



Sligo County Council  
Comhairle Chontae Shligigh

**Sligo.**



SLIGO  
COUNTY  
LIBRARIES

# Sligo Library Development Plan 2025–2029

- Discovery
- Literacy
- Technology
- Community





The hare illustration on the cover was created during the *Wild Things* nature art workshops for Cruinniú na nÓg.

The hare symbolises curiosity, responsiveness, and growth – qualities that define a modern library service.

Its fusion of traditional illustration and digital wireframe reflects the integration of heritage and technology, supporting discovery, literacy, and strong, connected communities.

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# Foreword

**Sligo County Council set an objective “to enrich the quality of life for citizens and communities by providing access to vibrant arts and cultural activities and promote all of the services delivered by library & arts services” in its Corporate Plan 2024–2029.**



**Cllr. Donal Gilroy,  
Cathaoirleach,  
Sligo County Council**



**Martin Lydon,  
Chief Executive,  
Sligo County Council**

This 5-year Sligo Library Plan sets the objectives to improve and expand services to citizens throughout County Sligo. It builds on the work delivered through previous library plans while setting out to deliver Sligo County Council’s corporate objectives.

*Our Libraries Our Futures: Sligo Library Development Plan 2019–2023* delivered new technologies alongside core services. Throughout this plan Sligo Libraries maintained reading, literacy, and information provision at the centre of our public library service. The removal of Library Fines has been a positive development in making libraries accessible to everyone.

Library Staff delivered new and improved services, engaging with existing and new users, and community groups. The online engagement library staff developed during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated innovative ways to connect with communities and schools. The improved access to digital resources has broadened the reach of libraries and grown new membership.

We look forward to improving our library services through continued investment in our infrastructure. The delivery of a new Central Library, Museum and Archive through the Urban Regeneration Development Fund will bring improved facilities and increased space thus expanding and enhancing service delivery. Support from the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, through the Libraries Capital Programme 2023–2027, will deliver a next generation Mobile Library vehicle, and a larger Ballymote Community Library, expanding services in a refurbished space. The introduction of My Open Library in all capital projects will bring increased opening hours for families and communities.

We wish to gratefully acknowledge the many stakeholders and partners who work collaboratively with us in delivering library services to communities throughout County Sligo. We look forward to continued engagement and fostering new collaborations throughout the lifetime of this plan.

We wish to thank all those who contributed during the preparation of this plan, your input has co-designed a strategy to improve library services to citizens throughout County Sligo.

# Introduction

**Sligo County Libraries offer a service for everyone throughout our County.**

The range of services offered by Sligo libraries to communities throughout County Sligo aims to enrich lives and empower citizens through access to knowledge, skills, culture, and connection. The access to books and newspapers Public Libraries first provided to communities two centuries ago, still exists today alongside access to digital information and eLearning, digital skills classes, PC's and printing, 3D Printing, literary, cultural, arts and heritage events. Access to lifelong learning through public libraries empowers everyone in the community to improve their lives.

While this strategy sets out the objectives to grow and expand our library services, the one constant is that Sligo Libraries remain a socially inclusive space where everyone in the community is welcome. To have our services freely available in safe accessible Library spaces remains a priority without compromise.

This strategy maps our priorities for the next five years. In planning library services throughout County Sligo we incorporate the mission, vision, and priorities outlined in the national public library strategy *The Library is the Place: Information, Recreation, Inspiration National Public Library Strategy 2023–2027*. The vision in this strategy is to engage communities through access to literature, culture and heritage.



*Sligo Libraries remain a socially inclusive space where everyone in the community is welcome.*





We look forward to delivering improved Library facilities through our capital programmes. At the heart of our service is our committed and professional library staff. Throughout this strategy library staff will be supported in learning new skills through continuous professional development.

As our services improve and increase, we will continue to engage with everyone in our community to best serve their needs. In our commitment to provide the best service we can to improve lives and opportunities, we are excited by the challenges and advancements this strategy will deliver.

*At the heart of our service is our committed and professional library staff.*



**Patricia Keane,**  
A/County Librarian,  
Sligo County Council  
September 2025



1

# Preparing this Plan



# 1 Preparing this Plan

This plan was prepared over 10 months in 2024 and 2025 with internal consultations and reviews, a series of external consultations, and an online public survey.



Review of what was delivered from objectives in *Our Libraries Our Futures: Sligo Library Development Plan 2019-2023*



Review of key performance indicators



Policy reviews to consider relevant local and national plans and strategies



Meetings with senior staff of Sligo Libraries



Strategy planning day and SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) with all staff of Sligo Libraries



2 x Stakeholder engagement consultations



4 x Public consultations



Public survey in Sligo Library branches



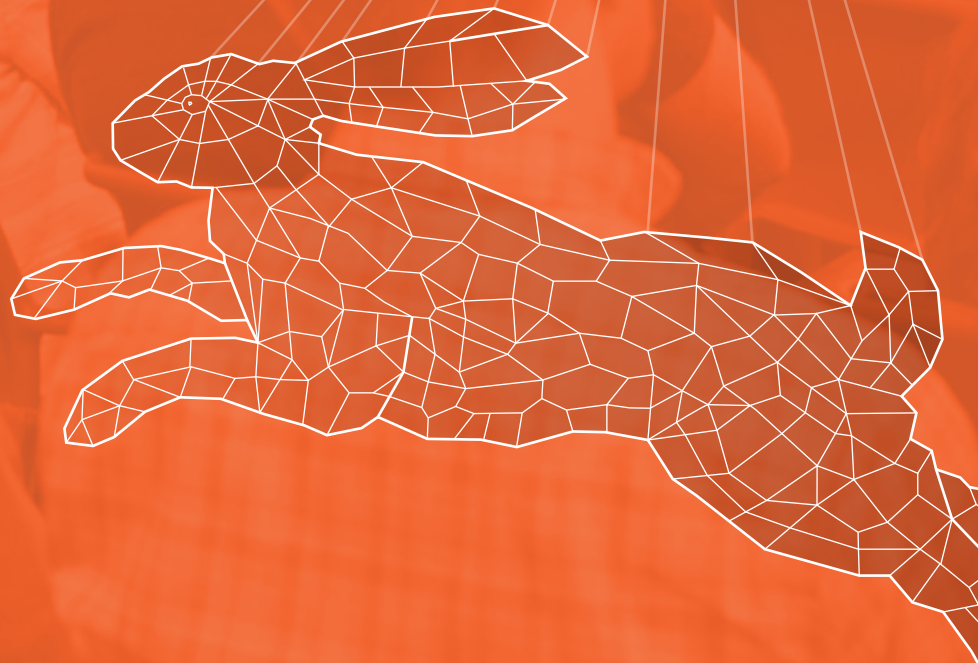
Online Public survey



Presentation to SPC 3 Live Invest Visit (See Appendix 1)

# 2

## Consultations: Key Findings



## 2 Consultations: Key Findings

Topics raised in all consultations were taken with the 255 survey respondents to inform this strategy.

### Key findings from consultations:

#### Library Staff



- › Valued as friendly, knowledgeable, helpful and professional.
- › Skilled in delivering new and innovative services.
- › Recognised as often working in sub-standard conditions and being highly imaginative in making the most of limited space.
- › Acknowledgement of achievements from previous strategy.

#### Library Spaces



- › Lack of space in Sligo Central Library and Enniscrone Branch Library highlighted.
- › Lack of meeting rooms and study spaces.
- › Lack of exhibition and events space.
- › Communities without a branch network.
- › Managing expectations – quiet space vs lively, noisy space.

#### Library Services



- › Praise for book stock, eServices, Local Studies collection, national catalogue and free reserves.
- › Praise for digital skills classes and follow-on help from Library staff.
- › Some lack of knowledge of breadth of services.
- › Praise for inclusivity – Audio Books, C-Pen Readers, Age Friendly Libraries, Sense-Ability sensory services.

#### Library Connections



- › Engagement with communities, schools, and stakeholders.
- › Time and resources to deliver all programmes
- › New ways of engaging to reach new members.
- › Opening Hours and My Open Library (MOL)
- › Outreach with Mobile Library
- › Europe Direct Information Centre.

## Public Survey: Sample Responses

**Bigger library, need space for young people.** If there was a space to hang out more younger people would go in.

The **mobile library** visits my daughter's Montessori regularly and it is a **highlight of her week** when it does.

To encourage new members, could **tuition classes on I.T.** (especially for farmers Department of Agriculture form filling) be throughout the year?

Having a **new building** which is long awaited would help tremendously in providing more additional services to everyone and **make it more inviting to visit and stay awhile.**

I am **concerned** that if anything happens to me (who is about one third I.T. literate), how will my wife cope? We have **no computer at home** and her I.T. skills are even less than mine.

The customer service is excellent. The staff always go above and beyond to accommodate.

It would be helpful to have a regular, maybe monthly, **newsletter** to advertise new services and also maybe relaunch existing services that are not that popular.

Sligo Library staff are working in Dickensian surroundings. What has happened to the plans with regards to the Connaughton Road site?

The main library in Sligo does its best with the space it has but it is long overdue investment. The town deserves and warrants a **library four times the size of the current one.**

**Exceptional facilities** for our Book Club.

The library could use a **bigger space** so that it can hold even more events, and so that the **public computer room** doesn't need to be closed so often.

Great to have **late evening opening** on Thursday or Friday evening until 7pm to facilitate those working until 5.

We need a **bigger space** in Enniscrone library as there isn't enough space.

A larger premises. A separate children's library. **More space** to lay out books. **More space** to access books - very cramped space. **More space** to read in children's area.

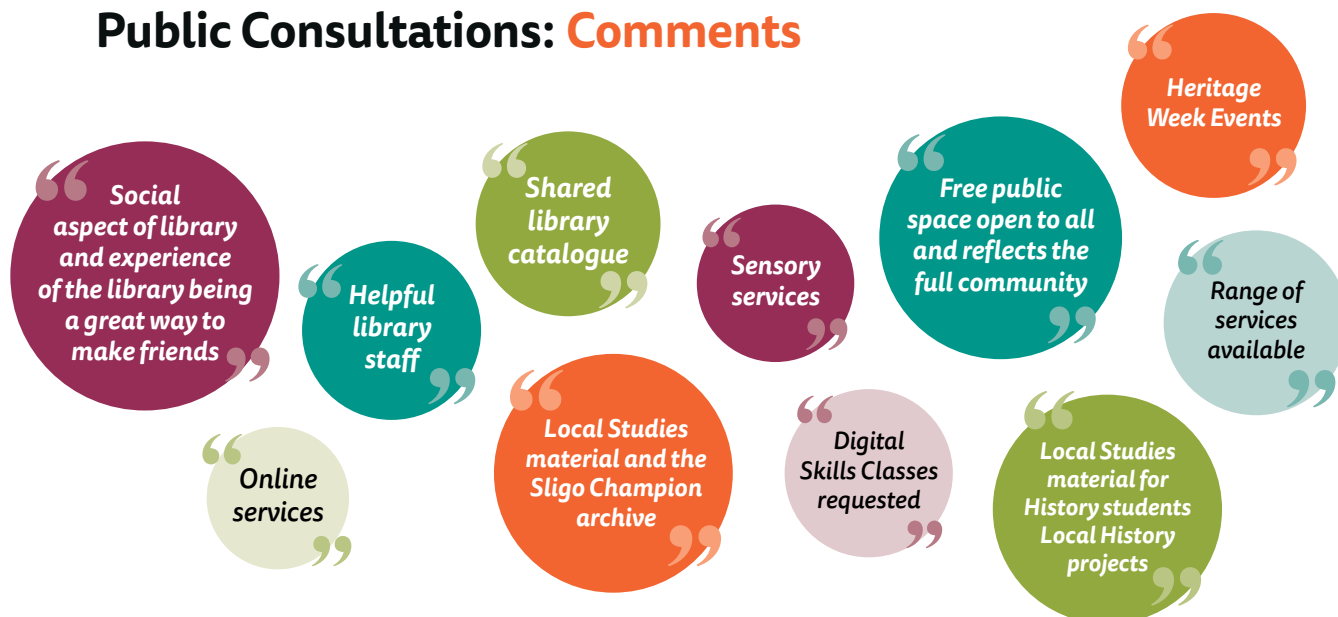
**Survey Question:**  
Do you use your library membership for online services only?

Yes 12%

No 88%



## Public Consultations: Comments



## Stakeholder Consultations: Discussions Raised

- > Lack of awareness among the public of the extent of services available through Public Libraries.
- > Wide-ranging services:
  - > Climate Action
  - > Right to Read
  - > Healthy Ireland at Your Library
  - > Skills for Life
- > Promotion of services:
  - > New website
  - > eZine
- > New Sligo Central Library
- > Library link-in with LCDC and PPN
- > Lack of teenage areas and study space
- > Praise for quantity of events in Libraries
- > Services to Pre-Schools, Primary and Post-Primary Schools
- > Possibilities with increased space in new library buildings
- > Lack of civic space currently in Sligo
- > Collaborations
- > Exploration of Library QR code for self-guided walking tours



# 3

## Sligo Library Services



# 3 Sligo Library Services

**Sligo County Libraries deliver the public library service of Sligo County Council, as assigned under the Local Government Act 2001, where each Local Authority is responsible for managing and delivering the public library service in its administrative area.**

Sligo County Libraries are part of the Live, Invest, Visit Directorate in Sligo County Council. Sligo County Library services are delivered across a branch network of five locations, via a Mobile Library service, and online.

Sligo has a long and dedicated Library service going back to 1881 when books were first loaned from the Town Hall. In Autumn 1925 Sligo was the second local authority in the Republic to start a Public Library service.

Many changes, relocations, and additions to services throughout the years has contributed to the library service being highly valued by communities throughout County Sligo.



**Tubbercurry Community Library**



**Ballymote Community Library**



**Enniscrone Branch Library**



**Sligo Central Library**

# Sligo Library Locations



**Mobile Library service visiting eighteen locations throughout County Sligo**

- |                                 |                   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Benwiskin                     | 10 Sooy           |
| 2 Mullaghmore                   | 11 Geevagh        |
| 3 Cliffoney                     | 12 Strandhill     |
| 4 Grange                        | 13 Ballisodare    |
| 5 Maugherow                     | 14 Collooney      |
| 6 Cregg House                   | 15 Skreen/Dromard |
| 7 Abbeyquarter Community Centre | 16 Dromore West   |
| 8 Cranmore Resource House       | 17 Coolaney       |
| 9 Ballygawley                   | 18 Easky          |



## Core Services

Sligo Libraries maintain a range of core services alongside the delivery of national programmes, while providing free access to the following:

**Lending services: printed, and digital resources**

**Local Studies and Archive collection**

**Literacy development**

**Lifelong learning**

**Digital skills learning**

**Verified information provision**

**PC access and printing**

**Sensory services**

**Learning supports**

**Events: Cultural, Literary, Artistic, Climate Action, Biodiversity, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths)**

Sligo Libraries work with partners and stakeholders to meet needs across communities and ages. We deliver services through an outreach programme working with early learning and care centres, pre-schools, primary schools, post-primary schools, community childcare services, direct provision and International Protection centres, housebound and nursing homes.

Our digital resources provide 24/7 online access to eBooks, eAudiobooks, magazines, national and international newspapers, eLearning and eLanguage learning courses.

Our collection of Books, DVDs, and CDs is part of a shared national catalogue among 30 Library Authorities. This allows Sligo Library Members to access over 12 million items from any public library in the Republic of Ireland.



4

# Spotlight



# 4 Spotlight

Library services evolve and change meeting literacy, digital and community needs. This section puts a spotlight on programmes, services and publications successfully delivered by Sligo Libraries alongside core Library services.



## Sligo Library Programmes

### Summer Stars

In 2019, Sligo Libraries recorded the highest national participation rate per head of population for children who joined Summer Stars.

The 44% participation rate recorded by the national Library Management System was testament to the work of Sligo Library staff promoting this initiative through school presentations, class visits, in-branch and online marketing, organising competitions and events to run throughout the summer months to encourage families to visit the library.



## Summer Stars 2019 Overview

	No. of Children	Population Aged 5-9	Percentage
Carlow	1,041	4,420	24%
Cavan	1,039	6,301	16%
Clare	2,181	8,993	24%
Cork City <sup>1</sup>	128	6,030	2%
Cork County	5,290	34,415	15%
Donegal	1,967	13,744	14%
Dublin City	3,506	12,445	28%
DLR	2,248	27,937	8%
Fingal	1,247	26,260	5%
Galway	3,959	18,885	21%
Kerry	1,496	10,153	15%
Kildare	2,622	19,124	14%
Kilkenny	2,664	7,601	35%
Laois	1,665	7,583	22%
Leitrim	671	2,416	28%
Limerick	3,298	14,018	24%
Longford	1,000	3,386	30%
Louth	1,300	10,493	12%
Mayo	1,657	9,146	18%
Meath	1,722	17,774	10%
Monaghan	1,129	4,924	23%
Offaly	1,225	6,239	20%
Roscommon	1,415	4,766	30%
<b>Sligo</b>	<b>2,063</b>	<b>4,733</b>	<b>44%</b>
South Dublin	4,014	22,765	18%
Tipperary	2,331	11,951	20%
Waterford	2,426	8,716	28%
Westmeath	2,791	6,948	40%
Wexford	2,542	11,677	22%
Wicklow	3,443	11,718	29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>64,080</b>	<b>355,561</b>	<b>18%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Cork City does not participate in Summer Stars, the 'Certificates Awarded' figure is from their own reading programme, the participants figure is from the LMS and likely represents Cork City library members who registered in another authority.

## The Word

**The Word was established in 2017, giving Sligo Library audiences access to writers and offering an inclusive space for open mic.**

Held on the last Wednesday of the month during term time in Sligo Central Library, *The Word* runs in collaboration with the staff and students of the BA in Writing and Literature, ATU Sligo.

Authors in conversation read from their work, followed by audience Q&A, and an open mic segment for flash fiction, poetry or song. Live music intersperses the conversation and readings, making each event unique and memorable.



### The Word programme 2018–2025

#### 2018 Programme

<b>January</b>	Eoin McNamee, Louise Kennedy
<b>February</b>	Lisa McLnerney, Niamh MacCabe
<b>March</b>	Alice Lyons, Treasa Nealon
<b>April</b>	Kevin Barry, Julianna Holland
<b>May</b>	Declan Burke, Eileen P. Keane
<b>September</b>	Pat McCabe, John Patrick McHugh
<b>October</b>	Molly McCloskey, Alice Kinsella
<b>November</b>	Alan McMonagle, Jo Holmwood

#### 2019 Programme

<b>January</b>	Postponed due to adverse weather conditions
<b>February</b>	Live Music edition – James Fraher. Music by Maria Carbonell
<b>March</b>	Declan Hughes, Jessamine O'Connor
<b>April</b>	Nicole Flattery, Caragh Maxwell
<b>May</b>	Ruth Fitzmaurice in conversation with Niamh MacCabe. Music by Eddie Lee & Ray Coen
<b>July</b>	<i>The Word Junior</i> – Special Event Eva Byrne, Author & New York Times best-selling Illustrator, with young writers from Creative Writing Summer workshops
<b>September</b>	Louise Kennedy, Michael Nolan
<b>October</b>	Dacre Stoker in conversation with Fiona Gallagher. Music by Niamh Crowley & Anna Houston
<b>November</b>	Sarah Clancy, Bairbre Flood

#### 2020 Programme \*

<b>January</b>	Dr. Marion Dowd, Garrett Carr
<b>February</b>	Mary Costello, Siobhan Mannion
<b>March</b>	Postponed due to COVID-19 Pandemic
<b>November</b>	Claire Keegan in conversation with Alice Lyons. Music by Collette Sheerin. (Online via Zoom & Facebook)

#### 2021 Programme

<b>January</b>	Eileen Myles & Oilibhèar Diarmuid in conversation with Jessamine O'Connor (Online via Zoom & Facebook)
<b>February</b>	Ailbhe Smyth & James Hudson in conversation with Lou McGrath. Music by Avoca Reaction (Online via Zoom & Facebook)
<b>March</b>	Sinéad Gleeson in conversation with Una Mannion. Music by Sive (Online via Zoom & Facebook)
<b>April</b>	Una Mannion in conversation with Lauren Baker and David North. Music by Irene Hennessy (Online via Zoom & Facebook)
<b>May</b>	Lucy Caldwell in conversation with Dr. Keith Hopper. Music by Bridín (Online via Zoom & Facebook)
<b>September</b>	Elske Rahill in conversation with Julianna Holland. Music by Senna O'Hara (Online via Zoom & Facebook)
<b>October</b>	Poetry Special – Linda Norton and Jane Robinson in conversation with Jessamine O'Connor. Music by Clare Sands (Online via Zoom & Facebook)
<b>November</b>	Mike McCormack in conversation with Alice Lyons. Music by Seamie O'Dowd (Online via Zoom & Facebook)

\* In 2020 The Word moved online during the pandemic. In 2022 it returned live in Sligo Central Library, becoming a hybrid event livestreamed on Sligo Libraries Facebook page. Edited editions can be viewed on Sligo Libraries YouTube channel.



### 2022 Programme

<b>January</b>	Dermot Healy Special – Mary O'Malley and Brian Leydon in conversation with Dr. Keith Hopper. Music by Ray Coen (Online via Zoom & Facebook)
<b>February</b>	Jan Carson in conversation with Una Mannion Music by Nuala Kennedy (Online via Zoom & Facebook)
<b>March</b>	Fergal Keane in conversation with Susan McKay. Music by Steve Wickham. Live in Sligo Central Library (Livestream online via Facebook)
<b>April</b>	Louise Kennedy in conversation with Susan McKay. Music by Cathy Jordan
<b>May</b>	<i>The Word Special Edition</i> – In The Shadow of Benbulbin: Dixie Dean at Sligo Rovers, Paul Little in conversation with Austin O'Callaghan. Music by Stephen O'Dowd
<b>September</b>	Donal Ryan in conversation with Elske Rahill, Music by Seamie O'Dowd
<b>October</b>	<i>The Word Special Edition</i> – John Minihan: Beckett and the Wake. Music by Michael Holmes and Liam Kelly
<b>November</b>	Niamh Mulvey in conversation with Niamh MacCabe. Music by Amy O'Hara

### 2023 Programme

<b>January</b>	Florence Gillen in conversation with Una Mannion. Music by Ruth Clinton
<b>February</b>	Austin Duffy in conversation with Elske Rahill. Music by Wayne O'Connor
<b>March</b>	Pauline McGlynn in conversation with Dr. Keith Hopper. Music by Aileen Concannon
<b>April</b>	<i>The Word Special Edition</i> – Tribute to John C. McTernan. Panel Discussion: Michael Farry, Fiona Gallagher, and Cathal Martyn in conversation with Niamh MacCabe. Music by Bridín
<b>May</b>	Danielle McLoughlin in conversation with Elske Rahill. Music by Michelle Feeney
<b>September</b>	Liz Nugent in conversation with Una Mannion. Music by Anna Houston and Niamh Crowley
<b>October</b>	Kevin Curran in conversation with Seán Farrell. Music by Ruth Clinton
<b>November</b>	<i>The Word Special Edition</i> – Decade of Centenaries Launch – A Door Opening Sligo and the Legacies of Partition. Panel Discussion: Jean Bleakney, Mary Branley and Marion Dowd in conversation with Dr. Keith Hopper. Music by Ramona Sakalauskaite

### 2024 Programme

<b>January</b>	Thomas Morris in conversation with Elske Rahill. Music by Mary Branley
<b>February</b>	Elaine Feeney in conversation with Una Mannion. Music by Róisín Egan
<b>March</b>	Manchán Magan in conversation with Tim Hannigan. Music by Aoife Hammond
<b>April</b>	Tim Hannigan in conversation with Marion Dowd. Music by Mark Kennedy
<b>September</b>	Cecily Gilligan in conversation with Niamh MacCabe. Music by Aoife Hammond
<b>October</b>	<i>The Word Special Edition</i> – Commemorations Programme. Bringing Them Home Sligo's Great War Dead 1914–1918 Simone Hickey in conversation with Ronan McGreevey. Music by Steve Wickham
<b>November</b>	Johnny Gogan in conversation with Dr. Keith Hopper. Music by Sarah Crummy

### 2025 Programme

<b>January</b>	Nuala O'Connor in conversation with Niamh MacCabe. Music by Maggie Killoran
<b>February</b>	Maura Gilligan in conversation with Dr. Marion Dowd. Music by Anna Houston, Deirdre Correia, and Ray Coen
<b>March</b>	Bridget Hourican in conversation with Dr. Keith Hopper. Music by Seamie O'Dowd and Ray Coen
<b>April</b>	Elaine Garvey in conversation with Dr. Una Mannion. Music by Deia Carbonell and Felip Carbonell
<b>May</b>	<i>The Word Special Edition</i> – Tribute to Tommie Gorman. Panel Discussion: Adrian Eames in conversation with Leo Gray and Niall Delaney. Music by Seamie O'Dowd and Stephen O'Dowd



## Sligo Library Services

### Sense-Ability



**In 2022 Sligo Libraries launched Sense-Ability in collaboration with Leitrim and Roscommon Libraries, supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht through the Dormant Accounts Fund.**

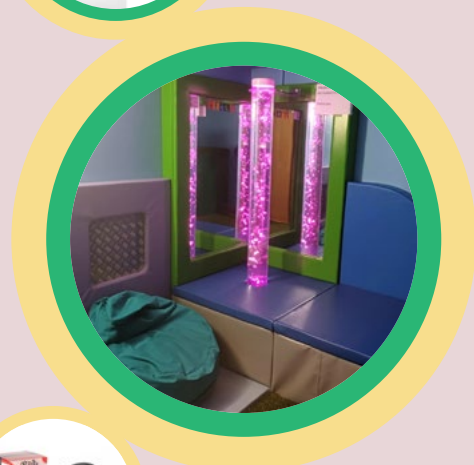
Sense-Ability aims to offer positive library experiences for people with sensory or additional educational needs. It strives to develop sensory friendly, accessible library services for the people of Leitrim, Sligo and Roscommon. It aims to provide a sense of belonging, a sense of space, a sense of welcome and a sense of support to individuals of all abilities, their families and caregivers. Through consultation with relevant professionals, extensive staff training, a programme of events and the development of new and exciting spaces and services, Sense-Ability gives everyone the ability to use library services in an inclusive, safe, non-judgmental way.

Sense-Ability is designed to support children and adults who are Neuro-diverse i.e. autistic people and those with ADHD, DCD/Dyspraxia, Dyslexia, and/or Intellectual disability.

Sligo Libraries catalogue of specialised lending collection of toys and equipment was carefully compiled with Occupational Therapy guidance and advice. This collection is available to borrow free of charge for parents and schools with Neuro-diverse children and is held in branches throughout Sligo.

Short video clips of elements of the lending collection with hints and ideas on how to use the toys and equipment can be viewed on [sligolibrary.ie](http://sligolibrary.ie).

A sensory room is available in Ballymote Community Library and a portable sensory pod in Tubbercurry Community Library.



## Europe Direct

Sligo Libraries have one of 8 Europe Direct Centres in Ireland which offers a starting point for finding information about the European Union.

The centre provides access to material covering a wide variety of topics, including:

- › General information about how the EU works.
- › Information about the various EU institutions and agencies.
- › The latest news about EU affairs and events.
- › Information about citizen rights, consumer rights, and business set-up in the EU.
- › Events, talks, debates, school visits, exhibitions to raise awareness of EU policies locally.

### Europe Direct Sligo offers a range of facilities and resources:

- › A selection of free EU publications and brochures covering a wide range of EU related topics.
- › Free public computers to search for specific information about EU related matters.
- › Free public telephone where you can call the Europe Direct Citizen's Helpline with queries on any aspect of the EU that are of interest to you: 00800 6 7 8 9 10 11.

### Typical queries the Europe Direct Centre help with:

- › Enquiries about how to obtain an EU Passport.
- › Information about legal matters relating to EU legislation.
- › Requests for information on setting up a business in the EU.
- › Information about citizen and consumer rights in the EU.
- › Requests for general documentation on the workings of the EU and its institutions.



## Europe Direct Sligo deliver the following workshops with Schools throughout the County and with third-level students in ATU Sligo:

### Study abroad

Europe Direct Sligo delivers annual workshops to secondary schools throughout County Sligo providing information on studying in other European countries. The workshops are facilitated by Sligo Libraries Europe Direct Manager in collaboration with EUNiCAS, an independent advisory service that supports Irish, UK, and EU students in applying to European universities. These workshops aim to empower students with the knowledge and confidence to explore higher education opportunities beyond Ireland.

### Volunteering abroad

Europe Direct Sligo delivers presentations informing students on how to access and participate in The European Solidarity Corps (ESC); a funding programme of the European Commission offering young people opportunities to volunteer, work, or initiate solidarity projects that benefit communities across Europe.

### Misinformation and Disinformation

Workshops to help students explore the growing impact of misinformation and disinformation, learning how to critically assess digital content and recognise deceptive narratives. These workshops highlight AI's dual role in amplifying and combating false information, and equip students with practical tools to stay informed and resilient in today's media landscape.

### EU Basics

Presentations on the structures of the EU which helps students build a clear understanding of the structure and key institutions, how EU legislation is created and enforced, the EU's role in international affairs, and the impact of EU policies on member states and citizens. The presentation concludes with an EU quiz with prizes.

### Voting Workshop

Civic engagement workshops with third-level students from ATU Sligo giving guidance on the practical steps of how to vote and why voting matters. The session cover registering to vote, understanding different voting systems, reading ballots and meeting key deadlines. Beyond the mechanics, the workshops emphasize the importance of voting as a cornerstone of democracy, highlighting how individual participation helps shape policies, communities, and the future. Students take part in lively mock debates on current issues, encouraging critical thinking, allowing a space to articulate their views, and to engage respectfully with differing perspectives. Students then cast votes to determine which arguments resonated most, reinforcing the power of informed decision-making and active participation.





# Sligo Library Publications

Sligo Libraries publications during our last strategy included literacy guides, project booklets, historical and literary adult publications, and books for and written by children.

## Reading with your child

A literacy guide for families supporting and encouraging reading with young children.



## Primary School Resources

A literacy guide for schools to support class novels.

## Music & Memoir

A project booklet with memories from residents in Caltragh Crescent and St. John's Community Hospital, supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht through the Dormant Accounts Fund.



## The Martin Savage Story

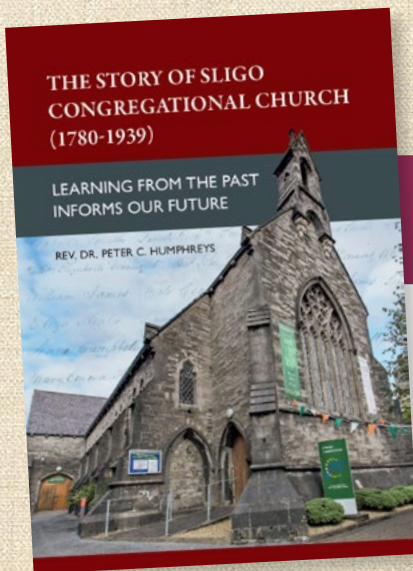
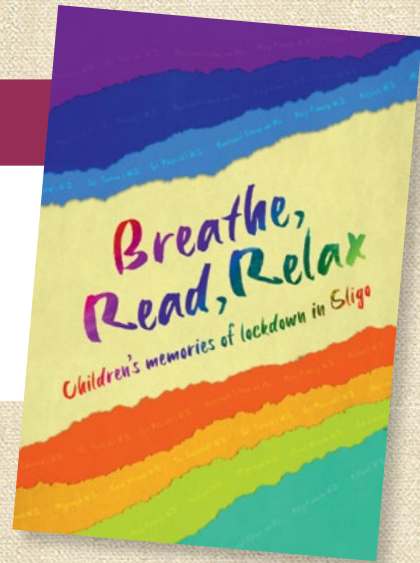
A graphic novel style children's book written and illustrated by Wayne O'Connor, published as part of Sligo County Council's Decade of Centenaries 2012–2023 Programme, supported by the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport.



## Sligo Library Publications

### Breathe, Read, Relax

Children's memories of lockdown in Sligo; features writing and illustrations from children in 8 primary schools, supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht through the Dormant Accounts Fund.



### The Story of the Sligo Congregational Church (1780-1939)

A history of the church building where Sligo Central Library is located, written by Rev. Dr. Peter C. Humphreys.

### A Door Opening, Sligo and the Legacies of Partition

An anthology co-edited by Susan McKay and Dr. Keith Hopper, published as part of Sligo County Council's Decade of Centenaries 2012–2023 Programme, supported by the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport.



# 5

## Review of Our Libraries Our Futures: Sligo Library Development Plan 2019–2023



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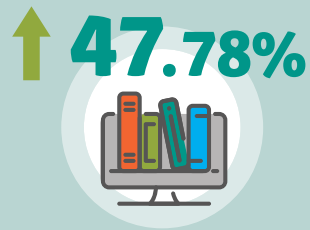
Sligo Libraries successfully delivered objectives in Our Libraries Our Futures: Sligo Library Development Plan 2018–2023.

## 1 Placing Literacy and Reading at the centre of our Service.

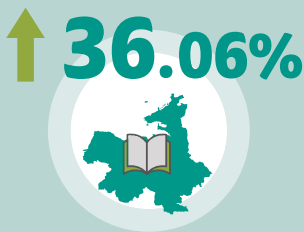
Sligo County Libraries recorded increased membership and lending despite closures and service disruption caused by the COVID-19 global pandemic.



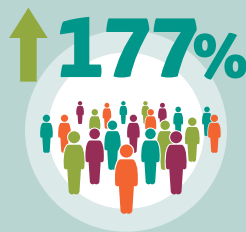
5% increase in membership across County Sligo Library service.  
(See Appendix 2)



47.78% increase in items borrowed in 2020; Sligo County Council being one of only two authorities with increases in the number of items borrowed.  
(See Appendix 3)



36.06% increase in items borrowed in 2021; Sligo County Council being the highest percentage increase nationally.  
(See Appendix 4)



177% increase in registered members in 2022 equating to 6,340 users.  
(See Appendix 5)



Ireland Reads Day delivered annually since 2020 – a national celebration of reading overseen by Libraries Ireland.



Quick Reads available in all Sligo Library branches – shorter, more accessible fiction for less confident adult readers, to raise confidence in reading and improve adult literacy.

873



873 Little Library Book Bags were collected from Sligo Libraries in 2023 as part of the Government's First Five strategy, a 10-year, whole-of-government plan to support babies, young children, and their families during the first five years of a child's life.



### 3 Creative Libraries: The Library as an active space leading and facilitating culture and creativity in our communities.



- › Investment in IT services included new public access computers, lap-tops for use in library branches, and software upgrade to Hublet bank of tablets for use in library branches.
- › Remote printing and self-service printing facilities available in 3 branches.
- › 3d Printing available in 3 branches.
- › Acorn tablets – a simple interface with built-in data giving access to those who do not own devices, and/or do not have a broadband connection in their home. Supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht through the Dormant Accounts Fund.
- › Sligo Libraries chartered as Age Friendly Libraries under the national Age Friendly Libraries Recognition programme.
- › Sligo Community Training Centre collaboration to introduce early school leavers and young unemployed people to services available through Sligo Libraries.
- › Online engagement throughout the period of the pandemic with library staff upskilling to facilitate events online for schools and for library members of all ages, in addition to a varied online events programme delivered through the Community Resilience fund.
- › Live online sessions facilitated by library staff during the pandemic demonstrated how to access and log-into eLending services accessing books, newspapers, magazines, language and self-learning courses.

### 4 Collections Policy: Update and development of our printed and digital collections.



- › Continued Collection Development, with increases in Sligo County Council's annual budget allocation to the Book fund.
- › 2019 Book fund €70,000 – per capita spend €1.06.
- › 2023 Book fund €100,000 – per capita spend €1.42.
- › The base line set for the minimum book fund required in each county is €4.00 per capita set in *The Library is the Place: Information, Recreation, Inspiration National Public Library Strategy 2023–2027*.
- › Increased online resources in digital collections including eBooks, eAudiobooks, eNewspapers, eMagazines, eLanguages and eLearning.
- › Increased online reference collections.
- › Access to Irish Newspaper Archive in all library branches.
- › Access to the national Library Management System (LMS) offering Sligo Library members a free book request system, for all lending items held in public libraries nationally.



## 5 Placing Literature at the centre of our Service.

- Writer in Residence appointed under the Decade of Centenaries programme.
- Anthology of new and established writers published under the Decade of Centenaries programme.
- *The Word*, monthly literary event in collaboration with staff and students of the BA in Writing and Literature ATU Sligo.
- Book clubs in all Sligo Library branches.
- Book club titles to support independent book clubs throughout County Sligo.
- New Book clubs for juvenile readers.
- New Book clubs for adults with Down Syndrome in collaboration with Down Syndrome Ireland.
- Poetry as Commemorations workshops delivered in collaboration with UCD School of English, Drama and Film.
- The Art of Reading Book club events with Laureate for Fiction in collaboration with Libraries.



# Sligo Libraries in 2023



**11,846**

**Membership in 2023**  
16% of the population of Sligo



**134,603**

**visits to Sligo Libraries in 2023 a 34% increase**  
(4.1% higher increase than the national average increase of 29.9%)



**223,056**

**items borrowed or downloaded**  
(2% increase on 2022)



**22,235**

**eAudioBooks downloaded**  
(22% increase on 2022)



**85,301**

**eLoans**



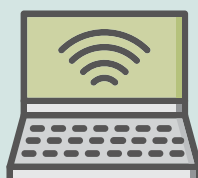
**11,999**

**eBooks downloaded**  
(16% increase on 2022)



**411**

**Local Studies queries**



**10,212**

**Internet /Wi-Fi Sessions**  
(38% increase on 2022)



**€100k**

**Book Fund**



**51,000**

**website hits**  
(155% increase on target of 20,000 website hits)

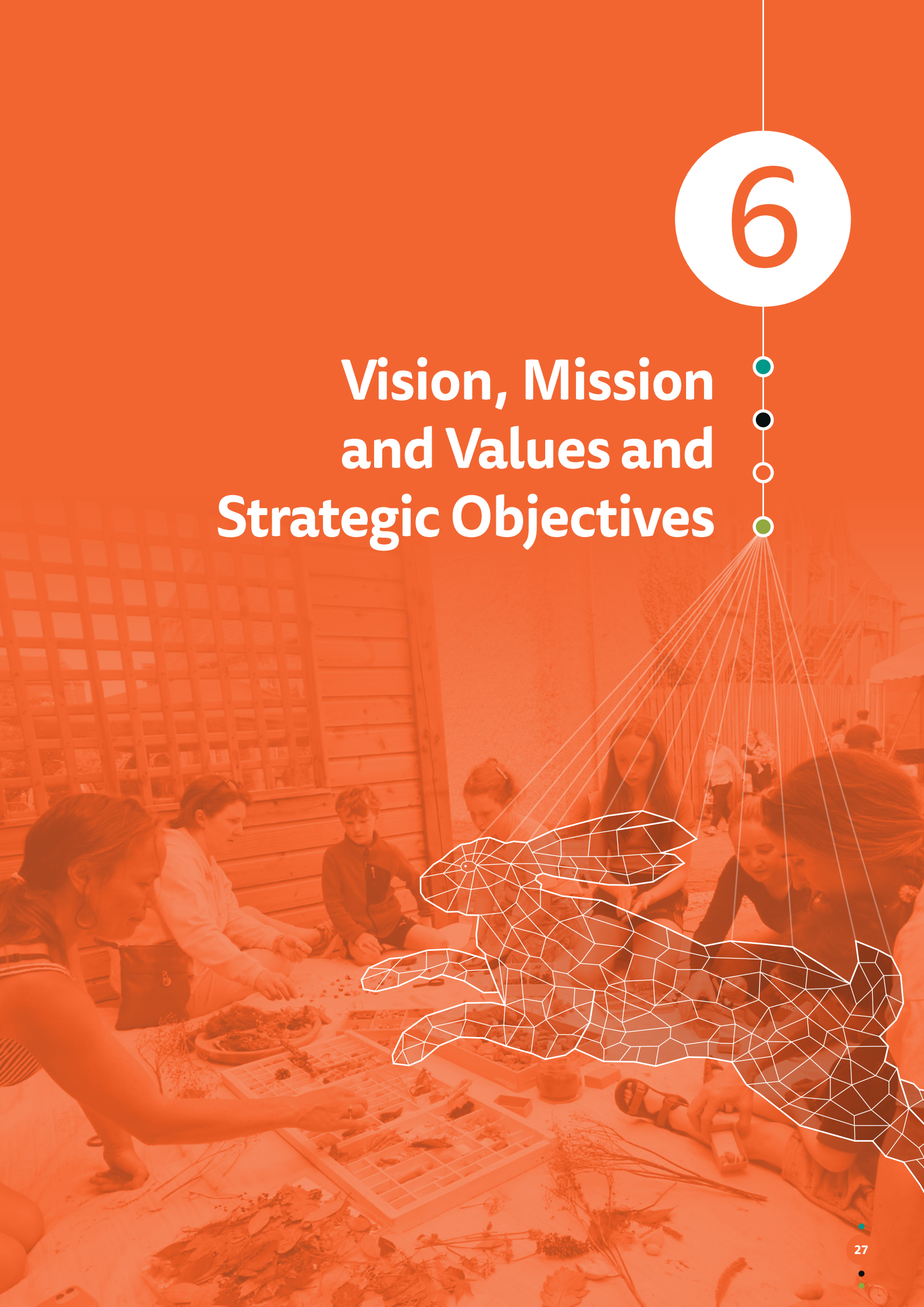


**660**

**cultural events throughout Sligo Libraries branch network in 2023**

# 6

## Vision, Mission and Values and Strategic Objectives





# 6

## Vision, Mission and Values and Strategic Objectives



### Vision

**Sligo County Council Library Services will provide opportunities in literacy, lifelong learning, skills development and innovation, by giving access to printed and digital resources, and to technology, in socially inclusive spaces where everyone can engage as active communities.**



### Mission

**Sligo County Council Library Services will deliver our vision through the range of literacy, digital, artistic, and cultural services delivered across a modern, accessible library network while responding to changing needs in technology and in our communities.**



### Values

**Sligo Libraries will continue to strive to be inclusive, innovative, accessible and trusted, embracing new technologies and services to offer excellence in library services.**

# Strategic Objectives

Sligo County Council Library Services will deliver our vision, mission and values over the next five years through the implementation of 5 strategic objectives:

## 1 Connecting with our Communities

Sligo Libraries will work to enhance capacity with our programmes and services to support needs throughout the community.

### Actions

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>1.1</b> Deliver actions on the national public library strategy reaching new communities and increasing engagement with our services and events.</p>     | <p><b>1.3</b> Continue Mobile Library service with free WiFi to communities.</p>  |
| <p><b>1.2</b> Continue to work with Libraries Ireland, the HSE, Healthy Sligo and local partners to deliver the Healthy Ireland at Your Library programme.</p> | <p><b>1.4</b> Climate Action – continue to provide access to resources, current information, and events to empower library members and communities.</p> |
|  | <p><b>1.5</b> Sligo Libraries will continue to be a trusted and reliable source of information offering up-to-date information.</p>                     |

## 2 Spaces and Places

Sligo Libraries will work to improve our library buildings through a capital programme and expand services to communities currently without a branch library.

### Actions

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>2.1</b> Deliver capital programme resulting in increased capacity in service delivery while providing spaces that are inclusive and accessible to everyone.</p> | <p><b>2.4</b> Provide modern event spaces to deliver local and national programmes.</p>   |
| <p><b>2.2</b> Strive to use sustainable alternatives in all capital projects and to enhance the sustainability of our services.</p>                                   | <p><b>2.5</b> Open branch libraries in proposed new locations of Ballisodare and Grange to communities not currently served by a library.</p> |
| <p><b>2.3</b> Increase opening hours through the introduction My Open Library (MOL) in all new builds and refurbished libraries.</p>                                  |   |

## 3 Collaboration and Partnership

**Sligo Libraries values the contribution of our partners and stakeholders, strives to foster new collaborations and reach new audiences.**

### Actions

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>3.1</b> Continue to work with partners and stakeholders and explore opportunities for new collaborations and devise programmes that deliver identified targets in library service delivery (see Appendix 6).</p> | <p><b>3.4</b> Work with partners to deliver the national Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) strategy, Skills for Life, Right to Read, and Healthy Ireland at Your Library programmes.</p> |
| <p><b>3.2</b> Request user feedback and evaluate our programmes and services.</p>  | <p><b>3.5</b> Evaluate partnerships to maximise reach and to target hard to reach and underrepresented groups in the community.</p>  |
| <p><b>3.3</b> Strengthen engagement with education providers at pre-school, primary, post-primary, third level and community level, while developing links at tertiary level.</p>                                      |  |

## 4 Diversity and Inclusion

**Sligo Libraries actively seeks participation from marginalised communities, and those with varying abilities and needs, striving to offer inclusivity and accessibility to everyone in the community.**

### Actions

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>4.1</b> Deliver innovative library services to meet diverse needs in communities.</p>   | <p><b>4.4</b> Continue to improve services and facilities through the Age Friendly Libraries initiative.</p>   |
| <p><b>4.2</b> Enhance ICT services to improve access and delivery of a modern public library service.</p>   | <p><b>4.5</b> Continue to provide access to resources and programmes for children and adults who are neuro-diverse, have additional learning needs, and/or have hidden disabilities.</p> |
| <p><b>4.3</b> Continue to provide outreach programme aligned with national objectives, and reach marginalised and socially isolated groups to ensure equitable participation and access to library events and services.</p> |  |

## 5 Culture and Knowledge

**Sligo Libraries will celebrate culture, strengthen access to knowledge, and support inclusive lifelong learning and creativity throughout County Sligo.**

### Actions

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>5.1</b> Continue to provide a programme of cultural, literary, artistic, historic, digital and ICT events throughout County Sligo.</p>   | <p><b>5.3</b> Deliver national events to celebrate Irish culture, to include Seachtain na Gaeilge, Bealtaine, Heritage Week, Culture Night, and Cruinniú na nÓg.</p> |
| <p><b>5.2</b> Continue to invest in book stock, digital resources, local studies and archives, and specialised collections supporting book clubs, schools, digital skills development, and learners with additional needs.</p> | <p><b>5.4</b> Implement the Right to Read and Skills for Life Programmes.</p>  |
|  | <p><b>5.5</b> Deliver national Public Library Open Day and Ireland Reads Day initiatives.</p>  |

7

# Capital Programme



# 7 Capital Programme

## Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF)

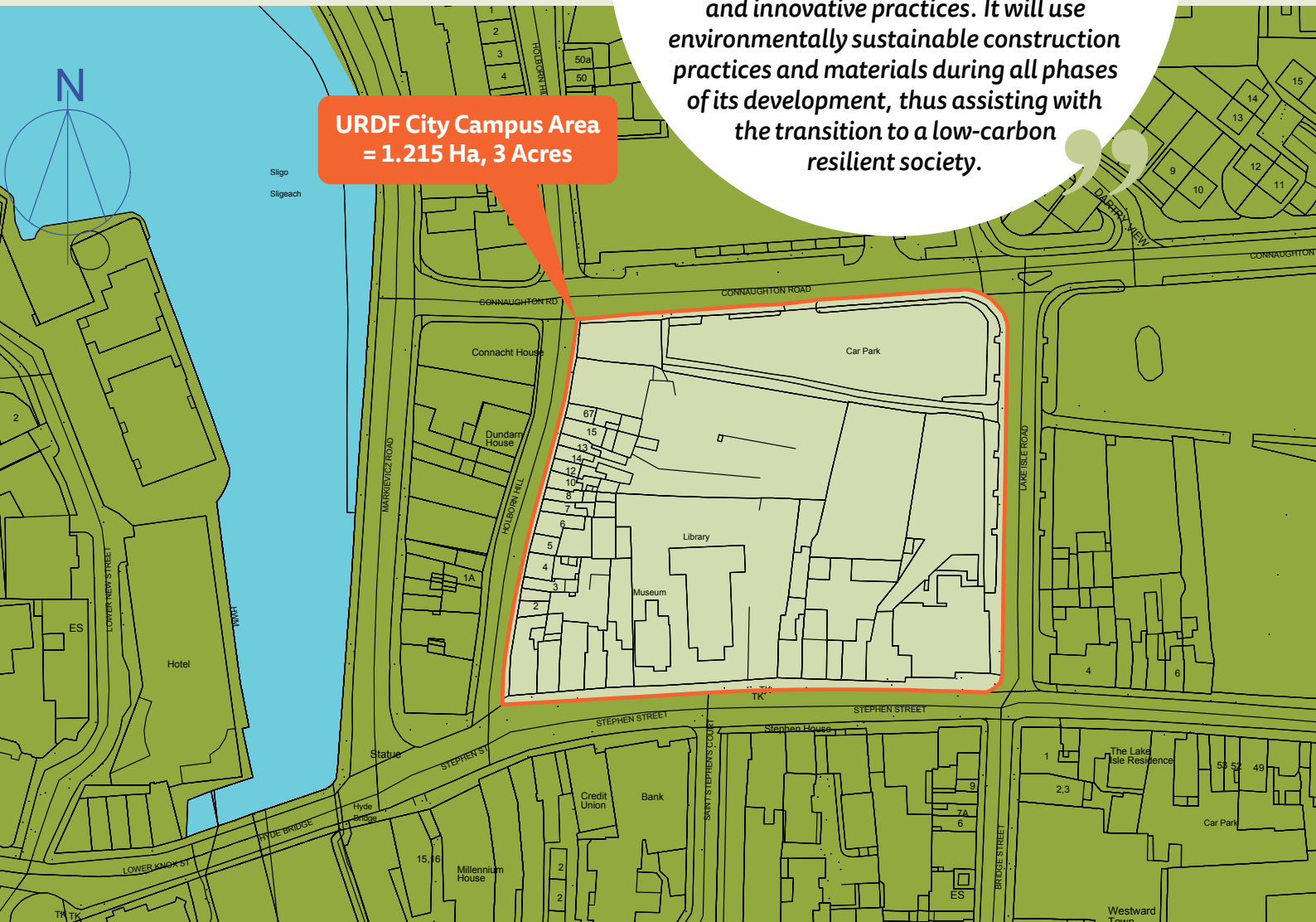
March 2021

€28.68 million

### New Sligo Central Library, County Library HQ, Museum and Archive

“A new cultural centre of Sligo Town. This is to happen through the strategic transformation, regeneration and redevelopment of an under-utilised and semi-derelict block of land in the town’s centre. The project will be an exemplar flagship project for the region that will embrace SMART cities’ technologies and innovative practices. It will use environmentally sustainable construction practices and materials during all phases of its development, thus assisting with the transition to a low-carbon resilient society.”

URDF City Campus Area  
= 1.215 Ha, 3 Acres



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## Libraries Capital Programme 2023–2027, Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht



€1.31 million

### Re-location of Ballymote Community Library

Re-locate Ballymote Community Library to a refurbished Sligo County Council owned building.

This new space will expand existing library services to include:

- > Increased study spaces
- > Increased event space
- > Increased meeting rooms
- > Increased exhibition space
- > Maker Space
- > Increased opening hours through the introduction of MY Open Library (MOL)



€225,090

### Next Generation Mobile Library Vehicle

A next generation mobile library with an Internal Combustion Diesel engine (I.C.E.) switched to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (H.V.O.) fuel to reduce carbon emissions by 90%.

The Mobile Library currently serves a mixture of urban and rural communities throughout County Sligo for whom there is no Branch Library or Community Library:

- > Ballisodare, Strandhill, Dromore West, Skreen/Dromard, Collooney, Ballygawley, Geevagh, Benwiskin, Mullaghmore, Cliffoney, Grange, Maugherow, and Easkey.

In addition to scheduled stops, the mobile library serves urban locations and centres:

- > Community Centres
- > Cranmore community, population of 1,400
- > Cregg community, socially isolated new community of Ukrainian families, population of 395
- > Nursing Homes and assisted living facilities
- > Pre-schools
- > Community-led After-School services
- > Primary School for children with additional needs

## Proposed new locations



In identifying priority areas of service delivery in this five-year plan, areas of population not currently served by a library were evaluated.

**Ballisodare** is identified as a populated area requiring a library, which would also serve communities in West Sligo and Collooney.

**Grange** is also identified as a populated area without a library, which would also serve communities in the wider catchment throughout North Sligo.

**Ballisodare** being the chosen location due to the Primary and Post-Primary schools in the village. Census 2022 recorded a 30.3% increase in population growth in Ballisodare.

# 8

## Delivering Objectives



# 8 Delivering Objectives



**The delivery of objectives in this five-year strategy and in the national public library strategy will require staff time and resources.**

Implementation of the strategic objectives in this plan will be through an annual Unit Operational Plan.

Sligo County Council will fund service delivery in Sligo Libraries through its annual budget allocation. Additional grant funding will be applied for where available.

In addition to Sligo County Council, the Local Government Management Agency, and the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, support the delivery of modern, innovative library services.

All Capital projects will be delivered in accordance with guidelines in *Public Library Standards and Benchmarks 2026*.

## Capital Projects

- > New Sligo Central Library, Library HQ, Museum and Archive
- > Re-locate Ballymote Community Library
- > New Mobile Library vehicle
- > Review of Enniscrone Branch Library building and services
- > New Branch Library in Ballisodare
- > New Branch Library in Grange

## Operational Programmes

- > Extend outreach programmes in communities throughout County Sligo
- > Extend opening hours
- > Introduce MY Open Library (MOL) in all new branches
- > Deliver externally funded programmes
- > Deliver evaluation on all nationally funded programmes

## Strategic Programmes

- > Implementation of a revised workforce plan to reflect the enhanced programming in delivering objectives in the national public library strategy
- > Support library staff training, throughout the lifetime of this strategy, through Individual Performance Plans in the Integrated Performance Management System
- > Support staff continuous professional development by encouraging staff participation in Sligo County Council supported staff education in professional library qualifications
- > Support library staff continuous professional development programme through training provided by Libraries Development, Local Government Management Agency
- > Support senior library staff through the national leadership programme for library staff
- > Develop a Collections Policy
- > Develop a Digitisation Strategy
- > Develop a marketing plan for library services
- > Develop an action plan for Archives
- > Implement objectives through the annual Sligo Libraries Unit Operation Plan
- > Review service delivery through performance indicators and National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) reports

# 9

## Strategic Context

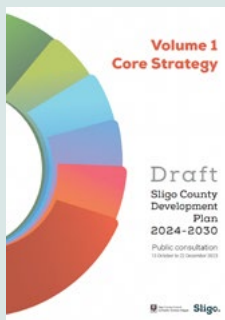


# 9 Strategic Context

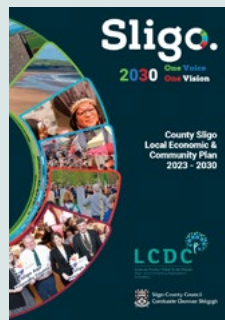
**This 5-year library plan builds on the work delivered through the Sligo Library Development Plan 2019–2023.**

Sligo County Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2029 and the objective **“to enrich the quality of life for citizens and communities by providing access to vibrant arts and cultural activities and promote all of the services delivered by library & arts services”** has informed this strategy.

## Key Local Policies, Plans and Strategies



Sligo County Council Development Plan 2024–2030



Sligo 2023 One Voice One Vision: Local Economic & Community Plan Sligo 2023–2030



Sligo County Council Corporate Plan 2024–2029



Sligo County Council's Official Languages Act 2003 & Language Scheme 2017–2020



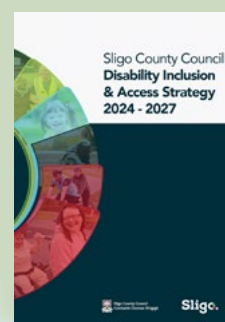
Sligo County Council Climate Action Plan 2024–2029



Sligo County Council Digital Strategy



Sligo County Council Age Friendly Strategy 2023–2026



Sligo County Council Disability Inclusion & Access Strategy 2024–2027



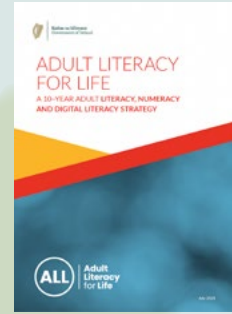
# Key National Policies, Plans and Strategies



The Library is the Place: Information  
Recreation, Inspiration  
National Public Library Strategy 2023-2027



Right to Read  
Campaign



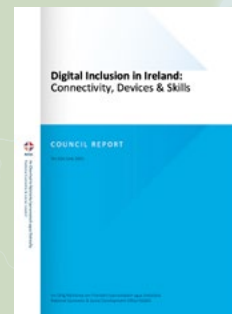
Adult Literacy for Life 2021  
A 10-Year Adult Literacy, Numeracy  
and Digital Literacy Strategy



First 5: A Whole-of-Government  
Strategy for Babies, Young Children and  
their Families 2019-2028



20-Year Strategy  
for the Irish Language  
2010-2030



Digital inclusion in Ireland:  
Connectivity, Devices and Skills



Healthy Ireland – A Framework for  
Improved Health and Well Being  
2013-2025



National Roadmap for Social  
Inclusion 2020-2025



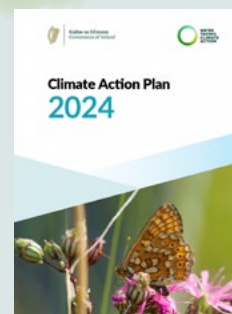
National Positive  
Ageing Strategy



National Disability Authority  
Strategic Plan 2025-2027



Our Sustainable Future:  
A Framework for Sustainable  
Development in Ireland



National Climate Action  
Plan 2024

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

### SPC 3 – Live Invest Visit

Councillors (8)	Sectors Represented	Representatives
<p>Cllr. Gerard Mullaney, <i>Chairperson</i></p> <p>Cllr. Declan Bree</p> <p>Cllr. Liam Brennan</p> <p>Cllr. Marie Casserly</p> <p>Cllr. Arthur Gibbons</p> <p>Cllr. Dara Mulvey</p> <p>Cllr. Fergal Nealon</p> <p>Cllr. Thomas Walsh</p>	<p>Business/Commercial</p> <p>Trade Union</p> <p>Community/Voluntary</p> <p>Social Inclusion</p>	<p>Paula Scallon <i>Chambers Ireland nomination</i></p> <p>Denise Curran <i>Irish Congress of Trade Unions nomination</i></p> <p>Stephen Barker <i>Public Participation Network nomination</i></p> <p>Ruth Flood <i>Public Participation Network nomination</i></p>

## Appendix 2

Spydus Library Management System (LMS) Statistics 2023.

## Appendix 3

National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) The national independent oversight body for local government sector in Ireland. Local Authority Performance Indicator Report 2020; NOAC Report No. 44 – September 2021.

## Appendix 4

National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) Local Authority Performance Indicator Report 2021; NOAC Report No. 50 – November 2022.

## Appendix 5

National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) Local Authority Performance Indicator Report 2021; NOAC Report No. 58 – September 2023.

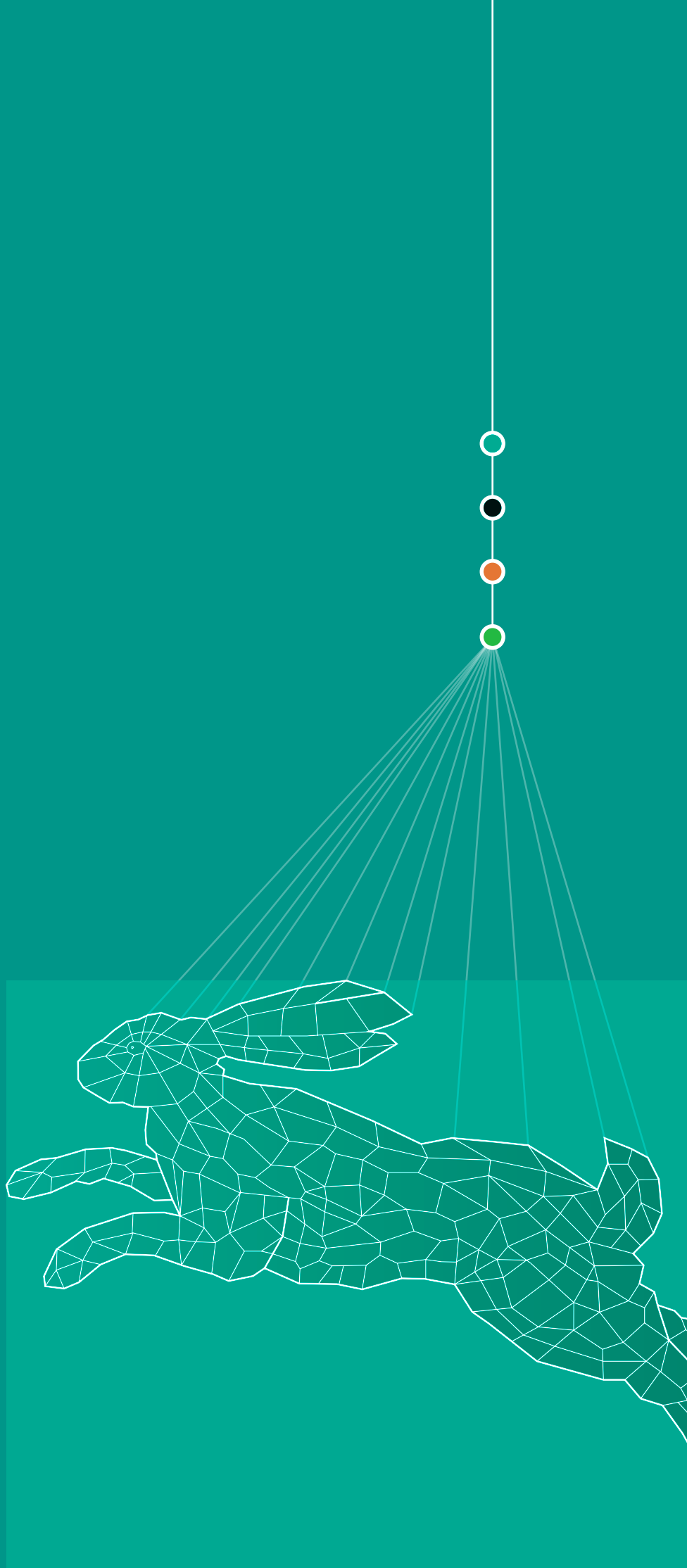
## Appendix 6

### Internal stakeholders

Sligo County Council Arts Service, Heritage Department, Climate Action Team, Integration Team, Corporate Services, Community, LEO and Tourism.

### External stakeholders

Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education and Training Board (MSLETB), Sligo Leader, ATU Sligo, Sligo Childcare Committee, Sligo Leitrim CYPSE, Family Resource Centres Sligo, Tubbercurry, Ballymote & Enniscrone, Dyslexia Association Sligo, Sligo Springboard Family Support Services, Community Centres, Sligo Sports and Recreation Partnership, Community Childcare Centres, Active Retired, Cranmore Co-op, Sligo Traveller Support, Diversity Sligo, Down Syndrome Sligo, Sligo Community Training Centre.





Sligo County Council  
Comhairle Chontae Shligigh

Sligo.



SLIGO  
COUNTY  
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🌐 [www.sligolibrary.ie](http://www.sligolibrary.ie)

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