



## BALBRIGGAN REJUVENATION STRATEGY ONLINE CONSULTATION SURVEY ANALYSIS

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January 2019

The basis for the online survey was developed by Fingal County Council, in conjunction with 4 'pillar' leadership groups. These groups met for a total of 12 workshops over a period of 3 months, with 42 bodies and 66 individuals represented. The key areas of focus of these groups were;

- Public Realm and Place-making,
- The Local Economy and Enterprise
- Community Affairs and Integration
- Employment, Education and Training

Through 30 hours of stakeholder insights, key ideas on areas for improvement within Balbriggan were identified. The public then had the opportunity to have their say on which top 4 of these ideas they felt would bring the most benefit to Balbriggan, under each pillar. The survey was available online at [Balbriggan.ie](http://Balbriggan.ie), for just under 3 weeks from November 26<sup>th</sup> – December 14<sup>th</sup> 2018. It was also available to take part on a tablet at any of our public consultation events which took place between the same dates.

Participants were also asked if they felt we had missed any areas that were important to them, as well as some demographic questions. Aside from the main question under each of the four pillars, all additional questions were optional and did not need to be completed in order to participate.

This report highlights the response to the ideas under the four pillars, as well as any free text responses received.

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# OVERVIEW

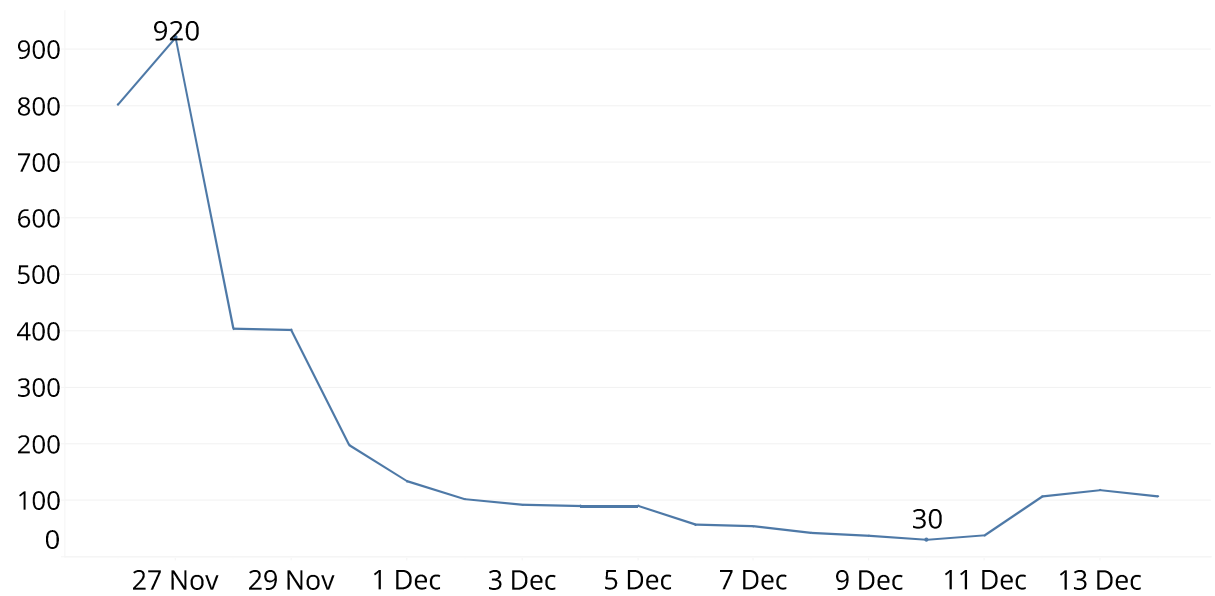
## Number of Online Survey Submissions

4,001

A total of 4,001 people took part in the consultation survey. Excluding those who are 11 or younger (based on a low level of likelihood that they would participate in a public consultation survey) the population of Balbriggan stands at 16,265\*. As such **we captured the opinion of roughly 25% of the people of Balbriggan**. Shown below is the trend of survey submissions. The highest volume of submissions was received on 27<sup>th</sup> of November, with 920 people participating.

Figure 1.

### Trend of Submissions



*\*Central Statistics Office - Census 2016*

The survey captured opinions across all ages and ethnic or cultural backgrounds. The breakdown of the data collected, by age and ethnicity, is visible in figure 2 and 3 below.

Figure 2. Age Profile

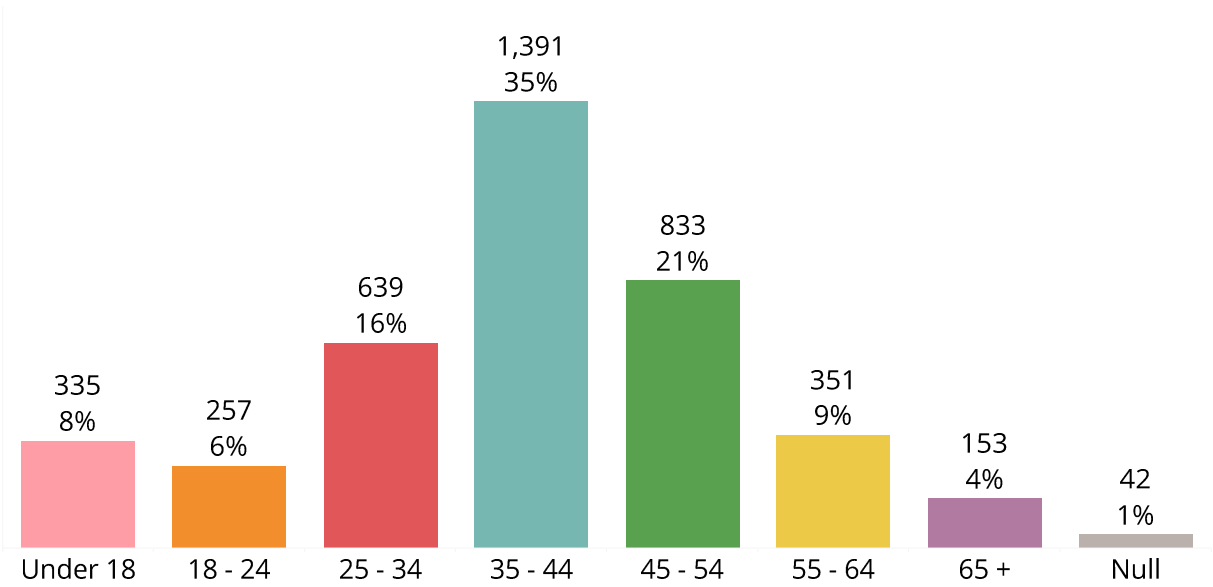
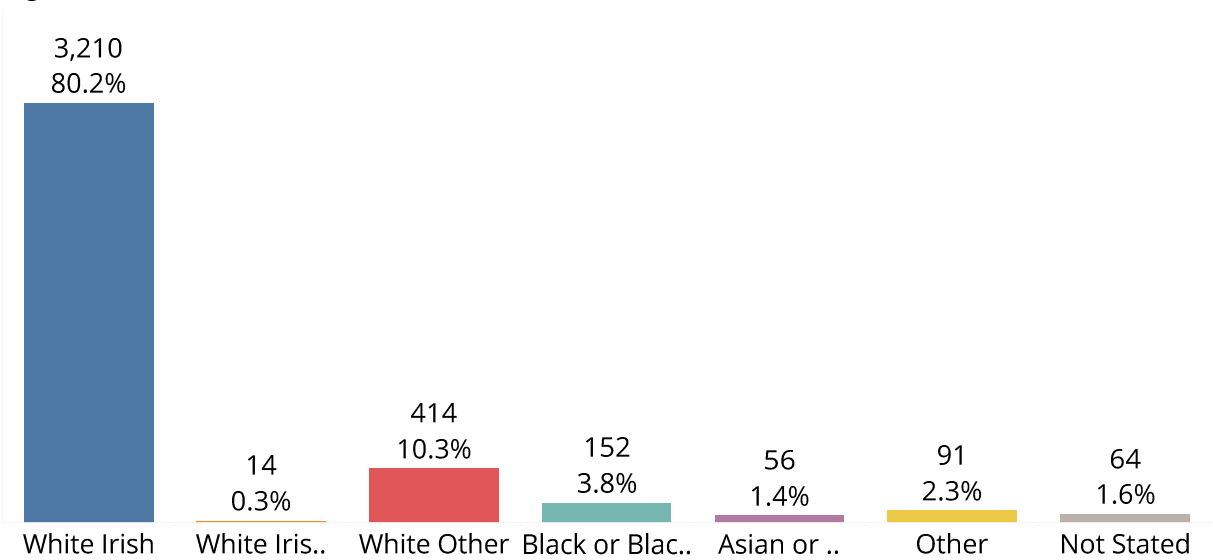


Figure 3. Ethnic Profile



Participants were asked whether or not they lived or worked in Balbriggan. 87% of respondents live within Balbriggan, 12% live elsewhere and 1% chose not to share this information. 24% of respondents are employed within the town, 74% are employed elsewhere and 2% chose to skip this question.

Figure 4. Do you live in Balbriggan?

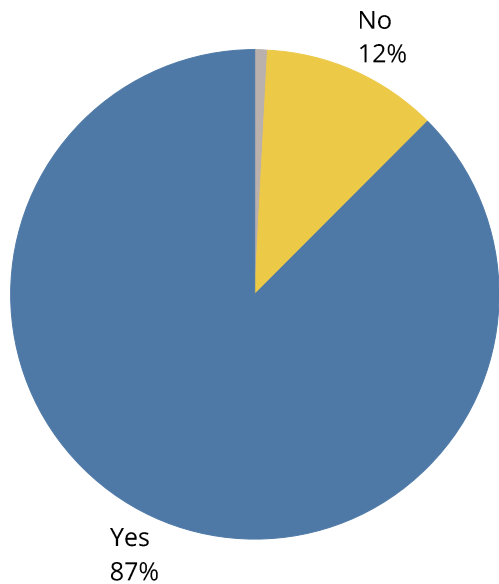
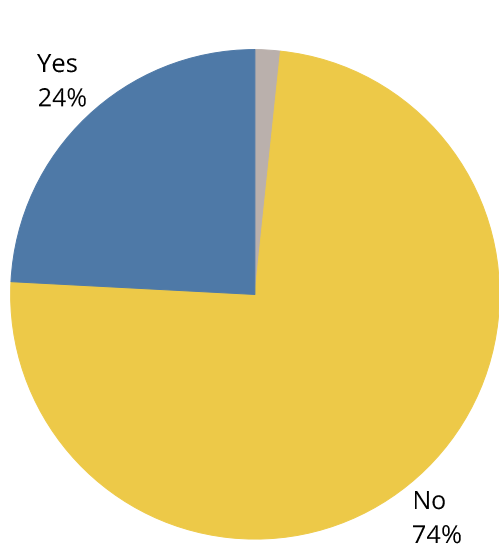


Figure 5. Do you work in Balbriggan?



Focusing on those who live in Balbriggan, 34% are living in the town 21 years or more, 31% between 11 and 20 years and 21% 10 years or less. 13% did not fill in this question. See figure 6. Of the 87% of respondents living in the town, just 22% are working within Balbriggan, with 77% travelling elsewhere for employment. 1% did not state where they were employed. See figure 7, below right.

Figure 6. If yes, how long have you lived in Balbriggan?

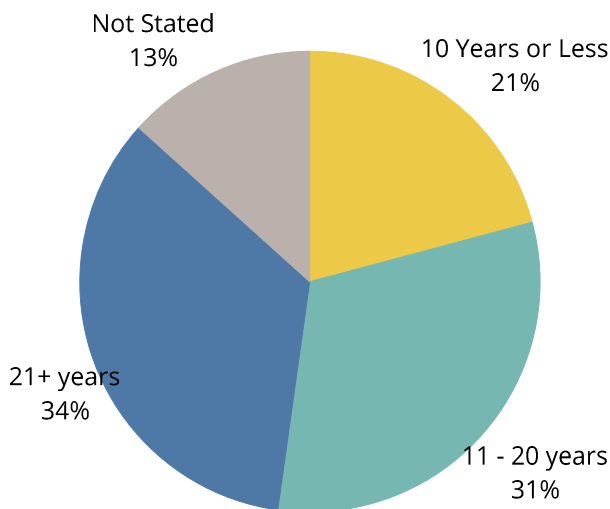
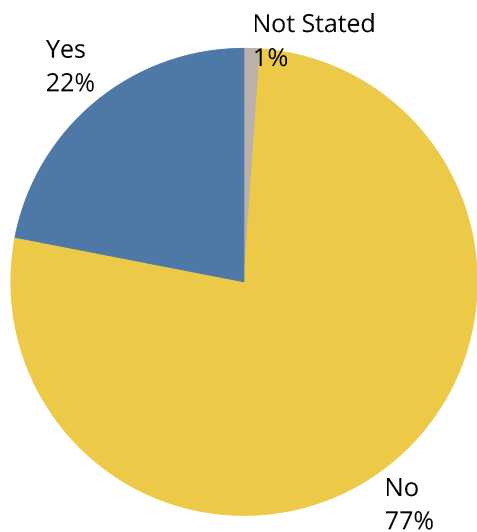


Figure 7. If yes, do you work in Balbriggan?



Respondents were asked to name one thing that they currently really value about Balbriggan. 2,388 people filled out this question, giving us a 60% response rate. The Word Cloud below depicts the most popular words that popped up again and again in the answers people gave. A list of the most popular words is displayed in table 1, with how many times they occurred.

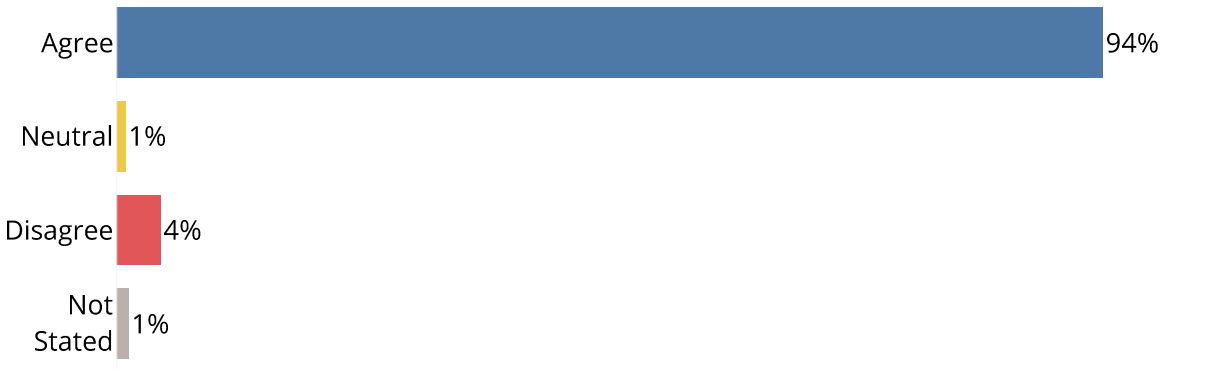


Table 1.

Word	Frequency
Beach	682
Community	480
People	448
Sea	273
Harbour	194

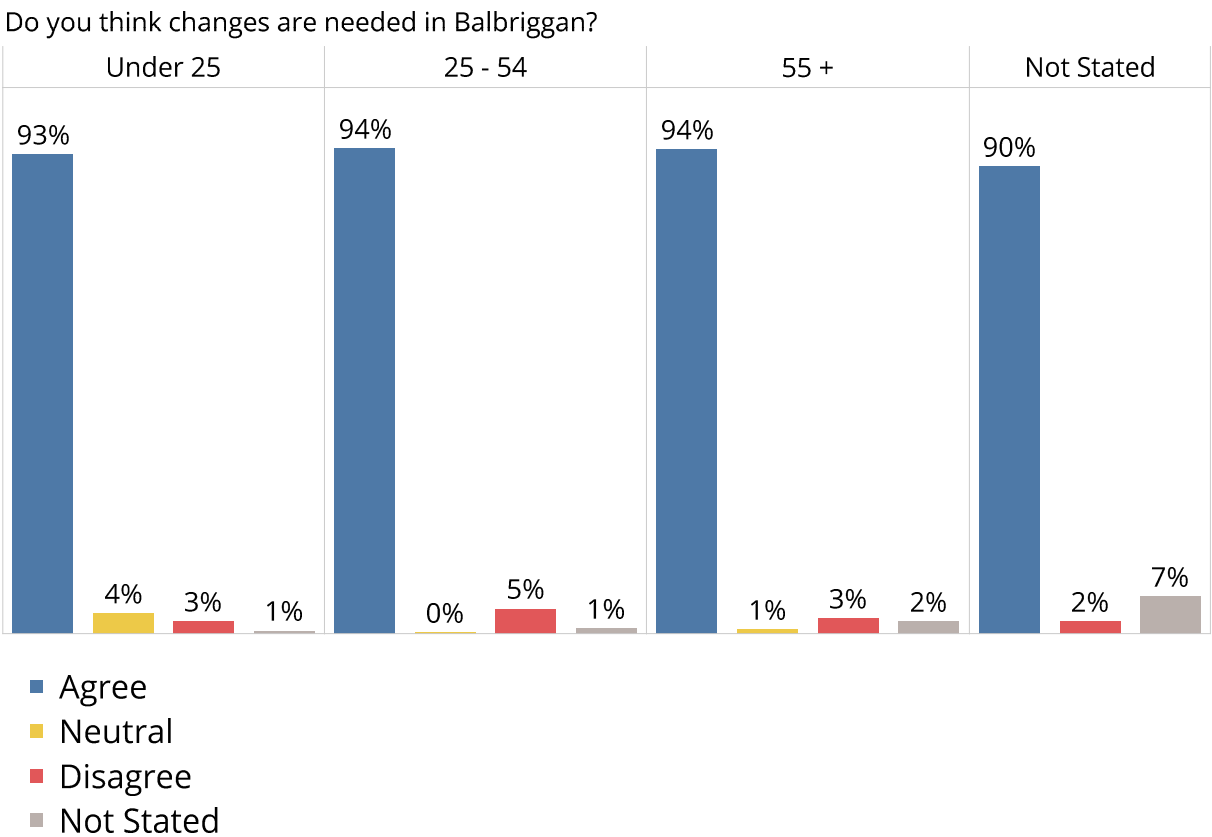
When asked if changes were needed in the area, 94% of people ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’. Just 4% ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagreed’ that change is needed.

Figure 8.  
Do you think changes are needed in Balbriggan?



This opinion holds across all ages, and those who chose not to share their age. This is shown in figure 9 below.

Figure 9. Changes needed, by age.



## PUBLIC REALM AND PLACEMAKING

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The theme of the first pillar is public realm and placemaking. The question posed is;

### **What physical improvements do you think will bring the most benefits to Our Balbriggan?**

In answer to this question 7 key areas of improvement were identified by the leadership group for this pillar. They are listed in table 2 below, with the alias used for each for the purpose of charting the public's response. There was an addition 'other' choice included, which allowed participants to put forward ideas not already captured by the leadership groups' suggestions.

Table 2. Public Realm and Placemaking

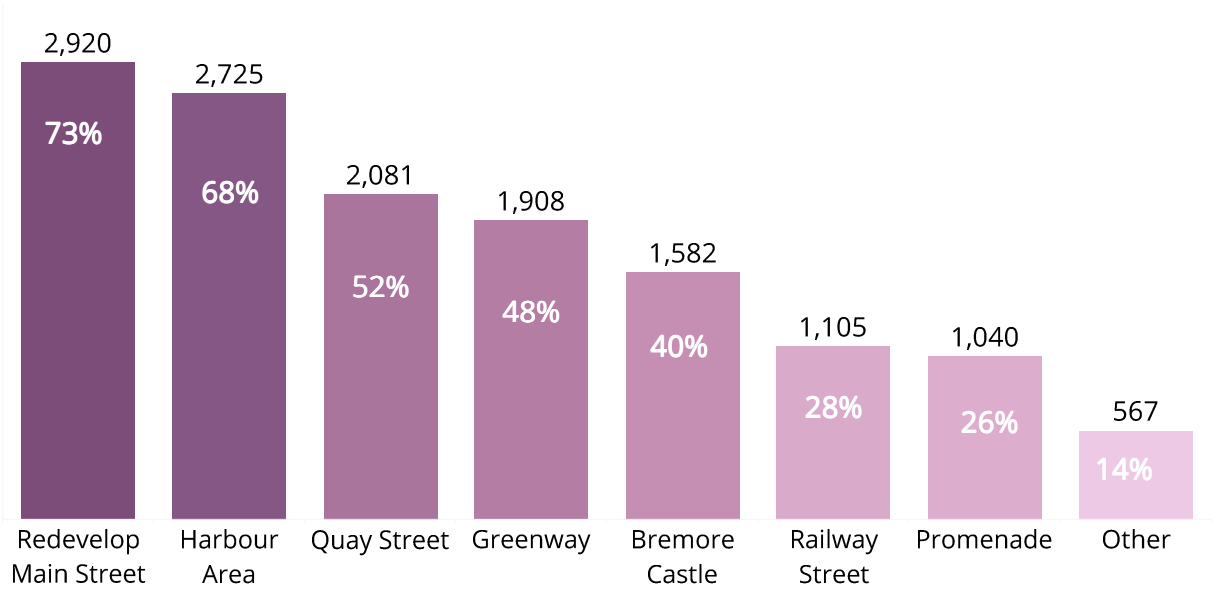
	Full Description	Alias
1	Redevelop the heart of the main street (Dublin & Bridge St.), opening up the centre of the town to Millpond Park and the Bracken River, with new landscaped civic amenities	Redevelop Main Street
2	Reimagine the harbour area to create an exciting, lively pier and waterfront, linking numerous leisure and tourism opportunities	Harbour Area
3	Transform Quay Street into a multi-purpose plaza area with a linear park alongside the Bracken River, featuring tiered seating for events, repurposing the Railway Viaduct arches into a vibrant market space, including redevelopment of the RNLI Boathouse	Quay Street
4	Revamp Railway Street including the historical train station and station master's house, and its immediate access area, creating a vibrant public, social, commercial space	Railway Street
5	Develop a coastal greenway (cycling and walkway) from Balbriggan to Skerries	Greenway
6	A new promenade and boardwalk linking the Martello Tower across the beachhead to the harbour area	Promenade
7	Opening Bremore Castle and Regional Park as a premier leisure and tourism experience	Bremore Castle
8	An additional option to outline an idea that was not captured in the leadership group suggestions	Other



In relation to Public Realm and Place-making, the most popular choice was the redevelopment of the Main Street, with 73% of participants placing this in their top 4 most preferred choices. This was followed by reimagining the harbour area (68%), developing a multi-purpose plaza on Quay Street (52%) and the cycling and walking greenway which will run from Balbriggan to Skerries (48%). These results are displayed in figure 10 below. Also shown are some quotes from the 'other' free text option of the survey under this pillar.

Figure 10.

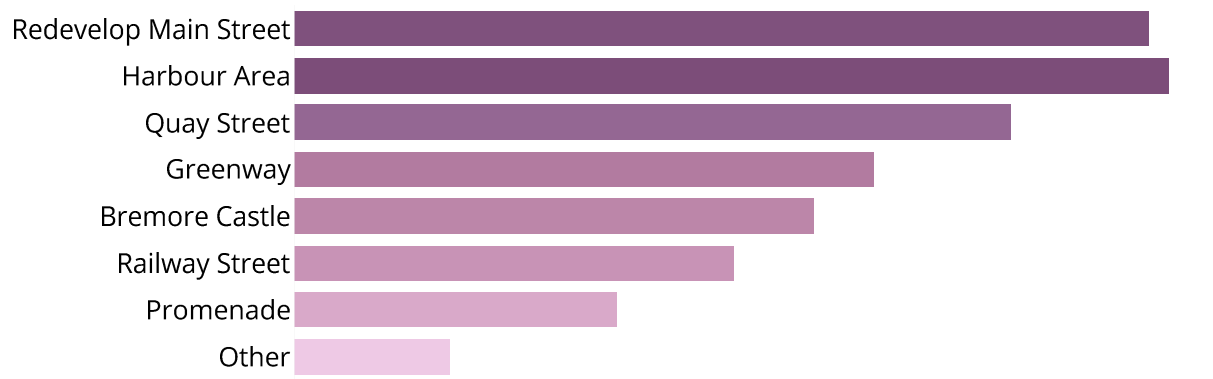
What physical improvements do you think will bring the most benefits to Our Balbriggan?



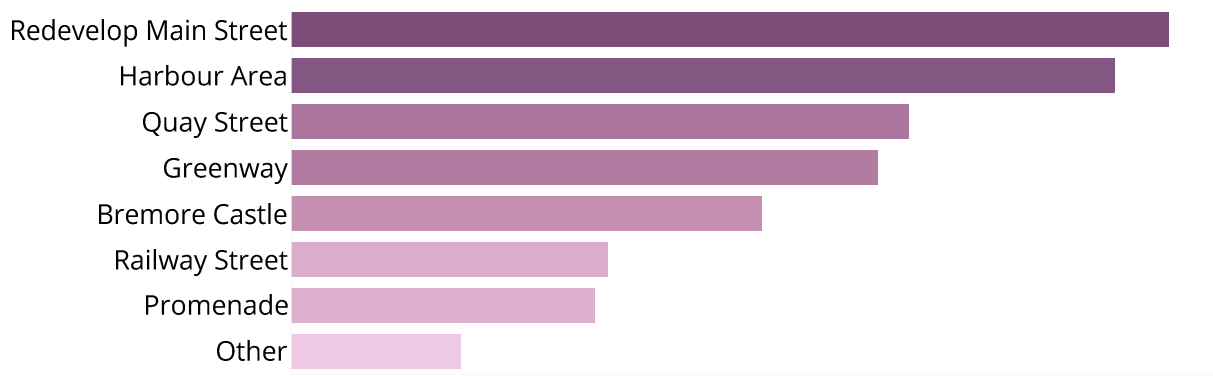
In order to assess whether there were any differences of opinion between people of different ages, the age groups were further banded into three brackets; under 25 years, 25 to 54 and 55 and over. We can see from figure 11 below, the top 4 choices for public realm and place-making hold across all age groups. A minor difference of opinion arises where those under 25 slightly favour the reimagining of the harbour area over redeveloping Main Street.

Figure 11.

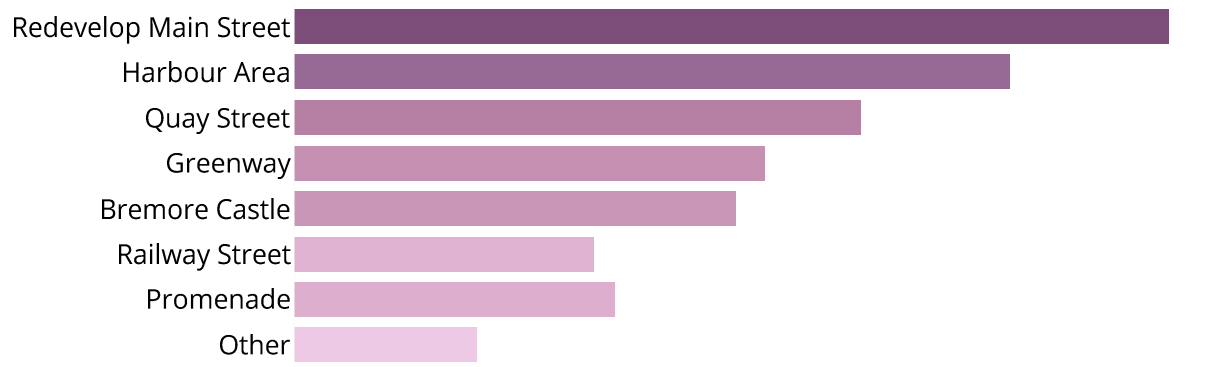
Under 25



25 - 54



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## FREE TEXT ANALYSIS

This section analyses the 'other' free text portion of the Public Realm and Place-making question. **14% of participants chose the 'other' option under this pillar.** A Word Cloud of the most commonly used words is displayed below. Of the responses received 'Swim' and 'Pool' were the most commonly used words. The top five words and their frequency are displayed in table 3 on the next page. This table, the Word Cloud below the direct quotes taken from survey submissions highlight the demand for a swimming pool within Balbriggan, as well as for the redevelopment of the Main Street.



Table 3.

Word	Frequency
Swim	315
Pool	315
People	61
Park	57
Leisure	52

"A **swimming pool** in the area is badly needed and will bring a lot of custom to the area too"

"Revitalise **Main Street**, provide leisure facilities for teens to combat anti-social behaviour, provide an arts/performance venue and build a **swimming pool**"

"Picnic areas and seats in **Millpond Park**. Random **seats throughout the town** as there is none at present for elderly/disabled people while out walking"

"More enterprise in the town and **accessible parking** to help anyone open a business on what used to be a thriving **Main Street**"

"A **swimming pool** is badly needed. A coastal town needs to be able to teach children to swim"

"A nice restaurant and coffee shop around the **harbour**"

"**Millpond Park** must include a large pond in the centre of the park (so kids can come feed the swans / ducks like we did years ago), a large pond at least fifty per cent of the area! Also the **Main Street to be planted with trees** where allowed. Bare at the moment, compared to other towns in Fingal!"

"The **park area around Martello Tower** would make an amazing spot for upper end restaurants or bars **overlooking the sea**"

"Community space for **young people specifically** the new scout group, 89th Bremore"

## LOCAL ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE

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The second pillar covers local economy and enterprise. The question posed is;

### What needs to happen in Our Balbriggan to help the local economy develop and grow?

In answer to this question 8 key areas of improvement were identified by the leadership group for this pillar. They are listed in table 4, with the alias used for each for charting purposes.

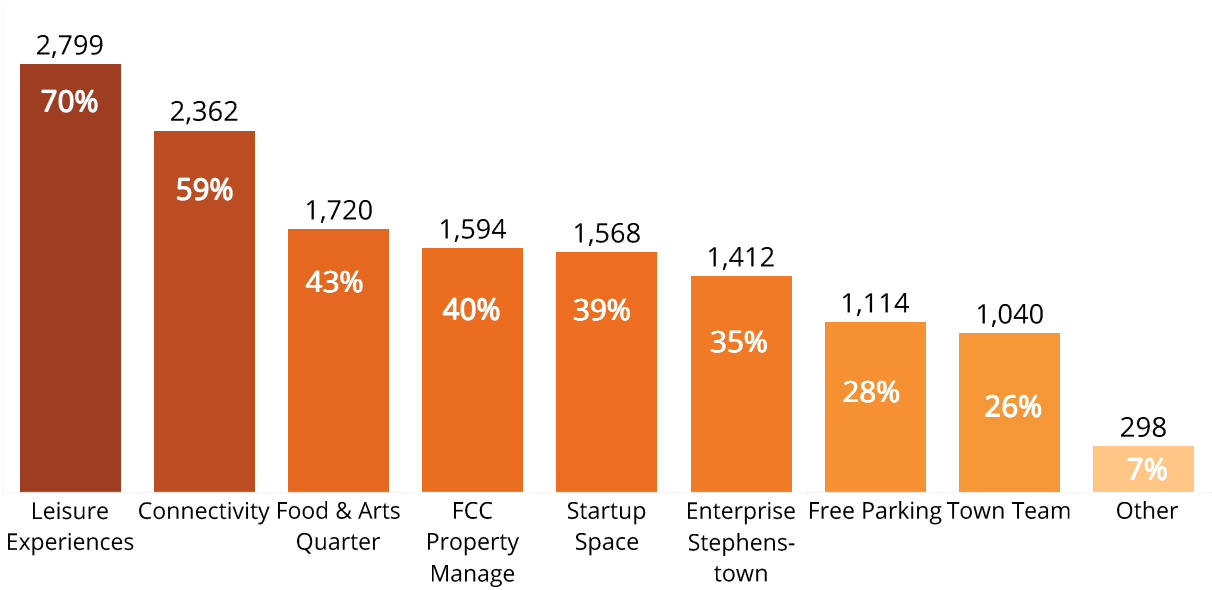
Table 4. Local Economy and Enterprise

	Full Description	Alias
1	Develop better connectivity between the harbour, beach and Quay Street area and the main street, creating more opportunities for people to meet and linger	Connectivity
2	A dedicated town team	Town Team
3	Start-up enterprise space located in the town centre with additional supports for entrepreneurs and existing small and medium sized enterprises	Startup Space
4	A food and arts quarter for the town	Food & Arts Quarter
5	More proactive land and property management by Fingal County Council in the town centre	FCC Property Manage.
6	Encourage new enterprises to set up in the Stephenstown area, leading to new jobs	Enterprises Stephenstown
7	Develop quality leisure experiences based on the potential of the harbour, river, coastline and castles	Leisure Experiences
8	One hour free parking	Free Parking
9	An additional option to outline an idea that was not captured in the leadership group suggestions	Other

To help the local economy to grow, developing quality leisure experiences based on the potential of the harbour, river, coastline and castles was viewed as most important, with 70% support. This was followed by developing better connectivity between the harbour, beach and Quay Street area and the main street (59%), creating a food and arts quarter for the town (43%) and Fingal County Council taking a more proactive role in property management in the town centre (40%). The results are charted below in figure 12.

Figure 12.

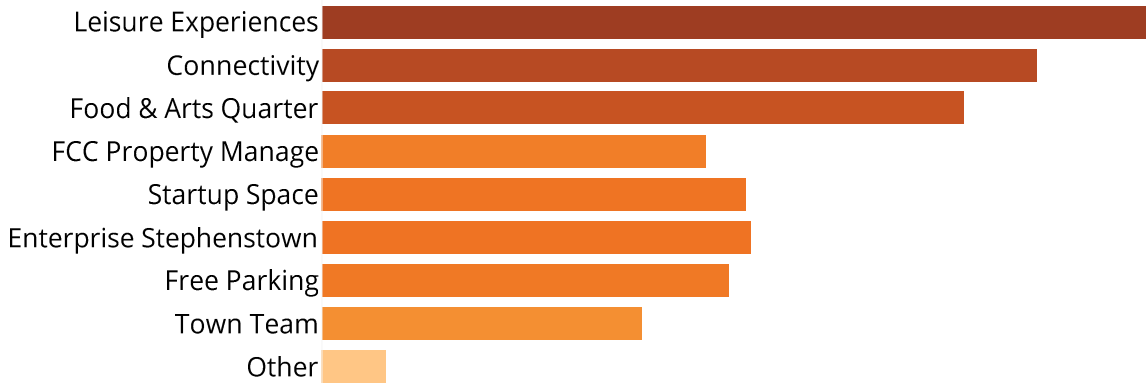
What needs to happen in Our Balbriggan to help the local economy develop and grow?



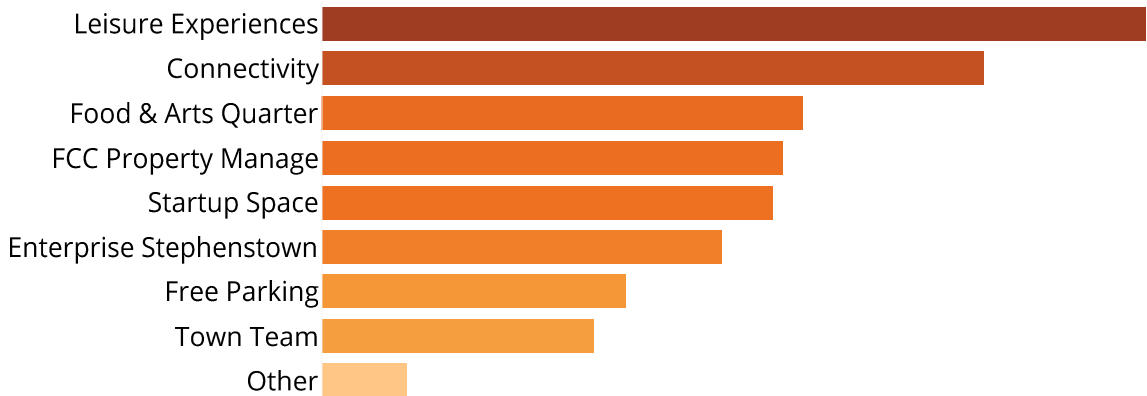
Under this pillar there were some differences of opinion between the age groups; those under 25 favoured encouraging new enterprises to set up in the Stephenstown area over Fingal County Council's management of town centre properties. Those 55 and over favoured a start-up enterprise space located in the town centre over a food and arts quarter. However the top 2 choices; leisure experiences and better connectivity held across all groups as the perceived most beneficial options to the local economy.

Figure 13.

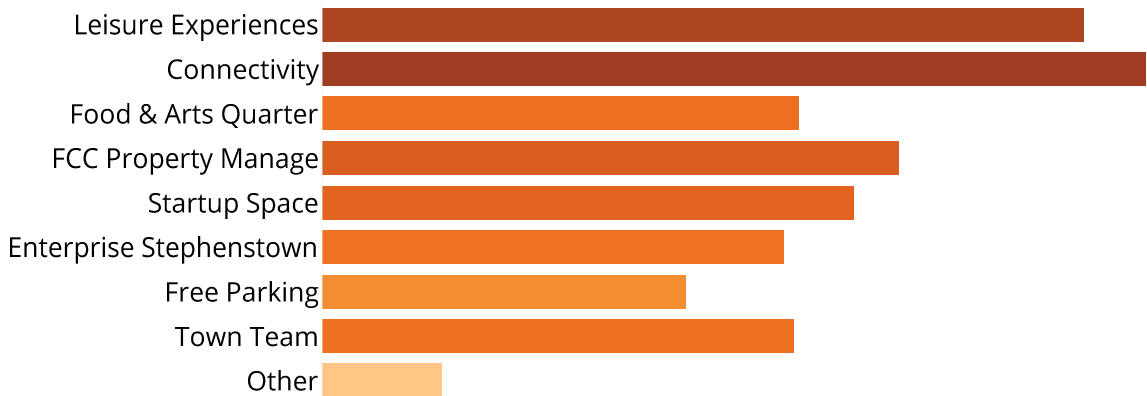
Under 25



25 - 54



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## FREE TEXT ANALYSIS

**7% of respondents chose the 'other' free text option under the pillar of local economy and enterprise.** A Word Cloud below displays the most commonly used words. 'Swimming' and 'Pool' were the top two most used words in the submissions received. The top five words and their frequency are displayed in table 5 on the next page. This table, the Word Cloud and the below quotes taken from survey submissions again highlight the demand for a leisure centre and swimming pool within Balbriggan.





Table 5.

Word	Frequency
Swimming	87
Pool	82
Centre	37
Parking	35
Food	25

"**Swimming pool** complex to develop employment, economy and activities for youth of town and surrounding areas"

"Restrict the numbers of fast food outlets via proper town planning. Encourage nice cafes and restaurants to open around the **redeveloped harbour area [...]**"

"Multi story car park at station and provide **free parking for the beach/harbour**"

"**Improve public transport connectivity** with the [neighbouring] towns and Dublin, to make it easier for people to visit without clogging the town with car traffic. This would also benefit Balbriggan residents who work elsewhere (mostly Dublin I guess). For example, faster and more frequent train connections. Also, diesel trains are quite noisy and spoil some of the beach-going experience. Would be great to electricise the line"

"**Swimming pool/gym/spa** as there isn't any local swimming pool and I feel this is needed"

"We need so much more **parking around schools** so we don't have to obstruct a pathway. Allow **free parking on a Sunday** in the town, it will attract more visitors."

"Promote green economic opportunities. **Food with low food mileage**, farmers markets. Create opportunities for social entrepreneurs. Improve cycle infrastructure"

"An **organic / natural food hub** & designer maker space along railway street (similar to amazing design spaces in Eindhoven) turning Balbriggan into the hip young cool town it actually is"

## COMMUNITY AFFAIRS AND INTEGRATION

The theme of pillar three is community affairs and integration. The question posed is;

**What needs to happen in Our Balbriggan to ensure a strong, inclusive place where people can realise their full potential?**

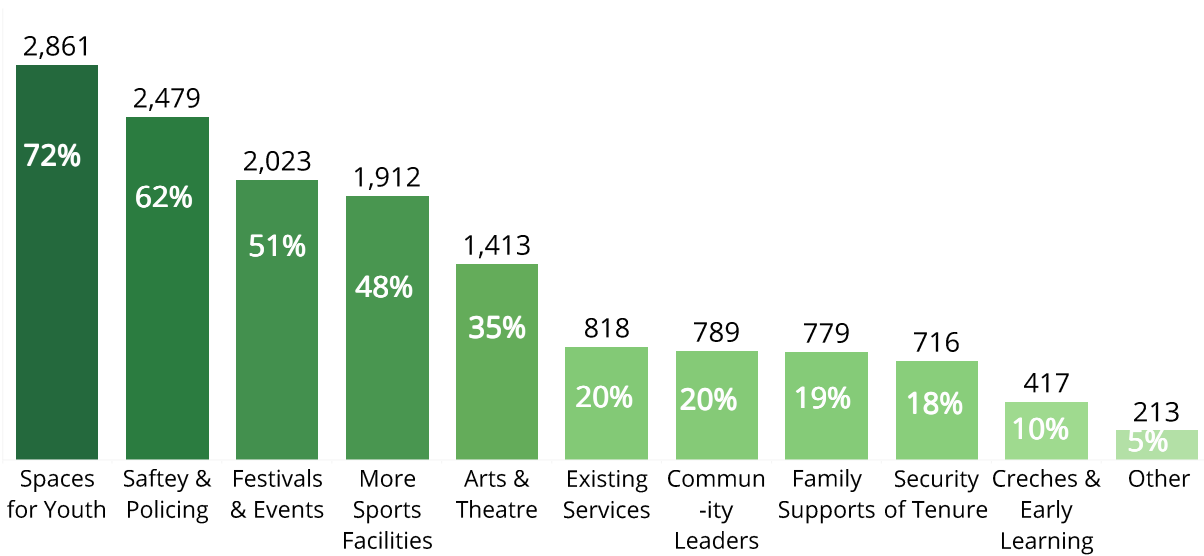
In answer to this question 10 key areas of improvement were identified by the leadership group for this pillar. They are listed in table 6 below, with the alias assigned to each for charting purposes.

Table 6. Community Affairs and Integration

	Full Description	Alias
1	Community spaces for arts and theatre	Arts & Theatre
2	Social spaces for young people (outside of school)	Spaces for Youth
3	More festivals and events designed to promote pride and greater integration in the town	Festivals & Events
4	Grow, develop and support new and existing community leaders in the town	Community Leaders
5	Security of tenure (housing)	Security of Tenure
6	More sports facilities	More Sports Facilities
7	More community crèches and early learning supports	Creches & Early Learning
8	Improved awareness and co-ordination of existing services	Existing Services
9	Increased services to support families	Family Supports
10	Increased safety and policing	Safety & Policing
11	An additional option to outline an idea that was not captured in the leadership group suggestions	Other

In order to create a strong and inclusive community in Balbriggan, social spaces for young people to congregate, increased safety and policing, festivals and events to promote integration and more sports facilities were seen as the 4 most important factors. Social spaces for young people generated 72% support, increased safety and policing had 62% support, and festivals and events to promote integration and more sports facilities had 51% and 48% support respectively. These results are charted in figure 14 below.

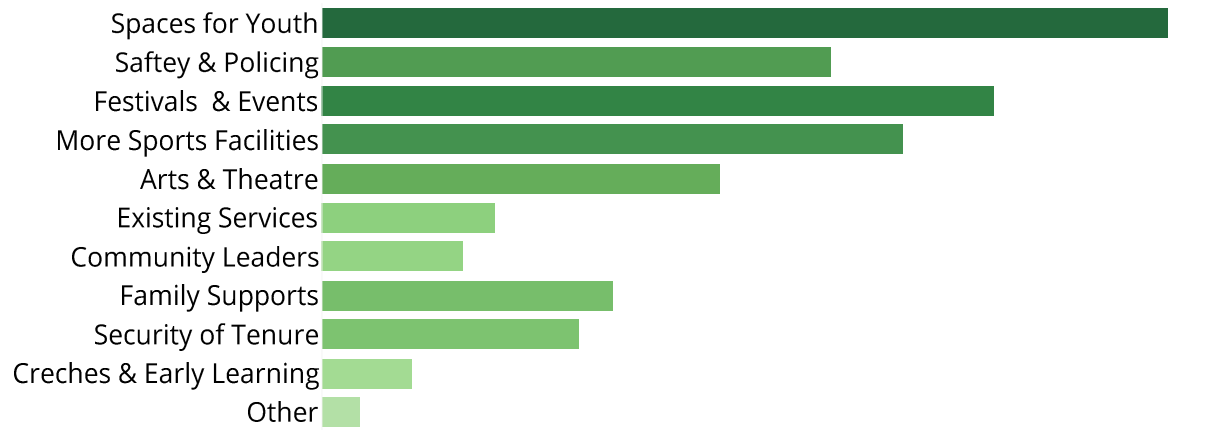
Figure 14.  
What needs to happen in Our Balbriggan to ensure a strong, inclusive place where people can realise their full potential?



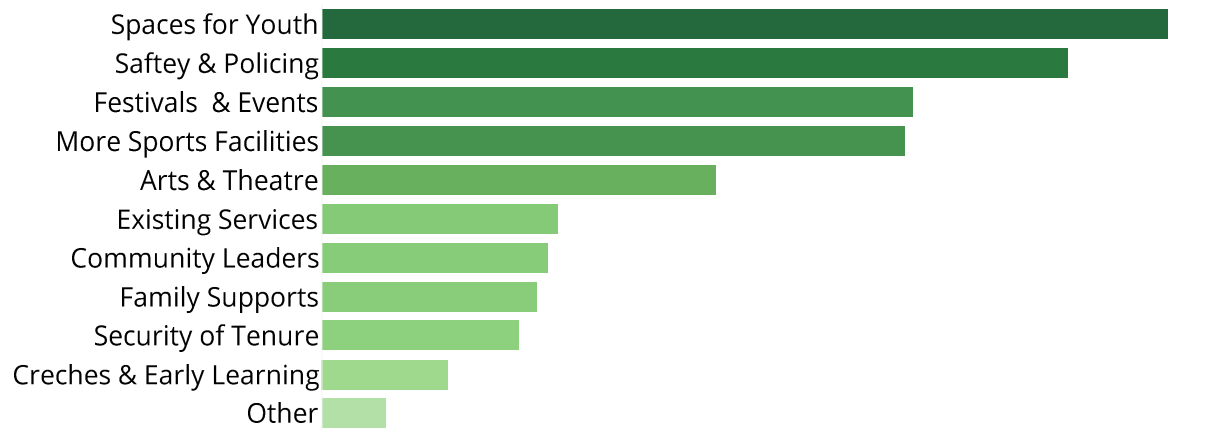
When looking at the three age groups the top 4 preferences remain almost the same, with some small discrepancies; those over 55 favour community spaces for arts and theatre over more sports facilities. Increased safety and policing also jumps to the number one spot among this age group. Those under 25 favour festivals for integration slightly higher than those 25 and over. This is shown in figure 15.

Figure 15.

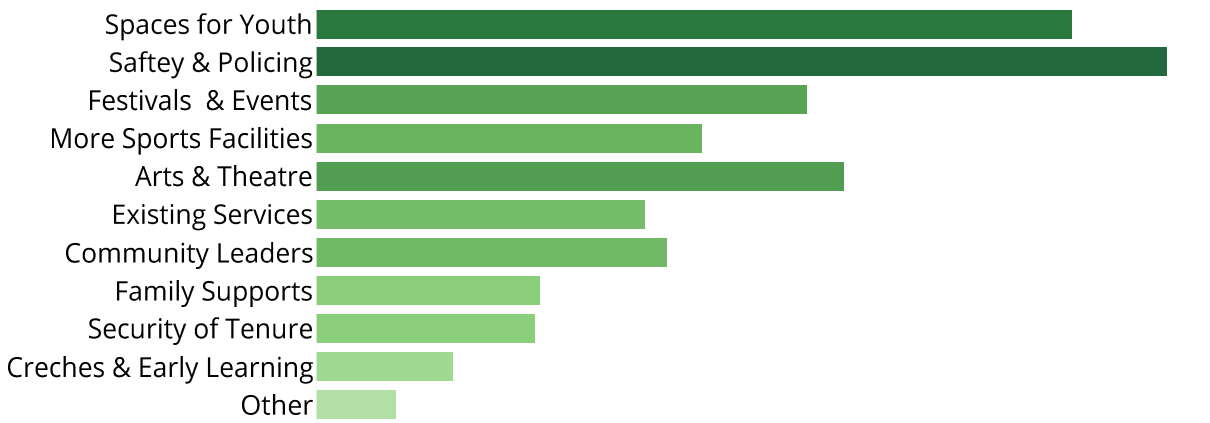
Under 25



25 - 54



55 +



## FREE TEXT ANALYSIS

In relation to community affairs and integration, **5% of participants chose the 'other' free text option.** A Word Cloud of the most popular words used in these answers is displayed below. 'Swim' and 'Pool' were the top two most commonly used in these answers. The top five words and their frequency are displayed in table 7 on the next page. This table, the below Word Cloud and quotes taken from survey submissions highlight the demand for a swimming pool within Balbriggan, as well as the need for the public to be involved in decision making for the town and for increased policing.



Table 7.

Words	Frequency
Swim	73
Pool	73
Social	23
Young	21
Community	21

"A **swimming pool** so children and teenagers will have a place to spend their free time and stay healthy!"

"Targeted, multi-cultural, multi-race integration, mutual respect and collaboration on community development; zero tolerance of racialism from any sector of our community, and transparent and stern **policing of anti-social behaviour** and hate crime"

"All people need to be included in decisions - as the **youngest & most diverse town in Ireland** - that probably makes it the coolest/most contemporary town but only if ordinary people of all ages are included and listened to"

"Make Balbriggan a **destination for employment** or 3rd level college to bring new young people into the town and make it a new **headline for education** rather than antisocial behaviour"

"Increased opportunities for **young people** to engage in **pro-social, community based activities** based on the needs of young people, and developed in consultation WITH young people"

"Raise awareness of environmental issues among **community**"

"Activities for teenagers and **community** events"

"**Community sports & swimming pool** which has subsidised entrance & use with full & inclusive facilities for special needs & plus out of hours cafe chill out zones for kids & teenagers a lot of mentors needed for teenage support - link up with Foroige & Jigsaw"

## EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Pillar four relates to employment, education and training. Two questions were asked in relation to these issues;

**What needs to happen in Our Balbriggan to be able to access quality employment opportunities? How can education and training support this?**

As part of the leadership group sessions, 9 key areas for improvement were identified. These are listed in table 8, with the alias assigned to each idea for the purpose of charting the public's response.

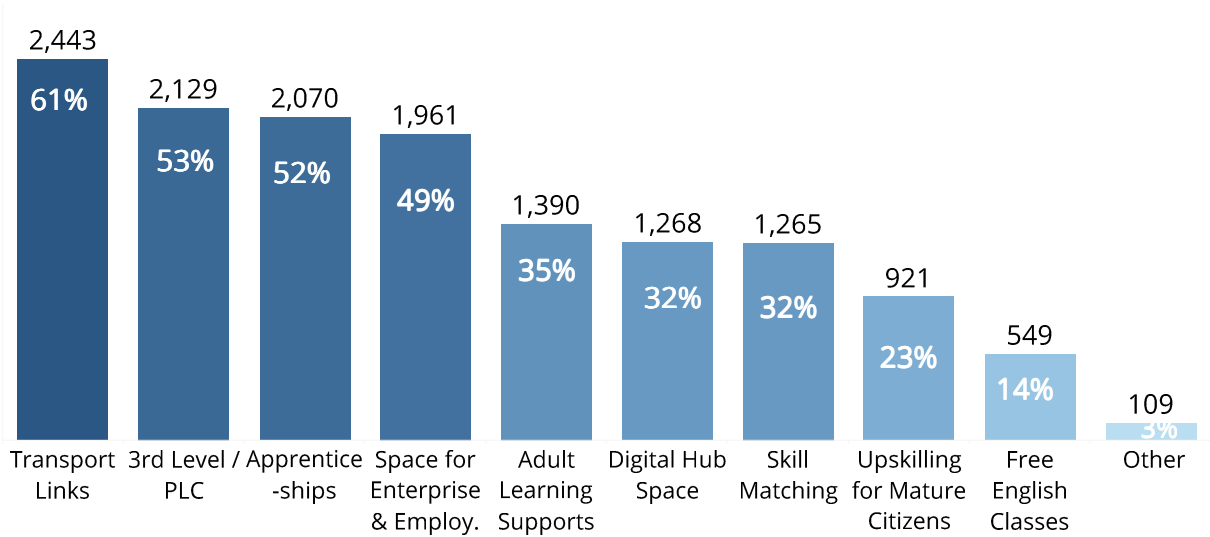
Table 8. Employment, Education and Training

	Full Description	Alias
1	Improved transport links to employment, education and training opportunities	Transport Links
2	A 3rd level college and/or Post Leaving Certificate provision	3rd Level / PLC
3	Apprenticeships and traineeships with local employers	Apprenticeships
4	A digital hub working space	Digital Hub Space
5	Up-skilling training to match the needs of local employers	Skill Matching
6	More adult learning and training courses	Adult Learning Supports
7	Free English classes	Free English Classes
8	Up-skilling opportunities for mature citizens	Upskilling for Mature Citizens
9	A dedicated space in the town centre to support social enterprise and employment opportunities	Space for Enterprise & Employ.
10	An additional option to outline an idea that was not captured in the leadership group suggestions	Other

In relation to employment, education and training, participants of our survey viewed improving transportation links as the most beneficial idea, with 61% including this idea in their top 4 choices. This is followed by the introduction of a 3<sup>rd</sup> level or post leaving certificate college (53%), encouraging apprenticeships and traineeships with local employers (52%) and a dedicated space in the town centre to support social enterprise and employment opportunities (49%). Figure 16 below highlights the percentage of respondents that chose each idea as one of their top 4.

Figure 16.

What needs to happen in Our Balbriggan to be able to access quality employment opportunities? How can education and training support this?

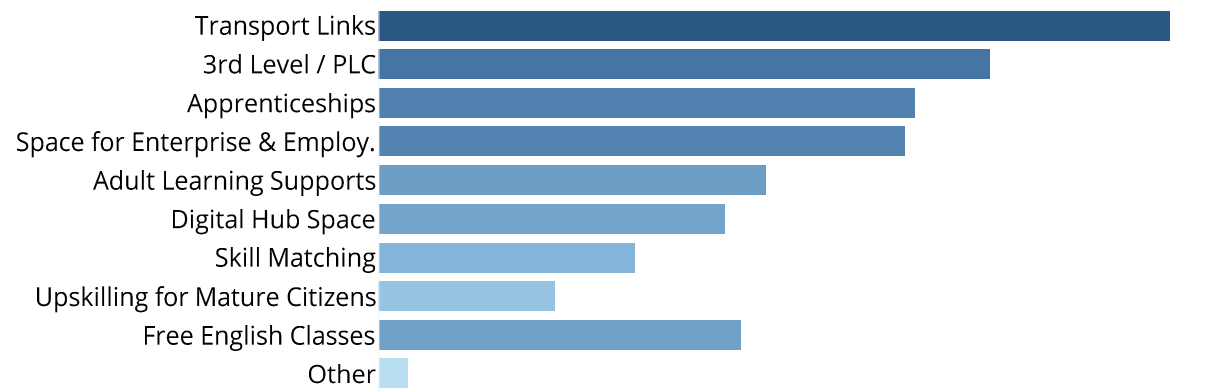




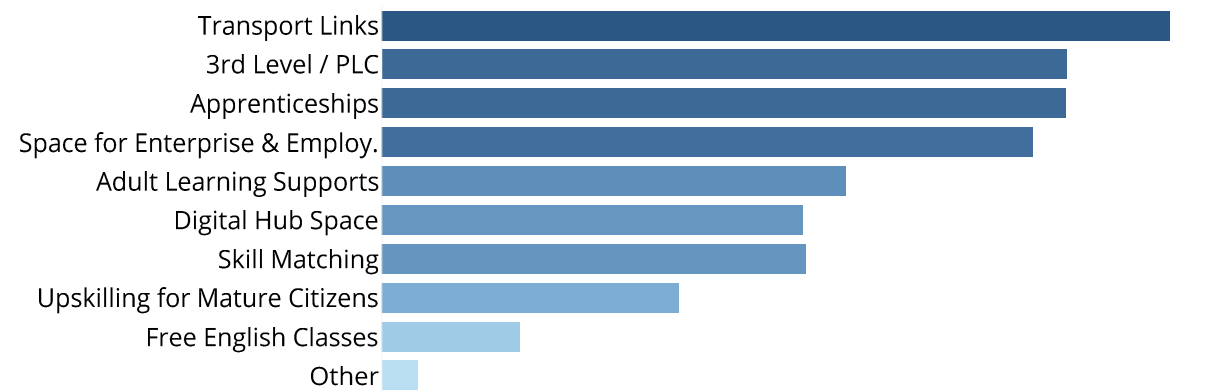
Looking across the three age groups - those 54 and under agree that improving transport links is the best idea while those over 55 slightly favour the introduction of a 3<sup>rd</sup> level or post leaving certificate institution. The younger cohort (those under 25) favour free English classes far higher than those 25 and over. However the top 4 choices hold across all age groups. This is visible in figure 17 below.

Figure 17.

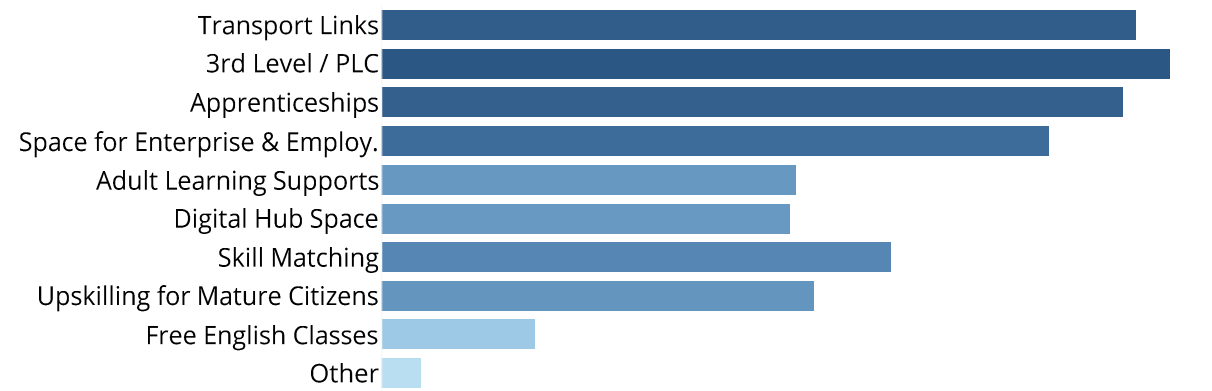
Under 25



25 - 54



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FREE TEXT ANALYSIS

Under the Employment, Education and Training question 109 people, or **3% of respondents** chose 'other' as one of their top four preferences. The most commonly occurring words in these responses are displayed in the Word Cloud below. 'Training' and 'Jobs' were the two most commonly used words. The top five words and their frequency are displayed in table 9 on the next page. This table, the below Word Cloud and direct quotes taken from survey submissions highlight the demand for frequent jobs fairs in the area, the need for specific skills training, and the demand for improved transport links.



Table 9.

Word	Frequency
Training	10
Jobs	9
Education	9
Businesses	7
Employment	7

"**Job fair** in library or Flemington Community Centre"

"Supporting **businesses** in the town to boost employment is critical...improved broadband will promote **digital hub workspace**. Affiliations with tech companies to co-invest in **critical skills training** in digital hub would provide a pathway for people"

"Up-skilling **training** not just for local employees but future **potential hi-tech employers** "

"Routine **job fares** to promote **local businesses** and advertise employment"

"**Better/faster transport to and from the City Centre**, particularly via the Port Tunnel so people can have more of a social life in the evenings. Currently buses and trains are full to capacity, limited, and don't allow for working hours outside the standard 9-5pm"

"**Public transport links** to/from surrounding villages such as the Naul, Balscadden, Oldtown/Ballyboughal, Stamullen etc. feeding into Balbriggan are vitally needed to bring people into these fast rising population areas into Balbriggan to local shopping, amenities and **direct transport links** to Dublin/ Drogheda etc."

"Supports and incentives [are needed] to **draw new large employers to the town**. If everyone didn't need to commute to Dublin there would be more money spent in the town daily and more community involvement"

## HAVE WE MISSED ANYTHING?

One of the final sections of the survey allowed people to outline any ideas they feel were not captured under any of the four pillars, or to voice any concerns. The questions asked was;

Have we missed anything that is important to you?

2,241 of the 4,001 participants (56%) of the survey left a response to this question. The Word Cloud displays the most commonly occurring words that came through in these responses.

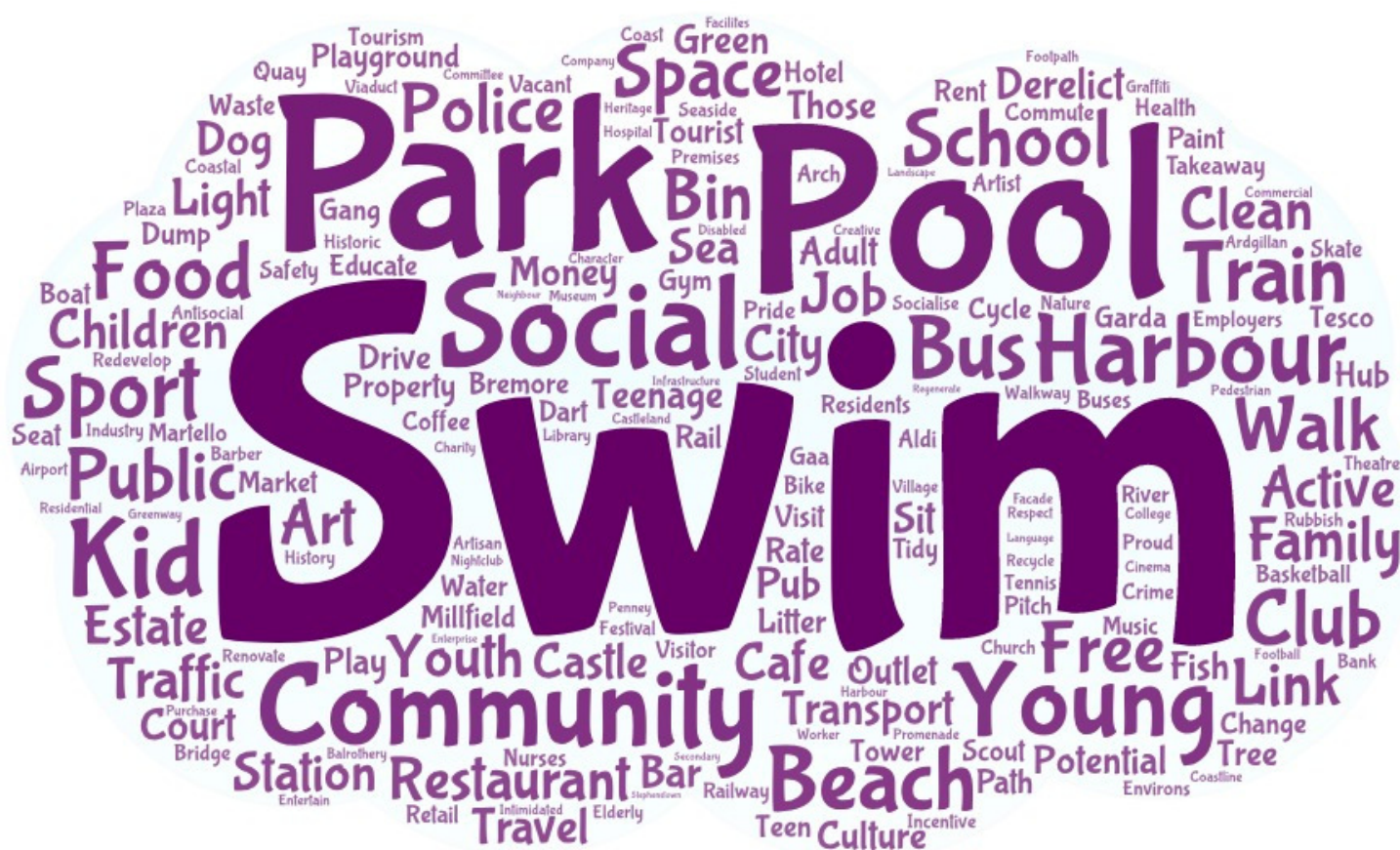


Table 10 below displays the five most common words and their frequency, as well as the five most common phrases.

Table 10

Word	Frequency	Phrase	Frequency
Swim	760	A swimming pool	334
Pool	738	The main street	199
Park	331	The town centre	75
Community	273	Anti-social behaviour	70
Young	253	For young people	61



Here are some of the responses received;

"A **swimming pool** it would be great for young and old people with disabilities and special needs!"

"More **indoor sporting facilities** for the long winter months. Indoor swimming pool, basketball courts, martial arts, yoga hall, etc."

"A **swimming pool** is definitely needed in the area. I think it would bring more visitors into the area and The Bracken Court would benefit from this. More shops open on the Main Street if possible. Boarded up buildings don't exactly look good to visitors."

"If a **new plaza was created on the harbour** it would open up amazing views to the Mourne Mountains"

"**Improve the transportation** to more frequent services from town on both rail and buses to encourage people to live and commute to balbriggan. Ensure that there will be enough police around so young people are not loitering around. Have **water sports and places to eat in the harbour**"

"I think **the swimming pool** is the most important for the locals. I know this won't help tourism as much but with the current population it is a no brainer for someone to invest"

"Would like to see **improved amenities** in the town as Balbriggan people frequently have to leave to avail of services, shopping, leisure, and education. Balbriggan should have a **swimming pool, 3rd level college, recycling facility & children's playground**. Also parking needs to be taken into consideration"

"Extend the **dart** to balbriggan. We need more nice restaurants & the **Main Street** needs improving i.e. derelict buildings need work. **Would love to see the harbour become a vibrant area**. Nice central wine shop/off licence"

"Emphasis to be placed on making the **beach** area an attractive place for tourists - Skerries pier has lovely **bars and restaurants by the beach** and it's a great spot for business to thrive. Balbriggan needs the same to make use of **our lovely natural landscape**"