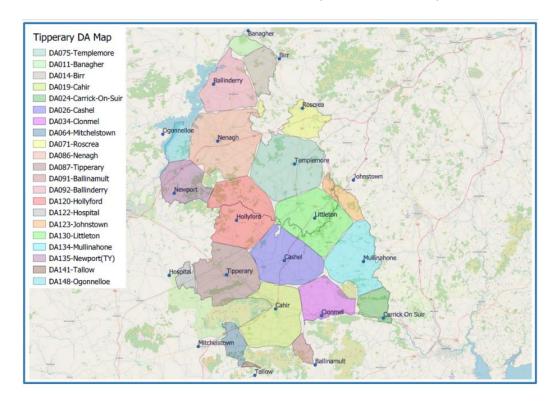**Delivery of the National Broadband Plan in County Tipperary**

Tipperary County Council supports the delivery and implementation of the rollout of the National Broadband Plan (NBP) and the policies identified in the County Tipperary Digital Strategy 2018-2023.

 The rollout of high-speed broadband through the National Broadband Plan (NBP) will be a key enabler of remote working in rural Ireland, with added benefits through reduced commuting time, lower transport emissions, a better work-life balance and improved quality of life.
The NBP rollout will also have a transformative effect for rural business, farms, schools and communities as more and more elements of our interactions are delivered through digital technologies. Improved access to digital connectivity will also support social cohesion and urban / rural equality. The National Broadband Plan (NBP) is a key aspect of government strategy across a number of key areas including climate, agriculture, education, transport, tourism, sustainable growth, jobs and health.

The term 'broadband' refers to internet access. Broadband connectivity is important for growth, innovation and social cohesion. Today over seven in ten premises have access to high speed broadband from commercial operators. There are approximately 540,000 premises where operators will not provide this essential service. These are located in the National Broadband Plan - State intervention area. In 2019, the Government appointed National Broadband Ireland - NBI™ to build, maintain and operate a future proofed high-speed broadband network in the State intervention area over a 25-year period.

The **NBI™** high-speed Fibre broadband Network is currently being deployed to over 29,759 premises in 21 State Intervention - Deployment Areas (DAs) in County Tipperary - which includes homes, farms, commercial businesses and schools. This equates to 35% of all premises in the county.

*The current status of each Deployment Area is shown on the **NBI™** web link at https://nbi.ie/where-are-we-working/*

Covid-19 has further highlighted the importance of broadband in keeping people connected to each other, their work, education resources, business needs, and entertainment services. The NBP will contribute significantly to removing the existing digital divide between urban and rural communities in Ireland.

The government wants to roll out high speed broadband as quickly as possible and is in the process of ensuring early connection to high speed broadband in key locations in rural communities. The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) is working with the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) and the local authorities to deliver high speed broadband to specified BCPs across the country. These locations will be connected with high speed broadband in Year two/ three of the NBP State intervention deployment - while waiting for the wider deployment to reach their area.

To support remote working and connected communities, approximately 300 BCPs throughout the country were identified by Local Authorities to be connected to high speed broadband. The BCPs will leverage the high-speed broadband connection through a range of initiatives, for example, providing free public Wi-Fi. Some will also have hot-desks, and some will be digital hub business centres where digital training, business information events and other SME supports are organised.

The connected Communities- broadband connection points (BCPs) in County Tipperary are named as follows:

1) *ROSSMORE COMMUNITY HALL, ROSSMORE, CASHEL, CO. TIPPERARY, E25D429*
2) *DROM COMMUNITY HALL, DROM, BORRISOLEIGH, THURLES, CO. TIPPERARY, E41X285*
3) *CURREENEY COMMUNITY HALL, CURREENEY, KILCOMMON, THURLES, CO. TIPPERARY, E41XC62*
4) *AGLISH COMMUNITY HALL, AGLISH, ROSCREA, CO. TIPPERARY, E53E132*
5) *KILLURNEY COMMUNITY CENTRE, KILLURNEY, BALLYPATRICK, CLONMEL, CO. TIPPERARY, E91H7W4*
6) *MOYGLASS COMMUNITY HALL, MOYGLASS, FETHARD, CO. TIPPERARY, E91WK25*
7) *KILLOSCULLY COMMUNITY CENTRE, KILLOSCULLY, NEWPORT, CO. TIPPERARY, V94FK20*
8) *KILLEA COMMUNITY CENTRE, KILLEA, TEMPLEMORE, CO. TIPPERARY, E41T6Y0*
9) *THE PAVILLION, BALLINDERRY SPORTSFIELD, BALLINDERRY, NENAGH, CO. TIPPERARY, E45 F627*
10) *BALLINAHINCH COMMUNITY CENTRE, ROSSFINCH, BALLINAHINCH, BIRDHILL, V94 CVC0*
11) *BOHER PARISH HALL, BOHER, BALLINA, V94 EY06*
12) *FANURE COMMUNITY HALL, FANURE, ROSCREA, COUNTY TIPPERARY E53 AE02*
13) *KILCOLEMAN COMMUNITY AND RECREATIONAL CENTRE, BURGESS GAA CLUB, PAIRC NA NGAEL, KILCOLEMAN, NEWTOWN, NENAGH, E45 YH76*
14) *THE APPLE CAMPING & CARAVAN PARK, MOORSTOWN, CAHIR, E21 YX33*
15) *DONASKEAGH COMMUNITY CENTRE, DONASKEAGH, E34 AK24* (as NBI Fibre is now available in this area – the HSB connection to this building will be using "Fibre cable")*
16) *TERRYGLASS COMMUNITY HALL, TERRYGLASS, NENAGH, E45 FC42*
17) *BALLYLOOBY CASTLEGRACE GAA CLUB, BALLYLOOBY CASTLEGRACE GAA CLUBHOUSE, KILROE, BALLYLOOBY, E21 TA47*
18) *LATTERAGH COMMUNITY CENTRE, SALLYPARK, LATTERAGH, NENAGH, E45 EF68*
19) *GURTAGARRY COMMUNITY HALL, GORTAGARRY, TOOMEVARA, NENAGH, CO. TIPPERARY E45 FA43*
20) *LISMACKIN COMMUNITY HALL, LISMACKIN, ROSCREA, CO. TIPPERARY E53 Y589*

21) *NORTH TIPPERARY FOOD WORKS,* *MAIN STREET, REARCROSS, NEWPORT, COUNTY TIPPERARY V94 YW08**

* Not yet connected to HSB per (26/4/2022)

The BCP delivery project is well underway in County Tipperary with preliminary technical work advancing at locations throughout the County which will facilitate connectivity in the near future. In advance of homes and businesses receiving future-proofed broadband directly to their door, the BCPs will provide vital high-speed internet access at locations within the intervention Area.

*Photograph 1 – **KILLOSCULLY COMMUNITY CENTRE BCP, V94FK20***

35 BCP primary schools in County Tipperary will also be connected to broadband by the end of 2022 as the rollout of the National Broadband Plan accelerates. These connections will be in place significantly earlier than the original completion date in 2026.

These 35 BCP schools delivered under the National Broadband Plan (NBP) will ensure that primary school pupils in rural Tipperary will be able to participate fully in the digital revolution that is taking place. A BCP at a school location will provide connectivity for pupils and teachers and will underpin the Department of Education's Digital Learning Framework for Schools.

The BCP initiative is a collaborative effort involving the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, the Department of Rural and Community Development, the Department of Education, Local Authorities and the owners and managers of these BCP sites.

Our Rural Future policy recognises **remote working hubs** and BCPs as being key economic assets for towns and villages throughout Ireland. By supporting sustainable economic activity and local job opportunities, hubs can help to drive both urban and rural regeneration and support the balanced regional development goals under Project Ireland 2040.

The vision of **Our Rural Future** is for a thriving rural Ireland which is integral to our national economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing and development. An Ireland which is built on the interdependence of urban and rural areas. An Ireland which recognises the centrality of people, the importance of vibrant and lived-in rural places, and the potential to create quality jobs and sustain our shared environment.

High quality digital connectivity offers an unprecedented opportunity to transform rural Ireland. It will support the sustainability of rural communities by enabling more people to continue to live and work in rural locations and encouraging others to relocate to rural areas.
The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of digital connectivity in supporting many aspects of our daily lives. Throughout the crisis, digital connectivity helped many people to avoid becoming socially isolated; it enabled students to continue their education through on-line learning; and it demonstrated its potential to support economic activity through remote working and the delivery of services on-line.

The availability of high-speed broadband services in rural communities will have a transformative effect, even in the most remote parts of the County. It will ensure equality of access to on-line services for people in rural areas. It will create potential for improved social cohesion and economic growth and will allow people to pursue their careers without the need to relocate, as well as offering

the potential to attract new people and businesses to rural locations. NBP connectivity will allow businesses, particularly small and micro enterprises, to trade in wider markets, potentially expanding their customer base internationally.

Digital Education in Schools

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of connectivity in facilitating remote learning. The availability of high-speed broadband services will allow rural schools to benefit through facilitating live streaming of classes where required and using innovative educational tools, granting access to specialist teaching resources and enabling equal engagement through distance learning.

This will be underpinned by the delivery of high-speed residential broadband under the National Broadband Plan, enabling engagement in the home. Under the Department of Education's Schools Broadband Programme, 98% of primary schools are provided with some level of broadband connectivity, with all post-primary schools and a number of special schools provided with high speed symmetrical connectivity of 100 Mbp/s or more

Where existing and planned commercial infrastructure does not provide for high speed broadband, the services to be rolled out under the NBP will help address connectivity issues and bring many benefits to rural primary schools. These include facilitating improved collaboration and engagement across the school sector, opening up capacity for teachers to embed digital technologies in teaching and learning in their schools, facilitating collaboration with other schools, including on the islands, and improving networking across schools. The Department of Education will continue to deliver guidance on the use of digital technologies in schools, including through national frameworks such as the Digital Learning Framework, and provide Continuous Professional Development programmes for teachers and school leaders. There have also been considerable developments in Further and Higher Education training to improve capacity in digital inclusion and blended learning to make education and training as accessible as possible to everyone, including those in rural communities.

Digital Skills for All

Acquiring digital skills is as important as physical access to broadband infrastructure to enable individuals and communities to maximise the benefits of high-speed broadband connectivity. The internet and digital technologies are transforming the way people live and work, but figures from the Central Statistics Office show that use of these technologies decreases in older age categories. The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications'

The **Tipperary Broadband Connection Point Network - Project Activities Planned for 2022** to include**;**

1) **"Remote Digital Hubs" –** each with 4 Remote Working Spaces
2) **Our Kids Code – in association with Trinity College, Dublin**
   Families are required to complete this Programme – includes new wearable devices – Killurney BCP Pilot completed.
3) **Hi Digital - in association with Vodafone and Active Retirement Ireland** in 7 BCPs in County Tipperary including Rossmore, Curreeney, Killurney, Moyglass, Kiloscully, Fanure and Gurtagarry BCPs.
   Hi Digital Training Programme to older people in the community

4) **Microsoft Dream Space Den -** An space for young people to engage with all available Dream Space content without the need for an educator or facilitator.
A Digital Skills amenity and resource for all members of the community (Teachers, Parents, Young People, etc.)
Pilot in Rossmore, Gurtagarry and Killurney BCPs

5) **KINIA**
Youth Work Ireland Tipperary are one of our partners and we see real potential for building in BCP sites with youth services across the county as one aspect to an overall approach.

6) Our **Rural Future: Digital Initiative Programme 2021** – **Smart Skills for Farming Communities (Tipperary)** with the support of the IFA, Teagasc, ICMSA, Others and the Connected Communities – Broadband Connection Points, the Department of Rural and Community Development in the use of new digital technologies in Irish agriculture in rural County Tipperary and is based upon the Departments BCP Thematic programmes.

7) **DRCD/ Irish Film Institute** – Special Screening of Irish Films which were nominated for an "Oscar award" will be shown throughout the "**Tipperary BCP Network"**