

Monday, 3 May 2021



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development

Our Rural Future: Minister Humphreys announces €15 million fund to revitalise rural towns & villages

- ***Tackling dereliction a key focus of new enhanced Town and Village Renewal Scheme***
- ***Funding available to turn vacant buildings in town centres into remote working hubs, enterprise spaces, cultural, tourism and community hubs***
- ***Scheme encourages Collaborative Projects to upgrade shop fronts and inject street facades with colour and vibrancy***
- ***Investment in green spaces in town centres***
- ***Marketing Campaigns to attract remote workers to rural Ireland***
- ***Grants from €20,000 to €500,000 available***

The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, has today (Monday, May 3rd) announced €15 million in funding to help revitalise rural towns and villages post Covid-19.

The Town and Village Renewal Scheme is designed to breathe new life into rural communities - making them more attractive places to live, work, socialise and raise a family.

The initiative is a key part of *Our Rural Future* – the Government's five year strategy to revitalise rural Ireland.

The measures that will be supported by the 2021 Town and Village Renewal Scheme include:

- Tackling dereliction in town centres
- Turning vacant properties into remote working and community spaces
- Supporting Local Authorities to run innovative marketing campaigns targeted at attracting remote workers to their county.
- Investing in green spaces, parks and recreational amenities
- Upgrading and improving shop fronts & streetscapes on Main Streets
- Projects that support and enhance the night time economy and add vibrancy to town centres

The Town and Village Renewal Scheme is administered through the Local Authorities, who are required to work closely with local communities and local businesses to develop and implement proposals.

The previous maximum grant of €200,000 has been increased to €500,000 under this year's scheme so that projects of scale can be supported.

Launching the Scheme today, Minister Humphreys said:

"As part of the Government ambitious new rural development policy, Our Rural Future, I am determined to make our rural towns and villages vibrant and attractive places to live, work, socialise and raise a family.

"As part of the €15 million Fund I am announcing today, I want to see innovative and exciting projects coming forward that will make a real and lasting difference in our rural towns and villages.

“The focus of this year’s scheme is to renovate derelict and vacant buildings in our town centres and give them a new purpose – whether it is for remote working, cultural or community use. I have increased the maximum grant to €500,000 this year so that projects of scale and ambition can be put forward.

“I also want to see Local Authorities engaging with local businesses and property owners on our main streets and putting forward collaborative projects to upgrade shop fronts and enhance our streetscapes. Support is also available for murals in our town centres, perhaps dedicated to local cultural or sporting personalities and events. This is all about adding colour and vibrancy to our towns and villages making them more attractive places to live, work in and visit.

“Most importantly, I want to seize the momentum around remote working and for that reason, I am supporting Local Authorities to run innovative marketing campaigns highlighting what their area has to offer in terms of remote working facilities as well as cultural and recreational amenities. This is about showcasing our rural towns and villages with the aim of attracting remote workers and the so called ‘digital nomads’ to come and live in rural Ireland.”

Full details of the scheme are available on [gov.ie](https://www.gov.ie)

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Note to Photo desks

Caption for attached photographs: Pictured at Scotshouse, Co. Monaghan; Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, launching a €15 million fund to help regenerate rural towns and villages. The 2021 Town & Village Renewal Scheme will provide funding to bring vacant and derelict buildings and sites back into use as homes, multi-purpose spaces and remote working hubs.

Credit: Rory Geary Photography

Notes for editors:

The Town & Village Renewal Scheme provides funding for projects that make our towns and villages more attractive and sustainable. Since the launch of the Town and Village Renewal Scheme in 2016, almost €93 million has been allocated to more than 1,300 projects across Ireland. The Scheme has supported settlements the length and breadth of the country.

The scheme is administered through the Local Authorities, who are required to work closely with local communities and local businesses to develop and implement proposals that can make a lasting impact in revitalising rural towns and villages across the country. Applications for funding are submitted to the Department of Rural & Community Development through the Local Authorities. The closing date for the submission of applications is 16th July 2021.

Under the 2021 Scheme, grant funding of 90% of the total cost of a project will be provided for any individual project. The remaining 10% match funding must be contributed by the Local Authority and/or the community.

Each Local Authority is invited to submit up to 8 applications of varying scale under the 2021 Scheme as follows:

- i. 4 applications funding €20,000 to €100,000
- ii. 2 applications funding €20,000 to €250,000
- iii. 1 application funding €20,000 to €500,000
- iv. 1 application funding up to €50,000 (New Project Development Measure)

The 2021 Scheme will continue to support projects that respond to the new challenges associated with COVID-19 and support the economic and social recovery of our rural towns and villages.

The **priorities** of the 2021 Town and Village Renewal Scheme are:

- Projects that bring vacant and derelict buildings and sites back into use as multi-purpose spaces. E.G. Tourism, Cultural or Community Hubs
- Projects that bring vacant properties in Town Centres back into use as Remote Working Hubs. This also includes funding for the repurposing of existing community or publicly owned buildings in town or village centres to facilitate remote working.
- Projects to support the upgrade and enhancement of shopfronts and street facades in towns and villages.

- Projects to develop parks, green spaces and recreational amenities in town centres to make them vibrant hubs for community enjoyment, and to increase footfall for local businesses.
- Marketing campaigns targeted at attracting remote workers and mobile talent to their county/region; and promotion of specific town/villages to attract new customers and/or business investment.
- Projects that support and enhance the night-time economy in line with emerging recommendations from the Night-Time Economy Taskforce.
- Regeneration projects that support active and vibrant town and village centres; these projects should be identified in town and village masterplans (or similar) developed in collaboration with the local community, businesses and the other relevant stakeholders in the town or village.

New Project Development Measure:

For the 2021 Scheme a Project Development Measure has been introduced. Under this Measure Local Authorities can apply for grant funding of upto 90% of development costs for one strategic large scale project that may be subsequently progressed with funding from the Town & Village Renewal Scheme e.g. detailed design, preparation for the planning and/or procurement, appropriate assessment etc.

- Funding of up to €50,000 at a 90% rate of aid
- Maximum of one proposal to be submitted by any Local Authority

Full details of the scheme are available on [gov.ie](https://www.gov.ie)