



# Cork City Council Libraries 2020-2024

Placing Learning, Creativity,  
and Inclusion at the heart of Communities



Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí  
Cork City Council

## Mission Statement

*To place libraries at the heart of communities, welcoming and supporting everyone in their enjoyment of reading, and in their pursuit of learning, knowledge and culture.*

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## Message from Lord Mayor & Chief Executive

### Cork City Council Libraries Strategy 2020 - 2024

*Placing Learning, Creativity,  
and Inclusion at the heart  
of Communities*



**Councillor  
Joe Kavanagh**  
*Árdmhéara Chorcaí*



**Ann Doherty**  
*Chief Executive*

Cork is Ireland's fastest growing city, and this ambitious programme, for the period 2020 to 2024, will see the library service evolve to meet the challenges of a new and exciting urban centre.

As we as a society make our way out of the Covid-19 emergency towards new ways of living and working, the City Council's library service has again proven its importance to many Cork communities. The library service already had a well developed digital offering, and this meant it was well placed to provide content for people who had to access information and learning and cultural resources at home. The continuation, indeed enhancement, of the housebound service to people cocooning at home, is an invaluable human service at such a difficult time, and one greatly appreciated by those people directly served and by their families.

The Council's library service is thus very well placed to meet the challenges of this 'new normality': advancing on both the physical and digital fronts, and showing the resilience and adaptability that will doubtless be required in an uncertain future. Over recent years the library service has demonstrated its importance to the city and its people, as a place of learning, social inclusion, and cultural expression for all, and this will continue and grow.

This library development programme is coming at an opportune time: it covers the same time period as our Corporate Plan, coming as it does early in the lifetime of the Council elected in 2019, and of course in the lifetime of the newly expanded city. It fulfils the Council's statutory obligations: this programme meets the requirements of the 2001 Local Government Act regarding local authority library development programmes.

### The Council's priorities for the library service over the next five years are set out in three main sections in the Action Plan 2020-2024 [pp 37- 51]:

- Continuing investment in areas of strength, building on achievements in many aspects' of service over recent years;
- Targeted investment in new areas of opportunity, responding to the challenges and opportunities which the library service will face;
- Major investment in library buildings across the new city, in recognition of the city's challenging infrastructural needs.

This last section sets the tone for the entire programme. In 2019 we welcomed three new local libraries and their communities to the city. All of these communities need a new purpose-designed library building, as do some remaining parts of the older city. The over-riding challenge, however, is for a new city centre library, a library of a new type, not only for Cork but for Ireland, along the lines seen in recent buildings in European cities such as Helsinki, Turku, and Aarhus. The new Library will be a vibrant destination, one of Cork's most important social, educational and cultural spaces, an active partner in the cultural, social and educational life of the city, and a crucial element in revitalising the city centre.

These are challenges for the Council but also great opportunities and ones we know we can make the best of. Witness the very successful Hollyhill Library which opened early in the lifetime of the last library development programme – successful as a beautiful building recognised in national architectural awards, successful as an invaluable space for the local community, for lifelong learning, for real social inclusion and cultural expression.

While the emphasis on infrastructure is a new one, prompted by our much expanded city, there will be many points of continuity. The rhythm of the city's social and cultural life is marked in a very real sense in the city's libraries throughout the year. Beginning with the Lifelong Learning Festival in Spring, leads on to the Cork World Book Fest, to the Bealtaine programme for older people, to the children's summer programme, to Heritage Week, Culture Night and to the Children's Book Fest in October. This is, of course, in addition to the evolving everyday service provided to the public.

The libraries contribution to Creative Ireland programming and the Cork City Council Creative Team is also vital to placing culture and creativity at the heart of communities.

This programme again places Libraries at the heart of Cork the Learning City. Lifelong learning – nowadays anchored on digital literacy – is more and more important in the 21st century, and learners' needs are more diverse and personal. Our Libraries will continue to make significant contributions to achieving the commitments of the UNESCO Learning Cities programmes.

Great progress was made in the Council's last libraries development programme in achieving real social inclusion. Libraries are widely accepted as a welcoming meeting place; few other public arenas are so diverse in terms of usage by the local community. To enhance access the Council has removed membership fees, fees for using computers in libraries, and fines for late returns.

In all of these key areas – learning, cultural expression, social inclusion – the library service will be both building on achievements in recent years, and searching out new challenges and opportunities. Libraries' staff, with the full support of all sections of the Council, are fully committed to achieving the objectives set out in this Libraries Development Programme, which we warmly commend.

## Acknowledgements

*This Development Programme was prepared by a group of library staff comprising:*

**David Burke, Ed Cashman, Eibhlín Cassidy, Clare Doyle, Claire Fitzgerald, Angela Hannon, Nora Harrington, Breda Hassett, Caitríona Honohan, Patricia Looney, Maria Luis, Nicola Lyons, Helen McGonagle, Conor MacHale, Elizabeth McNamara, Yvonne Moloney, Anne O'Mahony, Ann Riordan, Rose Smyth, Deirdre Swain, Thomas Talbot and Liam Ronayne.**

This group carried out the preparatory work in a variety of ways – through plenary sessions, smaller working groups and via email.

Socio-economic statistics in relation to the city were provided by Corporate Affairs and International Relations, and by the Social Inclusion Unit.

The Programme was edited by **Liam Ronayne**, who was Cork City Librarian until June 2020 and **Patricia Looney**, Senior Executive Librarian.

The contributions of all library staff are gratefully acknowledged, along with those of **Adrienne Rodgers**, Director of Services, Community Culture and Placemaking and the staff of that Directorate.

Staff of the Directorates of People and Organization Development, Finance, ICT & Business Services, Strategic and Economic Development, the City Architects Department and the Social Inclusion Unit, Cork City Council.

## Public Consultation

*The public consultation process leading to the preparation of this Development Programme comprised a number of strands:*

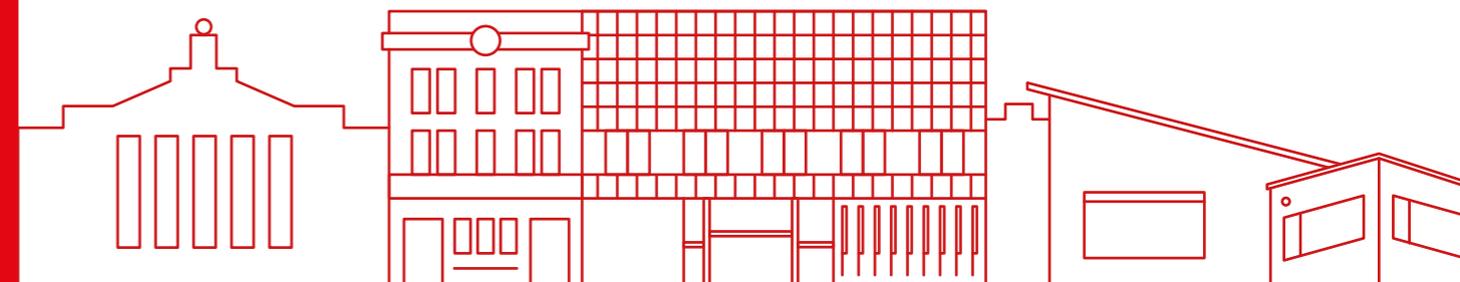
- Posters and fliers in libraries across the city;
- Consultation forms which were available to the general public to complete;
- Partnership with the Public Participation Network, to seek the views of a wide range of community groups;
- Newspaper ads, inviting the public to contribute;
- Online and social media campaign, encouraging the public to contribute.

Through these various strands the Council announced that it was looking for feedback to help us develop our services for the next five years.

### We sought ideas and suggestions on:

- Using Your Libraries
- Increasing Usership
- A New City Centre Library
- Reaching Out
- Programmes and Activities
- Your Ideas for Development, and any other thoughts

*The closing date for feedback was 21 February 2020. The Council is grateful to all members of the public who contributed suggestions, comments and ideas. A total of 92 contributions were received. These ideas, suggestions and comments fed into the process of the preparation of this development programme.*



## Sustainable Development Goals

*Cork City Council Libraries contribute to:*



Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions



Reduced Inequalities



Good Health & Wellbeing



Partnerships for the Goals



Climate Action



Quality Education



Sustainable Cities & Communities



Decent Work & Economic Growth



Gender Equality



Responsible Consumption & Production



Affordable & Clean Energy

## Staff Contributions

The first step in the preparation of this programme took place on 1 November 2019, when all library staff gathered for a morning-long brainstorming session, led by Adrienne Rodgers, Director of Services, Community, Culture, and Placemaking, and Liam Ronayne, Cork City Librarian. The session was facilitated by 12 staff members, who each guided a group of colleagues through topics such as 'Blue Sky' thinking, Reading City & Learning City, Serving the New Communities, Libraries and Placemaking, Promotion and Marketing, and so on.

The ideas and proposals gathered in that session, together with the feedback from the public, form the bedrock of this development programme.

## Design & Print

Design & Illustrations by **Coolgrey**

## 1.1 Introduction

*In preparing this strategic plan, which will be a five-year development programme for the library service, the Council recognizes that there will be considerable continuity with previous programmes and with the evolution of the library service over the last decade and a half.*

There will also be some major departures. The context in which this Plan was devised, and in which it will be implemented is set out in the next section, including the continuities and departures.

In drawing up the Plan, the Council consulted widely. Suggestions and ideas were received from the public in written form, in emails, through the consult Cork City Platform, and through the PPN. A summary of these suggestions is available on the website [www.corkcitylibraries.ie](http://www.corkcitylibraries.ie). These suggestions and ideas proved valuable in preparing this draft. Led by the Director of Services, Community, Culture & Placemaking, and the Cork City Librarian, the staff of the library service came together in November 2019 to focus on the future needs and direction of the service. This proved to be a heartening experience, as evidenced by the wealth of enthusiasm and breadth of ideas which were present on the day.

This libraries strategy covers the same timeframe as the Council's Corporate Plan to 2024, and should be seen in the context of that Plan. This strategy shares the vision, mission, and values of the Corporate Plan. Libraries will play a key role in achieving high level goals such as 'A City Valuing its People', 'A City promoting Culture, Heritage, Learning, Health & Wellbeing' and 'A City of Engaged Neighbourhoods & Communities'.

The investment in library infrastructure across the new city set out in section 2.3 will form part of the next City Development Plan, which the Council has begun to prepare.

The national strategy Our Public Libraries 2022 sets ambitious targets, especially in the aim of having 30% of the population as active library users [Cork city has ca 21% active usership], and reaching a per capita spend of €4 on library stock [the Council currently spends €2.01 per capita]. Cork City Council commits to reaching these targets.



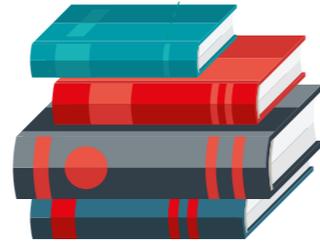
## 1.2 The Context of this Plan

*“Books , Bytes & Buildings”,  
the library plan for the years  
2005 - 2009 had two major  
objectives:*

1. The development of new branch libraries in Ballypéhane [Tory Top], and Bishopstown;
2. The expansion and embedding of library activities and events programmes, in particular the opportunities offered by Cork European Capital of Culture in 2005.

The annual Cork World Book Fest emerged from the Capital of Culture. The succeeding plan for the years 2010- 2014 – BBB2 – built on the progress made under its predecessor.

*Read, Learn, Explore* – the strategic plan for 2015 to 2019 – kept the focus on core services at a time of retrenchment in public services, while successfully steering the service through a range of technological challenges: enhanced digital offerings, RFID-enabled self-service, and joining the national database and national distribution service. The new Hollyhill Library opened to the public in the first year of *Read, Learn, Explore*. Before the expansion of the city in May 2019, all library locations in the city had introduced RFID- enabled self-service, and the public had direct positive experience of the benefits of our involvement in the national schemes.



The challenges for us as we face into the third decade of the 21st century are different.

Firstly, this development programme is coming right at the beginning of the evolution of the New City, a city five times the size of the old with a population of 210,000 and rising. A good start has been made in integrating the new libraries – Ballincollig, Blarney, and Glanmire. Communities in the area added to the city must feel that a library service of the highest standard is there for them, and that they can participate fully in library programmes.

Secondly, the condition of the existing City Library continues to deteriorate, although the upper floor at the front of the building has been secured. A new City Library has been mooted for more than 20 years, and in 2006-2008 it seemed that it was going to happen. The time to start developing the city centre library is now.

Thirdly, Cork’s demographic make-up continues to evolve quite rapidly. Today, Cork is an outward looking city, a diverse city welcoming and embracing those from other countries choosing to make their home here. The library service is already stepping up to the challenge of making libraries a platform for a diverse and intercultural city, and the challenge is to take this to another level.



Fourthly, we face challenges related to the rate of technological change. The economist Daniel Susskind recently advised on how people and organizations should deal with technological change

*“there are two strategies: either you learn to be good at the sort of things systems and machines cannot do, or you try to build the machines”.*

This is a stark warning, and not everyone might agree with it. What is clear for libraries, however, is that we must “be good at the sort of things systems and machines cannot do”. We must continue to use technologies wisely and strategically to allow our staff more time to interact at the human level with patrons and communities – something machines cannot do. We can also provide space and technologies to the general public and communities so that they can enhance their skills and potentials to “build the machines”.

Lastly, we must deal with the question of library infrastructure, other than the city centre library.

Prior to the expansion of the city in May 2019, with Stage 1 Approval for Mayfield, and reasonable interim accommodation for Blackpool and Douglas, the only urgent infrastructural need was in the Blackrock–Mahon area. Since then the city has taken on three additional libraries, all of them leased. In addition, the fire in the Douglas Village Shopping Centre in August 2019 forced Douglas Library to close. This means that in the years ahead the Council must not only develop the city centre library and complete the Mayfield project; it must thus address infrastructural needs for Ballincollig, Blackrock–Mahon, Blarney, Douglas, and Glanmire – a significant challenge.

The planning of libraries for these areas must go hand in hand with the overall strategic planning for the areas involved. For libraries to prosper they must be located at the centre of these new urban areas. In addition, libraries located as a central focus of larger, busier, urban centres, will help those centres thrive.

## Libraries 2050: A vision for Cork City Libraries

*No one can predict the kind of world in which libraries will be operating in 2050. We do not need a blueprint for the future as we cannot know what events and surprises await us, so the best we can do is work for the best, be prepared for the worst, and always expect the unexpected.*

To arrive at where we want to be in 2024, it is wise to look a little further down the road to what Cork city and its library service should look like by the mid-point of the century. As this strategic plan, and the next five years of the development of library services, represent quite a departure from the previous situation, we need to be bold and ambitious in what we want to achieve for the city and its people.

Bearing in mind that the Council will be celebrating 130 years of continuous library service during the lifetime of this strategy, we should equally be conscious of the close and enduring bonds between the service and Corkonians, based on the decades of tried and tested service.

**Two policy documents set the overall direction:** Ireland 2040 (2018) is the government's long-term strategic plan to deal with the problems and opportunities facing the country in areas such as infrastructure, urban and rural development, transport, environment and climate change. Cork 2050: realising the full potential (2017) is a joint response by Cork City Council and Cork County Council to that strategy, intended to locate the city as an alternative development pole which would complement Dublin, and to garner the investment needed to make that goal a reality.



**The Council's ambition is for a resilient, forward looking, and agile library service appropriate for a European city of scale. While we cannot have a map for the future, we must have a compass, and the points of that compass must be the principles on which public libraries are founded:**

- Libraries as places for everyone in the community, vibrant, attractive and welcoming places accessible to all areas of the city;
- Libraries for learning, formal and informal, with the most up-to-date collections and facilities, and most importantly staff expertise and commitment;
- Diverse libraries: Open to all cultures and languages in the city of 2050;
- Libraries maintaining a balance between printed and digital: libraries are already present in both the physical and digital realms. The Covid-19 pandemic has emphasised that it is essential to be flexible, alert to opportunities and challenges, resilient, and fleet-footed as we can be to meet challenges and opportunities as they arise.



## The New City: Geographic evolution

### The new Cork city is very different to what it had been prior to May 2019.

While there will be considerable continuity in the years ahead, much will change. The city centre – the flat of the city surrounded by the two channels of the River Lee – will still look much the same, but will be impacted by the fact that it will now be the centre of a much larger city, with consequences for traffic management, retail, hospitality, and of course the need for a much larger and more modern city centre library.

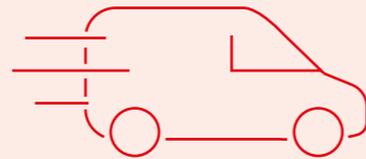
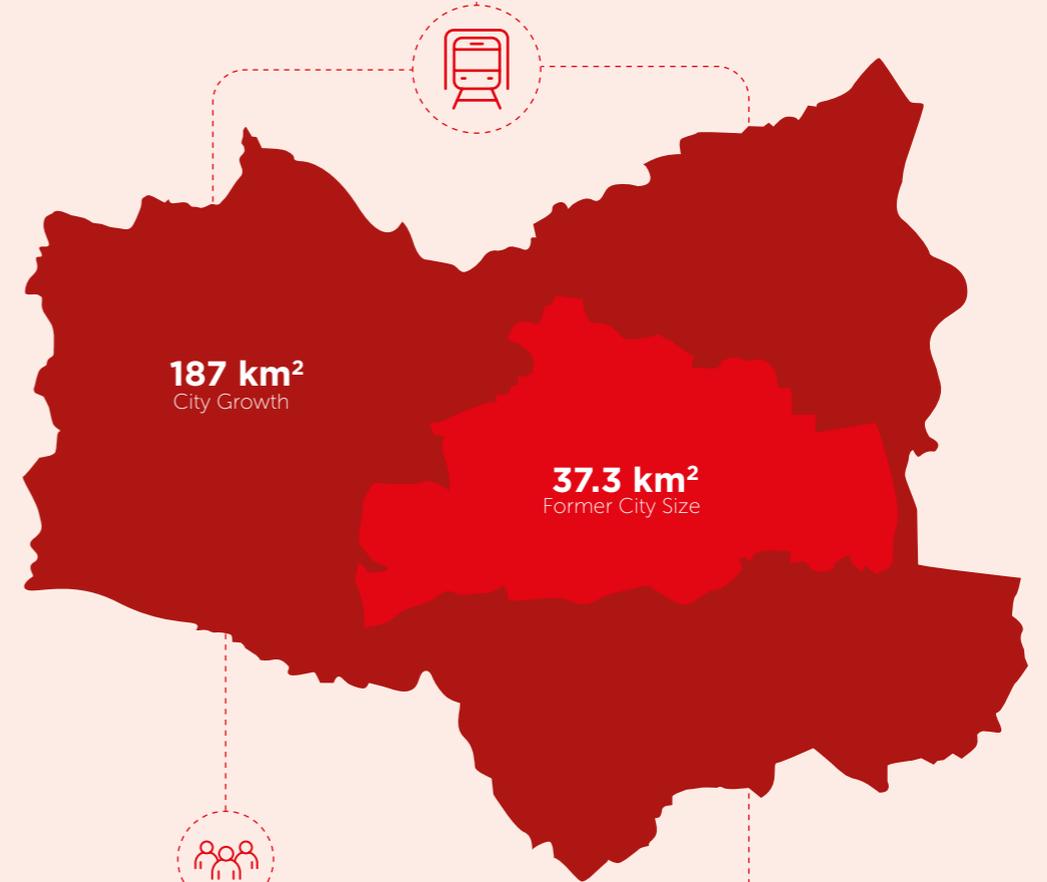
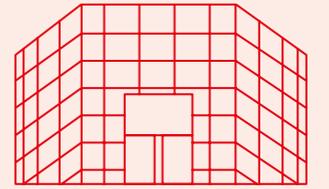
**Daniel Corkery, mentor of Frank O'Connor and many other writers and intellectuals, said of his native city:**

*"as humdrum a collection of odds and ends as ever went by the name of a city are hung higgledy piggledy together into a narrow double-streamed, many bridged river valley, jostled and jostling, so compacted that the mass throws up a froth and flurry that confuses the stray visitor... for him this is Cork."*

This description from a century ago holds true even today, certainly of the central part of the city, the North Parish, Middle Parish and South Parish areas.

Today the city stretches from Classes Lake, west of Ballincollig, to the M8 Motorway; from north of Buck Leary's Crossroads to south of Cork Airport. The city is five times the size of the former city in area: 187 km<sup>2</sup> rather than 37.3 km<sup>2</sup>. The population grew by 68% overnight on 31 May 2019, and is projected by central government planners to reach 324,000 by 2040. The library network grew from seven locations to ten.

For at least the next couple of decades there will be a huge focus and emphasis on the urbanization of the new areas. The city faces a big question in general terms, and in particular in terms of the future development of the Library Service: How will the larger, more populous city change the library service? How will embracing the new areas change the way the service will be delivered? Equally importantly, how can the library service help build this new city?



## The New City: Socio-cultural evolution

Social and cultural development is as important as physical development, arguably more important.

When the library service was preparing a five-year strategic plan 15 years ago, questions of diversity and interculturalism did not figure hugely. Cork has changed so much in the intervening years that for the next five years, and for the longer-term, these questions must be front and centre.

Irish society has changed significantly, and continues to change. For example in the lifetime of the last plan there were two major referenda, on marriage equality and on the repeal of the 8th amendment. Libraries must take these societal changes on board in a positive way, while continuing to be open to all shades of opinion and belief.

The city's age profile changed on 31 May 2019 – we are now a much younger city on average – but like the rest of Ireland we will still be an aging society in the years ahead. The percentage of people who have moved to Cork to live and work is already quite high, and is likely to remain so. This includes people from other EU countries and elsewhere.

The library service made very tangible progress on making Cork an intercultural city, most notably through *A Journey called Home*, both the book published in 2018, and the process that led to it.

It will be more difficult to keep a focus on socio-cultural priorities in a city which is so much larger, in geographic and population terms, as there will be more matters jostling for attention.



## Learning from other cities

It is well accepted that the proportion of the world's population living and working in urban centres will continue to grow. In Ireland, 63.17% of the country's people already live in cities and large towns, in line with the global average.

In terms of the process of urbanization which this will entail, there is more than one model to follow. Will Cork be one continuous conurbation, stretching from Clashes Lake to the M8, or a vibrant, attractive mix of urban centres, with the whole greater than the sum of its parts?

In becoming a much larger city, both in terms of population and geographic area, Cork might learn lessons from other places.

Bordeaux, an historic city on the west coast of France, with trade and cultural links with Cork dating from medieval times, has in the past decade or so reinvented itself as a vibrant and prosperous urban centre. It has done so by rethinking the city and its constituent parts.

It brands itself as 'Bordeaux – la Métropole des Quartiers' i.e. a city made up of distinctive local quarters or areas, each with its own socio-cultural flavours and distinctive physical features.

This is one model for Cork, a city made up of the historic city core, plus urban villages – Blackpool, St Luke's, Ballintemple, Blackrock – and towns – Ballincollig and Glanmire. Douglas is slightly different, larger than other villages, but so integrated in the rest of the city that it cannot have the sense of a town in the way that Ballincollig and Glanmire can.

# 324,000

**Cork city's population projection by 2040**

Cork city's population is projected to grow to 324,000 by 2040, according to central government planners. The City Council will face huge challenges in meeting the needs of such a population rise in terms of housing, transportation, and community services, including libraries.

Cork has many lessons to learn from other medium sized cities on how to create urban centres that work for people, cities that help to bring people together rather than force them into cars to get from home to work, as was the model followed in the 20th century. The geographer Jared Diamond recently wrote:

*"Urban life involves trade-offs. We may gain big benefits in return for suffering big disadvantages. Let's consider two of them: the trade-off between individual freedom and community interests, and the trade-off between social ties and anonymity."*

**The urbanist Peter Calthorpe echoes that:**

*"if you really want to affect environmental outcomes and social outcomes, it's not shaping a single building that matters, it's shaping a community."*

**This is echoed by another US urbanist, Samuel Stein:** *"cities are their neighborhoods, and neighborhoods are their residents"*.

In a rapidly growing city, libraries as trusted community spaces will have a huge role to play.

## Corcach Mór na Mumhan': climate adaptation & libraries

The challenges of climate change impact the library service, as they do all other City Council functions. Cork city centre is built on what was once a marsh – Corcach Mór na Mumhan. The potential damage to the city of rising sea levels is self-evident. Many cities of comparable size in Europe are taking the first steps to becoming car free cities. Cork, with its medieval street patterns, was never made for car travel, and transport policy will be one of the key strands of climate adaptation. This will impact on people getting to their local libraries, and in particular the city centre library. It will also impact on deliveries to the library and the library service's own vehicles.

The library service must, over the next five years, play its part and factor climate adaptation into all relevant aspects of its planning and operations. It can, and must, do so in two main ways:

Firstly, seek to radically reduce our carbon footprint. All new library buildings planned and developed from 2020 must be designed to be environmentally responsible and sustainable, as close to carbon neutral as we can achieve. During the lifetime of this development programme the Council must also seek to adapt existing buildings to make them as sustainable as possible.

Secondly, the library service must actively provide information and encouragement to the public in the area of climate adaptation. Given the large user base of the service, libraries are very well placed to be a focus for the Council in getting widespread community buy-in for its ambitious climate adaptation policies and programmes.

## Looking to the future

Following the staff restructuring of 2019, and the new staff who joined the service when the city expanded, the library service is enjoying a new start.

During 2018/9 the staffing structure of Cork City Council libraries was significantly renewed. There were new appointments at all library grades, from Library Assistant to Senior Executive Librarian. This was achieved through the implementation of the Libraries Workforce Plan, which had been agreed between the Council and central government in 2017.

At the end of May 2019, a total of 16 positions were transferred from the County to the City service. This happened in recognition of the three new libraries added to the city network (Ballincollig, Glanmire and Blarney) and the support services needed for the larger population. The staff compliment is now 93.5 whole time equivalent.

As noted earlier the demography of the city has changed dramatically in the past decade and a half. It is imperative that the staff of the Library Service must reflect the make-up of the New City, in its diversity.

The library service, through its younger and re-invigorated staff, is ready to face the future, with great reserves of enthusiasm, expertise and confidence.



## Local, National & EU Contexts



*This Development Programme has been prepared in the context set by local, national and EU legislation and policies, which include:*

### Cork City Council

- Cork City Council Corporate Plan 2020.
- Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021.
- City Centre Strategy, 2014 (prepared by Colliers International).

### Cork City Council, Cork County Council. (2017)

- Cork 2050: realising the full potential; Cork's submission to the National Planning Framework. Cork: Cork City Council, Cork County Council.
- Cork Area Strategic Plan [CASP] 2001-2020.

### Ireland. Oireachtas

- Local Government Reform Act 2001
- Local Government Reform Act 2014.

### Ireland. Department of Rural and Community Development

- Our public libraries 2022.

### Ireland. Department of the Taoiseach

- Project Ireland 2040 Our Plan: National Planning Framework. Dublin: Government of Ireland, 2018.

### Relevant EU programmes

[www.librariesforall.eu](http://www.librariesforall.eu)

[www.europeana.eu](http://www.europeana.eu)

<http://ec.europa.eu/culture>

<http://www.ccp.ie/>



### 1.3 Quick Facts about Cork City



**10**

Public libraries



**618,766**

Items in stock



**805,422**

Visitors (2019)



**1 in 8**

of city's population  
born outside Ireland



**2**

higher education  
institutions & suite of 3rd  
level vocational education

**Earmarked to be the fastest growing city in the country over the next 20 years under Ireland 2040, the National Development Plan**

**Only Irish city**

to be part of the International  
Rainbow Cities Network



**36,000+**

students



**2nd**

largest English  
speaking city in EU



**3rd**

friendliest city  
in the world



**WHO**

Healthy City

**2nd**

largest airport in Ireland



**94%**

of those surveyed agreed Cork  
is a great place for tourists

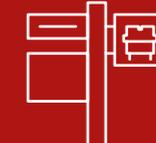
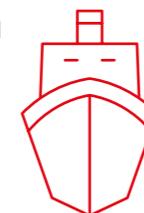
**Top 8 Ideal Cultural and Creative Cities**



Cork was ranked as one of Europe's  
Top 8 Ideal Cultural and Creative Cities  
by the European Commission in 2017,  
in its EU-wide Cultural and Creative  
Cities monitor

Cork Harbour is the  
**2nd largest**  
natural harbour in the world

**Statio Bene Fide Carinis**  
a safe harbour for ships



**24 hours**

1st Irish city to have  
24-hour bus route

Over

**1,100km**

of roads



**30**

Parks & open spaces

**24,000**

Public lights



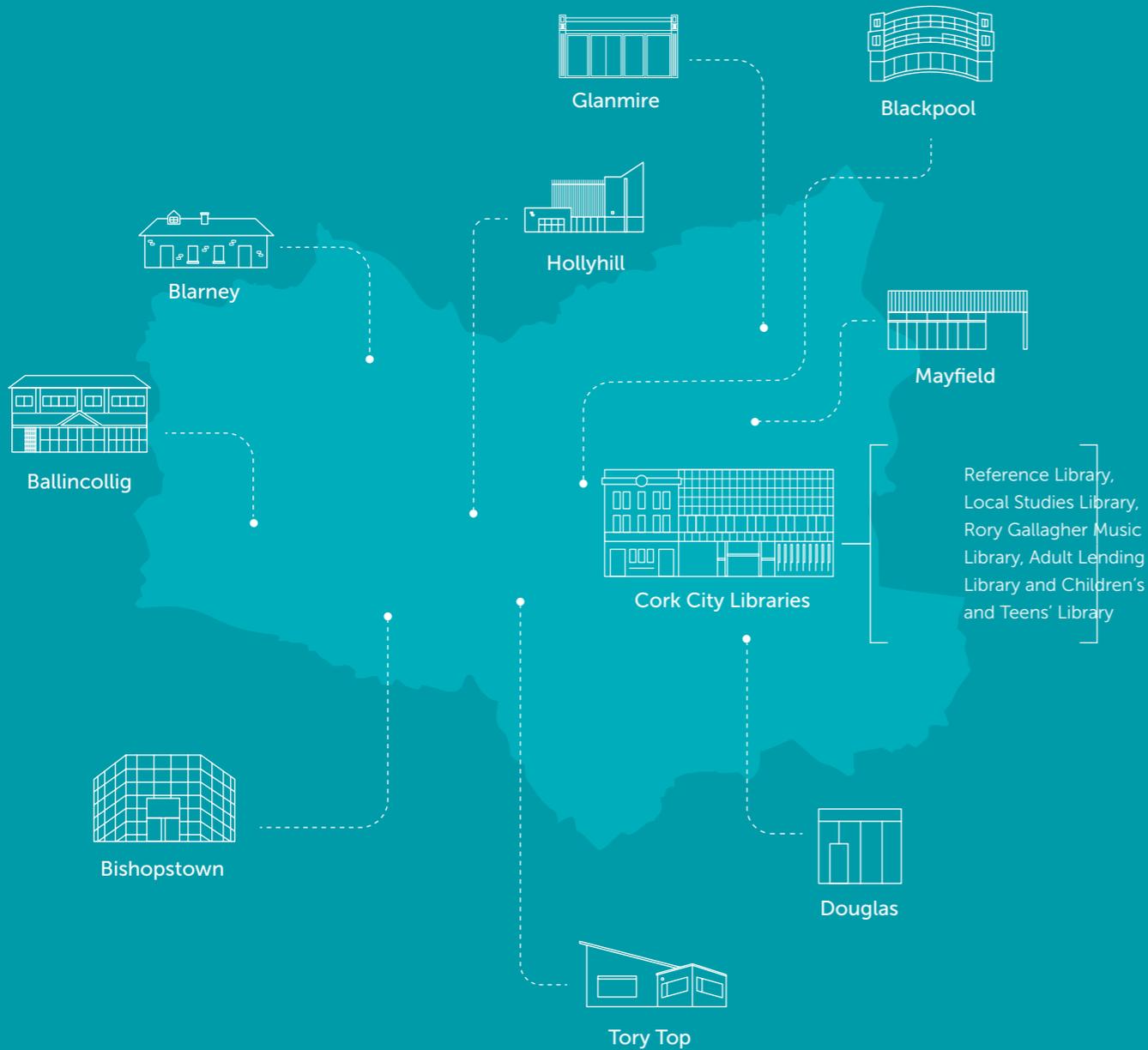
**UNESCO**

Learning City



# 1.4 Cork City & its libraries

Cork City Council Library Service is a popular and well-loved resource, contributing to the social, cultural and economic life of the people of the city. The Library Service will celebrate its 130th birthday half way through this development programme.



## FREE Membership Benefits

Reference, lending and local studies use of internet, PCs and other services are free to all, no minimum age, no fines; borrow up to 12 items from a huge range of books, CDs, DVDs; or borrow 5 x eBooks and 5 x eAudiobooks.



### Books

208,215 Books for Children  
300,567 Books for Adults

Total Number of Books **508,782**



### Media

**21,903** DVDs



### Number of films

DVDs, online via Film Fest

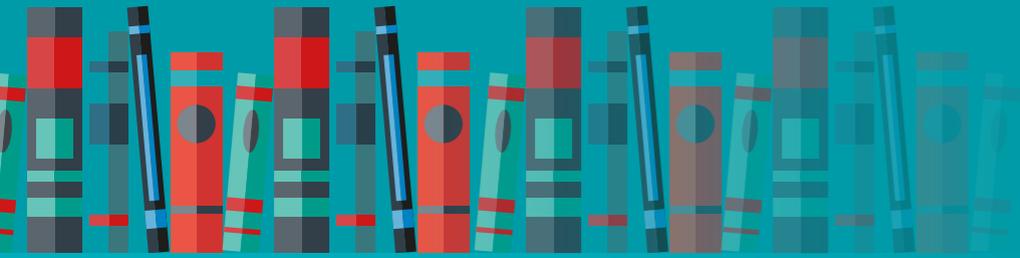
32,395 eBooks

25,281 eAudiobooks

Access to 12 M items nationally through Library Ireland's national catalogue and delivery service

### Music

- + Access to 45,382 recordings
- + Access to 2 M tracks through Naxos
- + Access to 15 M tracks through Freegal



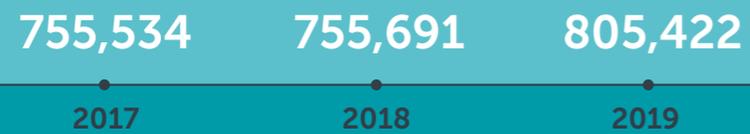
**919,161**  
issues of physical items  
and downloads in 2019



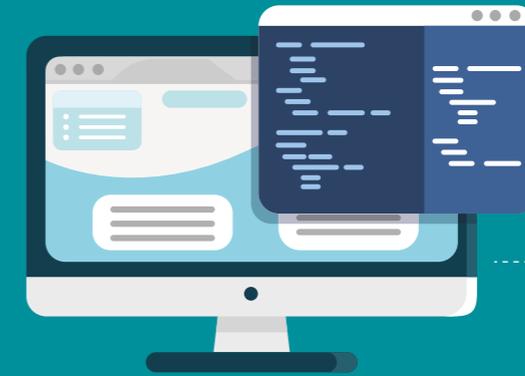
Extensive collections of  
newspapers, periodicals  
and journals

**Membership**  
32,000 – 35,000  
members each year  
+ca 22,000 users who  
do not have a library card

**Annual visits to Cork City Libraries**



**120**  
computers  
available



attract 300,000 visitors  
each year on average

**845,500**  
pages viewed

**69,375**  
public PC sessions

**Staffing  
number 93.5**

(77.5 as approved in the Work  
Force Plan (2017) + 16 staff after  
city extension in (2019))

**Number of home  
visits per year**

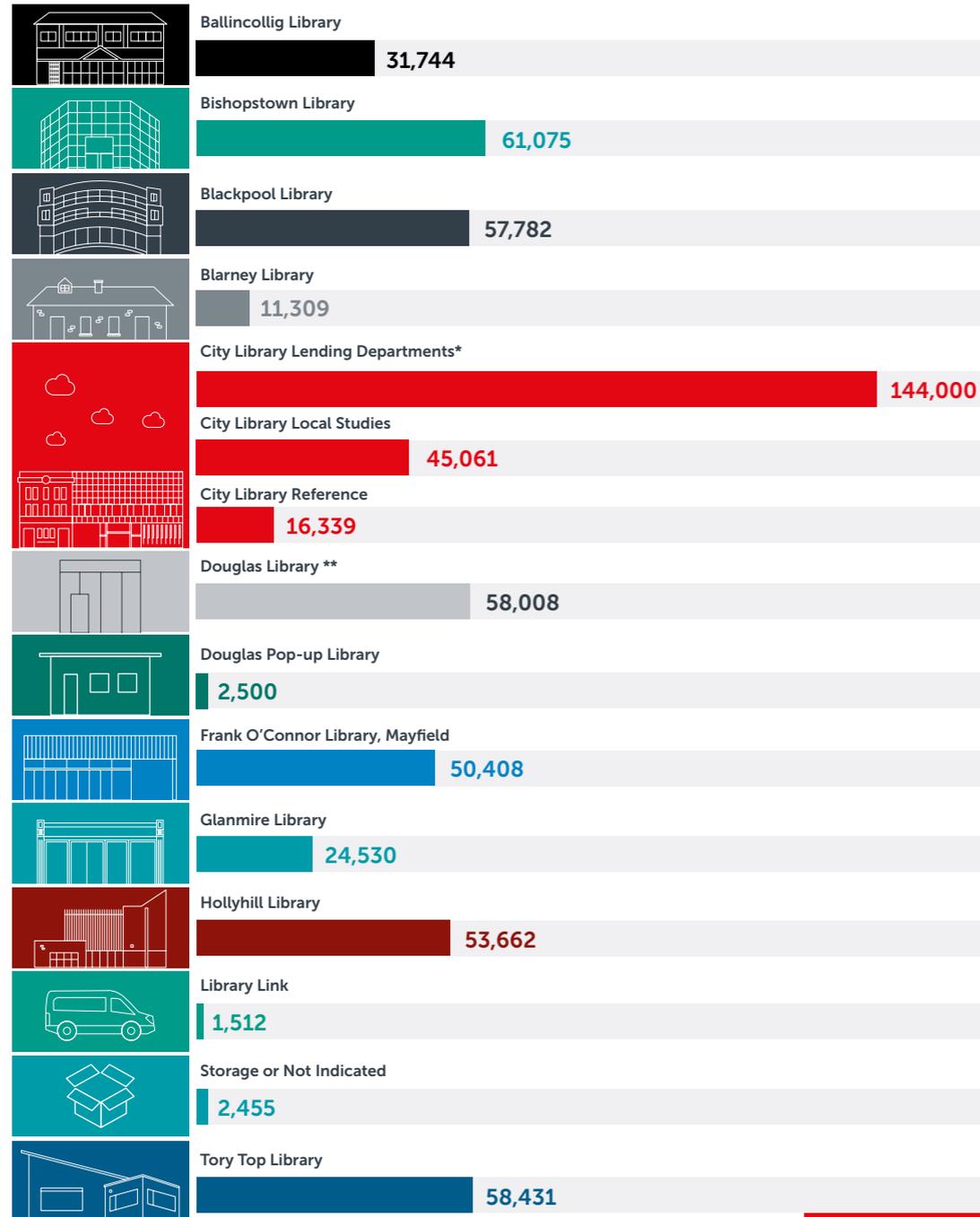
(Extended service during  
2020 due to Covid-19)

**1,227**



## Number of items by location

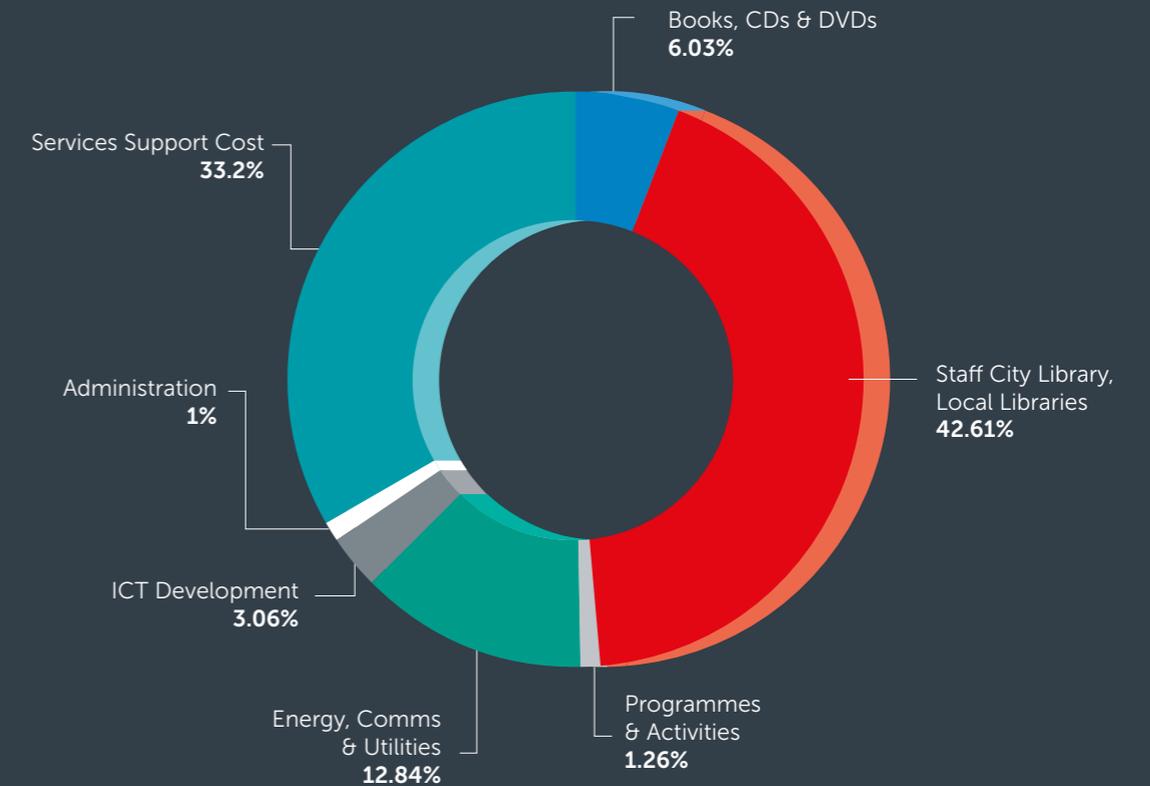
All appendix data taken 4 February 2020



\*includes Adult Lending, Children's and Teens' Library and Rory Gallagher Music Library  
 \*\*includes 38,539 items lost in Douglas Shopping Centre fire. New stock will replace.

**Total Stock**  
**618,766**

## Investment in the City and its People



Overall Actual Budget	5,399,590	66.80%
Service Support Costs	2,682,500	33.20%
<b>Total Spend</b>	<b>8,082,090</b>	<b>100%</b>

Books, CDs, DVDs, Newspapers, Etc	487,342	6.03%
Staff, City Libraries & Local Libraries	3,443,659	42.61%
Programmes & Activities	101,538	1.26%
Energy, Comms, Utilities	1,037,801	12.84%
ICT, Website Development	247,452	3.06%
Administration	81,798	1.0%
Service Support Costs	2,682,500	33.20%

## Collections by Format



**Books**  
508,782



**Music Recordings**  
45,382



**DVDs**  
21,903



**Grade Readers**  
22,545



**Graphic Novels**  
5,224



**Spoken word, Audiobooks**  
11,540



**Language Sets**  
745



**Mixed media, books with CD**  
595



**eBooks**  
32,395



**eAudiobooks**  
25,281



**Naxos Music Tracks**  
2,000,000+



**Freegal Music Tracks**  
15,000,000+

## Special Collections



**Cork Local Studies Books**  
16,339



**Cork Music Archive**  
3,023



**Maps of Cork 1545 – 1964 online at Cork Past and present**  
337



**Growing Imaginations Sensory Books in a bag**  
32



**Library Link Housebound**  
1,512



**'S' Joint Fiction Reserve Collection**  
6,116



**Michael O'Leary Photographs**  
833



**Original Library Publications**  
14



**Rory Gallagher Collection**  
58



**Burning of Cork Collection**  
811



**Childcare Collection**  
1083



**Alf O'Brien Bequest**  
1726



**Bishopstown Library Hearing Impaired Resource Collection**  
44



**Tom Barry Collection**  
32



**Fleischmann scores & manuscripts online**  
311



**Bibliotherapy, Your Good Self, Health Ireland & Life Skills**  
2764



### Festivals hosted and supported



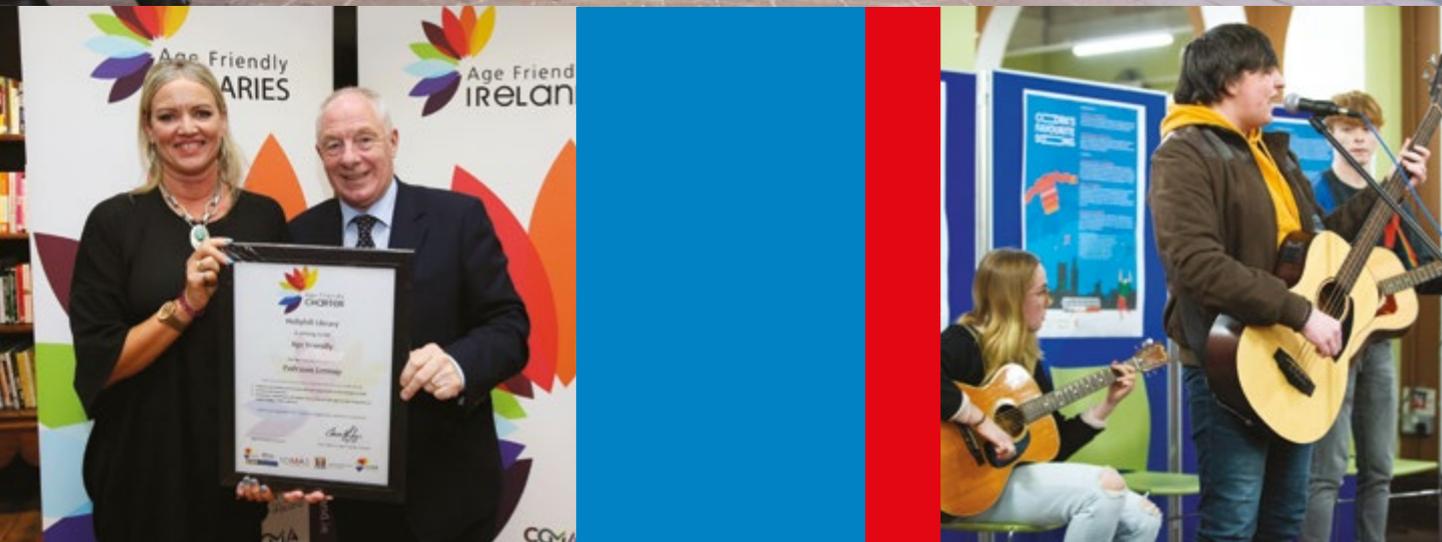


# LEARNING, CREATIVITY AND INCLUSION IN CORK CITY LIBRARIES

## Action Plan 2020 – 2024

For the five years to the end of 2024, the Council's focus will be on these three Strategic Goals.

- 2.1 Continuing investment in areas of strength, building on achievements over recent years.
- 2.2 Targeted investment in new areas of opportunity, responding to the challenges and opportunities which the library service will face.
- 2.3 Major investment in library buildings, in recognition of the city's challenging infrastructure needs





## 2.1 Continuing investment in areas of strength, building on achievements over recent years

*Cork City Council's library service has a proud history, reaching back almost 130 years. Recent years have seen major developments in the provision of library services. The library service contributes in a vital way to the quality of life and well-being of those who use it, and indeed to all communities in the city.*

*To achieve the goal of continued investment in areas of strength, the Council will implement the following objectives:*

### Objective 2.1.1 Welcoming and inclusive community spaces

- We will further develop measures which enhance inclusion and diversity, measures which the service has tried and found useful in recent years;
- We will provide a coherent range of services across the entire city, while meeting specific local needs and preferences;
- We will foster the diverse languages and cultures which are now a feature of Cork city, including the Irish language and culture;
- We will ensure that libraries will be a key focus of an intercultural city;
- We will further develop the service to housebound patrons.

### Objective 2.1.2 The Learning City

- We will deepen and enhance programming: local programmes such as the Learning Festival, Learning Neighbourhoods, as well as national programmes such as Work Matters, Right to Read, Healthy Ireland;
- We will teach critical literacy, and media literacy, in a structured way;
- We will enhance school-visit programmes across the city;
- We will continue to develop collections, staff expertise and facilities;
- We will foster a strong city identity in all areas of the new city through Cork Local Studies and the [corkpastandpresent.ie](http://corkpastandpresent.ie) website.

### Objective 2.1.3 The Reading City

- We will use the Collection Development Strategy 2020 to improve and enhance collections for children, teens, and adults;
- We will continue to develop our range of early years activities, and intergenerational and family based reading initiatives;
- We will deepen and enhance programming such as 'One City, One Book'; author residencies; other imaginative reader promotion initiatives; book swaps, Cork World Book Fest, Children's Book Fest, and Summer School of Creative Writing;
- We will develop Playful City and Toy library initiatives.





### Objective 2.1.4 Music and cultural expression in Libraries

- We will expand popular music collections in local libraries, and deepen the range of collections in the Rory Gallagher Music Library;
- We will enhance cultural programming through Creative Ireland, and expand Culture Night, Heritage Week, Seachtain na Gaeilge;
- We will continue to host exhibitions of cultural relevance, both local and national, and include intercultural expression in local and national festivals;
- We will expand music initiatives such as ukulele lending, music classes, Open Mic performances, keyboards for use in the library;
- We will provide music booths and film booths, with appropriate space.

### Objective 2.1.5 Committed and expert staff

- The Council will fully implement the Workforce Plan for the New City;
- Libraries will play a full part in the people development strand of the Council's Corporate Plan to 2024;
- We will match staffing hours to areas of need in a more targeted way;
- We will offer Continuing Professional Development, and training and development for all levels of staff, to develop capacity to the full;
- We will develop comprehensive and coherent staff engagement initiatives;
- We will develop a diverse workforce, reflecting the city we serve.



## 2.2 Targeted investment in new areas of opportunity, responding to the challenges and opportunities which the library service will face

The society which libraries serve continues to evolve. The Council will target investment in areas which will help provide a better service, meeting needs which will evolve as the service evolves.

To achieve the goal of targeted investment in new areas of opportunity, the Council will implement the following objectives:

### Objective 2.2.1 Reaching out

- We will establish a dedicated outreach team, including staff with marketing expertise;
- We will develop a more focused and better-resourced advertising and PR strategy;
- We will develop and implement ambitious actions to meet governments target of membership by 30% of the population, e.g. link subsidized bus travel to library visits on a pilot basis;
- We will meet communities half-way: e.g. community pop-up libraries in areas without a static library building, alongside a mobile library service (see objective 2.3.5);
- We will expand Age-friendly policies and programmes to meet the needs of an aging society;
- We will offer more science-based, climate conscious / bio-diverse activities.

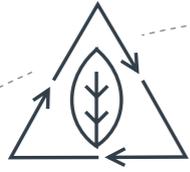


### Objective 2.2.2 Increasing access

- We will offer enhanced staffed opening hours where possible;
- We will plan for a new City Library which will open from 09:00 to 21:00 most days, and be open 7 days each week, with staff on duty;
- We will review staffed opening hours in other locations, and expand where possible;
- We will implement the 'My Open Library' model, adapted for the specific urban location of Cork city;
- We will ensure that all library infrastructure will enable full physical accessibility.

### Objective 2.2.3 Adopt and develop people-centred technologies

- Our Digital Strategy group will drive the objectives of Cork City Libraries' Digital Strategy;
- We will provide for cashless payments, where appropriate and possible;
- We will enhance the range of online tutorials and digital literacy classes;
- We will provide digital equipment for borrowing;
- We will expand adult coding classes;
- We will ensure that staff are always available and visible near kiosks and other equipment.



44



45

### Objective 2.2.4 Green Libraries

- We will ensure that our new library buildings are sustainable and as low carbon as possible, and that they provide opportunities for green spaces and biodiversity;
- We will urgently investigate funding and partnerships to provide a zero carbon mobile library van (see objective 2.3.5);
- We will assess our waste procedures, including aiming for a zero landfill policy for disposal of books and ICT equipment;
- We will continue to promote libraries as a green option for readers, highlighting shared collections, and eBook and eAudiobook options;
- We will advocate, at a national level, the case for zero carbon providers for the next National Distribution Service tender.

### Objective 2.2.5 Expand and enhance partnerships

- We will develop a range of partnership models:
  - ✓ Strengthening partnerships with other public bodies such as ETB, UCC, ACE, CIT;
  - ✓ Strengthening partnerships with memory institutions, e.g. Archives, Museum, Cork Folklore Project;
  - ✓ Strengthening city-wide partnerships with other literary and cultural providers making the city a destination for literary and cultural experiences;
- Further developing partnership with community groups and charities for specific purposes;
- We will investigate the possibilities of using the Library Card to provide benefits for library patrons, in new imaginative partnerships;
- We will forge stronger links with creative writing groups and language groups who may need a facilitator or writer in residence to sustain themselves;
- We will develop both city-wide partnerships, and links with agencies in each local library catchment area;
- We will forge stronger links with the HSE to support the roll-out of various courses and Healthy Ireland initiatives.



## 2.3 Major investment in library buildings, in recognition of the city's challenging infrastructure needs

### Background

The condition of the existing City Library continues to deteriorate, although the upper floor at the front of the building has been secured. A new City Library has been mooted for more than 20 years, and in 2006-2008 it seemed that it might happen.

The time to start developing the city centre library is now. The challenge facing the Council in terms of library infrastructure needs is set out in detail on p.5. In summary the Council must not only develop the city centre library and complete the Mayfield project; it must also address infrastructural needs for Ballincollig, Blackrock–Mahon, Blarney, Douglas, and Glanmire.

The planning of libraries for Douglas, Ballincollig, Glanmire and Blarney must go hand in hand with the overall strategic planning for these areas new to the city [for Blackrock-Mahon see 2.3.4]. There are two crucial considerations:

- a. in order to prosper libraries must be located at the centre of these new urban areas;
- b. libraries located as a central focus of larger, busier, urban centres, will help those centres thrive.

The Council will continue to emphasize the importance of libraries as places, i.e. destinations in their own right, places in which to spend time, meet people, enjoy talks, exhibitions and other activities, as well as use the collections. During the course of this plan, as well as developing new buildings, the Council will review the condition of existing buildings and improve and make internal changes, as appropriate.

## Two projects have already been identified by the Council as urgent priorities:

### Key Objective 2.3.1: Develop a new City Library

The Council intends to develop a new city centre Library for the people of Cork, and for visitors to the city. Cork City Council has a vision for the library which the city of Cork needs and deserves. The new City Library will greatly enhance the life of the city centre, from morning to night.

The new City Library will be a platform for activities such as reading, learning, and discussion, providing access to equipment, data networks, and expertise. It will be a place for creativity [music studios and media rooms, maker space], and a place for interactions [café, cinema, lecture hall], sometimes noisy, but with lots of 'conventional' quieter library areas.

- It will be green – in its design and construction, in its operation, and as the city's key information source and encourager of sustainable living. It will be a playful, engaging space;

- The new Library will lead to a huge increase in footfall, up to 1 million visits each year, achieved through extensive opening hours;

- It will be a 'Digibit Library', part of a worldwide network. The City Library will have integrated and smart technologies to support innovation, creative industries start-up, and culture. This will not only be high-tech, but low-tech too, making full use of alternative and self generated (people power) technologies;

- It will foster culture for all, and will be a one stop shop for information on Cork.

### Objective 2.3.2: Refurbish and extend Frank O'Connor Library

Cork City Council has received Stage 1 Approval from the Department for the extension and refurbishment of the Frank O'Connor Library, Mayfield, as a joint development with St Joseph's Community Centre / SJCA;

- Consultants [structural engineers; QS] have been appointed;

- The documentation required for Stage 2 is being prepared with a view to lodging Stage 2 application in early Q2 2021;

- Council will agree operational arrangements with the neighbouring community group, in line with Departmental guidelines;

- Council will seek early decision from the Department, to progress to Stage 3 approval.

### Objective 2.3.3: Douglas Library

Douglas Village Shopping Centre [DVSC] will be re-opened in late 2020; Douglas Library will move back in to the Centre once the complex is ready:

- The Council will use insurance funding, 'My Open Library' grant-aid, (and possibly other Departmental support), to fit-out and stock the Library.
- The Council will use the remainder of the strategy period to identify the best location for a long-term home for a library of 2,000M<sup>2</sup>, and procure the necessary funding, and planning permissions, etc.

### Objective 2.3.4: Progress other Library buildings

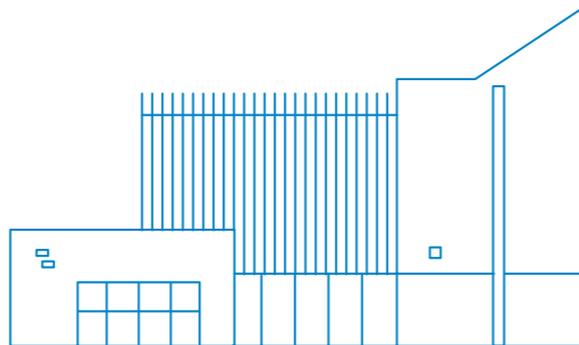
#### Blackrock–Mahon Library

There is recognition from the Department and the LGMA that the Blackrock – Mahon area needs a purpose-designed Library;

- The Council is in discussions with a number of parties on a suitable site;
- There is a need to identify an exact location at an early date;
- This may be a joint development with another community facility for Mahon.

#### The Council will

1. Agree the exact location, preferably on or close to the Skehard Road;
2. Develop a design brief, identifying what might be shared with a community facility;
3. Progress the project through the 4-Stage process.



### Bibliographic Services

Bibliographic Services accommodation is for the ordering, accessioning, cataloguing, and processing of new stock for the city's 10 libraries. A city centre location is not suitable for the delivery of new stock by suppliers, nor for the distribution by the Council van of finished stock to the various local libraries in the city. Bibliographic Services will therefore not be accommodated in the proposed new City Library, and this aspect of the service will have to move out to another location, sooner rather than later. The facility would need easy and timely access to circulation routes around the city, and easy access from main routes into the city, to provide for speedy and efficient deliveries from suppliers.

#### The most preferable option would be to co-locate with a local library, for a number of reasons, including:

- sharing of some elements between the public library and this facility, e.g. staff facilities, parking;
- easier estate management in the longer run by having fewer library service locations;
- cost efficiencies at construction stage, including on fees;
- potential for on-site staff relief, in the event of unexpected staff shortages.

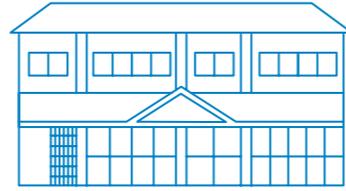
Early in the lifetime of the strategy the Council will identify the optimum location to have a shared local library | Bibliographic Services accommodation.

### Objective 2.3.5: Develop a Mobile Library service to meet the needs of new communities



The City Council has a S85 service level agreement with Cork County Council for the continuation of the mobile library service in the transition area for a period of 3 years from the date of the boundary extension. This will come to an end on 31 May 2022. Given the geographic and demographic nature of the extended city, the Council will require a mobile library service to reach communities in the more rural periphery, for decades to come.

The Council will begin planning in 2020 for the development of such a service, using an energy efficient and sustainable vehicle (see objective 2.2.4).



### Objective 2.3.6: Site identification for other library buildings

As noted earlier the planning of libraries for Ballincollig, Glanmire and Blarney, and a long-term home for Douglas Library, must go hand in hand with the overall strategic planning for these new areas. Libraries must be located at the centre of these new urban areas to prosper. But as well, libraries located as a central focus of larger, busier, urban centres, will enhance those centres.

Therefore the needs of the local libraries listed below will be looked at as a matter of urgency in the context of the City Development Plan, preparation of which has already begun. A long - term home for Douglas Library will also be reviewed as part of this process [see 2.3.3], as will the optimum location for Blackpool Library. The needs of these areas, in terms of libraries and other social and cultural facilities, will inform the next City Development Plan.

#### Ballincollig Library

- The Council is exploring a number of options to provide enhanced library facilities in the medium term, and this process is at an early stage;

#### The Council must

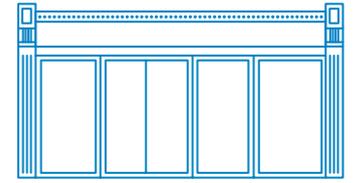
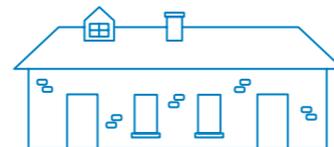
1. Make a decision on which is the better option in terms of providing a public library to the people of Ballincollig;
2. Progress the project with the Department.

#### Blarney Library

- The Library is in a very good location, and there is no urgent need to relocate;
- It would be possible to extend into the open space behind the existing library, building a purpose-designed library there. The existing premises would then become a foyer/exhibition area. Other options should, however, also be investigated.

#### The Council should therefore

1. During 2020 – 2021 progress an outline proposal with interested parties, with a view to selecting a long-term purpose-designed accommodation for a public library for the Blarney–Tower area.



#### Glanmire Library

- The Glanmire | Riverstown | Sallybrook area is a dispersed one, with no recognised centre;
- The internal refurbishment carried out in the existing premises in 2019 has improved conditions in the short-term, but due to its limited size, the building is not suitable for long-term use;
- The Council needs to make plans for the future of the area as a coherent urban centre.

#### The Council will

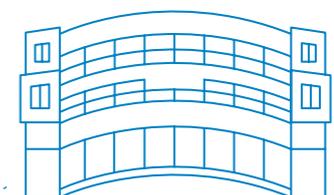
1. Through the Library Service and both the Directorate of Strategic and Economic Development and the Directorate of Community, Culture and Placemaking, develop an overall Council strategy for the area.
2. Keep possible locations under review.

#### Blackpool Library

The Blackpool Library premises, while not ideal, are adequate for the period of this development plan.

The Council will, however, investigate the optimum location for a centrally located library building, close to shops and other services in the heart of the north central city area. The site should ideally be within easy walking distance of shops and community services.

Blackpool bridge, where Thomas Davis St, Great William O'Brien St, Commons Rd and Watercourse Rd meet, would be an appropriate location.

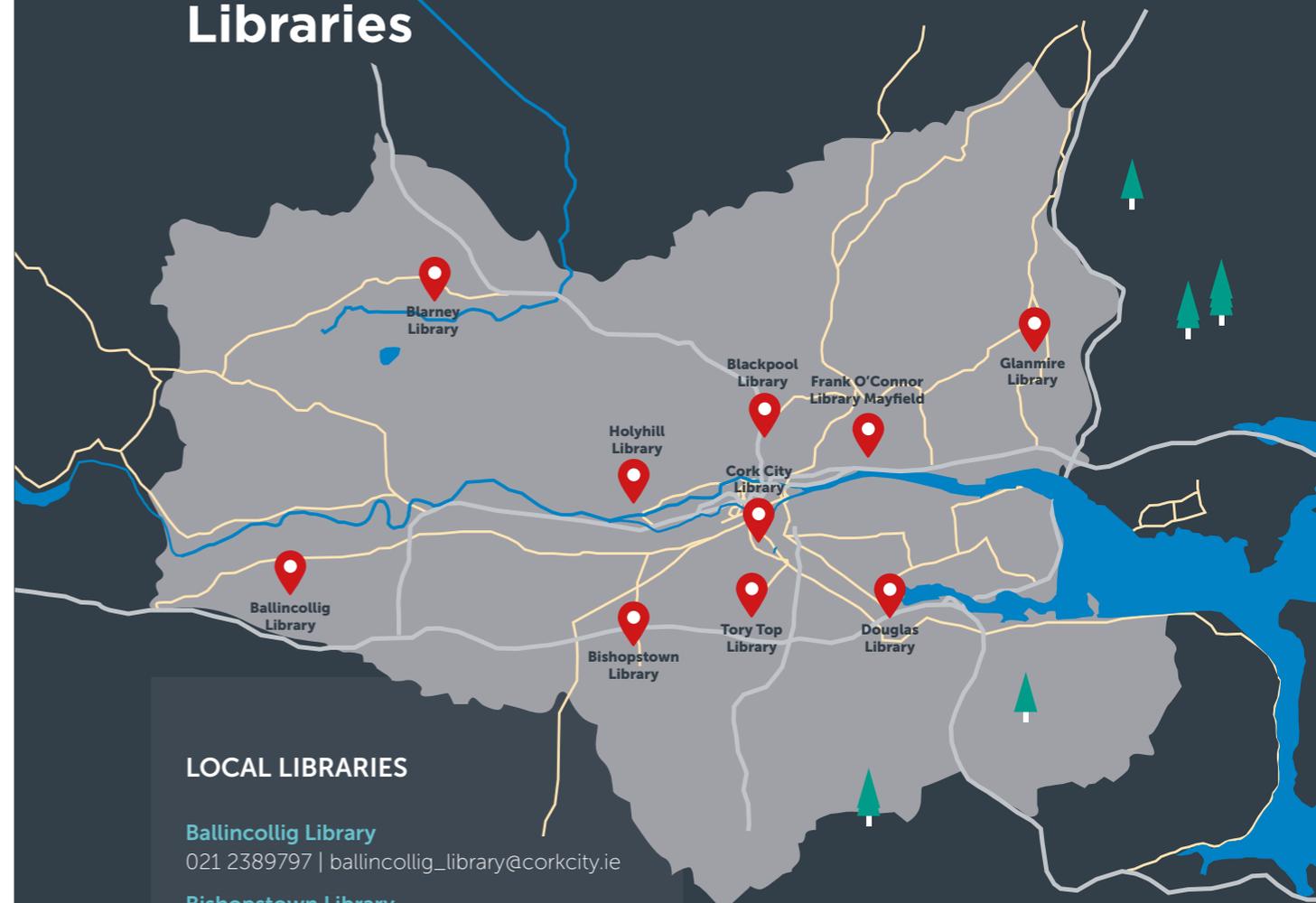


*“Every library is a trusting space at the heart of any creative city, a trusting space created by the empowerment of readers and information seekers. The dynamism of a Library operating at full power, its welcoming atmosphere, its cultural inclusiveness, creates a frisson of liveliness and optimism. A great city library not only keeps a record of who we once were, it offers us endless possibilities of what we might become.”*

**Thomas McCarthy**

Poet. Author of *Rising from the Ashes: The Burning of Cork’s Carnegie Library and the Rebuilding of its Collections (2010)*

# Leabharlanna Libraries



## LOCAL LIBRARIES

**Ballincollig Library**  
021 2389797 | ballincollig\_library@corkcity.ie

**Bishopstown Library**  
021 492 4950 | bishopstown\_library@corkcity.ie

**Blackpool Library**  
021 492 4933 | blackpool\_library@corkcity.ie

**Blarney Library**  
021 238 9796 | blarney\_library@corkcity.ie

**Douglas Library**  
021 492 4932 | douglas\_library@corkcity.ie

**Frank O'Connor Library, Mayfield**  
021 492 4935 | mayfield\_library@corkcity.ie

**Glanmire Library**  
021 238 9795 | glanmire\_library@corkcity.ie

**Hollyhill Library**  
021 492 4928 | hollyhill\_library@corkcity.ie

**Tory Top Library**  
021 492 4934 | torytop\_library@corkcity.ie

## THE CITY LIBRARY 021 4924900

**Lending Library**  
021 492 4908 | lending\_library@corkcity.ie

**Children's Library**  
021 492 4903 | childrens\_library@corkcity.ie

**Rory Gallagher Music Library**  
021 492 4919 | music\_library@corkcity.ie

**Reference Library**  
021 492 4911 | reference\_library@corkcity.ie

**Local Studies Library**  
021 492 4914 | local\_studies@corkcity.ie



*"Without the Cork City Libraries I would not be president of UCC today. My first exposure was as a child picking up books for my grandmother in the Grand Parade Library. As I grew to be a teenager and entered secondary school, the branch library on Tory Top Rd opened a short walk from my home.*

*In that wonderful setting, I studied for my Leaving Cert and for the University College Cork Scholarship examination. Without excellent exam results and that scholarship I most likely wouldn't have been able to attend UCC.*

*I look forward to seeing a new modern revitalised Cork City Library as a replacement for the icon on Grand Parade that has served so many of us so well for so long."*

**Prof. Patrick O'Shea**

Emeritus President, University College Cork



Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí  
Cork City Council



We are Cork.