

Minister Humphreys approves €3 million funding for public library upgrades and measures to respond and adapt to COVID-19.

From [Department of Rural and Community Development](#)

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113 libraries to benefit from €4.1 million in overall funding

Meeting spaces, study pods and other upgrades to be carried out

Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, has today (Monday, 28 September) announced funding of €3 million to support a Small Scale Capital Works Programme in public libraries.

The Department funding will be matched by local authorities to the value of c. €1.1 million - giving a total investment of almost €4.1million.

The public libraries strategy, [Our Public Libraries](#) , seeks to deliver a progressive library service and facilities that are fit for purpose.

This funding announcement, along with the library projects funded under the Libraries Capital Programme and the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, sees a major investment in public library buildings across the country.

Announcing the funding, Minister Humphreys said,

“When I launched this initiative earlier in the Summer I allocated €2.5 million total. However, following the receipt of the applications, and in recognition of the breadth and quality of the proposals, I have decided to increase the overall allocation to €3m, providing each Library Authority with €100,000 for their proposed works.”

The Minister continued:

“The works range from the installation of study pods, to Perspex screens, to building extensions; all of which will make a real difference to the library buildings as they adapt to the new public health guidelines.

These works will strengthen the library's position as a community hub and ensure that it is a modern, well-equipped and comfortable facility that will leave a positive legacy for years to come. In total 113 libraries will be upgraded with this funding."

In concluding, the Minister thanked local authorities and library staff for their ongoing work during Covid-19.

Works will commence in the libraries over the coming weeks and will be completed by end 2020/early 2021.

ENDS

Notes for Editor

Small Scale Capital Works Programme

The Small Scale Capital Works programme will complement the existing Libraries Capital Programme. Funding will support works including:

- Upgrades to facilities e.g. remote working facilities, new furniture and fittings, library occupancy counter & traffic control technology, porches, awnings, ventilation system etc.
- Technology / software to support contactless user services e.g. apps for borrowing, user e-services access management, booking management services etc.
- Energy Efficiency technologies in libraries to make the buildings more sustainable and energy efficient by installing LED sensor motion lighting, insulating or replacing roofs, and fitting heating systems that could utilise solar power etc.
- Each Library Authority has been allocated €100,000.

Libraries Capital Programme Update

- The Libraries Capital Programme will invest some €29 million in 18 projects, and the My Open Library service between 2016 and 2022. The Programme has six completed library projects with five projects at construction stage.
- The My Open Library (MOL) initiative provides self-service access to libraries that is additional to normal staffed hours. Library members can access a MOL library from 8am to 10pm, 365 days a year. The My Open Library service is currently available in 15 libraries and will be provided in a further 10 before the end of 2020.

Library projects funded under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund

- The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) supports the renewal of small towns and villages and this includes investment in seven projects which contain public libraries.
- Funding under RRDF is categorised under 2 headings - Category 1 which are ready-to-go projects and Category 2 are projects which require further development to enable them to be potentially submitted as Category 1 proposals.

Currently the following libraries projects are being funded under the RRDF:

Category 1

- Kinsale Library and Public Realm.
- Virginia Library
- Castleblayney Library
- Macroom Library

Category 2

- Banagher Library
- Thomastown Library
- Youghal Library

Libraries Reopening Following COVID-19 Restrictions

- 262 out of 327 library branches are now reopened. Of those, 234 are providing a browsing service, either by appointment or drop-in, and the remainder are providing a 'Contact and Collect' service for members who do not wish to enter the premises.
- Some of the smaller branches may not open for browsing until the social distancing requirements are reduced as they are small in size e.g. a room in a community centre and have only one member of staff assigned to them.
- Libraries continue to provide their online services which includes eBooks, eAudiobooks, newspapers, magazines and eLearning courses