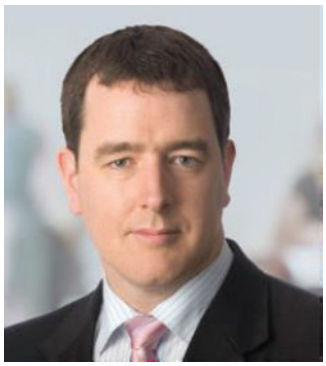
NOAC
National Oversight and Audit Commission

Tipperary County Council Scrutiny Report

NOAC Report No. 35 - May 2021

Web: www.noac.ie Email: info@noac.ie



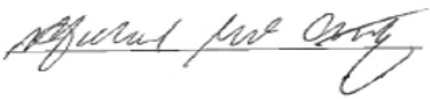
Chair's Opening remarks

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 introduced significant changes to a wide range of aspects of the local government system, including in relation to matters of accountability and oversight. In that regard, the Act provided for the establishment of the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) as the statutory body overseeing the local government sector. NOAC was established in July 2014 under the 2014 Act to provide independent oversight of the local government sector. NOAC's functions are wide ranging, involving the scrutiny of performance generally and financial performance specifically, supporting best practice, overseeing implementation of national local government policy and monitoring and evaluating implementation of corporate plans, adherence to service level agreements and public service reform by local government bodies.

Since I became Chair of NOAC in September 2018, I continued the good work that had been started by the previous NOAC Chair in meeting with the Chief Executives of the local authorities and their Management teams. As outlined below this process has evolved over time and continues to evolve.

The preparation of the profile report also identifies the performance of local authorities in relevant NOAC reports and provides for further examination of the results of these reports. The Scrutiny Process requires time and resources from NOAC and the local authorities in preparation of the profile report and for the Stage 1 and Stage 2 meetings. NOAC considers to date that the investment of time and resources has been worthwhile and necessary.

I have been struck by the welcome and sharing of information that has taken place at the meetings. It has provided an opportunity to learn, to listen to how the particular local authority operates, the challenges they face, the plans and ideas that have been developed and gives an opportunity to reflect on what is working well and areas that need to be addressed. It has identified areas of good practice and many of these ideas have been showcased at the NOAC Good Practice Seminars over the years. I look forward to continuing to work closely and collaboratively with all the local authorities and want to use this opportunity to thank all the Chief Executives and their teams for the time and courtesy and welcome extended to NOAC in this process.



Michael McCarthy, Chair
20 May 2021

Background to Profiles and Scrutiny Programme

In February 2017, NOAC, in accordance with its statutory functions, began to review the performance of individual local authorities. The starting point was getting an overall picture derived from the performance indicator report results, the Local Government Audit Service (LGAS) audit reports, the financial position and revenue collection performance. Information on private rented sector inspections, housing stock management and maintenance data and Customer Satisfaction was all considered by using the relevant data contained in the NOAC reports published to date.

At the outset the importance of the meetings was emphasised over and above the data which NOAC had regarding local authorities. There was also an objective to broaden the NOAC members' understanding of the work of the local authorities and the individual priorities and pressures they faced and to put the information in context. Therefore, NOAC wanted to get the background perspective from the authorities and any other datasets that the Councils consider should be taken into account. Significant work is required to bring this part together and the work of the NOAC Secretariat and the local authority NOAC Coordinators must be acknowledged.

Following an initial face to face meeting, which is called a Stage 1 meeting, local authorities were invited to a Stage 2 meeting where more detailed questions would be carried out in the areas of interest to NOAC, including customer service and IT investment, collection rates, the quality of information provision to the public etc. These meetings would take place after or latterly before the main NOAC board meeting with all the board members present.

The purpose

The process gives NOAC the opportunity to have oversight of all the local authorities and considers the factors that facilitates them in performing well, along with the barriers that may exist relevant to the individual local authority. The meetings enable the local authorities to outline their strong and weak performing areas. It allows for further examination of the results of the performance indicators and shows the results in context. It must be emphasised that these meetings differ from the Performance Indicator (PI) Validation meetings which are carried out by the Performance Indicator Working Group to interrogate the results reported in relation to selected performance indicators. These meetings, while very informative, are specific to the performance indicator process and do not consider other areas of performance that NOAC have oversight of, including Customer Service, Internal Audit, Corporate Plans etc.

During the meeting NOAC can see areas where consistent under-performance is highlighted and which can be examined further. It also allows for exemplars of best practice to be identified and used to share with other local authorities. The process as outlined, is not a follow up to the PI reports, but does enable consideration of issues that may warrant further clarification or investigation in the PI process. Local authorities have all indicated in the meetings thus far that they compare their performance and results in relation to what they deem as similar local authorities. This grouping could be reviewed further by NOAC and adopted for the results of some of its reports. Groupings are not only on size but, on levels of finances, urban and rural, staff numbers and other factors.

The Scrutiny Process

The process has evolved over time, allowing it to become more structured, formal and documented. Given the importance of the work, it is led by the Chair of NOAC (or a delegated alternate, if required) with support from NOAC members and the Executive. The formal process agreed by the Board is termed as a constructive dialogue and is laid out below.

1

Stage 1 (NOAC Scrutiny Visit)

Meeting held with NOAC Chair (or alternate) and/or one additional NOAC member and member(s) of the NOAC Executive. The Chief Executive and members of the management team, as invited by the Chief Executive shall attend.

- Stage 1 notice issued to Chief Executive of the local authority.
- Profile report prepared by NOAC Executive with input from the local authority. This is circulated along with an agenda to the local authority and NOAC attendees in advance of the visit. The report is based on general and specific information from NOAC reports relating to the local authority in question.
- Local authority to present on issues arising and take questions from attending NOAC members.
- Meeting minutes prepared and issued for comment.

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Stage 2 (NOAC Scrutiny Meeting)

Appearance at full NOAC meeting. The Chief Executive and members of the management team, as invited by the Chief Executive shall attend.

- Stage 2 notice to attend NOAC meeting issued to Chief Executive of local authority.
- Profile report updated as required and circulated along with an agenda to local authority and NOAC members in advance of the meeting.
- Local authority to present on issues arising and take questions from full NOAC board.
- Meeting minutes prepared for circulation to local authority for its comment.

3

Stage 3 (NOAC Sign off and Publication)

Following completion of Stages 1 and 2 the Executive shall collate the material and present it to the NOAC Board as follows: -

- Final sign off on minutes / documents / reports.
- Comments / Findings / Recommendations to be made as required.
- Approval for completed records to be published.

Progress to date

2017

To commence the process, profiles were prepared in respect of Cork City Council, Louth and Offaly County Councils and these were forwarded to the Chief Executives of the authorities concerned. The NOAC Chair at the time, Pat McLoughlin, began this process with a meeting with the Chief Executive of Louth County Council for a general discussion on the profile in August 2017. This Stage 1 meeting was followed by a similar meeting with the Chief Executive of Cork City Council in September 2017. The final Stage 1 meeting to take place in 2017 was held with the Chief Executive of Offaly County Council in October 2017. In December 2017 Louth County Council attended a meeting with NOAC after the main NOAC Board meeting. This was the first Stage 2 meeting, which formed an important part of the overall process. These meetings served a particularly important function which allowed the Council to give an overview of their work and also gave an opportunity to the full NOAC Board to put questions to the Council and understand their situation in more depth.

2018

In 2018 the schedule consisted of eight meetings with local authorities, four each for Stage 1 and Stage 2. A Stage 2 meeting was held with Offaly County Council in January 2018. This was followed by another Stage 2 meeting with Cork City Council in March 2018.

A new Chair, Michael McCarthy, was appointed on 24 September 2018. The process continued with Westmeath County Council in October 2018 and Kerry County Council in December 2018. These were Stage 2 meetings with the full NOAC board as in these cases, the 2018 Performance Indicator validation meetings for these authorities were deemed sufficient as Stage 1 meetings. Further Stage 1 meetings were held with Roscommon County Council and Tipperary County Council.

2019

The format continued with 8 meetings with local authorities during the year. Five Stage 1 meetings and three Stage 2 meetings. The Stage 1 meetings were with Donegal County Council, Laois County Council, Clare County Council, Waterford City and County Council and Carlow County Council. Stage 2 meetings took place with Roscommon County Council, Tipperary County Council and Donegal County Council.

2020

A meetings list was scheduled for 2020 to cover 6 additional local authorities. The year commenced with a Stage 1 meeting with Monaghan County Council in February, along with two Stage 2 meetings with Laois County Council and Waterford City and County Council. Further meetings were scheduled for April, however due to the COVID crisis these meetings were required to be deferred.

The COVID restrictions presented some challenges to the meetings but it was decided to continue the Stage 2 meetings virtually and meetings were held with Clare, Monaghan, Waterford City and County, Carlow and Sligo. These were carried out by the WebEx platform.

A socially distanced Stage 1 meeting was held in person with Limerick City and County Council in August and with Sligo County Council in September 2020.

2021

COVID has had a huge impact on local authorities, and in particular, for NOAC on the Scrutiny process. The Stage 1 meetings have all been held in person thus far and restrictions have allowed for no Stage 1 meetings to be held yet in 2021. The Stage 2 meetings have progressed as these were capable of being held remotely, with one held in January 2021 with Limerick City and County Council. It is hoped to make up for lost time as the restrictions are relaxed and plans are in place to commence Stage 1 meetings as soon as it is possible to do so.

Future meetings and reports

This report outlines the purpose and the procedures and while the process may continue to evolve it would not be expected at this time to produce another master report, similar to this one. This report takes into account the first 13 local authorities which have completed the process. It would be intended that once all stages in the scrutiny process has been fully completed with the relevant other local authorities that the report would be published on that basis and would form part of the suite of reports under the umbrella of the Scrutiny Report Process. Later in quarter 2, 2021, Sligo County Council and Limerick City and County Council reports will be published. It is anticipated that progress will continue to be made with further Stage 1 and Stage 2 meetings so that each local authority will have participated in the process. It must be outlined that significant changes and delays have been experienced due to the restrictions imposed by COVID in 2020 and 2021.

Conclusion

The process thus far allowed for the NOAC chairman and members to get a greater understanding and insight into the challenges that face each of the local authorities. Also, issues such as collection rates, staff numbers, inspection rates, finances that are included in reports in some cases benefit from the explanation and discussion as to the reason behind these figures. The meetings also enabled NOAC to see the various priorities that each local authority considered relevant to their citizens and how they overcame various challenges and how they work collaboratively with other local authorities, state bodies and stakeholders. Areas of Good Practice have been identified along the way and these have contributed to presentations of these projects at the NOAC Good Practice Seminars in 2017, 2019 and 2020.

Tipperary County Council had their Stage 1 meeting in December 2018 and their Stage 2 meeting in March 2019. It is important to note that the material in this report is reflective of the position at that time. Therefore any changes to the profile from later NOAC reports are not included in this report. Tipperary County Council provided useful insight into the merger of North Tipperary County Council and South Tipperary County Council and the challenges and achievements arising from the merger. In response to the poor results of the Customer Survey report the Council advised that the findings were lower than expected and disappointing. However they consider this to be a snapshot and that future surveys would yield better results. A lot of time and effort had being put into its Customer Service and it was an area that they looked at frequently. Tipperary County Council were invited by the NOAC Chair at the Stage 1 meeting to present a project on the environment, climate and energy at the 2019 Good Practice Seminar.

Tipperary County Council Scrutiny Process

1. Tipperary County Council Profile February 2019 7
2. Stage 1 meeting December 2018– Minutes 27
3. Stage 2 Meeting March 2019- Minutes 29
4. Stage 2 Presentation 32

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NOAC Profile Tipperary County Council

February 2019

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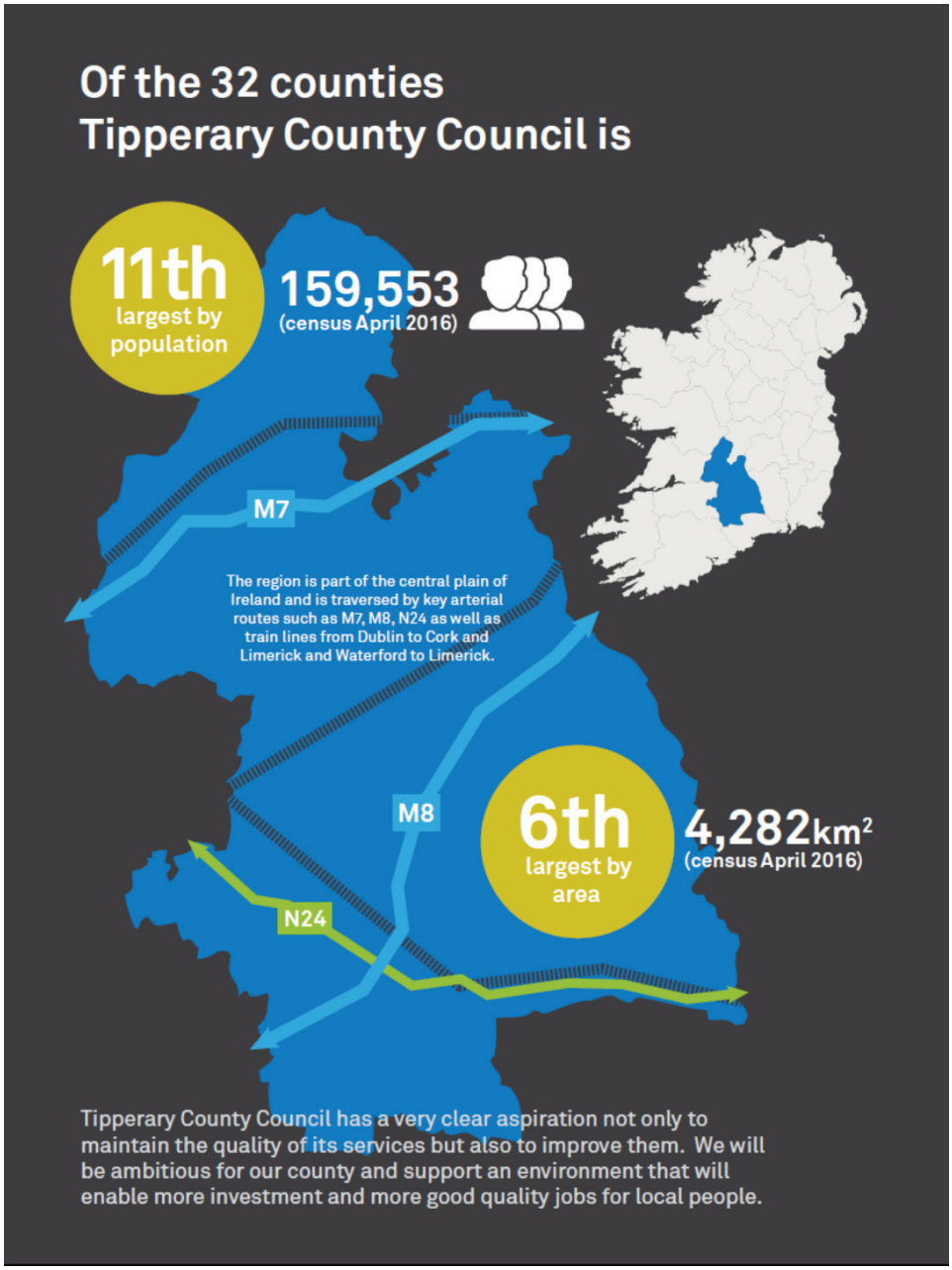
Tipperary County Council General Information

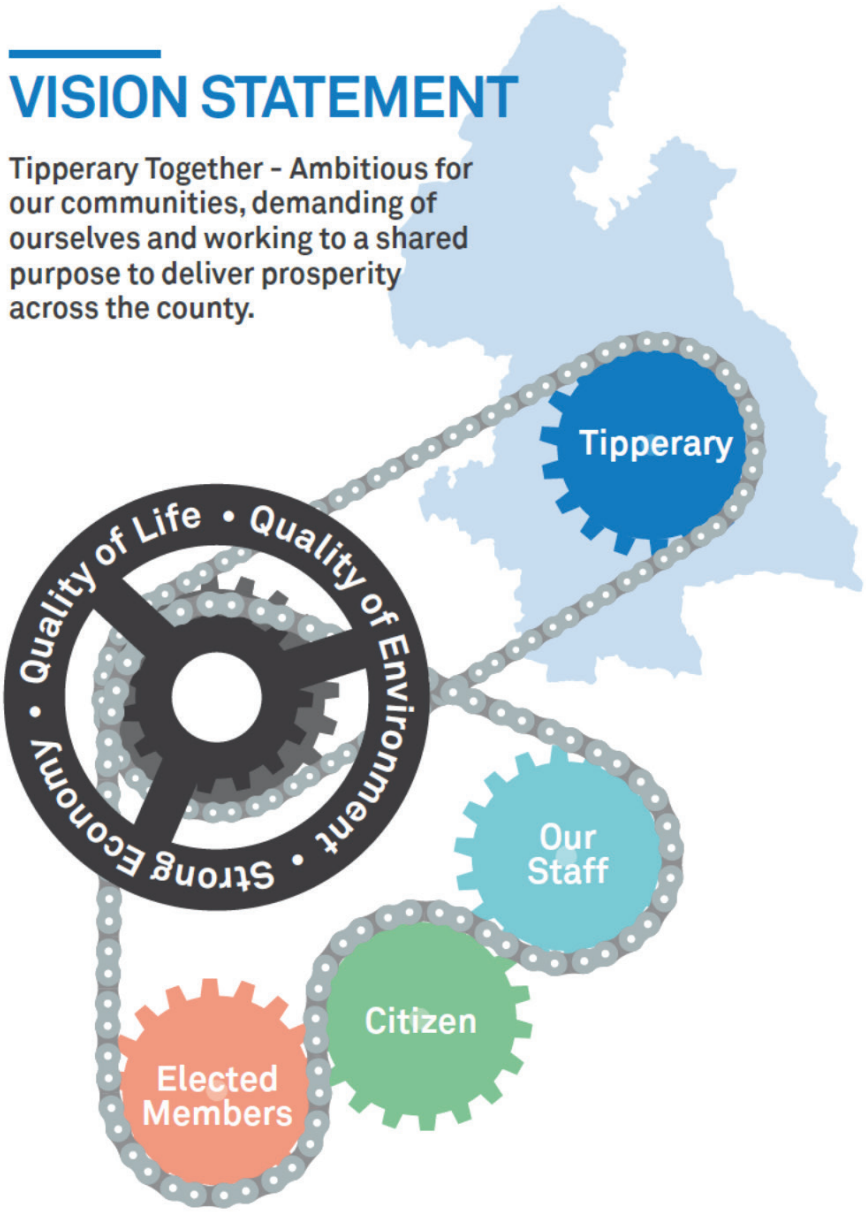
Population:	159,553
Area:	4,282 km²
Municipal Districts:	4 (Templemore-Thurles; Carrick-on-Suir; Cashel-Tipperary; Nenagh)
Borough District	1 (Clonmel)



COUNCIL MISSION STATEMENT

VISION STATEMENT

Tipperary Together - Ambitious for our communities, demanding of ourselves and working to a shared purpose to deliver prosperity across the county.



- Strategically located within the central plain of Ireland
- Diverse employment base with a strong Medi/Pharma sector
- Attractive & vibrant towns/villages to shop, live and visit
- Superb fertile land ideal for food production
- Growing reputation for artisan foods
- County rich in local heritage and tourism
- Famous for its horse breeding industry
- Tipperary known as the Premier county & home of hurling

The Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan serves as Tipperary County Council's Strategic framework for action during the lifetime of this Council and acts as the driver for economic development, social inclusiveness and environmental sustainability within the County of Tipperary.

The plan provides a vision for how it is proposed to deliver services and includes the following symbiotic elements that work in unison: Citizen, Elected Members and Staff. These elements will act in unison to implement sustainable programs that improve quality of life for all people in Tipperary by enhancing the Environment in which they live, developing a vibrant economy whilst maintaining an excellent customer service across the Organisation.

The Plans should be submitted to the elected members for approval within 6 months of the annual meeting that takes place 2 weeks after the day on which the local elections were held, which date in 2014 was 23 May. Where this deadline is not met, there is provision for the Cathaoirleach to convene a special meeting of the Council within the following fortnight, at which the Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive make a joint submission to the members outlining the steps to be taken to ensure the Corporate Plan's completion and when it is proposed to submit it to the elected Council.

Section 134 (subsections (1) and (2)) of the Local Government Act 2001 requires local authorities to prepare a Corporate Plan every 5 years. The Plans should be submitted to the elected members for approval within 6 months of the annual meeting. Tipperary County Council complied with this requirement.

- The Corporate Plan has been used as the framework within which the annual service delivery plans for 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 were formulated. The annual service delivery plans are prepared as a statement of the principal services to be provided. They include a list of the key objectives and priorities for the year having regard to the objectives set out in the Corporate Plan and include performance standards to be met and how the Council proposes to assess performance in respect of delivery.
- Progress on the delivery of the Corporate Plan is reported through 2 mediums, namely:

  a) Monthly Management Report which highlights significant milestones. Progress in each Directorate is reported through the Management Report on a bi-monthly basis.

  b) The Corporate Plan provides a framework of three strategic themes and the Council's Annual Report is prepared on the basis of these themes and a summary of the progress on the implementation of objectives of the various Directorates is provided therein, namely

     - **Strong Economy** - Economic Development and Enterprise; Roads Transportation/ Health & Safety; Planning and Development; Tourism;
     - **Quality of Life** – Housing; Social Inclusion & Community Development; Library Services; Arts; Tipperary Heritage Office; Tipperary Museum; Tipperary Sports Partnership;
     - **Quality Environment** – Environment; Fire & Rescue Services; Water Services; Civil Defence;

- In relation to the preparation of an annual progress report, this Council has not to date prepared a specific progress report on the Corporate Plan to the full Council. However, as referenced above, the Annual Report is prepared having regard to the framework of the 3 strategic themes as set out in the Corporate plan and specific progress on objectives is contained within each Directorate's report.
- In addition, at senior management level, a reporting mechanism has been developed on Sharepoint which embraces the values and themes in the Corporate Plan and spells out in more detail a set of actions which have the capacity to shape and steer the future strategic direction of the county. The potential sphere of influence of these actions extends beyond their geographic and thematic context, which if delivered, will contribute to all 3 strategic themes in the Council's Corporate Plan. The actions are set out in a "Delivering for Tipperary" document presented as Management Team (i.e. higher level countywide) priorities, Directorate (i.e. countywide) priorities and District (local) priorities. The Council utilises this format for the preparation of a progress report for review annually.

This Council is satisfied of the progress made to date in implementing the strategies and achieving the objectives outlined in the Corporate Plan. The above mentioned action plan is regularly reviewed by Management to ensure that the actions are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely.

Staffing

Number employed	@ 31/12/2017 1,000
WTE Staff per 1,000 population	6.21%

Percentage of paid working days lost to medically certified sick leave

2015	3.99%
2016	4.35%
2017	3.46%

Budget

2019	€161,791,392 (€1,014.03pp) 2016 Population
2018	€146,592,032 (€918.77pp) 2016 Population
2017	€138,876,599 (€870.41pp) 2016 Population

Collection Rates

	2017	2016	2015
Rate collection rates	81%	81%	78%
Rent collection rates	99%	97%	95%
Housing loan collection rates	84%	79%	77%

Housing Information at 31/12/17

Percentage of LA owner dwellings vacant:	2.89%
Local Authority Stock number:	4,930
Number currently on waiting list:	3,435
HAP Tenancies:	1,633

Number of adult Individuals classified as homeless and in emergency accommodation, on 31/12/2017:	10 reduction from 68 in 2016 (however this reduction arose from cases not closed off properly on PASS system at the end of 2017)
The number out of those individuals who, on 31/12/2017, had been in emergency accommodation for 6 months continuously, or for 6 months cumulatively within the previous 12 months:	40%

Homeless presentations

2015	468
2016	379
2017	456

Additional Data on Housing Programme Rebuilding Ireland 2018 Targets

- Target of 117 units in 2017 (though own build; turnkey; Part V; AHB; Long term leasing; Acquisitions; Buy & Renew; Repair & Lease etc)
- By 31/12/18 TCC will have achieved 203 units (173% of target)

Housing Assessments

- 1,246 assessments completed from Jan to end of Nov 2018
- 623 qualified
- Average time for decision on assessment = 9.59 weeks (KPI target = 12 weeks)
- Allocations offered to 427 tenants and of these

  Homeless allocation = 12

  Traveller allocation = 23

  Disability allocation = 29

Housing Tenancies 2018

- 64 new RAS contracts agreed and signed & 266 RAS rent reviews carried out
- 37 new Long Term Lease contracts agreed and signed
- 1,754 active HAP tenancies in the county in 2018

  550 new HAP tenancies set up in 2018

  82 rent supplement transfers assisted to HAP in 2018

  Average weekly target set by Department = 2 per week ; Actual = 10 per week
- Total of new Tenancies offered in 2018 = 918 consisting of

  LA tenancies = 304

  RAS tenancies = 64

  HAP tenancies = 550

Housing Grants

- 4,138,616 euro grant aided in 2018 for Housing Adaption Grant for People with a Disability (HGD); Mobility Aid Grants (MAG); Housing Aid for Older Peoples Grant (HOP) & LA Disabled Persons Grants which assisted 369 families to have an improved quality of life.

  Of this, 657,543 euro was expended on Local Authority Disabled Persons grants (54 families)

Housing Rents

- 9 rental schemes amalgamated into one all county scheme; rent review completed for roughly 8000 tenancies & tenant handbook revised, updated and agreed.

Loans & Tenant Purchases

- 236 tenant Purchase application processed and 129 approved in 2018
- 114 Rebuilding Ireland Loan applications processed and 33 approved in 2018

Housing Inspections

- 1,000 inspections carried out in 2018 in HAP tenancies, RAS tenancies and Private tenancies

Specific housing issues

The Council would like to see the introduction of a scheme outside of SHIP, to allow the purchase of existing RAS properties that become available for sale due to landlords' financial difficulties and landlords selling RAS properties. In 2017, some 86 RAS contracts were ceased, which resulted in the Council purchasing properties under SHIP and providing alternative accommodation for the RAS tenants from their own stock. A separate RAS standalone purchase scheme would allow the Council use the properties purchased under SHIP for approved applicants on the housing waiting list.

Consideration should be given to ensuring that where finance companies repossess RAS properties, the first offer to purchase should be to the Local Authority where the property is located. Furthermore, consideration should be given in instances where RAS properties are repossessed or contracts cease and the Council does not have suitable accommodation within their stock that the tenants can revert to HAP.

There is interest in Turnkeys in the county. However, the lack of finance for medium sized companies is a barrier to progressing such schemes.

The OGP Framework is very useful for design teams. However:

- The designated lots are covering large geographical areas and not enough firms in each lot, therefore tender returns can be low on any occasion. A voluntary body recently had 1 response to a competition in Tipperary.
- The framework is based on a percentage as opposed to a lump sum. This is not necessarily providing value for money where design teams are engaged after the Part 8 process in some counties and a fixed fee would be a viable option.

There has been an increase in Homeless Presentations across the county. An increase in financial support through section 10 funding from the DoHPLG will be required to develop necessary supports for Housing First & Housing Lead projects for Homeless families & individuals, in the absence of Hostel type facilities in the county. In addition, the provision of a housing unit to some homeless clients will be irrelevant if the appropriate supports are not built in behind the housing unit, including supports around mental health; psychology services; substance abuse supports and services; public health nurse services and other supports to assist such individuals to commence the journey back into mainstream society.

Economic Forum (CEF)

Co. Tipperary Economic & Enterprise Forum has been established post-merger to drive strategic economic development in Co. Tipperary through an integrated approach with the ultimate objective of job creation and business development. Membership comprises senior personnel from Tipperary County Council, IDA Mid-West and South East, Enterprise Ireland, Tipperary Education & Training Board, Limerick Institute of Technology, Waterford Institute of Technology, Tipperary LEO and Local Development Companies.

Tipperary County Council has also established a dedicated Economic Development & Enterprise SPC. The newly established LCDC will bring a more strategic, focused and joined-up approach to local and community supports, and will provide greater coherence to local and community development activity in the county. It is intended to facilitate a greater devolution or localising of responsibility for what is being done and spent in this area.

The LCDC, like the CPG and SPCs, is a committee of the local authority and unlike the CPG and SPCs, it is independent from the local authority in the performance of its functions. The LCDC comprises both public and private sector socio-economic partners and to maintain its community orientation, there must be at least one more private person when decisions of the LCDC are made.

Tourism plays an important role within the economy of County Tipperary with over 688,000 domestic and international visitors injecting over €157 million into the county annually. The Council has been very active in supporting the tourism sector through the establishment of the Tipperary Tourism Company and investment in new initiatives including the Munster Vales and Lough Derg.

The Local Enterprise Office

Since 2014, LEOs have a broadened economic role which provides a more coherent approach to enterprise support locally, with the LEOs delivering the micro-enterprise function undertaken heretofore by County and City Enterprise Boards as well as the support functions previously undertaken in the local authority's own Business Support Units.

In 2017, the economic development of the County was accelerated via grants approved by the Local Enterprise Office leveraging a spend of €4.8millon and resulting in the creation of 142 jobs over the next three years. The Regional Enterprise Development Fund awarded a grant in the sum of €4.628m for the pilot scale facility project in Lisheen for work in the Bio-economy sector. This was the largest grant awarded under this heading and was subsequently followed by an announcement of €22m EU funding in the Glanbia-led AgriChemWhey Project.

The Council also developed an inward investment suite of marketing material for the County by launching a brand for Tipperary 'Tipperary – The Place, The Time', which was attended by over 130 business interests.

Retail Incentives

Tipperary County Council are aware of the Retail Sector's significant contribution to the local economy and as such are constantly reviewing and developing strategies and programmes to assist in the sector's development. To date, Tipperary County Council has worked with traders in supporting a number of initiatives which assist the independent retailer to increase footfall and encourage additional spend. Retail initiatives include; Town and village enhancement; Tidy Town and festival supports; the establishment of retail fora which are responsible for developing, marketing and promoting retail. In January 2016, Tipperary County Council designed and developed a grant scheme to reduce the number of vacant retail units and to stimulate a wider retail mix and experience by limiting the risk associated with the establishment of a new retail business and providing an entry point to entrepreneurs wishing to start-up in the retail industry.

Tipperary County Council recognises the need to develop an appropriate framework to provide additional support to existing retail, to ensure that retail businesses grow, to allow retailers protect jobs and to help them to expand their employment base. A partnership approach between the local authority and retailers is of paramount importance in ensuring the future success of the county. Changes in the delivery of local government will have a significant positive impact on the county with a tangible shift in business sentiment.

In March 2015 and 2017, Tipperary County Council teamed up with Retail Excellence Ireland to host symposia targeted at the retail sector. The learning from the recent symposium was recorded and published on YouTube in March 2018.

Shared services

Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO)

Shared Lead Authority with Kilkenny County Council, comprising:

- **Local Authority Waters & Communities Office (LAWCO)**
  This office works across all 31 local authority areas to encourage active public participation in the development of River Basin Management Plans; it also supports community action in the protection and management of our natural water resources and local initiatives which align with the objectives of the Programmes of Measures in the RBMP.

- **Local Authority Waters Support & Advisory Team (LAWSAT)**
  This team coordinates the local government's implementation role within the River Basin Management Plan governance structure, including liaison with the other two tiers (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and the Environmental Protection Agency) and the other implementation bodies.

- **Southern Regional Waste Management Office**
  Shared Lead Authority with Limerick City & County Council.

- **South East Regional Bring Bank & Civic Amenity Waste Removal Tender Authority**
  Lead Authority for managing tender on behalf of South East regional Civic Amenity sites;

- **Regional Training Centres**
  Roscrea Regional Training Centre delivers a broad range of training to both the public and private sector. It is managed by Tipperary County Council on behalf of 9 Local Authorities in the region. The Centre also acts as the reporting coordinator for the other four Regional Centres at Ballycoolin (Fingal), Ballincollig (Cork), Castlebar (Mayo) and Stranorlar (Donegal). In addition, the National Coordination Office for Roads, Water, Environment and Fire training services is based at the Centre.

- **RMO/Roads Management Office**
  The Road Management Office is a local authority shared service comprising of a consortium of Tipperary, Donegal, Cork County, Cork City and Kerry.
  The office's current functions include developing and providing supports to Roads Authorities in the development of best practice and supporting ICT tools for road pavement management and road licensing. This may be extended to include other assets management supports for structures and activities such as management of speed limits as well as providing supports for risk and public liability management.

Regional Issues including new developments and initiatives

Issues/ New Developments/ Initiatives:

- Impact of Ireland 2040, National Development Plan and RSES on future growth of Co. Tipperary
- Lack of high speed broadband in rural areas
- Focus on development of new and emerging sectors to include Life Sciences, FinTech, Energy, Food, Tourism, Digital, AgTech, and Craft
- National Centre of Excellence for Bioeconomy being launched and developed
- Tipperary destinations incorporated within two of the four national tourism propositions
- Marketing of Tipperary The Place initiative ongoing
- Town Centre Fora established and operational
- Skills development ongoing to meet current and future labour requirements
- Continued focus on place-making, infrastructure provision and connectivity (e.g. upgrading of N24 and services on rail lines in the county).

Supporting Strategies

- County Tipperary Local Economic & Community Plan 2015 -2020 and Annual Action Plans
- Local Enterprise Plan 2018-2020
- County Tipperary Local Development Strategy
- Co. Tipperary Sustainable Energy Action Plan
- Analysis of Education, Training & Business Support Needs of Companies in Co. Tipperary
- Tipperary Craft Strategy
- Tipperary Digital Strategy
- Tipperary Tourism Strategy
- Lough Derg Tourism Strategy
- Munster Vales Marketing Plan
- Entrepreneurship Strategy (in progress)
- Green & Blue Infrastructure Master plan Roadmap for Tipperary Waterways
- Playground Policy
- Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)
- National Disability Strategy
- Strategy for Public Libraries 2013-2019
- North and South County Development Plans 2009 and 2010
- National Planning Framework 2040
- Development Contribution Schemes
- River Basin Management Plans
- Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018
- Major Emergency Plan
- Litter Management Plan

Other relevant information

Tipperary is the sixth largest of the 32 counties by area and the eleventh largest by population. The region is part of the central plain of Ireland, but the diversified terrain contains several mountain ranges: the Knockmealdown, the Galtee, the Arra Hills and the Silvermine Mountains. The southern portion of the county is drained by the River Suir; the northern by tributaries of the Shannon which widens into Lough Derg. No part of the county touches the coast. The centre is known as 'the Golden Vale', a rich pastoral stretch of land in the Suir basin which extends into counties Limerick and Cork. The county is traversed by key national arterial routes such as M7, M8, N24, as well as train lines from Dublin to Cork and Limerick, and Waterford to Limerick.

NOAC Reports Overview

NOAC was established in July 2014 as an independent statutory body to provide oversight of the local government sector in Ireland. NOAC's functions are wide ranging, involving the scrutiny of performance generally and financial performance specifically. NOAC also supports best practice, oversees the implementation of national local government policy, monitors and evaluates implementation of corporate plans, adherence to service level agreements and public service reform by local government bodies. NOAC has published 20 reports to date. NOAC since 2017, publishes annual local authority Performance Indicators and composite Public Spending Code Quality Assurance Reports.

From the 20 reports published, matters relevant to Tipperary County Council are outlined in the points below:

NOAC REPORT NO 19

Performance Indicator Report 2017 – September 2018

The annual Performance Indicator Report published by NOAC is one of its key reports every year. NOAC has the function of scrutinising local authority performance against relevant indicators. NOAC believes that monitoring performance over time and against comparable authorities has the potential to encourage continuous improvement in local authority service provision

Points to Note

- **Youth/Community**
  The number of organisations on the County Register for the Public Participation Network increased by 11.87% from 2016 to 2017. This is a welcome development which illustrates the value of the activity of community and voluntary groups within local authority areas. Tipperary recorded 1,341 registrations the highest in the country and accounting for almost 10% of the national total.

- **Corporate**
  Tipperary was one of only 10 authorities to meet the 3.5% public sector sick leave target.

- **Finances**
  Tipperary had a near perfect 99% collection rate of rent and annuities. A steady increase in collection rates from 92% in 2013.

- **Other:**
  - Average letting time for social housing decreased from 38.02 weeks in 2014 to 25.70 weeks in 2017.
  - The average cost of getting re-tenanted units ready for re-letting fell from €13,378.40 in 2014 to €8,127.09 in 2017, which is significantly lower than the national average.
  - There was a significant increase in Motor Tax transactions performed online from 35.80% in 2014, 46.75% in 2016, to 71.41% in 2017.
  - The % households availing of a 3-bin service jumped from 1.25% in 2016 to 37.83% in 2017.
  - The % of Fire Cases in which first attendance is within 10 minutes rose significantly from 28% in 2015 and 2016 to 48.22% in 2017.
  - The amount of LA website page views per 1,000 population has risen steadily (from 4,109 in 2014 to 9,528 in 2017) but remains behind the national average of 14,632.

A report is presented to the Audit Committee, Management Team and Plenary Council each year setting out the performance of Tipperary County Council in relation to the 35 Indicators together with a comparison with the National Average or Median, where relevant and a comparison with a number of authorities similar to Tipperary in area size and population. The attached is a summary of the points noted in the report:

- No of units added to Tipperary County Council Housing Stock increased by 75 in 2017 with a 43% increase nationally.
- There were 142 vacant units at the end of 2017. This represents 2.89% of total Council stock. It is a point in time figure. It includes all untenanted stock, including units undergoing work, awaiting tenanting or illegally occupied. Tipperary County Council own and manage more than 4,915 housing units and there will always be some level of vacancy as the Council attempts to make best use of units available and to make necessary upgrades to stock.

The Council's vacancy rate of 2.89% compares very well to a national property vacancy rate of 2.73%. A vacancy rate of 2.5% and 6% is considered normal in a properly functioning housing market.

The average re-let time for Tipperary County Council was 25.7 weeks compared to the national average of 28.9 weeks. However, the median cost of repair per unit was €1,311.82 for 2017 whereas for Tipperary County Council, the average cost was €618.50.

Reasons for vacant properties may include units awaiting re-letting, units under refurbishment, units that are in dereliction or significant disrepair, which take significant time and resources to bring back into use (funding for such projects has been available since 2014), there may not be demand for certain individual properties, for example in isolated rural areas, the Council has targets to acquire properties for social housing stock. Properties that have been acquired by the Council which need work to bring into use would be included.

- The number of tenancies in the private rented sector registered in Tipperary at the end of 2017 was 8,104 compared with 7,327 in 2016. 685 dwellings were inspected during the year with 88.91% deemed non-compliant with 514 units compliant before the end of the year.
- 71.4% of motor tax transactions in Tipperary were conducted online compared to 65.95% nationally.
- €2.2millon invested to strengthen 16.6km of Regional Roads along with €722,589 to re-seal 20.60Km of road. €7.55 million invested to strengthen local roads along with €1.66m to re-seal local roads.
- 98.49% of private water schemes in Tipperary compliant with statutory requirements.
- Buildings inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to Tipperary County Council was 17.84% compared to a national average of 17.20%.
- 1,570 pollution complaints were made to Tipperary County with 1,366 closed during 2017 and 204 on hand.
- The median value of area surveys that are unpolluted/litter free/slightly polluted was 80% compared to 79% in Tipperary.
- Average time to mobilise the fire brigade in response to a fire was 5min 50secs compared to 5min 49secs nationally. Average time to mobilise for a non-fire equivalent was 6min 01 secs compared to 5min 54secs nationally.

- 27,380 people working in Local Government nationally, a reduction from 35,007 in 2008. The figure for Tipperary at 31/12/2017 was 990.15 compared to a national average of 883.23. The % of paid working days lost to medically certified sickness absence was 3.46 compared to a national median of 3.74.
- 3.01% visits to Libraries per head of population recorded whereas 340,150 items were borrowed; in Tipperary compared to a mean of 464,008 nationally.
- Tipperary has 1,341 community organisations involved in Local Public Participation Networks with 78.79% of second level schools participating in Youth Councils.
- The Local Enterprise Office assisted the creation of 217.5 whole time equivalent jobs during 2017. 319 participants received mentoring from 01/01/2017 to 31/12/2017, with 37 online vouchers approved.

Full figures for PI 2014; 2015; 2016 and 2017 are on page 25.

NOAC REPORT NO 18

Customer Satisfaction Survey- July 2018

NOAC Commissioned IPSOS/MRBI to conduct a survey of the general public to establish their level of satisfaction with their experience of engaging with their local authority. Tipperary County Council was one of 10 Local Authorities chosen to take part in the survey. Tipperary had the lowest Overall Satisfaction rating at 40%.

The satisfaction level in Playgrounds/Parks and Local Amenities/Leisure were below the average level of the Local Authorities surveyed. Tipperary's satisfaction level in Roads Maintenance and Road Safety was significantly lower than the average satisfaction level:

	Average % Satisfaction	Tipperary County Council
Roads Maintenance	43	25
Road Safety	54	38

Affordable Housing was in line with the average satisfaction level. 41% of respondents believed that Tipperary County Council was doing a good job. The average was 47%. 41% of respondents felt informed by their Council, which was ahead of the average of 38%. 21% of respondents thought that Tipperary provided value for money, the average was 27%.

In general, the Council welcomed the findings of the NOAC survey as it is always striving to make Tipperary a better place to live and work and it is also an opportunity to receive feedback on how the Council is achieving this. Tipperary had the lowest Overall Satisfaction rating at 40%. The sample of those surveyed was small in each county - 100+ and in some cases, the response on individual questions was less than the sample number (in one of the questions, only 25 persons responded in Tipperary).

The Council is not surprised by the low satisfaction rating for the county's roads. Tipperary's satisfaction level in Roads Maintenance and Road Safety was significantly lower than the average satisfaction level:

However it is worth mentioning that the survey results may have been adversely impacted by the timing of the survey when there was a lot of negative publicity about roads. The survey was carried out (March 2018) at a time when the Council executive were particularly active in addressing the concerns of the members and concerns of local communities on the condition of roads. Cognisance must be taken of the fact that the Council manages 5,500km of local and regional roads, yet the grant allocation has reduced by 32% over the past few years, while at the same time the volume of traffic using the roads has increased and a number of severe weather events have put further pressure on the County's roads maintenance schedule. Tipperary needs more funding to manage and repair its roads in order to make them fit for purpose and safe for all road users and it's not surprising that a survey would highlight that issue. This can only be addressed over time with investment.

By contrast with the overall levels of satisfaction, the rating with Tipperary was reasonable. Tipperary scored highest on "Knowledge of Local Council". The Council also scored well on the extent to which Residents are informed by their Council. 45% of Tipperary respondents felt well informed by the Council compared to the national average of 38%. It is also noted that over half of those surveyed felt that Tipperary had improved its provision of local services over the past few years. 41% of respondents believed that Tipperary County Council was doing a good job. The average was 47%. 21% of respondents thought that Tipperary provided value for money, the average was 27%.

The Council acknowledges that the survey highlights a need to inform people more about all the valuable work that it is doing in some areas. This includes providing community, sports, and leisure facilities, managing our heritage, arts, tourism and generating jobs. A key focus of the Council over the next 12 months will be more proactive communication of the work of the Council across its full range of services. A Communications Strategy has been drafted and is expected to be rolled out to all staff before the end of the year. Good communications is essential to delivering our Corporate Plan and to maintaining, and building on our excellent reputation. The Council has also established a Communications Liaison Team (CLT) to support the delivery of proactive communications across the Council's internal and external audiences. By communicating proactively, in a planned and co-ordinated manner, the Council will help its citizens and stakeholders to be better informed, proud to live in Tipperary and proud to partner with the Council, and improve how we work together across our Council offices and depots.

NOAC REPORT NO. 17

Internal Audit in Local Authorities - July 2018

Tipperary have confirmed that they have a functioning IA Section with the Head of Internal Audit reports to the Chief Executive, Audit Committee and Director of Finance.

The Internal Audit team met with the Audit Committee five or more times in 2016. Only 11 Local Authorities achieved this.

NOAC REPORT NO. 16

Review of 2015 Statutory Audit Reports to the Members of Local Authorities – June 2018

One of issues raised in Audit Report 2015 was Unfunded Balances. The capital account recorded a net credit balance of €76.3m at 31 December 2016. The balance on project and non-project balances classified as unfunded amounted to €20.7m.The main unfunded balances were recorded in Appendix A below.

NOAC REPORT NO. 15

Operation of Audit Committees in Local Government – June 2018

In this report, NOAC asked the Audit Committees to outline the arrangements in place to review responses to matters raised in Audit Committee reports. Tipperary County Council advised that they had specific tracking procedures in place to track responses to matters raised.

NOAC REPORT NO. 14

Performance Indicators Report 2016

The Performance Indicator Sub Group visited Tipperary County Council on 21 June 2017 and met with the Chief Executive for a general discussion on overall performance issues and experience with the indicators and any follow-up to or analysis of the 2015 activity performance relative to other authorities and prior years that was carried out. The implication of Brexit is a significant concern for Tipperary where agriculture is an important economic activity.

It was reported that the development of a small industry incubator space in Tipperary was one initiative being taken up by the authority.

Tipperary County Council showed the 2nd biggest change in service usage during the year with 6,866 more households accessing a brown bin service.

Rent Collection performance was reported as excellent, at 97%.

In 2016, Tipperary County Council exceeded their 3.5% public sector sick leave target, registering 4.35% of Paid Working Days Lost to Medically Certified Sickness Absence in 2016.

NOAC REPORT NO. 12

Local Authority Housing Management and Maintenance Review

Tipperary County Council had the 3rd highest number of housing estates managed by local authorities at 457.

Tipperary stated that they were proactive in identifying new tenants quickly and that this was a key method for avoiding long vacancy times. They tried to have the properties 'pre-allocated' as soon as possible, even prior to any works being undertaken.

Tipperary Performance Indicators 2014 -17		2017		2016		2015		2014	
		Data	Median/ Average	Data	Median/ Average	Data	Median/ Average	Data	Median/ Average
H3a	Average time from vacation date to PI year re-letting date (weeks)	25.70	28.9	41.90	32.99	44.48	28.43	38.02	31.43
H3b	Average cost expended on getting re-tenanted units ready for re-letting	€8,127.09	€17,160.60	9,865.18	€15,877	8,037.29	€13,378.40	4,762.10	€11,534.91

NOAC REPORT NO. 11

Performance Indicators Report 2015

The cost of the library service per head of population for Tipperary County Council was the lowest in the country at €18.49.

The target for certified sick leave taken was not met in 2015.

NOAC REPORT NO 10

Rented Houses Inspections: A Review of Local Authority Performance of Private Rented Houses Regulations Functions – October 2016

16 local authorities have written policy/operations manual for undertaking inspections in the rented sector. However, Tipperary is one of the authorities in this report that did not have a written policy at that time.

NOAC REPORT NO 8

Financial Performance of Local Authorities 2013-2015: Deficits, Audit Opinion and Financial Statements – April 2016

Revenue Balance

	General Revenue Balance	Income	Balance as % Income
2013	€3,338,886	€131,136,640	2.55%
2014	€5,536,784	€141,042,673	3.93%
2015*	€5,542,326	€137,887,328	4.19%
2016*	€5,547,270	€143,115,943	3.88%
2017*	€5,550,224	€143,214,845	3.88%

*Updated data not included in Original report.

Annual Financial Statement Production 2013 - 2015

Tipperary County Council was not compliant with requirement for the submission of the Annual Financial Statement by the deadline of 31st March for 2016.

Date of signature of Annual Financial Statements

2013 AFS	1 October 2014
2014 AFS	1 December 2015
2015 AFS	*18 May 2016
2016 AFS	*31 May 2017
2016 AFS AFS	*1 May 2018

*Updated data not included in Original report.

	Performance Indicators	2017		2016	
	Tipperary Performance Indicators 2014 -17 Per population based on census figures for 2011 and 2016 (158,754 in 2011 and 159,553 in 2016)	Data	Median/ Average	Data	Median/ Average
H1	Social Housing provided in year per 1,000 population	0.47	0.53	n/a	3.43
H2	% of directly provided dwellings vacant at 31/12	2.89	2.73	3.30	3.02
H3a	Average time from vacation date to PI year re-letting date (weeks)	25.70	28.9	41.90	32.99
H3b	Average cost expended on getting re-tenanted units ready for re-letting	€8,127.09	€17,160.60	9,865.18	€15,877
H4	Average repair and maintenance cost per unit	€618.50	€1,311.82	812.78	€1,500.23
H5	Inspections (Dwellings inspected in 2016) carried out in year as % of registrations	8.45	4.96	8.17	4.36
R1a	% Regional Road KM that ever received a PSCI rating	96	96	99.00	99
R1b	% Total Regional Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	35	28	37.00	30
R1c	% Total Primary Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	20	20	28.00	13
R1d	% Total Secondary Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	18	14	17.00	10
R1e	% Total Tertiary Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	8	8	9.00	7
R2a	KM Regional Road strengthened using road improvement grants	16.60	10.3	20.60	10.8
R2b	KM Regional road resealed using road maintenance grants	20.60	11.9	23.30	12.2
R2/3	% Motor tax transactions performed online	71.41	65.95	46.75	64.05
W1	% private schemes with water quality in compliance	98.49	98.46	94.19	97.77
E1	% households availing of a 3-bin service	37.83	39.53	1.25	37.7
E2	Pollution cases on hand at year end as % of the cases that arose that year	12.99	9.79	2.58	9.91
E3	% area unpolluted or litter free	9	10	7.00	13
P1	New buildings inspected as % of new buildings notified	17.84	17	25.00	19.42
P2	% of determinations that confirmed the decision made by LA	77.78	79	64.10	77.78
P3	Ratio of planning cases being investigated at year end as to cases closed	2.83	2.41	15.24	2.87
P4	Cost per capita of the Planning Service	€23.40	28.31	22.83	€26.96
F1	Cost per capita of Fire Service (based on 2011 Census for 2014 and 2015)	€48.20	57.74	44.59	€56.07
F2	Average time to mobilise Brigade re Fire (Minutes) (FT)	N/A	1.45	n/a	1.5
F3	% of Fire Cases in which first attendance is within 10 minutes	48.22	40.45	28.21	57.79
L1a	No. of Library visits per head of population	3.01	3.56	2.11	3.61
L1b	No. of Items borrowed per head of population	2.13	2.92	2.06	3.82
L2	Cost of Library Service per capita	25.08	31.00	23.27	€30.05
Y1	% of local schools involved in Comhairle na nÓg Scheme	78.79	69.04	85.19	68.07
C1	WTE staff per 1,000 population	6.21	5.75	5.61	5.64
C2a	% of paid working days lost to medically certified sick leave in year	3.46	3.74	3.85	3.76
C2b	% of paid working days lost to self-certified sick leave in year	0.33	0.33	0.34	0.38
C3	LA website page views per 1,000 population	9,528	14,632	7,256.16	12,422
C4	Overall cost of ICT Provision per WTE	€2,761.61	€3,048.41	2,527.73	€2,675.69
M2a	% Commercial Rates Collected in year	81.0	83	81.00	82.3
M2b	% Rent & Annuities Collected in year	99.0	89	97.00	88.0
M2c	% Housing Loans Collected in year	84.0	74	79.00	70
J1	LEO jobs output per 1,000 population	1.36	0.68	1.07	0.7

	Performance Indicators	2015		2014	
	Tipperary Performance Indicators 2014 -17 Per population based on census figures for 2011 and 2016 (158,754 in 2011 and 159,553 in 2016)	Data	Median/ Average	Data	Median/ Average
H1	Social Housing provided in year per 1,000 population	3.20	1.91	0.19	0.80
H2	% of directly provided dwellings vacant at 31/12	2.97	3.5	3.67	3.8
H3a	Average time from vacation date to PI year re-letting date (weeks)	44.48	28.43	38.02	31.43
H3b	Average cost expended on getting re-tenanted units ready for re-letting	8,037.29	€13,378.40	4,762.10	€11,534.91
H4	Average repair and maintenance cost per unit	701.42	€1,292.57	308.00	€1,272.30
H5	Inspections (Dwellings inspected in 2016) carried out in year as % of registrations	8.39	5.64	10.35	6.51
R1a	% Regional Road KM that ever received a PSCI rating	22.00	68	100.00	47.9
R1b	% Total Regional Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	6.00	20	17.24	11.15
R1c	% Total Primary Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	19.00	11	19.67	6.4
R1d	% Total Secondary Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	12.00	8	12.53	4.61
R1e	% Total Tertiary Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	8.00	5	14.09	3.63
R2a	KM Regional Road strengthened using road improvement grants	18.80	10.2		
R2b	KM Regional road resealed using road maintenance grants	30.10	8.3		
R2/3	% Motor tax transactions performed online	40.63	56.6	35.80	54.7
W1	% private schemes with water quality in compliance	94.30	99.07	91.80	97.9
E1	% households availing of a 3-bin service	0.23	34.87	0.10	31.66
E2	Pollution cases on hand at year end as % of the cases that arose that year	22.92	8.49		
E3	% area unpolluted or litter free	5.00	14	9.00	9.5
P1	New buildings inspected as % of new buildings notified	24.22	24	10.35	17.71
P2	% of determinations that confirmed the decision made by LA	58.33	71.88	65.52	71.7
P3	Ratio of planning cases being investigated at year end as to cases closed	15.98	2.61	15.31	2.88
P4	Cost per capita of the Planning Service	23.57	€26.76	26.52	€25.27
F1	Cost per capita of Fire Service (based on 2011 Census for 2014 and 2015)	47.61	€57.88	40.97	€55.9
F2	Average time to mobilise Brigade re Fire (Minutes) (FT)	N/A	1.6	N/A	1.66
F3	% of Fire Cases in which first attendance is within 10 minutes	28.17	56.98	30.70	58.6
L1a	No. of Library visits per head of population	2.19	3.68	2.11	3.71
L1b	No. of Items borrowed per head of population	2.07	3.82		
L2	Cost of Library Service per capita	22.91	€30.02	21.83	€29.41
Y1	% of local schools involved in Comhairle na nÓg Scheme	100.00	67.59	99.09	51.86
C1	WTE staff per 1,000 population	5.29	5.58	5.17	5.63
C2a	% of paid working days lost to medically certified sick leave in year	4.02	3.52	3.55	3.34
C2b	% of paid working days lost to self-certified sick leave in year	0.35	0.39	0.36	0.4
C3	LA website page views per 1,000 population	6,304.32	11,666	4,109.72	9,651
C4	Overall cost of ICT Provision per WTE	2,649.84	€2,680.15	2,677.59	€2,646.8
M2a	% Commercial Rates Collected in year	78.00	83	72.00	77
M2b	% Rent & Annuities Collected in year	95.00	85	92.00	84
M2c	% Housing Loans Collected in year	77.00	68	76.00	67
J1	LEO jobs output per 1,000 population	1.14	0.66	0.28	0.73

2

Stage 1 meeting

NOAC Profile Meeting with Tipperary County Council

Date:	3 December 2018	
Venue:	Tipperary County Council	
Attendees:	**Tipperary County Council:** ■ Joe McGrath, Chief Executive ■ Clare Curley Director of Services, Corporate Affairs ■ Ger Walsh, SEO Corporate Affairs ■ Liam McCarthy, Head of Finance	**NOAC:** ■ Michael McCarthy, Chairperson ■ Claire Gavin, Secretariat

The Tipperary profile information was issued by NOAC in advance of the meeting to Tipperary County Council and this was the basis for the discussion on the day. Amendments were made to the document by the Council and these were to be emailed to NOAC to be incorporated in the final profile document. A soft copy was received on 21 December 2018 and the revisions were accepted as the NOAC Tipperary profile.-

Joe McGrath welcomed NOAC and gave a short presentation, which outlined the Council's structure and activities and the impact that the 2014 Local Government Reform Act had on the county. It was explained how following the merger Tipperary County saw its elected members reduced from 113 to 40 and despite 3 years of planning the impact was still huge. Therefore, it was suggested that results and reports pre 2014 are not valid for comparison purposes. The merger was difficult but members and staff got on with it. There was also a further sense of loss for the county with the abolition of town Councils. There was a sense of losing out as previously the local area budget was perhaps more visible and new budgets are not presented in the same way. It was very challenging for staff, who had to now operate budgets and planning for the entire county. Council meetings are held alternative months in Nenagh and Clonmel. So far it is working well but what was there was in place for 120 years so it is hard to turn it all around in four and a half years but huge strides have been made. The Municipal District model is working well, core functions are identified and issues raised and dealt with at local level with more strategic matters being considered at the full plenary Council meeting.

Other Matters discussed

Review and harmonisation of rents

Prior to the merger, there were ten different rent rates in place throughout the county, with different levels of maintenance and priorities both politically and administratively. It is now working very well, with excellent collection rates and a housing maintenance programme which is at the same level across the county.

Customer Service

It was outlined that there is a CR Manager and each issue that is raised has a unique reference. Management report provides frequent updated information on the number of queries in previous 2 months so that the response and issues are carefully monitored.

Economic Development

There had never been a county Economic Development Plan or a Tourism Plan done for the entire county before. However both have been done since the merger and now there are substantive plans which address the needs of the county in a single plan.

The Council is on track to exceed the targets set in these 3 year plans. Tourism is being pushed forward and there has been an increase by the LEOs in job creation. The Council see their location as an advantage for shared services and expertise has been built up in the county to allow it to deliver these services.

Online motor tax

Since 2014 the number of centres has reduced to just two locations in Clonmel and Nenagh. The other offices were closed. In Nenagh there was been a big increase in online whereas this is not so much the case for Clonmel. There is a big effort to encourage online and this is supported by the Council providing a service for customers paying in cash at the counter and getting a low value card that can be used to renew online. Up to 3,000 transactions are carried out this way now.

Housing and Homeless

Homeless services are provided by Novas, Respond and Cluid. The homeless action team is very active and meet every Monday. The main reason for homelessness is due to complex needs and housing is rarely the issue.

Innovation

Tipperary County Council is the leading authority on energy upgrades and carbon reduction. How to capture the success in these areas in a report can be difficult. The turnaround of the closure of the Lisheen mine, which employed up to 400 people in well-paid jobs and to use the site as a bio economy camp was discussed. While not creating many jobs at the present, it is anticipated it will do so in the future as expertise is built up. Regarding the energy works done by Tipperary, it has contributed to significant carbon reduction and the project is considered an exemplar of best practice. It was suggested by NOAC that this could be presented at the Good Practice Event in February 2019.

Recreation

Discussion on the operation of pools and other recreational areas was discussed. It was outlined that Nenagh pool had recently won an award and this along with Clonmel and Tipperary were in the direct control of the Council. Thurles, Roscrea and Ballina were separate companies.

Follow up matters

Presentation and Tipperary NOAC profile to be submitted as soft copies (Submitted Dec 2018)

Good Practice Seminar Feb 2019 participation to be considered and confirmed (Confirmed Jan 2019).

Attendance at the NOAC Board meeting of 5th of March 2019 at 10.45am.

3

Stage 2 meeting

National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) Meeting with Tipperary County Council

Date:	5 March 2019	
Venue:	Withdrawing Room, Custom House, Dublin 1	
Attendees:	**Chairman:** ▪ Michael McCarthy **Members:** ▪ Martina Moloney ▪ Dave Holohan ▪ Constance Hanniff ▪ Sharon O'Connor ▪ Michael McGreal ▪ Colleen Savage **Secretariat:** ▪ Lisa Clifford ▪ Claire Gavin ▪ Neill Dalton ▪ Colin Flood **Apologies:** ▪ Paul Lemass ▪ Tara Buckley ▪ John Buckley	**Tipperary County Council:** ▪ Joe MacGrath - Chief Executive ▪ Clare Curley - Director of Services ▪ Liam McCarthy - Head of Finance ▪ Ger Walsh - Senior Executive Officer

The Chair welcomed the Chief Executive and his team to the meeting. The Chief Executive provided a brief overview and an update to the group on matters concerning the Council and the challenges that they face. He explained about the changes that had followed the merger of North Tipperary and South Tipperary in 2014 and how that they now have 2 customer service offices in Clonmel and Tipperary and that the same service is offered to all, no matter what part of the county you are in. The Council has made significant investment in the district offices. He also said that the Corporate Plan demonstrates how each directorate is delivering for Tipperary. Tipperary now has a single strategy for jobs and tourism and these are the positive opportunities that arose from the merger. The CE then discussed housing and advised that the Rebuilding Ireland targets will be met and possibly exceeded this year. He outlined that there was very little private housing building investment in the county. The Chief Executive and his team then proceeded to answer questions from the NOAC members.

Retail Initiatives

The NOAC board sought details on the scope of retail initiatives put in place by the Council for the regeneration of town centres. Tipperary confirmed the initiatives were limited to towns with a population in excess of 3,000 and include a rates rebate and a discount on rates for early payment of between 5 and 6%. The initiatives are further limited to new businesses offering a diversification of business types in a town centre.

Tipperary is also working with major retailers in towns to promote the expansion of existing premises over relocation to out of town locations. An example was given where in Thurles a new town centre car park was developed in Liberty Square to encourage retailers to stay in the town centre and to address their concerns over accessibility.

Tourism and Economic Development

The NOAC board enquired about the Council's activities in this area including:

- Clonmel to Carrick on Suir greenway – Tipperary advised that the greenway was completed, all disputes have been resolved and official opening should happen shortly. There are plans to see if this can be linked with the Waterford Blueway which would bring a lot to the location and would be a wonderful amenity.
- Closure of Bord Na Mona factory - Tipperary advised that they are working with the company on the creation of a new facility and 40 replacement jobs.
- Creation of Food campus - Tipperary has invested time and resources in bringing together local artisan food producers and promotion of food produced in the county by both large corporations and small artisan producers. The Council is seeking to develop a food campus at Rockwell College which it hopes will create on-going sustainable employment.
- Tipperary is seeking to develop links between Holy Cross Abbey, the Rock of Cashel and Cahir, to increase visitor numbers. This would be done by means of signage and while some work has been done there is more to do.
- Craft Granary in Cahir – Tipperary has invested in the building and set up a limited company to manage operations. The Council acknowledges that the company is not lucrative but has no capital debt, only running costs that need to be met. Some of these costs, like the caretaker cost, are met from FAS funding. The value in the company is more than just the commercial operation, it is used to promote local produce while the building is also used as gallery space. It showcases what is good in the county and it is worthwhile. The farmers' market has now located beside it.

Customer Survey

The NOAC board raised the results of the Customer survey carried out in the county and what if any plans are in place to address the findings. Tipperary acknowledged that the findings of the survey were lower than expected and are disappointed with the results. Tipperary has taken the findings on board as a snapshot of what issues are being raised by customers. The Council has now got an integrated customer service contact number and this has worked well and the average time to answer has been reduced to 20 seconds. They have not done a survey on how well this is operating but they have provided customer service training and they constantly measure standards. They also now have a Communication Strategy which encourages more proactive communication. There is also a Communications liaison Group which is up and running since January this year.

Performance Indicators

The NOAC board asked what, if any actions, have been taken by the Council in respect of a number of Performance indicators, including:

- ### Sick leave
  Tipperary confirmed it has been proactive in putting a programme of supports in place for staff on sick leave to return to work. The Council have developed a healthy awareness initiative to foster a caring and supportive working environment. It is also working with the library on health promotion and have introduced “Lunch and Learn” presentations for staff on health promotion, talks on stress and bereavement etc.

- ### 3 Bin service
  Tipperary has introduced a policy where waste providers must offer the service to customers to secure a waste collection permit from the Council.

- ### Roads
  there are a large amount of local roads in the county. Tipperary confirmed it has not reduced investment on road improvement and maintenance, however during the past decade central funding has not been adequate to keep roads in good repair.

- ### Unfunded Balances
  Tipperary confirmed its unfunded balances mostly relate to land banks such as the 250-acre site of the former Ballingarrane estate, Clonmel. This site is now being developed and with the development the balances will be cleared.

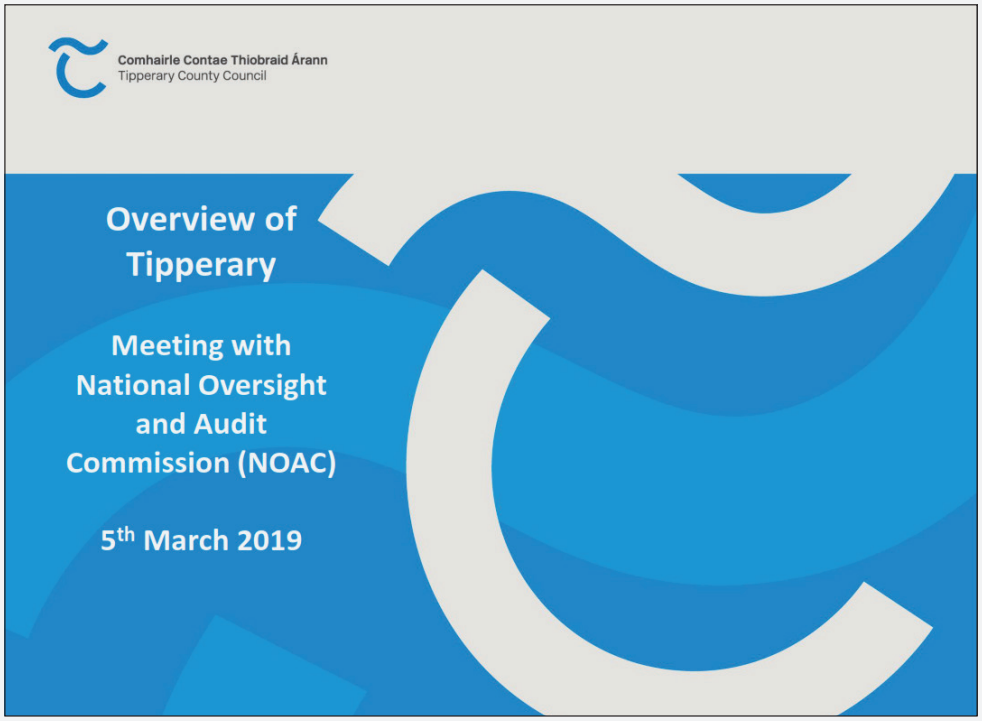
- ### Landfill Remediation
  Tipperary confirmed a solution has been identified for the remediation of the Ballaghveny landfill site, funds have been set aside and when the works are completed the ongoing cost will be alleviated.

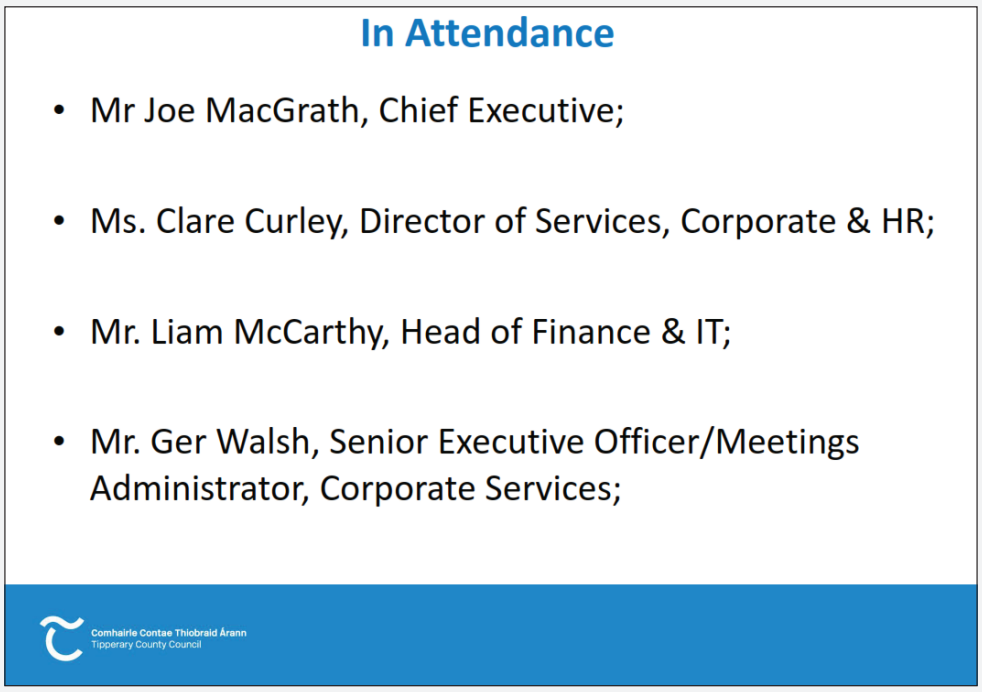
Local Authority Companies – The issues with these companies are being addressed using LPT, an improvement is expected in the 2018 report.

The NOAC Chair thanked the Chief Executive and members of the management team for attending and closed the meeting.

4

Stage 2 presentation





Tipperary in Context

- Overview of County
  - Geographic spread
  - Population density
  - Resources
  - Socio economic profile and
  - Demand for Services
- Vision and Strategic Themes
- Service Delivery Model
- Specific Priorities and Challenges

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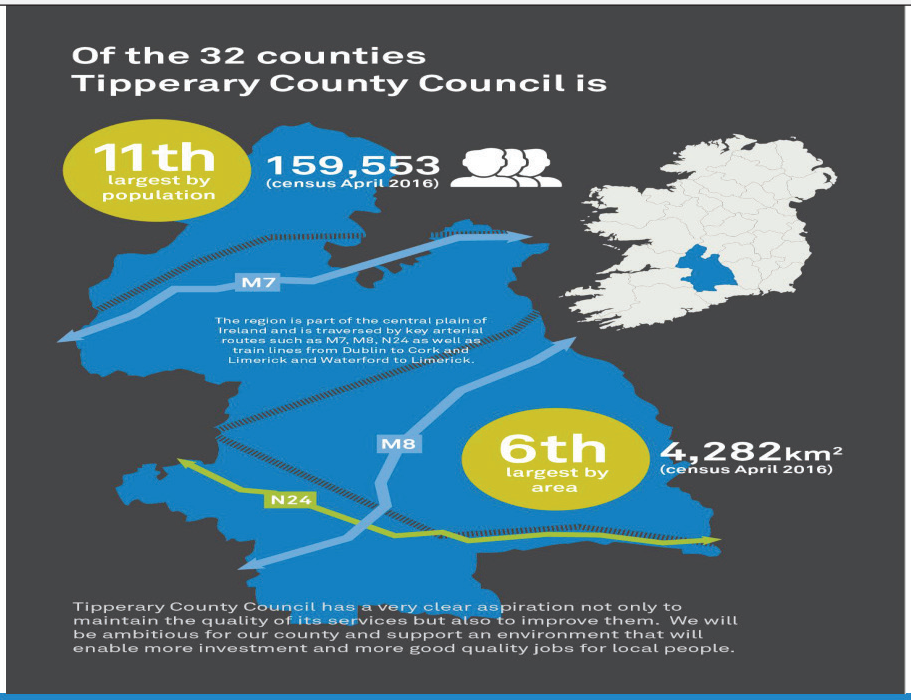
Tipperary County Council



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Tipperary County Council

Tipperary in Context
Governance

- Significant change in governance structures in 2014.
- 10 former authorities merged into a single authority:
  - *2 County Councils*
  - *Borough of Clonmel*
  - *6 Town Councils in Carrick-on-Suir, Cashel, Tipperary, Nenagh, Templemore and Thurles;*
  - *Joint Library Committee;*
- Elected Council
  - *40 directly elected Members from 5 Municipal District areas; reduction from 113;*
- Staffing/Budget/Services
  - *2019 Budget €162 million*
  - *Staffing (Dec 2018) – 1034*
  - *5 District Offices replaced 10 Area Offices*

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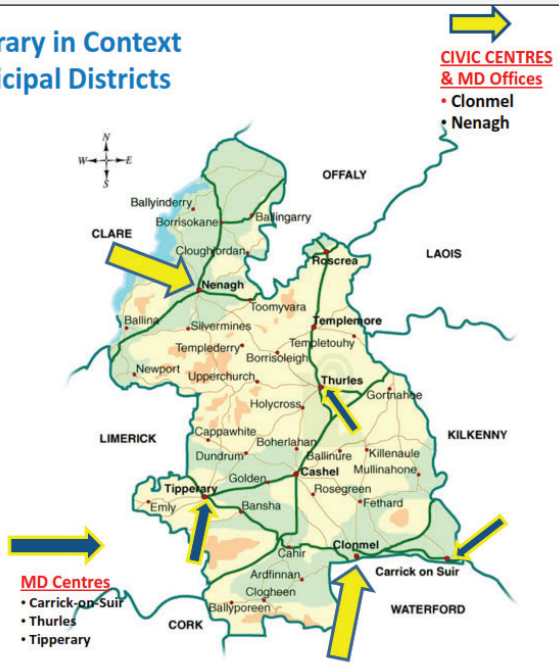
Tipperary in Context
Municipal Districts



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Tipperary in Context
Municipal Districts Re-configuration

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Tipperary County Council

Tipperary in Context
Vision for Tipperary

2.3 Vision Statement

Tipperary Together – Ambitious for our communities, demanding of ourselves and working to a shared purpose to deliver prosperity across the county.

The plan provides a vision for how we propose to deliver our services. It includes the following symbiotic elements that work in unison:

Citizen

We are ambitious for our residents and communities and we are demanding of ourselves as an organisation. The Council will seek to encourage residents to make a more active contribution to their local areas, working with elected representatives and other community activists to tackle local issues and ensure that council services are more responsive to their priorities and ambitions.

- Put people of Tipperary at the centre of all we do
- Encouraging public participation
- Building sustainable communities
- Improving quality of life
- Promoting Social Inclusion

Elected Members

Working with elected members to give a stronger voice and civic leadership to the people of Tipperary on the issues that matter to them, not just those issues we have a statutory responsibility to deliver.

- Providing leadership in the community
- Informed and supported
- Making policy and shaping the future
- Responding to the needs of the community

Our staff

As a new and progressive local authority, staff will work to provide a dynamic, flexible, quality-driven organisation committed to achieving excellent customer services. We will endeavour to work with all local and national agencies to ensure that citizens experience coherent, integrated and effective public services.

- Safe work practices
- Dynamic 'Can-do' approach
- Caring and customer focused
- Empowered to take responsibility
- Governance to match ambition

Our 3 strategic themes

Strong Economy: Positioning the County to be **'Open for Business'** remains critical within our Corporate Plan. The economic vitality of Tipperary and the success of our businesses are fundamental factors in shaping the quality of life and prosperity of local residents.

Quality of life: Tipperary will continue to be a **desirable place to live,** with lively and attractive towns and picturesque and vibrant villages, surrounded by beautiful countryside. Future growth in population will be accommodated in sustainable urban extensions and through sensitive development of our rural areas. The infrastructure to support this growth will be delivered in a timely fashion to ensure sustainable and inclusive communities.

Quality Environment: To protect the unique identity of Tipperary, and to ensure that development is designed and managed in a way that ensures the protection and enhancement of the **local distinctive character** and identity of the built, historic and natural environment in Tipperary towns, villages and countryside for future generations.

Tipperary

Tipperary as a brand: Tipperary is already a great place to live, work and invest and there is much that we should rightly be proud of. The Plan seeks to build on that reputation as one county, and one council working to a shared purpose.

- Driving economic development
- Proud of the past and ambitious for the future
- Making opportunities
- Building a Tipperary identity

Elements will act in unison to implement sustainable programs that improve quality of life for all people in Tipperary by enhancing the Environment in which we live, developing a vibrant economy whilst maintaining an excellent customer service across the Organisation.

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Tipperary County Council

Tipperary in Context
Tipperary Together

- *One County*
- *One Community*
- *One Culture*

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Tipperary County Council

Service Delivery Model

- 5 Civic offices in 5 electoral areas
- New Customer Services Desk
- Function-based Service Delivery Model
- Deal with maximum possible at Municipal District level;

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Tipperary County Council

District Operational Functions$_1$

Sample Breakdown

Current Town/ Area Functions	District Only	District (Budget & Policy from Centre)	Delivered at District by Centre Staff	Centre
Customer Services	X			X
Staff Supports, including HR, IR..				X
District Admin.	X			
Support Cllrs.				X
Councillor Reps	X			
Housing Maintenance		X		
Swimming Pools		X		
Surface Dressing			X	
Specific Improvements			X	

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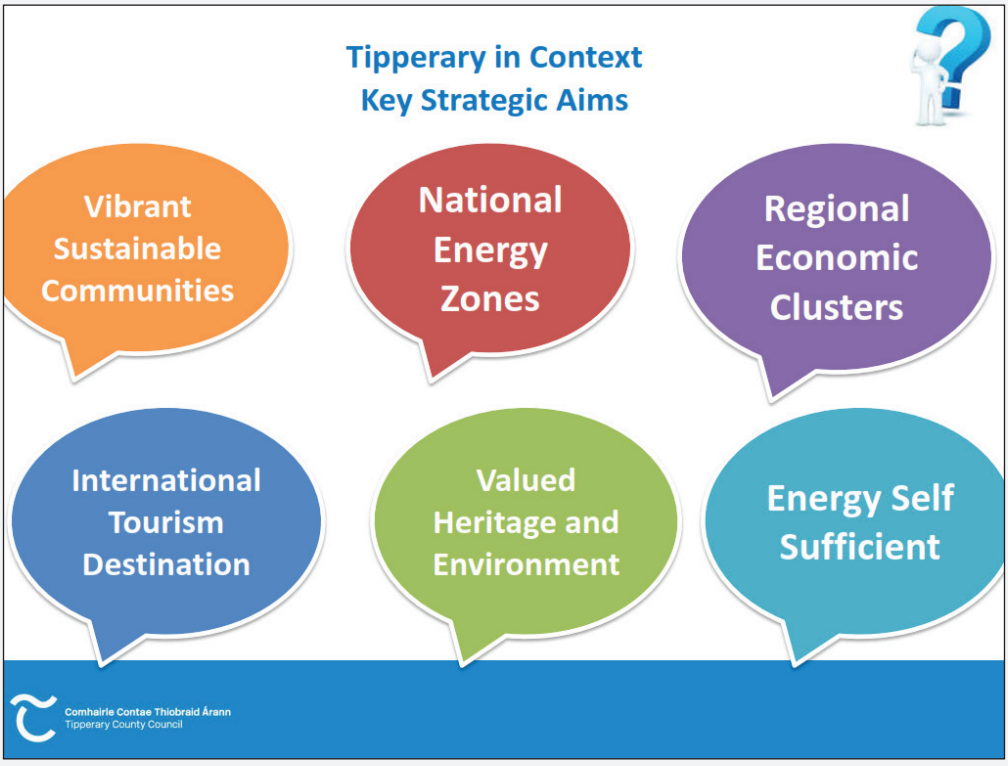
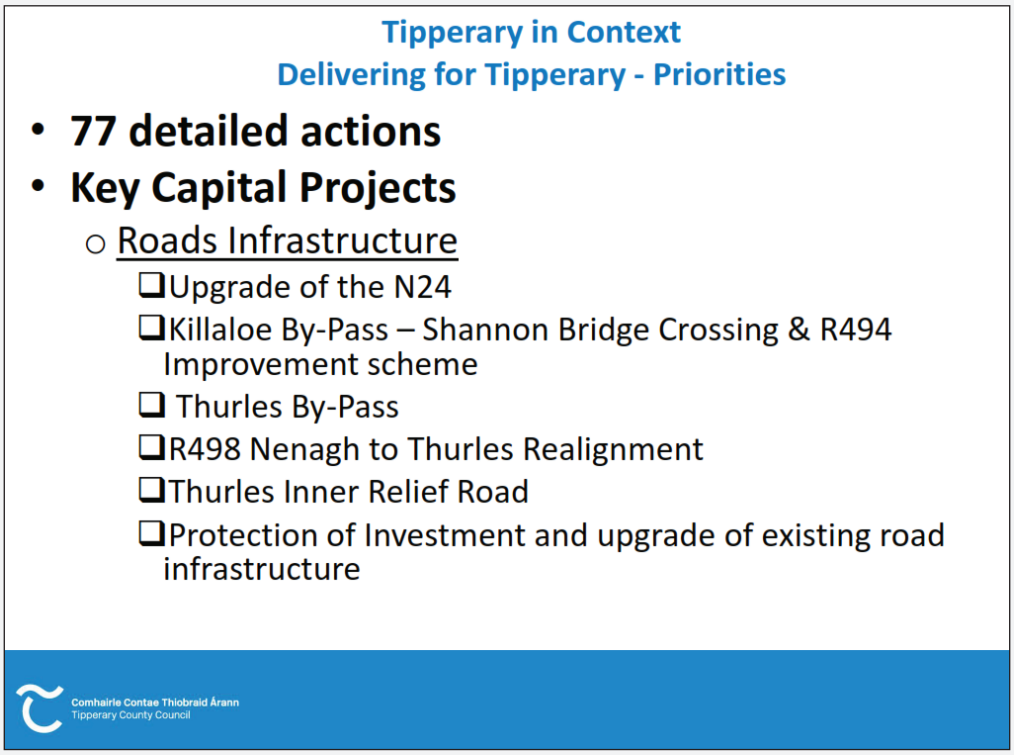
Tipperary County Council




Tipperary in Context
Delivering for Tipperary - Priorities
• 77 detailed actions
• Key Capital Projects
○ Roads Infrastructure
❑Upgrade of the N24
❑Killaloe By-Pass – Shannon Bridge Crossing & R494 Improvement scheme
❑ Thurles By-Pass
❑R498 Nenagh to Thurles Realignment
❑Thurles Inner Relief Road
❑Protection of Investment and upgrade of existing road infrastructure
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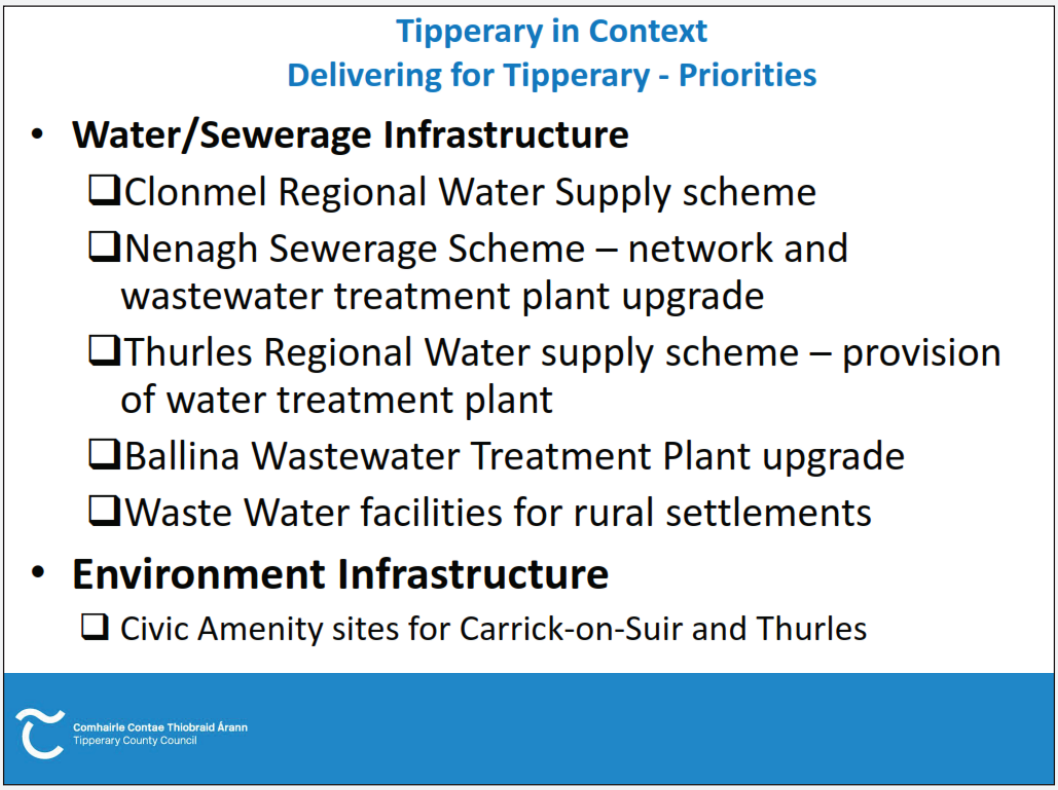
Tipperary County Council


Tipperary in Context
Delivering for Tipperary - Priorities
• Water/Sewerage Infrastructure
❑Clonmel Regional Water Supply scheme
❑Nenagh Sewerage Scheme – network and wastewater treatment plant upgrade
❑Thurles Regional Water supply scheme – provision of water treatment plant
❑Ballina Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade
❑Waste Water facilities for rural settlements
• Environment Infrastructure
❑ Civic Amenity sites for Carrick-on-Suir and Thurles
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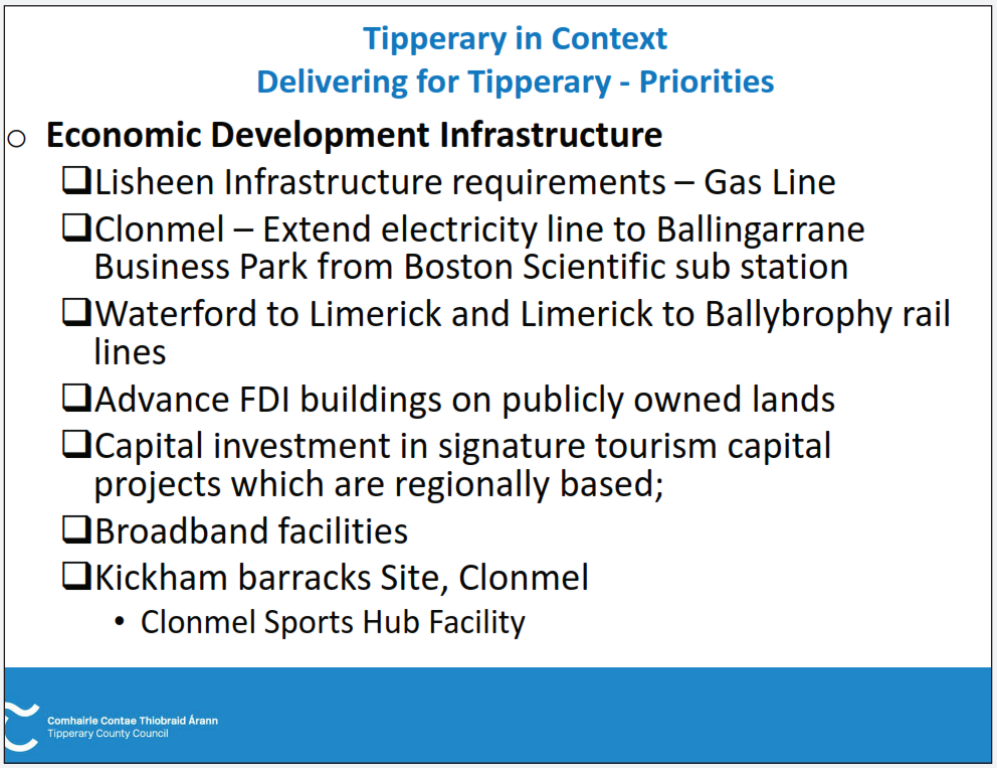
Tipperary County Council


Tipperary in Context
Delivering for Tipperary - Priorities
Economic Development Infrastructure
Lisheen Infrastructure requirements – Gas Line
Clonmel – Extend electricity line to Ballingarrane Business Park from Boston Scientific sub station
Waterford to Limerick and Limerick to Ballybrophy rail lines
Advance FDI buildings on publicly owned lands
Capital investment in signature tourism capital projects which are regionally based;
Broadband facilities
Kickham barracks Site, Clonmel
Clonmel Sports Hub Facility
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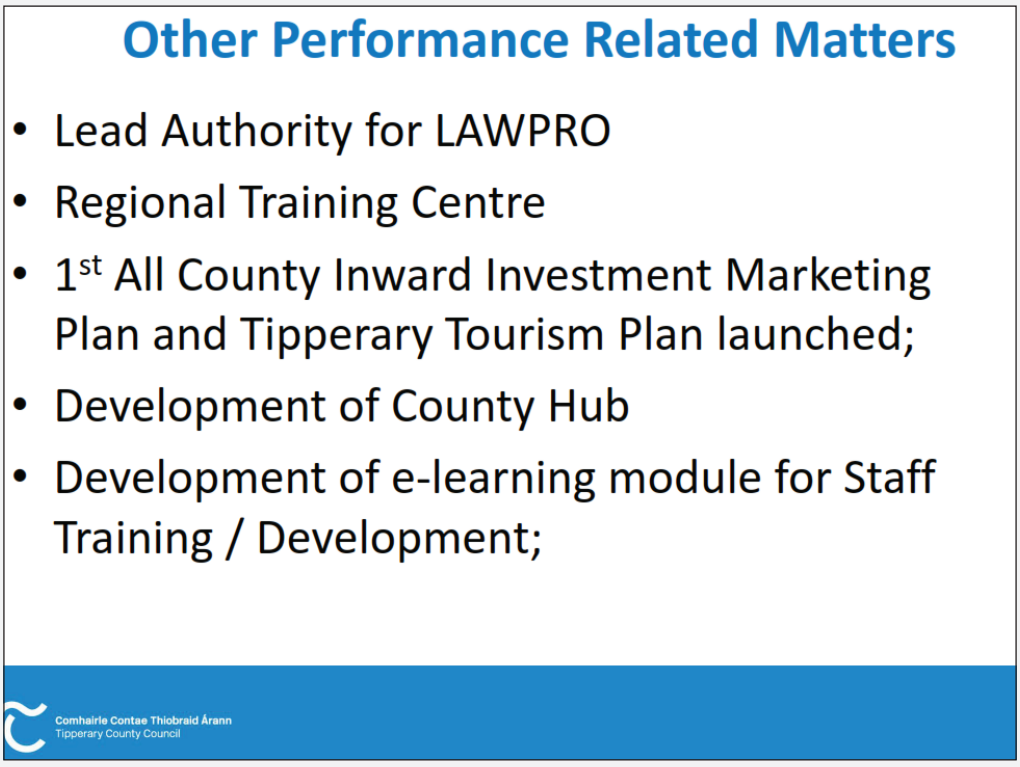
Other Performance Related Matters
Lead Authority for LAWPRO
Regional Training Centre
1st All County Inward Investment Marketing Plan and Tipperary Tourism Plan launched;
Development of County Hub
Development of e-learning module for Staff Training / Development;
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Tipperary County Council

Tipperary in Context
Other Challenges

Macro level

- Brexit – Impact on Agriculture / Employment;
- Political demographic of Oireachtas members
- Rural -Urban divide 60/40 compared to national 40/60
- Ability to generate own income - Net Beneficiary from LGF;
- Promotion of the County – Investment & Tourism;

Micro Level

- Developing the new unified Tipperary – Creating a unified culture / mindset;
- Changes to Municipal District configuration;
- Lack of investment in Private Housing;

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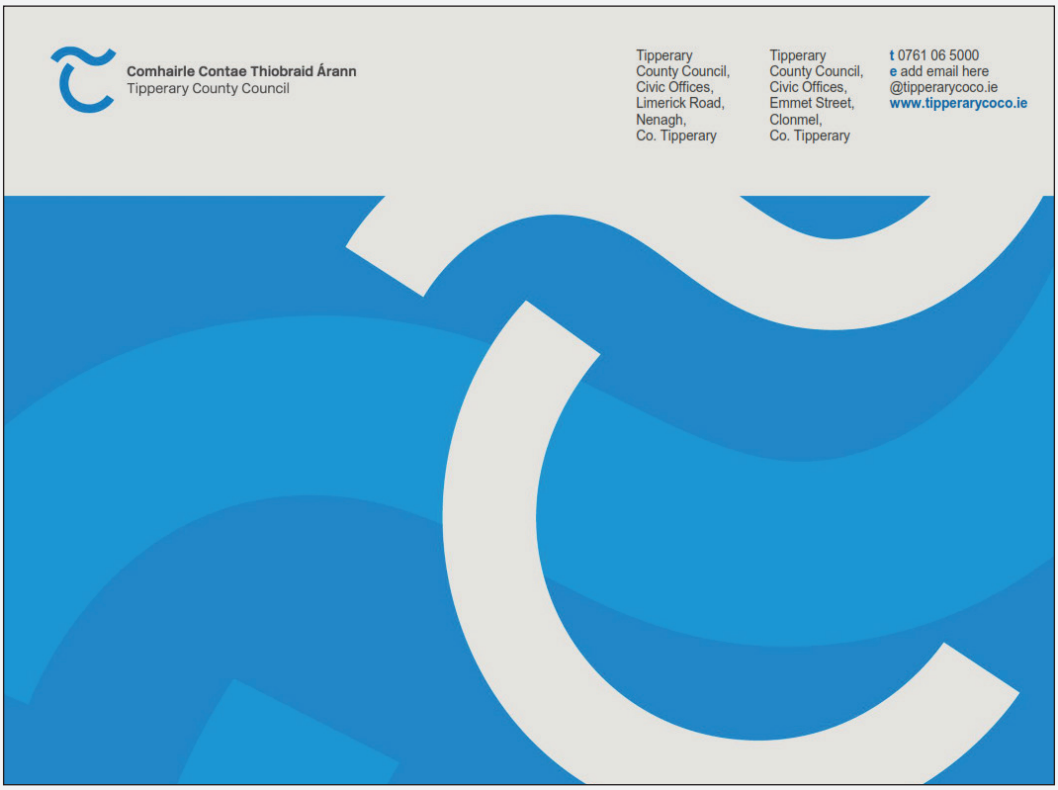

National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC)
An Coimisiúin Náisiúnra Maoirseachta & Iniúchoóireachta

Postal Address: Custom House, Dublin 1, D01 W6X0.
Website: www.noac.ie
Email: info@noac.ie