



Our Balbriggan 2019 – 2025 Executive Summary

Our Future



Introduction - Executive Summary

The future of Our Balbriggan is set to be transformed thanks to a plan that has been shaped by you, the residents of the town.

Our Main Street and its surrounding areas look set for a massive transformation following the Our Balbriggan survey, which was taken by over 4,000 local people.

Over 25% of the local population aged over 11 took part in the survey to prioritise a list of suggested improvements for the Our Balbriggan 2019-2025 Rejuvenation Plan.

These priorities will now become reality, this summary document contains a map of the key rejuvenation initiatives with accompanying timelines, which have been directly influenced by the results of the Our Balbriggan survey.

Transforming the Main Street and connecting it to a reimagined Harbour area were your top choices across all age groups in the public realm and placemaking pillar of a survey which will become a model for towns around the country.

From a menu of potential improvements, there was an overwhelming desire to redevelop the heart of the Main Street opening up the centre of the town to Millpond Park and the Bracken River, with new landscaped civic amenities.

When asked to name the thing that people most valued about Balbriggan, the five most popular words used were beach, community, people, sea and harbour.

By connecting all of these, and creating a properly functioning town centre, we can build a bright future in a town with fabulous assets and a diverse and rapidly-growing talent base.

70% of locals chose the development of leisure experiences around the harbour, river, coastline, and local castles as the highest priority in developing the town economically.

The proposed developments to Balbriggan's existing amenities include the transformation of Bremore Castle into a premier visitor destination, as well as a new greenway connecting Balbriggan and Skerries.

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 four most important factors

A Balbriggan leadership group, chaired by Professor Brian MacCraith, President, Dublin City University, had prepared a menu of different

initiatives for the €20million-plus rejuvenation plan – an ambitious new vision for the town.

“We couldn't have dreamed of this level of response, with a huge section of the community getting involved to imagine the possibilities in a transformed Balbriggan,” said Professor MacCraith.

“We now have a strong set of priorities such as the redevelopment of the main street and reimagining the harbour which will transform the town, realising its full potential.

“Balbriggan as a community has come together with the group of stakeholders, led by Fingal County Council, to engage in a collaborative and unified way to prioritise the ideas which will best address the socio economic challenges of the town.”

The conversation is only starting – you can follow the progress of the plan and get involved through any of the Our Balbriggan social media channels, the blogs on balbriggan.ie or simply by posting about your town and using #ourbalbriggan.

Our Balbriggan – it's our future. To download the Our Balbriggan 2019 – 2025 Rejuvenation Plan go to www.balbriggan.ie, the full version contains a comprehensive set of socio-economic plans and actions.



BALBRIGGAN HAS BEEN ONE OF IRELAND'S FASTEST GROWING TOWNS

This once homogeneous and close knit Irish Town of approximately 8,500 inhabitants (Census, 1996) has grown rapidly in the intervening years to a present day town settlement population of 21,722 (Census, 2016) or 24,611 if the full electoral districts of Urban and Rural are considered.

21,722

TOWN SETTLEMENT POPULATION (CENSUS 2016)

That's an increase of **194%** since 1991

24,611

BALBRIGGAN RURAL & URBAN ELECTORAL DISTRICTS (CENSUS 2016)

In the same period (1991-2016):

Ireland's population grew by **35%** Fingal's grew by **94%**

BALBRIGGAN IS THE YOUNGEST LARGE TOWN IN IRELAND

30.8 YEARS

AVERAGE AGE OF RESIDENT IN BALBRIGGAN

By comparison the average age is:

37 YEARS NATIONALLY

34 YEARS IN FINGAL

30.5%

OF THE POPULATION ARE BETWEEN 0-14 YEARS

75%

OF BALBRIGGAN'S POPULATION IS 44 YEARS OF AGE OR YOUNGER - NATIONALLY THIS FIGURE IS 63%

The Our Balbriggan 2019 - 2025 Rejuvenation Plan is available at www.balbriggan.ie

Town Rejuvenation Map

- 1 - 2 YEARS

1

RAILWAY VIADUCT AND RNLI BOATHOUSE

Up lighting of viaducts all year round. Restoration and refurbishment of the RNLI Boathouse for social, community and commercial use. Develop social and enterprise offerings and place making events in Railway Viaduct arches.
- 2 - 4 YEARS

2

BREMORE CASTLE

Spectacular visitor attraction. The restored castle will be open to the public and large groups with a banqueting offering. The site will include exhibition space, possibility of a cookery school, beautifully restored walled garden with restaurant/café.
- 2 - 4 YEARS

3

REIMAGINE THE HARBOUR AREA

A leisure destination which makes the most of its scenic location, attracting walkers, visitors and diners. A place where people meet and linger and enjoy the authentic experience of a small working fishing port nestled into a walled harbour, overlooking a wonderful beach, connecting with a rejuvenated quay street, main street and other leisure and tourism opportunities.
- 2 - 4 YEARS

4

REDEVELOP THE HEART OF THE MAIN STREET

Create a new street edge by demolishing single residential dwelling, improving visibility and access to river, landscaped green, water features, pathways, planting and event space. Re-purpose existing derelict buildings, in line with overall plan, maintaining existing facade and features and attracting new social and economic enterprises.
- 2 - 4 YEARS

5

BREMORE REGIONAL AMENITY PARK

A premier regional park destination with landscaped features, walkways and world class play facilities. Amenity to include restoration of Martello Tower, Boathouse, public bath area and Bells Cottage. Elevated connectivity with beach ramps, cycle way, enhanced seating, art installations and kiosk space.
- 2 - 4 YEARS

6

TRANSFORM QUAY STREET

Widen footpaths and increase flow and visibility from main street to a transformed Quay Street, Viaduct and Harbour area. Maintain car park amenity, remove kerbing, enabling its usage in evenings and weekends as a quality civic and meeting space. Develop linear park featuring seating, planting and other green features along the river bank.
- 3 - 5 YEARS

7

RAILWAY STREET

Improvement scheme designed to provide better connectivity and flow between beach (new ramp), station and main street. Streetscape improvements, signage and refurbishment scheme.
- 3 - 5 YEARS

8

BALBRIGGAN TO SKERRIES GREENWAY

Initial focus on Castle (Bremore) to Castle (Ardgillan) Coastal Way. Cycle & Pedestrian facilities and upgrades to connecting residential areas. Expanding upwards to Gormanstown and below to Skerries.



Enabling Factors

Four key themes emerged from the people of Balbriggan and how they viewed the rejuvenation project. These insights will guide implementation moving forward.

01

The ideas within "public realm and placemaking", are key to successful rejuvenation and to making Balbriggan a "destination".

02

The development of a 'local economy' is vital as a means of creating social cohesion and local wealth building.

03

Celebrate the diversity of Balbriggan, own the difference. This is critical in forging a shared sense of place: An identity which is reflective of its unique history and heritage, but also fully embraces the new.

04

A self-sustaining and community driven renewal will require strong leadership and commitment from the local authority, involvement and partnership with residents and strong public services.

IN ADDITION TO THESE, FOUR MORE KEY ENABLERS WERE IDENTIFIED:

Resources: A dedicated manager, with an adequately resourced and skilled staff team responsible to a board of management for the delivery of all aspects of a SMART implementation plan.

Communications & Awareness: Further develop the Our Balbriggan branding. Strengthen awareness of the town's unique selling points, celebrate success, promote community involvement, ownership and a stronger sense of place.

Proactive Land & Property Management: Acquire land and property (with sanction where necessary), including a review of public assets, with the purpose of more fully realising social and economic benefits for the town.

Transport & Connectivity: Improved sustainable transport network across the town, with specific reference to pedestrians and cyclists and connectivity between the town's center and residential areas. Improved linkages to and from the town particularly in relation to employment and further education.

‘Balbriggan has so much potential. We need to build on the positive history we have here. Exciting times ahead.’

Emma Mulvany & Derrick O'Rourke



20 things in the first 12 months

01 Establish a place-making and social innovation fund.

02 Develop an annual Education, Training & Skills festival.

03 Increase the number of quality public festivals and events.

04 Establish Ireland's first Grassroots Early Years Arts Festival (0-6yrs).

05 Establish an "Our Balbriggan" town centre shop front with staff responsible for the delivery of the actions in the plan.

06 Consult and publish a final masterplan for the development of Bremore Regional & Amenities Park.

07 Improve George's (town) Square.

08 Increase the number of public play and exercise facilities in the town.

09 Progress the process of acquisitions of derelict or vacant lands, buildings or dwellings in the town centre area.

10 Start refurbishing the RNLI Boat House.

11 Install lighting inside the town's historic viaduct bridge.

12 Secure inward investment and jobs into Stephenstown Industrial lands.

13 Establish an "Our Balbriggan" operations team with responsibility for general upkeep including cleaner and greener environmental initiatives.

14 Publish provisional design options for the Ardgillan to Bremore section of the Fingal Coastal Greenway.

15 Improve the harbour area.

16 Consult on a biodiversity plan for Balbriggan as a model of excellence.

17 Subject to planning permission the tender for the construction of cycle routes on the Harry Reynolds Road to be completed, the beginning of an improved sustainable transport network across the town.

18 Increase the number of commissioned public art installations.

19 Upgrade Balbriggan Library, with a particular focus on digital technology and improved meeting spaces.

20 Publish an "Our Balbriggan" directory of services.

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For further information please email ourbalbriggan@fingal.ie



Re-imagining Quay Street & Bracken River green corridor - impression indicative only.