

A1

Housing Strategy



Appendix A1

Housing Strategy 2011 to 2018

Waterford County Council

Table of Contents

1	Context	1
1.1	Corporate Strategy for Housing	1
1.2	County Settlement Strategy	1
1.3	County Housing Strategy: Content and Review Process	2
2	Housing Demand and Supply	3
2.1	Accumulated social housing need.....	3
2.2	Housing Requirements 2011-2017	3
2.3	Housing Supply 2011-2017.....	4
2.4	Housing Market Trends.....	4
2.5	Social and affordable housing requirements	5
3	Strategy for Social and Affordable Housing Provision	6
3.1	Direct provision of social housing including special needs.....	6
3.2	Provision of social and affordable housing through Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000.....	9
3.3	Relevant supporting strategies	9
4	Housing Policy	9
4.1	Housing Location, Design and Mix	9
4.2	Planning Permissions and Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000.....	10
4.3	Meeting the needs of persons with special requirements	11
4.4	Countering social segregation	12
4.5	Promoting the role of housing agencies.....	12

Waterford County Council is working to ensure that, insofar as the resources and the remit of the Council permit, suitable accommodation is available for each household within Waterford, in an appropriate location and at a price or rent that they can afford; and to promote the development of stable and sustainable communities through policies relating to the location, scale, character and tenure of dwellings built.

This document sets out the strategies and policies which the Council intends to follow over the period 2011 to 2018, in order to realise these corporate aims and to fulfil its statutory obligations in regard to housing provision.

Key players in housing provision were invited to make submissions as part of the development plan process. A survey of local auctioneers was also administered.

1 Context

Housing policies and programmes are shaped by the Council's own **Corporate Strategy**¹, **Action Plan for Social and Affordable Housing**² and the **County Development Plan**³ - as well as other documents relating to the **provision of special housing needs**⁴. It is also directed by the Council's statutory obligations with regard to housing. This strategy replaces the **Housing Strategy 2009-13**.

¹ Waterford County Local Authorities *Corporate Plan 2005-2009*.

² Waterford County Council and Dungarvan Town Council *Action Plan for Social and Affordable Housing 2004-2008*.

³ Waterford County Council *County Development Plan 2005-2011*.

⁴ E.g. Waterford County Council *Traveller Accommodation Programme 2005-2008*;

1.1 Corporate Strategy for Housing

Waterford County Council works to meet the needs of those requiring accommodation through its own house building programme and a range of social housing options. The Council's strategy is that those who can afford to do so should provide housing for themselves, through the range of options available to them, and that those unable to do so should have access to social housing.

Thus the Council's own housing programmes are directed towards: providing suitable accommodation and assistance for those in need; providing loans and assistance for people housing themselves; and making provision for homeless people in the county. They also embrace the provision of appropriate accommodation and assistance for the travelling community in the county, expanding the housing maintenance programme on a planned basis and encouraging the development of estate management within all Waterford Co Co housing estates.

The Council's Corporate Plan charts the actions to which the Council has committed itself in order to realise these goals.

Amongst these is the implementation of a reviewed housing strategy. Other committed actions which are relevant to the framing of the Housing Strategy include:

- Promoting the options available for Social & Affordable Housing.
- Promoting integration by acquisition of units in both existing and new private housing developments.
- Implementing the multi-annual housing programme for the provision of public housing.

- Facilitating the role of voluntary and co-operative housing in the county.
- Implementing the five-year plan for accommodation for travellers.
- Implementing the strategy for homeless people
- Acquiring an adequate supply of land to cater for the provision of public and private housing at the various locations in the county.

This Strategy conforms to, and builds upon, all these and other established, relevant housing programmes of the Council and should be read in conjunction with them.

1.2 County Settlement Strategy

Chapters 3 and 4 of the County Development Plan, 2011, provides a projection of population to 2017. The Plan defines a settlement strategy for the County, within the parameters of the National Spatial Strategy and the proper planning and development of the County.

The provisions of the Plan are consistent with spatial planning aspects of housing policy and programmes set out in the 2001 Housing Strategy and the 2005 County Development Plan. The policies are aimed, *inter alia*, at ensuring that sufficient land and houses are available to realise the housing strategies envisaged; and that settlements are balanced in their social composition and are grown in accordance with available infrastructure.

The CDP settlement strategy identifies a total of 51 settlements in a hierarchy including the Primary Service Centre of Dungarvan, the Secondary Centre of Tramore, eleven district centres, eighteen local service centres and twenty settlement nodes.

This is a refinement of the hierarchy set out in the 1999 and 2005 Waterford Development Plans.

The 2001 and 2008 Housing Strategies encourage development in those towns and serviced villages that are considered to possess the capacity to absorb further development as well as providing for local rural housing need. The 2001 Housing Strategy and the 2005 Development Plan stressed the importance of retaining the character of these settlements by ensuring that the scale, mix and nature of housing development is appropriate to its individual location and that it avoids undue social segregation. These policies are followed in the 2011 CDP.

This Strategy is shaped by and consistent with established Council spatial planning policies and should be read in conjunction with the County Development Plan.

1.3 County Housing Strategy: Content and Review Process

Statutory Requirements

The preparation of a Housing Strategy is a requirement under the Planning and Development Act 2000, Part V and Part II of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2002.

The Housing Strategy must include an analysis of demand and supply for the different sectors of the housing market, forecast future needs and shortfalls, and propose objectives to balance demand with supply in a sustainable manner. The procedures for the preparation of a Housing Strategy are set down in the Act.

In particular, the Act specifies that the Housing Strategy will:-

1. Estimate the existing and likely future need for housing in the area, and ensure that sufficient zoned and serviced land is made available to meet such needs.
2. Provide that as a general policy a specific percentage (not exceeding 20%) of the land zoned in the Development Plan for residential use, or for a mixture of residential and other uses, shall be reserved for those in need of social or affordable housing in the area.
3. Ensure that a mixture of house types and sizes is provided to meet the needs of different categories of households, including the special requirements of elderly persons and persons with disabilities.
4. Counteract undue segregation between persons of different social background.

This Housing Strategy replaces the strategy which was adopted in 2008 and its provisions have been framed in the light of the review of progress under the previous (2001) Strategy as well as the changed circumstances which face the County.

Aims of the 2001 Housing Strategy

- A total of 5,300 additional households were anticipated over the six years of the strategy. Some 2,400 were slated for location in the main and priority settlements (including 1,050 in Dungarvan) and 2,900 in the rural areas and villages.
- Some 278 hectares of serviced land and 530 hectares of unserviced land was identified by

the Strategy. The housing capacity on serviced zoned land was estimated at 5,985 units. A need for additional serviced land was identified.

- It was projected that of the new households, 1,400 (26%) would have affordability problems.⁵
- Accordingly, the Strategy reserved up to 20% of land zoned for residential, or a mixture of residential or other uses, for social and affordable housing, estimating this would generate 720 housing units (of which, 140 in Dungarvan) .
- The Strategy proposed that the Waterford County Council and Dungarvan UDC stock of 1,041 rented houses would be increased by 558 houses by 2006.
- The Housing Strategy envisaged an enhanced role for the voluntary and co-operative housing sector in the county. It was estimated that output from this sector would be 250 housing units by 2006.

Progress under the 2001 Strategy

House completions in the County totalled 7,700 over the period of the Plan. The *net number of new households* was 4,360⁶ over the same period.. Growth has therefore been less than that envisaged. Urban areas including villages accounted for 61% of the total population growth.

⁵ as defined by the Planning and Development Act (2000)

⁶ Estimate based on data from the 2002 and 2006 Census of Population

Although there is now a considerable amount of *residentially zoned land* available in the County, the amount which is serviced is relatively small.

Part V affordable housing activity has been less than that envisaged by the Strategy. Some 200 affordable housing units were provided over the period of the Strategy; of these, 99 were a result of Part V agreements and the balance from the 1999 affordable housing scheme and other activities.

The Local Authority programme of social housing has provided more than 450 new units under the period of the Strategy (Including 43 from social housing elements of Part V agreements). There have been 120 acquisitions. The voluntary and co-operative sector provided 26 social housing units. Local Authority housing has therefore been on target but *voluntary and co-operative housing* has been considerably less than envisaged.

Reviewing the Strategy: overview

In the light of the above, and using updated analysis of requirements, the Housing Strategy 2011-2017:

- Reduces the anticipated annual required rate of housing delivery for the period to 2017;
- Ties the spatial targets of the strategy to the National Spatial Strategy and targets set out in the CDP;
- Sets new targets for Local Authority and Voluntary and Cooperative housing sector deliveries of social and affordable housing;
- Varies the mechanisms for Part V affordable housing delivery in accordance with the

Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2002

- Maintains the 20% rule for social and affordable housing within new housing developments.

2 Housing Demand and Supply

In framing a Housing Strategy, two classes of housing need must be identified: that which exists at the commencement of the strategy period (accumulated) and that which is likely to arise during the period of the strategy (prospective).

2.1 Accumulated social housing need

Table 1 sets out the latest (2008) assessed overall social housing need within the County. The total of 966 was an increase from the 2005 figure of 703. The most recent figure for the housing register indicates that need has risen further.

More than half of need arises either because applicants are not reasonably able to meet the costs of their accommodation.

In terms of special needs, there were 105 elderly persons assessed and 11 traveller households in need of accommodation.

Table 1: Housing Need Assessment, 2008

Category	County Co.	Dungarvan	Total
Homeless	3	2	5
Traveller	3	8	11
Unfit accommodation.	15	50	65
Overcrowded accommodation.	34	18	52
Involuntary sharing	10	22	32
Leaving institutional care	0	0	0
Medical or compassion. reasons	23	13	36
Elderly	71	32	105
Disabled	24	5	29
Not reasonably able to meet the cost of accommodation.	389	244	633
Total	572	394	966

Source; WCC and Dungarvan Town Council

2.2 Housing Requirements 2011-2017

Housing requirements over the period 2011 to 2017 will arise from:

1. Increase in the number of households⁷
2. Obsolescence (including existing habitable dwellings that become second homes)
3. Additional vacancies to allow movement within the stock of housing

Increase in households

Of these, the first is the most significant in Waterford, where the number of households has been rising rapidly. This growth will continue but at lower rate. Households will climb from 25,500 in 2011 to nearly 27,500 in 2017 (Table 2).⁸

⁷ This embraces the overlapping concepts of housing need and housing demand

⁸ Population projections are detailed in a working paper in support of this Strategy.

Table 2: Projected population and households 2011 to 2017

Year	Household Numbers	Additional Households	Average Household Size	Population
2011	25,326	790	2.75	69,647
2012	25,774	448	2.73	70,362
2013	26,228	454	2.71	71,077
2014	26,689	461	2.69	71,793
2015	27,156	468	2.67	72,508
2016	27,631	475	2.65	73,223
2017	28,225	594	2.63	74,233

Source: Consultant's projection

Obsolescence, second homes and investment

The number of new houses needed will be significantly greater than the net increase in households over the period of the Strategy.

Between 2002 and 2006, some 5,159 dwellings were built, but the net increase in the number of households was 2,915. Between 1996 and 2002, the figures were 4,766 and 2,581. Over a ten year period, therefore, there were some 440 houses built each year, which could not be related directly to the growth in the number of households.

A significant proportion these is accounted for, not by structural or locational obsolescence, road widening and other demolitions, but conversion of existing habitable dwellings to second and holiday homes and the construction of new such homes, or by houses built for investment purposes and left empty.

On Census night 2006, one house in five (20%) in the County was vacant. This compares with 16.3% in 2002 and 13.5% in 1996. In fifteen Electoral

Divisions, more than a quarter of the housing stock was vacant.

Increase in vacancies

Additional vacancies needed, may be factored into the overall requirement by adding between 3 and 5 per cent to the growth in the number of households

2.3 Housing Supply 2011-2017

Housing requirements may be compared to the pattern of housing delivery observed in the recent past (Table 3). Completions averaged in the region of 1,250 in the period 2003 to 2007 and exceeded 1,300 in the period 2005-2007.

Table 3: Housing completions, County Waterford

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
1,074	1,000	1,324	1,171	1,248	1,369	1,511	1,095	950

Source: Quarterly Bulletin of Housing Statistics

If obsolescence and second home construction remain at prevailing levels, and allowing for the required increase in vacancies, a continuation of the present housing delivery performance would provide for an annual increase in the net number of households of around 600 – sufficient to meet the population growth needs of the County as set out in Table 2.

Housing output has, however, fallen very sharply in 2009 and the future level of completions is intimately bound up with the success in overcoming the current global and national economic and fiscal challenges. There seems little doubt, however, that as demand is restored, the supply of dwellings will not be wanting.

2.4 Housing Market Trends

The year 2007 marked a turning point in the market for housing in Ireland. High rates of completion and sharply rising prices have been dramatically reversed. The level of uncertainty in the market is now high and making planning difficult. It is considered prudent under these conditions firstly that policy decisions be robust and able to withstand the widest possible range of outcomes and secondly that options be left open as far as possible.

In the longer term there are special factors which are likely to impact on the County of Waterford. Chief amongst these is the demand arising from the expansion of the Gateway City of Waterford. A further factor is the growth of second homes.

As indicated above, the number of houses recorded as vacant on Census night has risen steadily over the last decade and reached 20 per cent in 2006. This is a reflection of second homes and unlet investment properties. The survey of Waterford auctioneers suggests that one house in seven is purchased by an investor, and analysis of census returns shows that there is a heavy concentration of second homes in coastal areas. More than half of all dwellings in Ardmore were vacant on Census night 2006.

The trend of second home construction and the extent of investor purchase, in the changed housing market conditions, will be an important factor influencing construction levels and price changes.

Projections of house prices from sources set out above, together with adjusted county data on projected national *per capita* income changes, have been used to calculate housing affordability for Waterford residents in each year to year 2017.

The following section summarises the results of these calculations and sets out the implications for the provision of social and affordable housing within the County.

2.5 Social and affordable housing requirements

Table 4 summarises the requirement for social and affordable housing. It sets out the annual rate of household formation and the numbers of households from these new formations who will meet the affordability criteria set out in Section 93(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

Estimates are based on existing patterns of income distribution, expectations regarding household income growth and distribution, house prices and price distribution and mortgage interest rates. Taken together, these factors determine the number of new households who will require social or affordable housing. Details of calculations underlying these figures are contained in a working paper.

Table 4: Summary of Anticipated Social & Affordable Housing Need

Measure	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Household formations (1)	790	448	454	461	468	475	594
Number of households meeting affordability criteria S 93(1) (2)	216	109	108	107	111	114	145
(2) as a % of (1)	27.3	24.3	23.7	23.1	23.7	24.1	24.4

Part V contribution to social and affordable housing requirements

Two further adjustments are required before the percentage of social and affordable housing to be required from non-exempt private developments can be established.

Firstly, direct provision of social and affordable housing by local authorities and the voluntary and co-operative sector will reduce the requirement from the private sector. Table 6 in section 3.1 summarises the projected level of completions and other elements of housing provision by the public and voluntary sector.⁹

Secondly, houses constructed on unzoned lands or on sites which fall below the threshold set by the Act and are therefore exempt from Part V, will reduce the total number of private dwellings from which the target number of Part V social and affordable 'take' can be made. The extent of development on unzoned lands may be gauged from section 2.2. A further upward adjustment is made to account for exempt developments on zoned land: it is assumed that 80% of private houses built will be on sites subject to Part V.

There are a number of other technical adjustments which are more minor in nature, including an allowance

⁹ These activities are, however, assumed in the first instance to be aimed at accumulated housing need as represented by the housing register. Only if programmes provide a surplus of housing solutions beyond that required for accumulated need, are they assumed to contribute to prospective social and affordable housing need. Conversely, accumulated need is 'ring-fenced' and assumed to be dealt with by public and voluntary sector programmes only.

for affordable housing freed-up by waiting list clearance¹⁰

The considerable number of variables required and the volatility of their possible values makes it wise to present a range of possible outcomes, and these are set out in Table 5. Growth rates of income and house prices are at current rather than constant prices.

Table 5: Range of outcomes for Part V Percentage fixing

Mortgage interest rate (%)	Annual Average growth in house prices (%)	Annual average rate of household income increase (%)			
		2	3	4	5
4	-2	26.3%	24.8%	23.4%	22.1%
4	-1	28.6%	27.0%	25.5%	24.1%
4	0	31.1%	29.4%	27.7%	26.3%
4	1	33.8%	31.9%	30.1%	28.5%
5	-2	29.3%	27.7%	26.2%	24.8%
5	-1	31.9%	30.1%	28.4%	26.9%
5	0	34.6%	32.7%	30.9%	29.2%
5	1	37.0%	35.2%	33.5%	31.7%

Source: Consultant's calculations

Despite the uncertainty in the present housing market, all results in Table 5 suggest maintenance of the 20% Part V contribution is appropriate at this time.

¹⁰ Privately rented housing relinquished by those taking up social housing may be available for social housing purposes

3 Strategy for Social and Affordable Housing Provision

3.1 Direct provision of social housing including special needs

It is recognised that there will continue to be a need for social and affordable housing irrespective of the level of overall housing output.

Waterford Housing Authorities will therefore endeavour to meet the needs of households through a range of social housing options, including the house building programme, as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan, Housing Action Plan and other special programmes. The Council is committed to promoting and facilitating the use of the full range of these social housing options.

The challenge is to ensure delivery of this programme and achievement of the maximum amount of social and affordable housing, thereby providing a quicker and more affordable access to housing for people on limited means. Achieving this will require the Local Authorities to play a wider promotional role, which will also necessitate an enhanced contribution from the voluntary sector.

Provision of New Social Housing by Waterford Housing Authorities

In the absence of a rolling multi-annual housing programme, and given the dependence of the Local Authority on central government funding for housing provision, it is not possible to set out with confidence the future programme of social housing within Waterford. Schemes under construction in 2009 included those at Crobally (Tramore), Cappoquin and Lismore. Latest estimates indicate

that during 2009, under the Councils' direct provision housing programmes, a total of 50 social housing units will be completed.

Housing Acquisition Programme

Where it proves economical to do so, the Council acquires dwellings at various locations¹¹ throughout the County for use as social housing. The number purchased in 2007 was 23 in the County Council area and 19 in Dungarvan. The number of house purchases dropped significantly in 2008.

Affordable Housing Schemes¹²

Within the County Council area, under this scheme the Council provides new houses, at cost price on land owned by them, to persons qualifying under the terms of the scheme. During 2009, 8 such houses were provided and it is anticipated that 25 such houses will be provided in 2010 in Crobally, Tramore..

Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)

There are approximately 157 people receiving rent supplement for a period of 18 months or longer in the Waterford County Council and Dungarvan Town Council areas. To date 105 private transfers have signed over to the RAS and 27 voluntary transfers. Negotiations are currently ongoing with the remaining tenants and their landlords.

¹¹ Recent acquisitions have been at Ballinagoul, Ballyduff, Cappoquin, Dungarvan, Kilmacthomas, Kilmeaden, Portlaw, Tallow and Tramore.

¹² These affordable housing schemes should not be confused with the term 'affordable housing' as used in Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and the regulations relating to the same.

Leasing Arrangements

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government has established a new leasing initiative for the delivery of social housing.

This new initiative represents an expansion of the options available to local authorities for the delivery of social housing. Properties will be leased from the private sector and used to accommodate households from local authority waiting lists. Leased properties will be allocated to tenants, in accordance with the local authorities allocations schemes.

The main features of the new arrangements are as follows:

- Local authorities will enter into lease arrangements with property owners for periods of between 10 – 20 years;
- Properties will be tenanted, managed and maintained by the local authority;
- Rent will be guaranteed for the whole lease period.

Incremental Purchase Scheme

The objective of the IPS is to provide an affordable route to homeownership for households that are renting social housing, including those renting from approved housing bodies (voluntary and co-operative housing) and under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS), or households that are, for the first time, being allocated a new house

provided by a local authority or approved body. The scheme offers social housing applicants the earliest possible start on the path to home ownership for those willing and able to undertake a house purchase. It also provides a vehicle for effective saving for low-income applicants and allows the household to avail of the opportunity to improve their housing circumstances over time.

The scheme is based on the development of the 'shared equity' concept whereby an applicant would be allowed to build up an equity stake in a new local authority or approved body house in an incremental fashion in return for purchasing a stake in the unit upfront and taking over responsibility for the maintenance and insurance of the dwelling. The scheme provides that an applicant will take out a mortgage to purchase a specified proportion of the dwelling. The proportion of the equity not paid for will be registered as a charge on the property in favour of the housing authority. This charged share is reduced in equal proportions, referred to as "incremental releases", over the period of the charge.

Other Social Housing Options

A number of other schemes are available to applicants on the Council's housing list (or to existing tenants) including:

- Shared Ownership Scheme
- Improvement works in lieu of local Authority house scheme
- Traditional housing loans
- Mortgage Allowance Scheme.
- Extensions to private Houses
- Essential Repairs Grants
- Improvement Works in Lieu of Local Authority Housing

- **Tenant Purchase Scheme**

All of these will be continued through the life time of the strategy and will make a modest but important contribution to provision of accommodation.

The Role of the Voluntary Housing and Co-operative Sector

Voluntary housing bodies are assisted under the Capital Assistance Scheme with non repayment capital funding and Rental Subsidy Scheme to provide accommodation to meet the special Housing needs such as those of the elderly, people with disabilities, homeless persons or small families.

The Voluntary Housing sector is represented in the County by Focus Ireland, Newgrove and Respond. It has made a valuable contribution to housing provision, with schemes in Dungarvan, Tramore, Kilmacthomas and Kilnamack

The sector has delivered over 100 social units during the previous housing strategy. Waterford County Council will continue to work with the Voluntary Housing Sector over the lifetime of the Strategy.

Revitalisation of existing areas of social housing

Waterford County Council has a planned maintenance programme for existing social housing. This includes replacement of windows, doors and kitchens; attic insulation and central heating. The Council has also prepared an Energy Efficiency Plan with the aim of increasing the energy rating in existing housing stock.

Waterford County Council will continue to carry out significant work in the area of estate management and anti-social behaviour. It has appointed a full

time Tenant Liaison Officer. Ongoing work includes: the formation of resident associations on estates; consultation with residents; investigation of anti-social behaviour by the Tenant Liaison; and provision of capacity building (pre-tenancy training is now provided to all applicants prior to any letting and residents associations are provided with training).

Special needs Accommodation

Nearly 9 per cent of Waterford residents have a disability. Almost half of these disabilities relate to a condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities.¹³ Waterford County Council recognise the increasing importance of provision in this area, with an ageing population.

(a) Social housing

Dungarvan Town Council have 67 houses provided specifically for the elderly. All these houses have central heating and comply with Part M of the building regulations. Waterford County Council provide houses for the elderly within its own housing stock and all new houses comply with part M of the building regulations. The County Council have adapted a small number of houses specifically for people with a disability. It is intended to continue with this provision within the housing construction programme outlined earlier. A 15 unit housing scheme for the elderly is currently under construction in Ballymacarbry. Waterford County Council will continue to work with the voluntary sector for the provision of houses for the elderly.

¹³ Census of Population 2006

b) *Housing Adaptation Grant for People with disability* is available to assist in the carrying out of works that are reasonably necessary for the purposes of rendering a house more suitable for the accommodation of a person with a disability who is a member of the household. All grant applications are assessed on the basis of household means. The maximum grant is 95% of the cost of works, subject to upper limit, and the percentage of grant payable is reduced based on household income.

Scheme of Housing Aid for Older People is available to assist older people living in poor housing conditions to have necessary repairs or improvements carried out. All grant applications are assessed on the basis of household means. The maximum grant is 100% of the costs of works, subject to upper limit and the percentage of grant payable is reduced based on household income.

Mobility Aids Grant Scheme is available to fast track grant aid to cover a basic suite of works to address mobility problems, primarily, but not exclusively, associated with ageing, in order that recipients are not subject to delays in accessing works. All grant applications are assessed on the basis of household means and an upper household means income is set down for this scheme. The maximum grant is 100% of the cost of works, subject to upper limit.

Homelessness

The 2006 Census of Population recorded 64 single person households living rough or in temporary

housing units in 2006, in the County. Not all of these were homeless

Homelessness is mainly confined to single males and is dealt with by the provision of 1 and 2 bed houses from the Local Authority housing stock where possible. If not, institutional or transitional arrangements can be made.

There is a very successful homeless forum operating in the County. A multi-agency sub-group of the housing forum meets monthly to review individual cases. Focus Ireland co-ordinate an outreach support service at present which currently handles approximately 25 people. A 21 bed supported housing scheme was constructed in Dungarvan in 2008.

The Housing Authorities will continue to monitor the homelessness position in the County and take appropriate action as required.

Traveller Accommodation

Waterford County Council has one of the smallest Traveller populations in the country. In 2006 the Department of Environment estimated that there was a nation wide total of 5,740 Traveller families. Only 24 families were recorded as living in the Waterford County area. The majority of these families were recorded as living in Local Authority Housing or on the Halting Site in Dungarvan. The 2006 Census enumerated 26 families with children living in temporary housing units in the County.

Waterford County Council will within the period of the Housing Strategy endeavour to meet the accommodation needs of Traveller families resident in the county. The Council will actively promote the full range of Social Housing Options as outlined in

the Department of the Environment and Local Government publication *Accommodation Options for Travellers*. Families with special needs will be taken account of in all building programmes.

Waterford County Council adopted a Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009 – 2013 which has put in place the necessary procedures, measures, resources and facilities to meet the accommodation needs of Traveller families in the County Council and Dungarvan Town Council areas.

Over the course of the plan it is proposed to provide for five houses in the Dungarvan Town Council area and one house in the County Council area.

Table 6: Summary of Direct Housing provision by the Local Authority and Voluntary and Co-operative sector during the period of the housing strategy

Category of Provision	No.	% of total
Housing solutions not involving new build - TOTAL	119	25.1
Casual vacancies arising (excl deaths and migration)	49	10.3
Long term voids to be refurbished and re-let	28	5.9
Provision of Extensions	28	5.9
Improvement works in lieu	0	0.0
Sale of sites	0	0.0
Units added or removed through regeneration progs.	14	2.9
Shared ownership scheme	0	0.0
New House Completions - TOTAL	265	55.8
Local Authority Direct Completions	175	36.8
Voluntary & co-operative sector completions (social and affordable, NOT Part V)	90	18.9
Housing provided by 1999 affordable initiative & any other such initiative	0	0.0
Purchase of dwellings for rental by Housing Authority – TOTAL	91	19.2

3.2 Provision of social and affordable housing through Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000

In addition to the direct provision of social and affordable housing, and assistance to voluntary housing agencies for such direct provision, the Authority proposes vigorously to pursue the provisions of Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, in order to facilitate the provision of such housing alongside private sector developments throughout the County. The policy for implementation of the Part V provisions is set out in Section 4.2 below.

3.3 Relevant supporting strategies

Measures which inform, guide or support the Housing Strategy are contained in the County Development Plan, as follows:

Chapter 4: Policies SS1 to SS10 which relate to the preferred spatial allocation of development and which support the availability of zoned and serviced land within the County to support necessary housing development.

Chapter 5: Policies H3 – H9 of the CDP deal with the provision of social housing, with specific reference to the matters of a suitable mix of units, social integration, the travelling community and to those with disabilities, as well as ensuring that such housing is provided at suitable locations. Similar objectives are found in Chapter 3 of the Dungarvan Town Plan. These policies are consistent with the policies set out in this strategy. Projections of household numbers contained in the CDP have been revised in this Strategy in the light of more

recent Census data and changing economic conditions.

Chapter 7: Infrastructural investment programmes set out in Chapter 7 of the CDP are designed to support the sustainable settlement patterns proposed for the County in Chapter 4 of the CDP and therefore by implication the housing strategy also. The Council recognises that the principle of sustainability dictates that land use and infrastructure share a symbiotic relationship in a manner that: reduces the cumulative impact of development on the environment with respect to visual amenity, air quality and water resources; minimises energy usage; and optimises the economic return from expensive infrastructure such as sanitary services and roads.

In this section of the CDP, the Council commits itself, under Local Agenda 21, to reducing non-renewable fuel consumption – by improving linkages between settlements, reducing unnecessary travel, creating a more balanced modal split and reducing overall energy consumption.

This housing strategy is in conformity with all CDP policies.

4 Housing Policy

When framing its own programmes, and controlling development by the private sector, to achieve the targets for housing provision set out in section 3 above, Waterford County Council will adhere to policies set out below relating to:

1. Ensuring proper planning and development of the County, in terms of the location and quality of housing, including housing design and housing mix;
2. Implementing Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000;
3. Meeting the needs of persons with special requirements;
4. Countering social segregation;
5. Promoting the role of housing agencies.

4.1 Housing Location, Design and Mix **Housing Location and sustainability**

It is the policy of the Council that future housing will occur throughout the county, both in rural areas as well as main urban and rural settlements, to ensure a *balanced and integrated approach to development*. This will ensure that rural communities within the county are sustained by encouraging the consolidation of rural settlements and villages and the provision of rural housing for local need. Policies will aim to reduce the need to travel and encourages a form of residential development that reduces urban sprawl.

All housing will be of a *form and scale that is appropriate to the location*.

The *planning authorities will aim to focus future land purchases in smaller pockets* in both the main towns and rural villages and settlements in order to counter balance the level of social / affordable housing being provided in the main settlements under Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000. It is important that social and affordable housing is properly integrated into existing communities.

Where the local authorities own undeveloped residentially zoned land, appropriate forms of development will be explored for the development of a *wider mix of uses than just social housing*.

The council will encourage the *utilisation and redevelopment of obsolete and vacant sites* in preference to green-field development.

The council will also enforce the 1991 Derelict Sites Act in order to *reduce the number of derelict and unsightly dwellings* in the county.

Housing Design and Mix

It is an objective of the 2000 Planning and Development Act to ensure that a mix of house types and sizes is developed to reasonably match the requirements of different categories of households, including the special requirements of the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Thus the Council will require that development proposals subscribe to *the principles of social integration and affordability*. In this context new developments will provide a high quality living environment; have an appropriate mix of unit types, design and sizes to cater for all users, including first time buyers, and should be accessible by the elderly and persons with disabilities. In general, proposals will be required to integrate single storey housing which would be available for the aged, amongst others.

The trend towards smaller households is likely to continue over the next decade. The providers of housing have responded positively to this by building an increasing variety of house types. It is recommended that in private housing schemes the following mix should generally apply to ensure the

future provision of a suitable mix of housing types and sizes:

Two bedroom houses	at least 30% of the total number of houses
Three bedroom houses	at least 30% of the total number of houses
Four bedroom houses	maximum 20% of total number of houses

Exceptions to this should only be considered where it could be shown that local market circumstances require a different housing mix.

4.2 Planning Permissions and Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000

Section 96 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 provides that the objectives of the Housing Strategy in relation to social and affordable housing shall be implemented by means of conditions attached to planning permissions for residential development.

Waterford County Council will require a 20% quota of social/affordable housing to be provided on each housing development within the County, and this requirement will be included as a condition of development, with the exception of application for development of 4 or less houses, or for housing on land of 0.2 hectares or less.

Conditions attached to planning permissions for residential development to which the 20% social/affordable quota applies will require developers to enter into an agreement with the

Council. Such agreements provide developers with a number of options; e.g.

- The developer can transfer ownership of 20% of the site to the Council, or
- May build houses/apartments and transfer 20% of the floor area of them to the Council at an agreed cost, or
- May transfer a number of fully or partially serviced housing sites to the Council at an agreed cost.
- May provide for the transfer to the planning authority of the ownership of any other land within the functional area of the planning authority

The ratio of social to affordable houses to be provided, will be assessed on a case by case basis, having regard to local housing needs.

In so far as it is known at the time of the agreement, the Council will indicate to the developer its intentions in relation to the provision of social/affordable housing, including a description of the proposed houses, on the land or sites to be transferred, where such lands form part of the site for which an application has been made.

The Council, in making such agreements, will have regard to:

- The Development Plan and any relevant local area plan
- the need to ensure the overall coherence of the development to which the planning application relates;
- The views of the developer in relation to the impact of the agreement on the proposed development, and

- The need for social integration.

The Council's Planning & Housing Sections will encourage housing developers to whom the 20% quota will apply to discuss the likely terms of the Part V agreements at such consultations. An agreement in relation to compliance with Part V of the Act must be made prior to submission of planning application.

It is currently a condition of all permissions being issued, to which Part V complies, that all agreements must be reached within 8 weeks of the grant of permission.

All social housing provided under Part V of the Planning & Development Act 2000 in accordance with this strategy shall be allocated to persons on the Waiting List for that allocation area in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Letting Priorities, and affordable housing provided under Part V of the Act in accordance with the terms of this Housing Strategy all shall be allocated in accordance with a Scheme of Priorities for affordable housing as adopted by the Council.

4.3 Meeting the needs of persons with special requirements

The Elderly

It is estimated that the share of people over the age of 65 in the State will increase from 11.1% in 2002 to 18.2% by 2016. The figure in Waterford was 12.3% in 2006. Some 3,400 persons aged 65 and over live alone in Waterford.

The main emphasis in the Council's housing policy for the elderly will be to enable elderly people to choose between adapting their homes for the increasing disabilities of Old Age or to move to accommodation more suited to their needs.

When planning and allocating accommodation for the elderly, special attention will be given to the elderly on low incomes in substandard, privately rented accommodation. Priority will be given to improving the accommodation of the elderly who lack the basic amenities of an indoor toilet, hot and cold water and a bath or shower.

Key housing issues that should be taken into consideration in the provision of housing for older persons are:

Location - accessible to local retail facilities and public transport, and not be located on steep gradients.

Accessible design - should meet the requirements of both the disabled elderly and the non-disabled – elderly i.e. single storey and double storey housing appropriate on a case-by-case basis. Part M of the Building Regulations, 2001 provides mandatory instructions that all new housing (private, affordable and social) must be designed to enable adaptable/lifelong housing at a later date if necessary. The ground floor of all homes must contain a bathroom and be designed such that it is adaptable to accommodate a person with a physical disability.

Such measures will result in older persons being able to adapt their home if necessary in order to continue living there.

Scheme of Housing Aid for Older People is available to assist older people living in poor housing conditions to have necessary repairs or improvements carried out. All grant applications are assessed on the basis of household means. The maximum grant is 100% of the costs of works, subject to upper limit and the percentage of grant payable is reduced based on household income

Wherever possible, elderly people will be housed in their own area. Dependent elderly people in isolated rural areas should be encouraged to move to suitable accommodation in nearby villages and towns. Waterford County Council will work with Voluntary Agencies to provide housing for the elderly.

People with Disabilities

Social and affordable housing for people with disabilities is required with respect to appropriate crisis units, sheltered and supported housing, and independent living options - a range of housing options are required. Such housing should not be segregated from the general population; rather it should be integrated within housing estates and between estates, towns and villages.

Importantly, where possible, such housing should meet the following requirements:

Location – be accessible to public transport

Access - pedestrian safety and ease of access should be catered for by ensuring that pavements are dished and best access practice is adhered to

Accessible design - should suit the requirements of individual tenants and therefore requires direct and on-going consultation with the prospective

tenant (with respect to size, design and accessories)

Housing Adaptation Grants for People with disability - available to assist in the carrying out of works that are reasonably necessary for the purposes of rendering a house more suitable for the accommodation of a person with a disability.

Refugees

Persons who have been granted refugee status have automatic rights to apply and be assessed for local authority housing. Consideration should be given in the provision of housing for refugees in terms of household size and structure and the need for access to social supports in terms of language, education, employment etc.

4.4 Countering social segregation

Section 94 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 states that a Housing Strategy shall take into account the need, *inter alia*, to counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different social backgrounds. It will be the Council's policy to encourage the development of mixed and balanced communities so as to avoid areas of social exclusion.

Specific policies in this regard are set out in section 4.1 above.

4.5 Promoting the role of housing agencies

Waterford County Council and Dungarvan Town Council have had a long and very successful relationship with the Voluntary Housing sector and have assisted a number of approved bodies over the past number of years.

The voluntary housing sector represents a potentially valuable resource within the County. The local authority recognise its important role and the particular resources and experience it brings to the social housing sector, particularly in the provision of housing for special needs categories each as the elderly, people with disabilities and homeless people.

It is proposed that the council will continue to further these relationships over the lifetime of this strategy.