSES also identifies Inter-Urban Networks as regional drivers of collaboration and growth. A network that incorporates Tipperary is identified in the region: The Limerick – Waterford Transport and economic network/axis (strengthened multi-modal connectivity between the Limerick-Shannon and Waterford metropolitan areas with sustainable upgrades to the N24 Corridor to connect the Atlantic Economic Corridor and connect port and airport assets).

## **5.8 Influence of Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans**

The RSES identifies the importance of the regional cities of Cork, Limerick and Waterford, and sets out a provision for the development of Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans (MASPs) for each of these.

Tipperary benefits from strategic connectivity and strong socio-economic relationships with each of these Cities and in particular Limerick and Waterford Cities,

with these cities. This relationship is demonstrated by commuter patterns illustrated in Figure 5. The new County Development Plan will consider and support these linkages in the development of new Settlement Hierarchy.



**Figure 5: % of workers commuting out of Tipperary, 2016 (AIRO)**

The role and function of Tipperary's towns and their relationship with the MASPs will be a consideration in the preparation of the County Settlement hierarchy.

## 6.0 Next Steps

National and regional planning policy supports the concept of compact and vibrant settlements, and diverse and sustainable rural communities, as the most appropriate form of social and physical development for quality of life, business and commerce, sustainable transport and infrastructure and ease of delivery of services.

You may access the National Planning Framework at <http://npf.ie/wp-content/uploads/Project-Ireland-2040-NPF.pdf>, and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy at <https://www.southernassembly.ie/regional-planning/rses>

Through the new County Development Plan, and with the support of stakeholders and citizens, Tipperary County Council will seek to be ambitious, visionary and proactive in supporting our communities and settlement.