



Department of Rural and  
Community Development



*An Roinn Forbartha  
Tuaithe agus Pobail*

# **Minister Michael Ring, T.D., Minister for Rural & Community Development**

**Invites**

**Public Consultation**

**Strategy for Public Libraries 2018 - 2022**

**December 2017**

**Department of Rural and Community Development,  
Government Offices**

**Ballina**

**Co. Mayo**

**F26 E8N6**

*Overview Document*

## **1.1 Introduction and Background**

Our public library service is a local government public service, delivered by local authorities. Libraries provide a range of services through a network of public library branches, mobile libraries and online through local library service websites and national portal and resource websites.

Public libraries provide a wide range of services both physical and virtual. The services include, print and digital lending material, reader development advice, internet access and support, information and reference resources and guidance, learning and e-learning activities, literacy support, cultural promotion, and community development.

The public library service is overseen at national level by the Minister for Rural and Community Development, with advisory support from Libraries Development in the Local Government Management Agency.

The current profile of the public library service, according to the most recent data, is as follows –

- 330 library branches across 31 local authorities
- 45 new or extended library branches between 2012 and 2017
- 754,748 members in 2016
- 17,270,751 visits to libraries in 2016
- 17,983,358 items issued in 2016
- In 2016, library members had access to 12 million books across the country as part of the national catalogue and distribution system.

## **1.2 New Public Library Strategy**

A new Public Library Strategy is being developed by the Department of Rural and Community Development, the County and City Management Association and the Local Government Management Agency. Our ambition is to develop an attractive, vibrant and multi-functional library service as a centre for information, learning, local culture and community.

### ***Key Targets***

*The key targets for the new Strategy are –*

- significantly increase active membership from 15% of the population to achieve a target of 30% of the population,
- ensure universal access, all barriers to library use, including library fines and fees, will be removed,
- place the library at the centre of local community,

- affirm the library as the go-to place for information and support on –
  - reading and literacy,
  - formal and informal lifelong learning for all ages,
  - business and job seekers support, and
  - healthy living.
- transform library buildings, user experience, technology, resources, and opening hours to provide a better service to more people,
- provide for increased resources to meet these targets, and
- establish a national and local marketing campaign to promote library services and benefits.

### *Service Development*

The Strategy sets out **three strategic programmes** for service development –

- Reading and Literacy,
- Learning and Information, and
- Community and Culture.

These programmes outline the strategic goals for the development of library services over the next five years. They were identified following consultation with stakeholders, focus groups with library users, an appraisal of both national and international trends in library use and services, and are in alignment with national policy priorities and strategies.

The delivery of the strategic goals is supported by **six enablers** for which programmes of development are also identified –

- Infrastructure and Service Delivery
- Library Team
- Promotion and Marketing
- Collections
- Funding
- Research and Development

The Strategy provides a platform to build on the local and national partnership approach of the public library service, specifically in partnering with a range of key government departments, national and local agencies in the delivery of the initiatives.

### **1.3 Public Consultation**

#### ***We want your opinion!***

This public consultation is the final phase of engagement on the development of the new Strategy. The purpose is to obtain input from as broad a range of interested parties as possible and everyone is welcome to respond. We hope to receive responses from the general public, including current library users and those who do not use public libraries, as well as interested organisations and other stakeholders.

#### ***What we would like you to do***

We would like to get your views on public libraries and library services with the following questions to guide you –

1. What do think the key priorities for the Library Strategy should be for the period 2018 to 2022?
2. To support people more fully and help them meet the challenges and take advantage of opportunities of daily life, are there aspects of the library service you believe should be –
  - I. changed [or discontinued], and
  - II. maintained [and / or improved].
3. What is your view of –
  - I. the public library,
  - II. public library resources and services, and
  - III. accessibility (including opening hours, location, etc.).
4. Are there aspects of the public library service that act as deterrents or barriers to the use of libraries by individuals and/or communities?

These questions are chosen to reflect the key priorities and policy considerations identified for the new Strategy. We will be happy also to receive any submissions or comments on any other aspects you believe should be considered.

#### ***How to make a submission***

Our *Public Consultation Response Template* is provided for your submissions to assist us in collating the comments. This is available at [www.drcd.gov.ie/libraryStrategy](http://www.drcd.gov.ie/libraryStrategy)

We ask you to use the survey monkey link to complete the survey electronically or to print this template provided, and submit a written version of the form.

All documents are also available by request at your local library or contact the Libraries Development & Community Policy Unit, phone (096) 24258 or email [libStrategyreview@drcd.gov.ie](mailto:libStrategyreview@drcd.gov.ie)

You may provide input to some, or all of the questions, we ask that you shape your responses to fit the space provided for each question. Additional views can be inserted in the comments section at the end of the *Response Template*.

We kindly ask that you provide any submissions no later than Thursday February 1, 2018.

Completed templates should be returned by post or email to –

Libraries Development and Community Policy,  
Department of Rural and Community Development,  
Ballina, Co. Mayo  
F26 E8N6

Email: [libStrategyreview@drcd.gov.ie](mailto:libStrategyreview@drcd.gov.ie)

Telephone: (096) 24258

*What will we do when we receive your submission?*

An acknowledgement will issue on foot of your submission. When the consultation period has ended we will review and consider all comments as we finalise the Strategy.

**Freedom of Information Act of 2014**

**Please note that all information and comments submitted to the Department of Rural and Community Development for the purpose of this consultation process are subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act of 2014.**

We hope to publish the new Public Library Strategy in early 2018.