

Minister Humphreys awards further €4.3 million for COVID-19 adaptations in towns and villages

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

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- 137 towns and villages countrywide to benefit
- Over €10 million now awarded to 363 projects under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme since July

Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, today announced details of a further 137 rural towns and villages that will benefit from €4.3 million in funding to help them adjust to COVID-19 restrictions.

The funding is being delivered under the Accelerated Measure of the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

This funding will enable towns and villages to implement immediate measures that will encourage people into towns and villages to shop and socialise, while adhering to public health guidelines. The funding is facilitated through the Government's July Stimulus package.

The funding announced today is in addition to €6.1 million allocated by Minister Humphreys to 226 towns and villages since July under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme for COVID-19 adaptations.

This means that over 360 projects are now being supported with funding of more than €10 million under the Accelerated Measure of the 2020 Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

The allocation includes funding of €1.5 million for 38 large towns with populations in excess of 10,000 which have not previously been funded through the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

Examples of the successful projects announced today include:

- Digital Hubs: Enhancements to a number of digital hubs and Broadband Connection Points across the country to support remote working.
- Co Kerry: Picnic and Recreational Area at Inch Beach
- Co. Roscommon: Range of interventions to increase footfall in the village of Kiltewan, including the provision of outdoor community amenities with gazebo, BBQ and outdoor heat, and a generator and PA system for events.

- Co. Laois: Provision of “smart benches” and cycle racks along the Slieve Bloom cycle track.
- Co. Waterford: Online platform to support local traders in the Waterford Gaeltacht and the provision of amenity seating in key locations.
- Co. Offaly: Refurbishment of Millennium Square in Tullamore.
- Co. Monaghan: External Porch and enhancements to aid access to Blackwater Valley Learning Centre/Community Centre at Knockconan.
- Dublin Fingal: Expansion of the number of festivals and events at Swords Castle through the purchase and installation of 40 cabins to be used by local producers.

Speaking today, Minister Humphreys said :

“Our rural towns and villages have always played a huge role in supporting businesses and communities by providing spaces for people to meet, socialise and shop locally. Recognising their importance to the economic and social well-being of rural areas, the Town and Village Renewal Scheme has invested significantly in towns and villages over the last number of years.

“The scheme is now more important than ever to assist businesses and communities to address the challenges that COVID-19 has brought to their towns and villages.

“I am therefore delighted today to announce the award of an additional €4.3 million under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme to 137 towns and villages across the country, for measures can be implemented immediately to adapt to COVID-19.

“The allocation includes funding of €1.5 million for 38 large towns with populations in excess of 10,000 which have not previously been funded through the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. This is in recognition of the important role that these towns play in supporting their rural hinterlands.”

The Minister continued :

“This is the third round of funding I have announced under this new strand of the Town & Village Renewal Scheme since July.

“The results of this funding are already being seen in towns and villages across the country as the Local Authorities, together with local communities, are rethinking the use of our public spaces.

“I look forward to seeing the impact of these projects over the coming months so that all of our communities can make the most of what our towns and villages have to offer.”

Full details of the 137 projects supported under this round of funding are available [here](#).

ENDS

Notes for editors:

Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2020

The Government's July Stimulus Package allocated an extra €10 million of funding to support towns and villages to adapt to COVID-19 under the 2020 Town and Village Renewal Scheme. This funding was in addition to €15 million already ear-marked for the scheme for 2020. The scheme is placing a particular focus this year on immediate responses to the COVID-19 pandemic (Accelerated Measure) and medium-term interventions to assist rural towns and villages to recover from the impact of the virus (Standard Measure).

Local Authorities were invited to submit applications under 3 separate rounds of funding under the Accelerated Measure. 106 projects were approved under Round 1 funding on 3rd August 2020 and details can be found [here](#).

120 projects were approved under Round 2 funding on 11th September 2020 and details can be found [here](#).

The list of the 137 towns and villages approved today under Round 3 can be found [here](#).

The projects approved will assist businesses/communities in towns and villages to adapt to the specific challenges posed by COVID-19 (e.g. social distancing) and to increase footfall and generate economic activity in the short-term. These projects have been identified by Local Authorities in conjunction with local community groups and businesses.

They include projects that adapt outdoor spaces for social gatherings, dining or the hosting of outdoor events; marketing campaigns to entice people back into towns and villages; investment in developing or improving the online presence of towns and villages; purchase of marquees and stage equipment to support local festivals/events; and public realm/infrastructural enhancements to allow for social distancing and to make towns/villages more welcoming.

Applications under the Standard Measure of the Town & Village Renewal Scheme, which will support the medium-term recovery of rural towns and villages from the impacts of COVID-19 are currently being assessed. The successful projects will be announced when that process is complete.