



Genesis

BALBRIGGAN REJUVENATION

World Café Events

Outputs from the sessions

December 2018

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Background

World Café as a tool for engagement and input

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Fingal County Council (FCC) hosted three World Café events in Balbriggan town as part of a series of public engagement activities. Their aim was to introduce the local community to the proposed rejuvenation plans, gain their input and recommendations and understand what areas of priority the people of Balbriggan believe should take precedence.

The World Café methodology is a simple, effective, and flexible format for hosting large group dialogue. It is particularly useful in the context of public consultation as it allows for the sharing and harvesting of ideas at scale.

At the event (facilitated by Genesis), an overview of plans and ideas focussed on the rejuvenation of Balbriggan* were shared with the room. People then discussed the ideas in groups at tables with each table conversation facilitated by a "table host". At the end of each topic conversation, a plenary discussion was held whereby the table host shared views and ideas from their individual tables and summary thoughts were then captured by them on templates provided.

Once all ideas were discussed, each table was asked to consider what 'one' idea would have the most impact for Balbriggan. This process allowed us create a 'heatmap', or hierarchy, based on the views of the Balbriggan community.

Further details on the events including agenda and conversations held can be found at the end of the document.

* These plans were previously developed by FCC, with 4 'pillar' steering groups, aimed at the key areas of focus, namely public realm and placemaking, local economy and enterprise, community affairs and integration, and employment, education and training

Key themes to emerge

Overview

Each of the four pillars, and associated ideas were discussed and debated. However, emerging from the conversations, were four 'macro themes' that reoccurred and formed the basis of how people reviewed the rejuvenation project overall.

1.

The majority believe that the key to rejuvenation lies in ideas within 'public realm and placemaking', and making Balbriggan a 'destination'.

2.

The development of a 'local economy' was seen as a vital means of creating both social cohesion and local wealth.

3.

Celebrating the diversity of Balbriggan and its unique character and history will be critical in forging a renewed, confident shared identity.

4.

Building a sustainable community for Balbriggan will require continued leadership, proactive involvement from its people, and *support* from the key services.



Theme 1.

Making Balbriggan a destination through public realm and placemaking

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Investment in the physical landscape, streetscapes and social spaces are overwhelmingly seen as *the* most important, impactful and positive change that could happen for Balbriggan. The community feel that 'all roads' would lead from this:

- Creating a beautiful, coastal town that people from all over will *want to visit*
- It will draw more people from around Balbriggan to shop, eat and socialise locally (rather than going to Swords, Skerries etc) – many speak of the need to put the 'heart back in the town' and restore 'pride'
- It will make Balbriggan a 'tourist destination', with sites of historic and cultural interest, alongside incredible scenery and coastal walks / cycleways
- More visitors = more spent locally = more local businesses = more local jobs
- Of key importance within this is:
 - › Main Street improvements
 - › Quay Street and Harbour rejuvenation
 - › Free and open social spaces in the town, particularly space that is suitable for younger people where they feel they can congregate without accusations of 'loitering'

Theme 1.

Making Balbriggan a destination through public realm and placemaking – **Voice of the Community**

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Rejuvenation of the **Harbour** will boost tourism and the local economy which will then filter out to the rest of the town leading to a rejuvenated **Main Street** – generating employment while improving facilities and services for people of Balbriggan. It also creates that much needed social space for young people to hang out.

Redeveloping the **Main Street** and centre will breath life into the town, bring a sense of pride, foster community, facilitate integration and attract business. People will spend locally which will boost the economy.

Develop the **Harbour** area. Balbriggan has the potential to create a unique coastal town with connectivity to the castle, boat house, beach and greenway.

The town needs a heart and the **Harbour** is the *Jewel of Balbriggan*. Redeveloping it will open up the town to everyone.

First impressions count – invest in the heart of the town by rejuvenating the **Main Street**, make it one way, encourage small shops and cafés and places where people can sit – not fast food! Needs trees and soft landscaping, footpaths widened.

Upgrade our **beaches** and achieve *Blue flag* status for Balbriggan.

Theme 2.

Creating a bustling, inclusive local economy

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The community believe that through investment in the public spaces of Balbriggan, a new energy could be created for people to visit and shop locally, which in turn could have a positive impact on the local economy, as well as creating more social cohesion as people would shop and socialise locally.

However, they also believe that in order to further promote and bolster economic activity locally, there is a need to exploit the key assets that are unique to Balbriggan, namely:

- Developing quality leisure experiences based on the potential of the harbour, coastline and castles
- More proactive management of land and property, including planning permissions, redevelopment of derelict buildings and sites, ensuring the town does not become overrun with 'barbers and takeaways'
- Separate to these initiatives, there is universal appeal of focussing on real and sustainable jobs in the Stephentown area. Again, more localised employment would bring ancillary spend into the town
- Many believe that improved transport links to, from and within the town would create employment, education and training opportunities
- A key component of making Balbriggan an attractive place for sustainable employment also lies in the need for a third level college / PLC centre that could answer a local need for adult education, skills training including apprenticeships and post-leaving cert qualifications

Theme 2.

Creating a bustling, inclusive local economy – **Voice of the Community**

Develop **leisure experiences** including harbour, coastline, castles, and create significant tourism development for Balbriggan – leading to jobs and quality employment and investment; leading on further to an invigorated Main Street and swimming pool, sporting complex with bowling alley track. **Spaces** also needed for those who don't want to take part in sports.

Keep **employment** in Balbriggan by encouraging and supporting new **enterprises**, existing SMEs and FDI investment in **Stephenstown** – this will **create wealth** that can be spent in the town.

Improve Main Street by **getting rid of boarded up buildings**. If this area is improved first, other improvements will follow. Consider providing **leisure spaces** on the Main Street.

The centre is an eyesore and unsafe for pedestrians. We need to encourage businesses into the Main Street and provide an **attractive, friendly space** where people can shop, socialise and enjoy.

Create an imaginative town centre that's **alive**, that's changed to a **real** town centre. Conditions: **dereliction** needs to be dealt with, why is it the way it is? Use **CPO powers**: De Bruns's pub burnt down (needs clear title)/shop front (FCC powers to deal with dereliction in the town).

Attracting **enterprises** to Stephenstown would have a knock-on effect on, **employment, transport** links (increasing connectivity) and **local safety**.

Provide **apprenticeships, training** and **upskilling** (including adult learning) to match the needs of local employers

Because of the young population, establish a **Third level college/PLC** in Balbriggan which potentially could lead to additional, similar infrastructure in the future.

Theme 3.

Celebrating Balbriggan's diversity

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The groups recognise that Balbriggan is now a diverse, multi-cultural community, and this should be embraced and celebrated so that Balbriggan as a whole can feel more integrated and connected.

A key component of this (also included in the 'public realm' theme) is the idea of a social space where young people could gather and mix, without the feeling they were 'loitering', and without the need to have to purchase something (i.e. takeaways/cafés, etc).

Furthermore, there is popularity in having a space or quarter for food, arts and theatre, that could again bring the whole community together through events, classes, workshops and activities.

Balbriggan has a rich and fascinating cultural diversity, giving it a dynamic, cosmopolitan feel. Many in the sessions called for a 'world festival' that could celebrate Balbriggan's history *and* its future; similar to Summerfest, but building on the theme of Balbriggan's diversity. It is something that has worked well in other cities – e.g. Notting Hill Festival in London, and it can be argued that Balbriggan is a more authentic location for some Dublin events, e.g. Festival of World Cultures (Dun Laoghaire); Africa/India Day Celebrations (Farmleigh, Phoenix Park).

There was also recognition that a significant number of residents in the town do not have English as their first language and this is impacting on their ability and confidence to participate in events and activities in the town. Availability of free English classes is supported by a number of groups as a way to improve integration.

Theme 3.

Celebrating Balbriggan's diversity – **Voice of the Community**

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Develop the town into one that attracts visitors due to availability of good restaurants, water sports, potential for experiences, i.e. Christmas markets, Summer festivals, etc. This will create and develop a sense of **integrated community**

Provide better facilities for young people – community strength, giving them **support and facilities**; programmes for arts, music and culture.

Encourage **events and initiatives** designed to promote pride and greater integration in the town

The youngest population in the Country and needs dedicated **spaces and facilities**. Hold evening activities for young people.

A **social space** for youth but not at the expense of tourist opportunities

Provide **free English classes**. Many non-nationals in the town who could work but because their English is poor they end up on social welfare. Parents are unable to help their children with homework.

Turn the Harbour and Bracken River area into a **market/eating/cultural quarter** – people want quality restaurants and footfall will be increased

Swimming pool/leisure centre leading to **activities** for **young people** and **employment**

Celebrate the **history** of the town.

Pride in the town would **facilitate integration**, foster community, attract business and people would spend locally which would boost the economy

Greater **awareness and integration** of existing services

Acknowledgement that **voluntary groups** are currently doing fantastic work with integration

Theme 4.

Building a sustainable community requires proactivity and support.

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The fourth theme to emerge strongly from the sessions is in relation to how a sustainable community is created.

The groups acknowledged that the people of the town themselves need to 'play their part' by being more actively involved in supporting initiatives and, more importantly, developing their own initiatives. Some called for a dedicated town team that could take responsibility for and promote and encourage participation across the community.

In relation to this - while the proposed funding by Fingal County Council is welcomed, it is felt that greater, long-term investment is required if Balbriggan is to become a sustainable, vibrant, inclusive and attractive town to live and work in.

For many, Balbriggan does not feel safe enough from evening time onwards, thus making it a less attractive place to be, and to socialise. Many believe it is holding the area back, and preventing community integration, and the enjoyment of social spaces.

In order for the Main Street and the surrounding areas to thrive, and to encourage people to spend their time and money there, it needs to feel safe and inviting. On-street, visual Garda presence is felt to be a priority, alongside investment in community policing initiatives.

Furthermore, better services and support for families is also seen as a complimentary way of improving outcomes for many of the town's residents, particularly those in economic hardship. These included childcare facilities, youth and social workers and medical services.

Theme 4.

Building a sustainable community in Balbriggan – **Voice of the Community**

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Build **sustainable communities** – people-centred. The strength of people.

Grow, develop and support new and existing **community leaders** in the town.

Increase **services to support families** – those struggling and/or new to the area. Childcare facilities needed

Incorporate **spaces** for people with autism – a quiet area/room where they can feel comfortable and belong

Rejuvenate the Harbour and follow through to Main Street. We want quality amenities and restaurants and a good standard of living for people in the town to be proud of. We want people of all ages to come together and mix. There must be better, **sustainable** planning in the future. There is a need to build confidence in Fingal County Council. The Dome was a positive step and we need to build on that. The town also needs **better policing** generally and a **Garda** presence in the train station.

A note on Balbriggan's students

Open, safe social spaces

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One of the World Café events was dedicated to the points of view of younger people in Balbriggan – teenagers from across a range of secondary schools.

Their contribution was immense, and a number of clear and consistent themes emerged.

In relation to what is needed for younger people in Balbriggan:

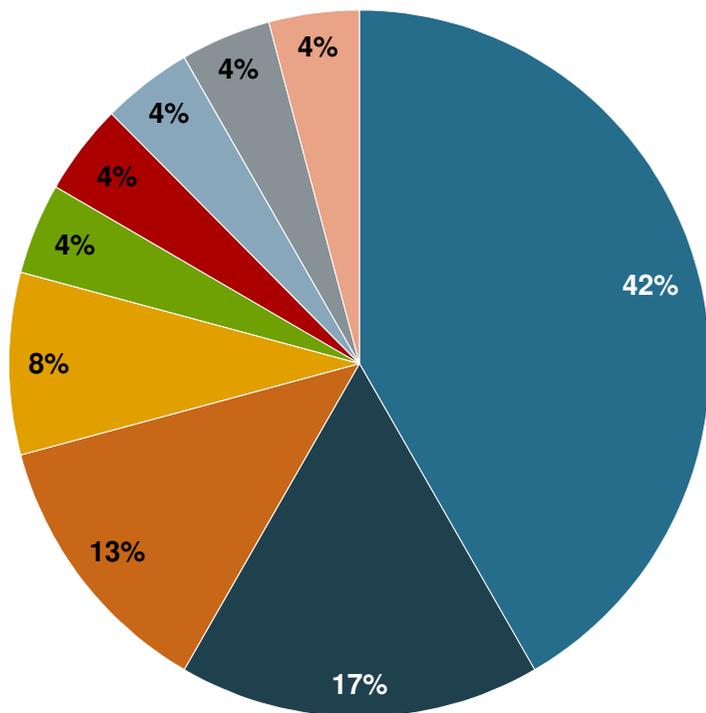
- They want a space in the town that they can socialise in, meet their friends, and just 'be'. The options at the moment are limited – hanging around takeaways or shops, etc. They don't want to be seen as a nuisance and many just want to be part of a positive town atmosphere
- They talk about sports facilities (e.g. basketball courts, etc) often being closed to the public / open at limited hours, etc. They would love to see freely available and open facilities, that all the community could use

When thinking about the community as a whole, they believe that making the most of the coast would have the biggest impact - cycle / walk ways, harbour rejuvenation, etc.

However, they are also very cognisant of encouraging greater integration across the generations – English classes and whole community festivals could create a much needed positive impact.

The One Big Idea

Which will have the greatest impact on the town of Balbriggan



n=24 group tables

- Quay Street & Harbour
- Main Street
- Bracken River & Millpond Park
- Enterprise Stephenstown
- Quality leisure experiences
- Proactive land & property mgmt
- Enterprise Town Centre
- Space for arts & theatre
- Services to support families

Many of the ideas proposed at the World Cafés were considered by participants as having merit which made choosing one from the list of 33 challenging.

However, with a score of 42%, the idea selected by those attending both the evening and school World Café events as having the potential to have the greatest impact on the town of Balbriggan, is...

The Rejuvenation of the Quay Street and Harbour Area

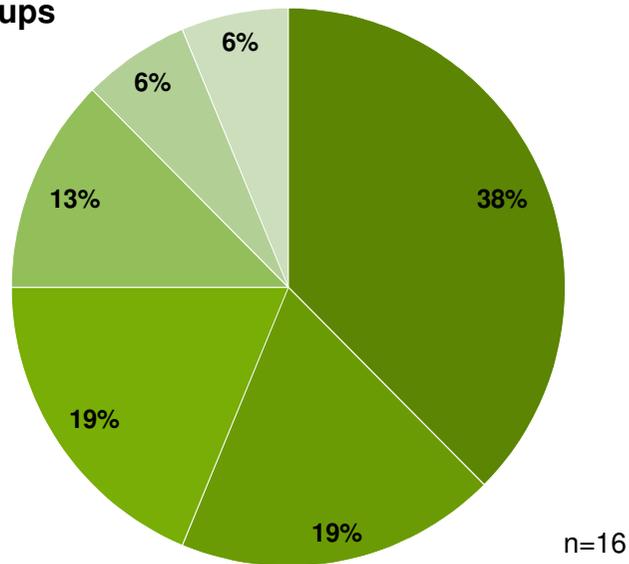


The One Big Idea

Which will have the greatest impact on the town of Balbriggan – by group type

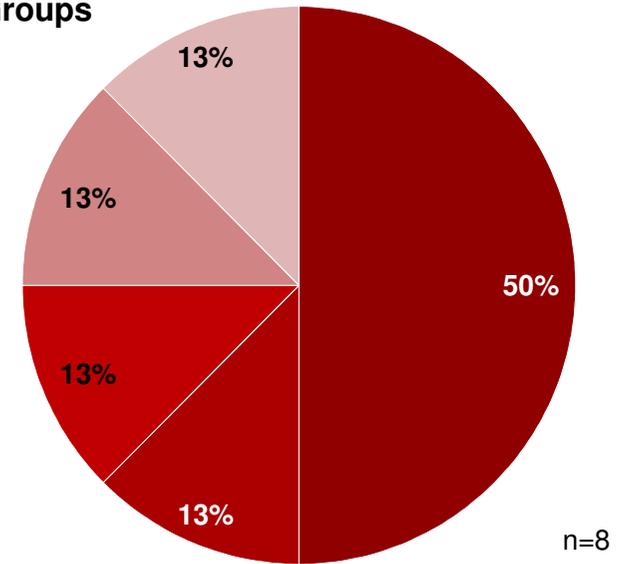
There were similar results for the adult and school groups. For both the single preferred initiative by a significant distance, was the rejuvenation of the Quay Street and Harbour area (50% and 38% respectively). The Main Street improvement scheme was in second place (along with some other initiatives) in both groups. After these ideas, the adults' preferences focussed on Local Economy and Enterprise while the school children's were around Community Affairs and Integration.

Adult Groups



- Quay Street & Harbour
- Main Street
- Bracken River & Millpond Park
- Enterprise Stephenstown
- Quality leisure experiences
- Proactive land & property mgmt

School Groups



- Quay Street & Harbour
- Main Street
- Enterprise Town Centre
- Space for arts & theatre
- Services to support families

The One Big Idea

Which will have the greatest impact on the town of Balbriggan

A number of reasons were given for selecting the rejuvenation of Quay Street and Harbour over other options.

People felt this was a **unique area** and one of the town's **greatest assets**. They also said it would give the Balbriggan a **focal point** and provide a **natural link** between the town and beach.

Developing Quay Street and the Harbour would bring **life and vibrancy** back to the town. Many mentioned that it would provide a **social space** – a meeting point for those in the community and a much needed place where **young people** could 'hang out'.

It also met participants' aspiration to have a bustling, inclusive local economy creating a more interesting and attractive place for all. Business would be motivated to invest bringing **cafes, restaurants and leisure amenities** to the town. This area could be a space where arts and food would thrive and where the rich, cultural diversity of the town would be visible for all to see and enjoy. Festivals and events could be held here. All this would bring **money** and **employment** to the town.

There was a recognition that it is important to give people of Balbriggan something to be proud of. Rejuvenating the Quay Street and Harbour area would bring benefits to a large number of people – not just residents but visitors too. People spoke about Balbriggan having the potential to become a **destination** in the way Skerries or Howth is. Developing this area would create a unique coastal town with connectivity to the castle, boathouse, beach and greenway. This would **boost tourism** – and consequently the **local economy**.

*The town needs a heart.
The Harbour
redevelopment will open
it up to everyone.*

*We would like to see the town
developing into one that attracts
visitors due to good restaurants, water
sports, potential for moments, e.g.
Christmas markets, summer festivals,
etc. which will create and develop a
sense of an integrated community.*

*We want quality amenities,
restaurants and a better standard of
living for those in the town. We want
people of all ages to come together
and mix. There must be better, more
sustainable planning.*

Other suggestions

Suggestions not included in the list of initiatives under the four themes

Participants were asked if they had any other idea, or if something had been missed, that was not included in the lists of initiatives under the four themes. Many ideas were suggested and, when analysed, it was found that a large number fell under the 'leisure and sports activities' area:

Area	Suggestion	No. times	
Leisure and sports activities <i>Total: 28 mentions</i>	• Swimming Pool	10	
	• Sports complex/bowling alley	6	
	• Multi-purpose skate park	3	
	• Cycleway link loop from coast to Balrothery	2	
	• Foothpath on cycleways	1 mention for each item	
	• New tennis club		
	• Funding for scouts		
• Community football field			
• Park and playground at Bremore Castle			
Festival and events <i>Total: 6 mentions</i>	• Wheelchair swing in playgrounds	1 mention for each item	
	• Spaces for people with Autism		
	• Events and initiatives for pride in the town		2
	• Colour run festival		1 mention for each item
	• Evening activities for people of all ages		
• Improve quality of nightlife in the town	1 mention for each item		
• Concerts for secondary school choirs			

Area	Suggestion	No. times
Heritage and History <i>Total: 5 mentions</i>	• Make more of our castles • Redevelop the old Mill • Martello tower • Celebrate the town's history • Create statute representing the town's history	1 mention for each item
Improving the town centre <i>Total: 4 mentions</i>	• Improve parking and traffic	2
	• No more licences for takeaways • Pedestrianise the Main Street	1 mention for each item
Making town more attractive to tourists <i>Total: 4 mentions</i>	• Less waste/more bins on beach – from town pride and tourism perspective	2
	• Enterprise/tourism opportunities for Bath House and Boat House • Viking Splash	1 mention for each item
	• Health (and mental health) for young people • Additional social workers • Increased funding for youth work	1 mention for each item
Improving services for young people <i>Total: 3 mentions</i>		

- PUBLIC REALM AND PLACEMAKING
- LOCAL ECONOMY & ENTERPRISE
- EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION & TRAINING
- COMMUNITY AFFAIRS AND INTEGRATION

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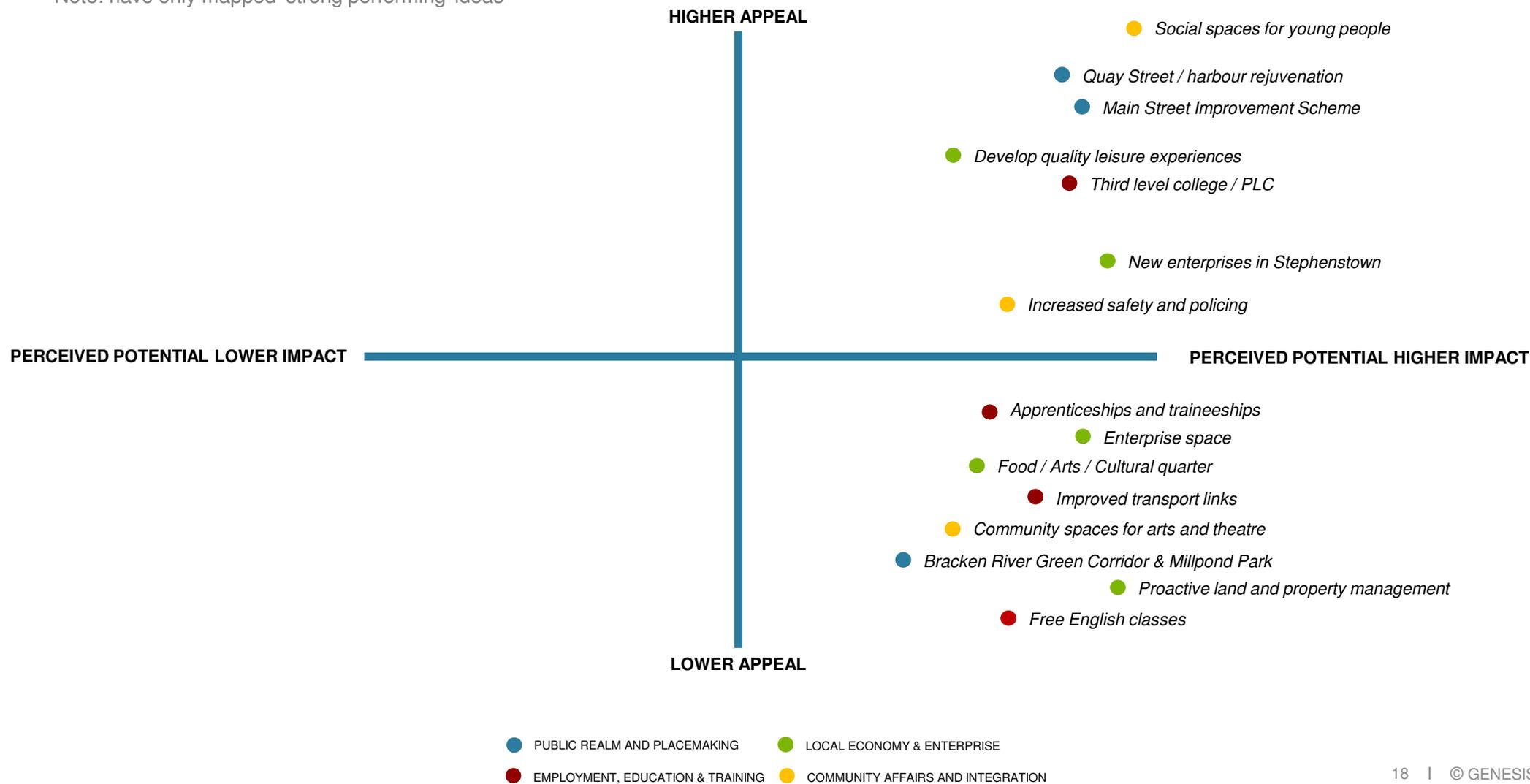
Appendices



Matrix overview

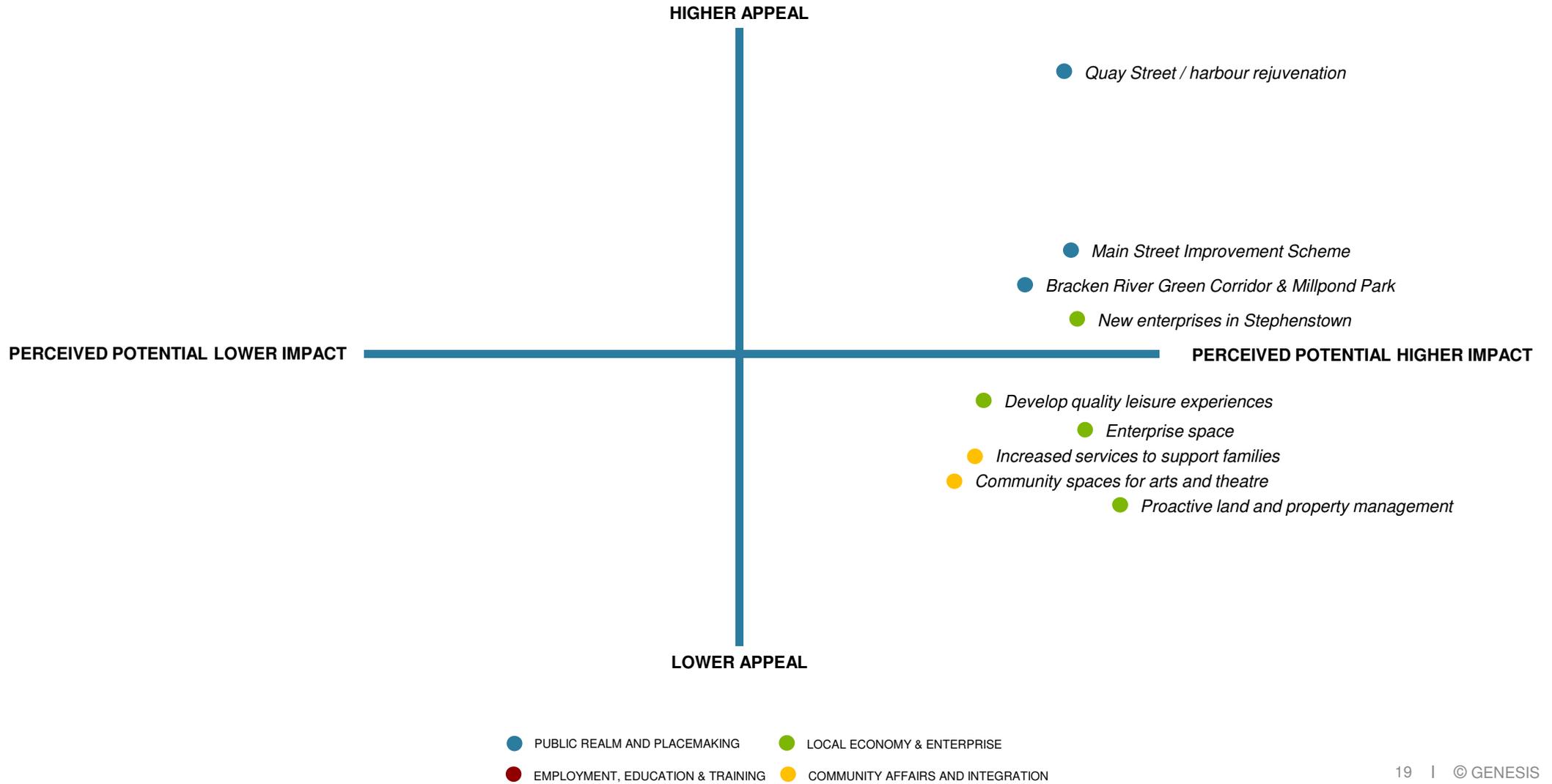
Qualitative assessment of strong ideas, across all events

Note: have only mapped 'strong performing' ideas



Matrix overview

The one **Big Idea** which will have the greatest impact on the town of Balbriggan



Heat mapping

Selections made from the four themes by the groups

Public Realm and Place-making			
Idea	Adults	Schools	Total
Quay Street & Harbour Rejuvenation	5	5	10
Main Street Improvement Scheme	7.5	2	9.5
Bracken River Green Corridor & Millpond Park	2.5	0	2.5
Bremore Regional Park & Coastal Improvements	1	0.5	1.5
Balbriggan to Skerries Coastal Greenway	0	0.5	0.5
Railway Street & Station - open space development	0	0	0

Community Affairs and Integration			
Idea	Adults	Schools	Total
Social spaces for young people	6.25	5	11.25
Increased safety and policing	3.5	0	3.5
Community spaces for arts & theatre	2.25	0.5	2.75
Increased services to support families	0	2	2
More sports facilities	1	0.5	1.5
Events & initiatives to promote price and intergration	1.25	0	1.25
Grow, develop and support community leaders	1.25	0	1.25
Community creche's and early learning supports	0.5	0	0.5
Improved awareness and co-ord of existing services	0.5	0	0.5
Security of tenure (housing)	0	0	0

Scoring methodology:

A score of one point was allocated to each idea chosen per theme at individual tables. At some tables, two ideas were selected and each was allocated half a point (0.5). At one table, three ideas were chosen and one third of a point (0.3) was allocated.

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Local Economy and Enterprise			
Idea	Adults	Schools	Total
Develop quality leisure experiences	5.5	3	8.5
New enterprises in Stephenstown	2.5	2	4.5
Enterprise space in Town Centre	3	0	3
Food & Arts Quarter	1.5	1.5	3
Proactive land and property management	2	0.5	2.5
Dedicated town team	1.5	0	1.5
Develop Visitor experiences	0.5	0.5	1
One hour free parking	0	0.5	0.5

Employment, Education and Training			
Idea	Adults	Schools	Total
Third level college/PLC	7	0.3	7.3
Apprenticeships and traineeships	2	1.3	3.3
Improved transport links	1	2	3
Free English classes	0	2.3	2.3
Dedicated space in town centre to support enterprise & employment	1	1	2
Digital hub	1	0.5	1.5
Upskilling training to match needs of employers	1	0.5	1.5
More adult learning and training courses	1	0	1
Upskilling opportunities for mature citizens	0	0	0

Agenda for World Café events

Three World Café events were held in the Bracken Court Hotel, Balbriggan. Attendance at each was as follows:

- General Public: November 28th, 2018 (7-9pm). *56 attendees*
- School Children: November 30th, 2018 (9.30-11.30am). *60 attendees*
- General Public: December 4th, 2018 (7-9pm). *40 attendees*

Our BALBRIGGAN

Conversation 1

30 Minutes

Discuss and select **one** idea from each of the **four themes** that you think will have the most positive impact on Balbriggan over the next few years?

Our BALBRIGGAN

Conversation 2

20 Minutes

Which **one idea** will make the greatest, long-term difference to Balbriggan?

Has your table identified a **'Big Idea'** we've missed?

WHEN	WHAT	TIMING
19.00	Welcome Introduction to session – why we're here this evening	5 mins
19.05	The Our Balbriggan Project Show video Overview of the 'Our Balbriggan' project (introduce the four themes) and the aim of this evening's session.	10 mins
19.15	How we're going to work together Ground rules Introduce table hosts – explain their role <i>Before we start, have a chat at your table about the following...</i> Ice-breaker Q. What makes Balbriggan a great place to live? Share with the those at your table one thing you really like about living here (special place, events, activities, pastimes, heritage)	10 mins
Introduction to Conversation 1 (question up on screen)		
19.25	Conversation 1 Have a look at the four themes for the 'Our Balbriggan' project ... <i>Discuss and select one idea from each of the four themes that your table believes will have the most positive impact on Balbriggan over the next few years?</i>	30 mins
19.55	Sharing of ideas – table hosts to headline	15-20 mins
20:15	Introduction to Conversation 2 (question up on screen)	
	Conversation 2 <i>Of the four selections your table made earlier, which one do you think will make the greatest, long-term difference to Balbriggan – and why? Also, have we missed something - has your table identified a Big Idea that should be considered?</i>	20 mins
20.35	Let's hear your preferred idea and any Big Idea missed – table hosts to headline	15 mins
20.50	Next Steps and Close	10 mins