



## **RGDATA WELCOMES GOVERNMENT'S TOWN CENTRE FIRST POLICY**

### **SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE FOR THE REGENERATION OF IRISH TOWNS**

### **LOCAL AUTHORITY SECTOR URGED TO STEP UP TO THE MARK TO DELIVER TOWN CENTRE RENEWAL**

RGDATA, the organisation representing Ireland's community-based retail grocery businesses has welcomed the new Town Centre First Policy announced by the Government today (Friday 4 February).

***"RGDATA fought hard for a Town Centre First Policy and has been an active advocate for Government to take this issue seriously. We welcome this new Policy and the initiatives announced by the Government and hope that they will be effective in halting the decline in so many of our towns and villages."***

RGDATA Director General, Tara Buckley commented

*"Experience in Ireland and internationally has shown that the key to successful town centre regeneration programmes is for a genuinely collaborative approach to be adopted, involving town centre traders, local authorities, community groups, expert advisors and all local stakeholders.*

*If this new Town Centre First Policy is to be successful and achieve its objectives, it will be of vital importance that it is genuinely collaborative and actively involves all town centre interests. It is also important that all existing expertise gained from the initial Collaborative Town Centre Health Checks and international experience is applied. There also needs to be strong oversight to ensure that 33 Actions are delivered."*

RGDATA said that the new Policy provides an opportunity for local authorities' to adopt a new approach to the management and regeneration of town centres. In the past in many instances the interventions or neglect of local authorities have directly contributed to vacancy, dereliction and decay in our towns. This is an opportunity for local authorities to make amends and demonstrate, through collaboration with town centre interests, in particular local businesses, that a bright future can be secured for Irish towns and villages.

Tara Buckley concluded;

*"On behalf of the many stakeholders who are actively engaged in seeking a brighter future for our town centres, I welcome this Government initiative. I hope that it will lead to an ambitious and collaborative approach to drive the policy forward and provide the vital back up and expert support for Town Centre Teams."*

Ends

For further information or to interview Tara Buckley email [rgdata@rgdata.ie](mailto:rgdata@rgdata.ie).