

Good morning all,

Please see below press release issued by the Department this morning.

Kind regards,

Ann

Ann O'Donnell

Community Policy and Libraries Development Unit

Media release

Wednesday, 14th December 2022



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

**Our Rural Future: Minister Humphreys announces over €27 million
to combat dereliction and breathe new life into rural towns and
villages**

- ***Largest ever investment under Town and Village Renewal Scheme***
- ***Former Banks, Ballrooms, Courthouses, Convents, Cinemas, Garda Stations and FCA Halls to be regenerated for community use***
- ***Public Plazas, Town Parks, Playgrounds, Community Gardens and Dog Parks to be developed***
- ***Local Shops and Businesses in 26 towns to have their shopfronts and building facades enhanced under Streetscapes Enhancement Initiative***

The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, has today (14th December 2022) announced over €27 million in funding that will combat dereliction and breathe new life into rural towns and villages.

The announcement represents the largest ever investment under the **Town and Village Renewal Scheme** and will see a range of landmark projects delivered across Rural Ireland.

The major package announced by Minister Humphreys today comprises 4 Strands:

- **€17 million** investment in 75 Town and Village Projects nationwide;
- **€6 million** in funding to purchase and re-develop vacant and derelict buildings and convert them into community facilities;
- **€2.6 million** to upgrade the shopfronts and building facades in 26 towns under the Streetscape Enhancement Measure;
- **€1.56 million** for planning and design works on a range of projects that are at an early stage of development.

Announcing the funding today, Minister Humphreys:

"I am delighted to announce a record €27 million in funding under my Department's Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

"This is all about tackling the scourge of vacancy and dereliction in our rural towns and villages.

"It's about taking old buildings and giving them a new lease of life.

"And it's about rejuvenating the centre of our towns by developing public plazas, town parks, community gardens and sports facilities for the benefit of local families.

"This investment today will breathe new life into rural towns and villages across every single county.

"It's the largest ever investment under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme and demonstrates my passion and ambition for our rural communities."

Among the 75 projects that received €17 million in funding under the standard Town and Village Renewal Scheme are:

- **Robertstown, Co. Kildare:** The development of a recreational facility which will include an eco-park, green playground, integrated green skate park, car park, dog park, playing pitches and an outdoor Amphitheatre at the centre - **€500,000.**
- **Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim:** To create a significant vibrant Town Centre community venue "The Market Yard" to host community and charity events including festivals, fun days as well as creating a Town Centre Tourist Kiosk and Café - **€435,013.**
- **Causeway, Co. Kerry:** Refurbishment of the former Shannon Ballroom (currently derelict) creating a facility within Causeway, which provides a focal point for the community that will be used as a meeting space and co-working hub - **€250,000.**
- **Longford Town, Co. Longford:** The development of a 'Skate and Recreational Park' within Longford Town along proposed future town cycleway and within immediate vicinity to the existing Royal Canal Greenway - **€405,000.**
- **Duncannon, Co. Wexford:** To restore and develop the historic Duncannon Fort - **€500,000.**
- **Herbertstown, Co. Limerick:** To renovate and re-purpose the former co-op building to develop it as a multi-use community space (indoor and outdoor). The investment will deliver a Community café, Men's Shed, remote working hub, enterprise hub and community garden - **€495,229.**
- **Arigna, Co. Roscommon:** A three phase development to include a public sports park, a pedestrian plaza and ancillary works to put the heart back into this historical village of Arigna - **€499,950.**
- **Bagenalstown, Co. Carlow:** Public realm improvements scheme for the enhancement of the River Barrow. This includes a coffee dock, bench seating,

covered canopy, green trellis overhangs, planter climber walls and decorative paving- **€500,000.**

- **Stepaside, Co. Dublin:** The project proposes to enhance the public realm and streetscapes of Stepside village, including the provision of a central green space - **€225,000.**
- **Convoy, Co. Donegal:** The development of the 'Railway Park' along the former and now disused railway line in Convooy providing a much needed inclusive green space and recreational amenity in the centre of the village - **€435,204.**
- **Moate, Co. Westmeath:** Bringing the old Fire Station in the town centre, which has laid vacant for many years, back into use as a multi-purpose space for community use by the Moate Action Group - **€112,500.**
- **Ballina, Co. Tipperary:** Provision of an access promenade and viewing area across the river Shannon, to drive tourist and local footfall activity - **€360,000.**

Building Acquisition Measure (BAM)

Minister Humphreys also today announced 29 projects that will benefit from funding under the Building Acquisition Measure (BAM) of the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

Under the initiative, local authorities were asked by the department to engage with the local community to identify suitable vacant or derelict properties that could be taken into public ownership and converted for community use.

Among the 29 projects to be funded under the €6 million Building Acquisition Measure are:

- **Rathkeale, Co. Limerick:** Convert the former Bank of Ireland Building into an e-Hub and multi-purpose community facility.
- **Mitchelstown, Co. Cork:** Convert of the FCA Hall on the grounds of the old Military Barracks into a multi-purpose sports and community venue.

- **Moyvane, Co. Kerry:** Convert a former garda station into a multi-purpose hub.
- **Kilrush, Co. Clare:** Purchase the former Mars Cinema and Ballroom and convert it into an educational training facility.
- **Monasterevin, Co. Kildare:** Convert a former Bank of Ireland building for use as a co-working enterprise hub.
- **New Ross, Co. Wexford:** Convert the former courthouse as a multi-use community building.
- **Carrick-on-Suir, Co. Tipperary:** Purchase of a garden centre for tourism accommodation, together with cultural, recreational, commercial and retail uses.
- **Monaghan Town, Co. Monaghan:** Purchase of the Convent School building for use as a social enterprise hub.

Minister Humphreys continued:

"We are all familiar with that old building in the community that has acted as an eyesore for far too long.

"This particular initiative, the Building Acquisition Measure, is about providing our local authorities with the necessary resources to tackle the scourge of vacancy and dereliction.

"This funding will see former garda stations, convents, old cinemas and banks taken into public ownership and converted for the good of the local community.

"This scheme goes to the heart of our rural development policy 'Our Rural Future' – breathing new life into towns and villages and making them better places to live, work and raise a family."

Streetscape Enhancement Initiative

Minister Humphreys has also today given the green light for works to take place in 26 towns under the **Streetscape Enhancement Initiative**.

This scheme will see funding of up to **€100,000** provided to one town per local authority.

Under the initiative, retailers and property owners will be provided with grants that they can use to improve the facades of their buildings, carry out artwork or install features such as street furniture or canopies.

The Towns being supported under the Streetscape Enhancement Initiative are:

County Council	Town
Carlow County Council	Bagenalstown
Cavan County Council	Ballyconnell
Clare County Council	Lisdoonvarna
Cork County Council	Bandon
Donegal County Council	Lifford
Fingal County Council	Rush
Galway County Council	Tuam
Kerry County Council	Tarbert
Kildare County Council	Athy
Kilkenny County Council	Callan
Laois County Council	Abbeyleix
Leitrim County Council	Carrick On Shannon

Limerick County Council	Foynes
Longford County Council	Granard
Louth County Council	Omeath
Mayo County Council	Ballyhaunis
Meath County Council	Trim
Monaghan County Council	Clones
Offaly County Council	Clara
Roscommon County Council	Ballinlough
Sligo County Council	Enniscrone
Tipperary County Council	Tipperary Town
Waterford County Council	Tallow
Westmeath County Council	Kilbeggan
Wexford County Council	Enniscorthy
Wicklow County Council	Newtownmountkennedy

Project Development Measure

Minister Humphreys also announced a further €1.56 million to fund 33 projects that are pre-development stage. This funding will support feasibility, planning and design works.

Examples of these projects include:

- **Ballyroan, Co. Laois:** Feasibility study to determine the potential future uses of the vacant/derelict former old boys school in Ballyroan village - **€50,000.**

- **Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim:** Feasibility study and preliminary design and planning for the courthouse building in Manorhamilton, with a view to bringing back into use as a community facility - **€50,000.**
- **Moneygall, Co. Offaly:** Architect led design team to deliver a detailed design proposal and planning permission for refurbishment of a derelict property into a multi-purpose community space/hub - **€50,000.**
- **Strandhill, Co. Sligo:** Design team to develop masterplan for Dolly's Cottage, a tourist attraction, including site survey, conservation architect, structural engineer, planning design - **€49,999.50.**
- **Tramore, Co. Waterford:** Feasibility study for the development plan of a multi-cultural centre, including review of properties and potential locations for the centre, funding model to acquire the building, and scope initial development works required - **€49,500.**
- **Carnew, Co Wicklow:** To do design, cost and planning for the refurbishment of the old Bank of Ireland building (BAM purchase) to become a remote working hub - **€49,999.50.**

The Minister concluded:

“Today I am giving the green light for works to commence in the 26 towns selected under the Streetscapes Enhancement Initiative.

“From Bagenalstown to Ballinlough, this initiative will provide retailers and property owners with grants that they can use to improve the facades of their buildings, carry out artwork or install features such as street furniture or canopies.

“This is a new initiative that I introduced as part of Our Rural Future. The response has been hugely positive to date and I look forward to seeing works commence in these 26 towns.

“Finally I am delighted to sanction €1.56 million for pre-development work on 33 projects to help with the costs of developing these applications so that they are shovel ready for future funding calls.”

A full list of the projects supported under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme is available [here](#)

ENDS

Photo caption:

Minister Heather Humphreys announces €27 million in funding to breathe new life into towns and villages across rural Ireland under Our Rural Future.

Notes to editors:

Town and Village Renewal Scheme

The 2022 Town and Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS) will prioritise tackling vacancy and dereliction in towns and villages. Other projects which will be welcomed include regeneration projects that support active and vibrant town or village centres, remote working, upgrading shopfronts and street facades, and green spaces and parks, etc.

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.

Main TVRS Measure

Under the main Town and Village Renewal Measure applications are permitted as follows:

- 5 applications of between €20,000 and €250,000
- 1 application of between €20,000 and €500,000

Project Development Measure

The Project Development Measure was introduced in 2021 and now forms part of the overarching Town and Village Renewal Scheme structure. It provides for a pipeline of significant, well developed projects which might be subsequently progressed to construction stage, subject to availability of further funding. Each local authority was invited to apply for up to 2 PDM projects for up to €50,000 per project.

Building Acquisition Measure

The new 2022 Building Acquisition Measure formed part of the overarching Town and Village Renewal Scheme structure. It provided up to €400,000 to each local authority to purchase vacant and derelict buildings for future development as community assets. Each local authority was invited to apply to purchase up to two such buildings within the €400,000 available.

Our Rural Future

Our Rural Future is the whole-of-government policy for rural Ireland for the period 2021-2025. It represents a new milestone in the approach to rural development policy for Ireland.

The policy's objectives will be achieved through the delivery of 161 measures, to be implemented progressively over the life of the policy across a range of government departments and agencies. Annual work programmes enable new actions to be added over the policy's lifecycle, to respond to the emerging needs of rural communities.

Delivery of actions in the 2022 Work Programme will be monitored through the publication of 6-monthly Progress Reports.