



Minister O'Donnell announces launch of new €120m fund to renovate heritage buildings in town centres

- **THRIVE scheme offers local authorities up to €7m to renovate disused heritage buildings in cities, regional growth centres and key towns**
- **Initiative has potential to transform town centres across the regions supporting delivery of the Government's *Town Centre First* Policy**

A new funding scheme under Ireland's two European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Regional Programmes is providing €120m to support local authorities and their citizens to re-imagine town centres and to transform publicly owned vacant or derelict heritage buildings within those town centres through renovation, renewal, and adaptive reuse.

THRIVE – the Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme – was launched by Minister of State for Local Government and Planning Kieran O'Donnell TD on February 8. The scheme has been co-designed by the Regional Assemblies and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to address European, national and regional policy objectives. THRIVE is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union.

Minister of State for Local Government and Planning, Kieran O'Donnell said: *"I welcome the launch of the new €120m THRIVE Scheme under the ERDF Regional Programmes. This is an exciting scheme that will breathe new life into towns and urban centres across Ireland, so that they can function as the sustainable and vibrant heart of the communities they serve. At the heart of this is the Town Centre First approach. This ensures that local authorities engage with their citizens to develop plans, select suitable projects, and identify sustainable and viable end uses for underutilised heritage buildings. I look forward to seeing the transformative impact in these centres and the benefits this will have in driving regeneration in the years ahead."*

THRIVE will provide local authorities with funding of between €2m and €7m to renovate, refurbish and adapt vacant and derelict heritage buildings in their town centres. Heritage buildings under the scheme are classified as structures that form part of the architectural heritage and have unique architectural, historical, archaeological or artistic qualities, or are linked to the cultural and economic history of a place.

Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan said: *"This announcement demonstrates the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's commitment to heritage-led regeneration and tackling vacancy as part of the delivery of Town Centre First policy. The funding will support local authorities not only in preserving and protecting our valuable built heritage, but also by ensuring the long-term sustainable re-use of these buildings and helping us meet our climate change targets"*.



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Southern Regional
Assembly

Cathaoirleach of the Northern and Western Regional Assembly, Cllr John Naughten said: “I believe that *THRIVE* will go a long way towards kickstarting development in our region by turning our town centres into attractive spaces for people to live and work and visit. *THRIVE* will promote a citizen-centred and community-led approach to planning and design while also preserving the unique cultural significance of our heritage buildings.”

Projects are required to embrace the core values of the New European Bauhaus – sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusion. The scheme promotes a citizen-centred community-led approach to planning, design and project selection under the Town Centre First framework. Grants of between €40,000 and €200,000 are available to support local authorities with the planning and design phase.

Cathaoirleach of the Southern Regional Assembly, Cllr Terry Shannon said:” *THRIVE* has the potential to transform our town centres by adapting and reusing vacant and derelict heritage buildings and allowing us to create beautiful, sustainable and inclusive spaces to improve the quality of life of our citizens. *THRIVE* provides the opportunity to rejuvenate our heritage buildings to meet the modern and innovative requirements of our communities today.”

THRIVE is targeted at larger urban settlements – cities, regional growth centres and key towns – and is designed to complement other national funds targeting smaller urban settlements. It is a competitive funding call and with 100% grant aid available, is expected to be highly competitive.

The scheme is managed by the two ERDF Managing Authorities – the Southern Regional Assembly and the Northern and Western Regional Assembly. THRIVE is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union. The first call is now open and published on the Assemblies’ websites at www.southernassembly.ie and www.nwra.ie