

Introduction



A message from AnnMarie Farrelly, Chief Executive of Fingal County Council

A year on from the launch of the Our Balbriggan Rejuvenation Plan, the transformation of Ireland's youngest town is taking shape. The first year of our journey has seen key milestones achieved in our 20 Things In 12 Months programme – despite the public health restrictions.

Over the last year the Council has made significant investment in Balbriggan, delivering two new playgrounds, a skate park, an extensive refurbishment of Balbriggan Library, and the Our Balbriggan Hub. These projects signal the Council's commitment to the Plan and are the first steps of our planned investment in Balbriggan.

The rejuvenation of Main Street is a key objective and plans are progressing to open a green corridor connecting Stephenstown to Main Street via Millpond Park, down to a revitalised Quay Street and reimagined harbour and beach area.

The Council is advancing the purchase of key sites for redevelopment and have already purchased a building at 2-4 Dublin Street to develop into a creative arts and digital space.

The collaborative approach taken in preparing the Rejuvenation Plan is acknowledged as an example for others and has been instrumental in making Balbriggan the first town in Ireland into a Smart District.

There is no one big thing that will change Balbriggan - the town will be transformed by many actions, completed by many stakeholders working together over a period of years. The Council is committed to seeing this plan through and I want to reaffirm our commitment to investing €30 million in Balbriggan and I am confident that Balbriggan will become widely known as a fantastic place to live, work and do business.



A message from Brian MacCraith, Professor of DCU, Chair of Leadership Group

When the Balbriggan Leadership Group first sat down to plan an inclusive rejuvenation strategy for the town, we could not have dreamed how far we would come in such a short time.

We asked you for your views and a huge section of the community got involved to imagine the possibilities and provide a strong set of priorities which will realise Balbriggan's full potential.

Our journey so far has been one of engagement, ambition, creativity and intent – and, thanks to you, the transformation of the town has already begun.

The Our Balbriggan initiative is about creating an ambitious and prosperous future for Balbriggan that builds on all of its strong points – the physical assets, its fabulous beach, its location and its diverse and rapidly-growing talent base.

We are in the first stages of a committed plan to transform the town, harnessing its economic, physical and human advantages and enabling an excellent quality of life for all its people.

Recent events have shown the resilience of Ireland's youngest and most diverse town, grown our sense of community and given us even more reasons to reimagine what we can achieve together.

In the way our home and working lives have changed, so will our town, and we must adapt to suit the new reality.

On behalf of the Leadership Group, I would like to thank you for your part in our journey, and please join me in thanking the people around you who have done so much to invoke the community spirit throughout the past few months.







A year on from the launch of the Our Balbriggan Rejuvenation Plan, the transformation of Ireland's youngest town is taking shape, with substantial progress across a range of objectives.

The plan's ambitious vision came from the Our Balbriggan survey which saw over 25% of residents get involved and overwhelmingly choose to transform the Main Street and connect it to a reimagined Harbour area.

The initial programme of 20 things in 12 months has been largely achieved, even with the current restrictions, and Fingal County Council has restated its commitment to the delivery of the objectives of the €30 million plan.

Significant investment has been made to date, with two new playgrounds, a skate park and an extensive refurbishment of Balbriggan Library, and the repurposing of a vacant shopfront as an Our Balbriggan Hub, signalling the initial physical improvements.

The Council has purchased a building at 2-4 Dublin Street to develop into a creative arts and digital space, strengthening the public and civic quarter of the town and is close to completing the acquisition of two key buildings on Main Street and the harbour which are integral to this plan.

Within the next year it is anticipated the existing nightclub building will be demolished at Balbriggan Harbour and plans progressed to transform the harbour area into a vibrant recreational amenity.

Plans are at an advanced stage to develop the heart of the town's urban core, opening up a green corridor along the River Bracken, creating a new street edge and park entrance on Bridge Street, sweeping down to a transformed Quay Street and flowing into the Viaduct area to a reimagined Harbour.

We will see a coastal pedestrian/ cycleway connecting the north of the town and Bremore Regional Amenity Park and Castle and on to Ardgillan Castle and Skerries as part of Fingal Coastal Way.

The Railway Street improvement scheme will provide better flow and connectivity to the town's most valued asset, its beach.

The Our Balbriggan Hub, which opens this month in George's Square, will be the engine room of the rejuvenation scheme and a constant link between the plan and the people of Balbriggan.

Designed as a multi-disciplinary space, the hub will accommodate small gatherings and develop new networks in areas identified in the plan.

There you can meet the dedicated Our Balbriggan team, who, along with your sports and community officers, have been working with stakeholders to improve the level of services, events and investments as part of the plan. The dedicated personnel allocated to Balbriggan by Fingal County Council represent a significant human resource investment. They will work with all sections of the public, community and business sectors, and side by side with clubs, groups and citizens to ensure quality services for Ireland's youngest most diverse town.

Balbriggan has also just become the first town in Ireland to be named as a Smart District, positioning it at the cutting edge of smart projects to improve services, create jobs and build a better community. Underpinned by the Our Balbriggan free public wi-fi, Smart Balbriggan projects will include the creation of an innovation hub and creative maker space.

Balbriggan is also part of the EU's iPlace initiative which brings together nine small cities and towns with similar issues to focus on identifying and strengthening local economic development opportunities through plans such as Our Balbriggan.



(L-R) Fingal Mayor, Eoghan O'Brien, Cllr Tony Murphy, Chief Executive, AnnMarie Farrelly, Director, Economic, Enterprise & Tourism, Emer O'Gorman, Cllr Grainne Maguire.

Town Rejuvenation Map



RAILWAY VIADUCT AND RNLI BOATHOUSE

Finalising lighting viaducts. Restoration and refurbishment of the RNLI Boathouse, request for expressions of interest to operate boathouse as a commercial operation, September 2020.



2-4 DUBLIN STREET

Private dwelling and adjoining commercial premises purchased by the council, moving towards procurement and design for a creative arts and digital maker space, strengthening the public and civic quarter of the town.

TRANSFORM QUAY STREET

Commencing procurement and design, increased 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 social space. Develop linear park increase seating, planting and other green features along the river bank.

REIMAGINE THE HARBOUR AREA

Create a acquisition of key buildings in progress to reimagine this scenic location as a premier destination, attracting more walkers and visitors. 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.

REDEVELOP THE HEART OF THE MAIN STREET -

GREEN CORRIDOR

Engaging to acquire derelict and private properties to create a new Main Street experience. Establish a new green corridor at the 'heart' of the town, following the River Bracken, through Millpond Park, creating a new street edge and park entrance on Bridge Street, flowing down to a transformed Quay Street, Viaducts and reimagined Harbour.



BREMORE REGIONAL AMENITY PARK

Masterplan will publish shortly for consultation. A premier regional park destination with world class play facilities, walkways and features. Restoration of Martello Tower, Boathouse, public bath area and Bells Cottage. Elevated connectivity with beach, cycle way, enhanced seating, art features is envisaged and kiosk space.



RAILWAY STREET

Implement improvement scheme designed to provide better connectivity and flow between beach, station and Main Street. Streetscape improvements, signage and refurbishment scheme.





BREMORE CASTLE

This beautifully restored castle when opened fully will be a spectacular visitor attraction with walled gardens, restaurant/café and other premier attractions. Open public access, on a phased basis, to castle and grounds.





BALBRIGGAN TO SKERRIES GREENWAY

Design options for consultation to be published shortly, focusing on connectivity between Castle (Bremore) to Castle (Ardgillan) initially this stretch will form part of a Fingal coastal Greenway. Enhanced cycle and pedestrian facilities and upgrades will connect to residential areas.



20 things in the first 12 months update

Establish a Placemaking Fund

Are you a member of a local group or an idea of a small scale action that Fund established and guidelines to be published on www.balbriggan.ie.



Develop an annual Education and Training Skills Festival

Balbriggan Loves Learning Festival was 31/03 - 02/04, it will feature in 2021.



Increase the number of quality public festivals and events

Commitment will continue to increase quality festivals and events, highlights in 2019/20 included: Open Air Cinema, Festival of Fire & Fireworks, Summerfest Fireworks, Autumn Jazz Presents, Grotto and Balbriggan Sings as part of the planned Fingal International Festival of Voices.



Establish Ireland's first Grassroots Early

August 2019, featuring international this year's edition was cancelled, it will feature in 2021.



Establish an Our Balbriggan shop front

The Our Balbriggan Smart Hub, located on Georges Square, will further support community engagement and involvement in the town's rejuvenation journey.



Consult and publish a final masterplan for the development of Bremore Regional Park

Following public consultations in November 2019, a masterplan is provisionally 2020, with extensive public engagement planned shortly afterwards.



Improve Georges Town Square

Additional and improved seating, signage



Increase the number of play and exercise facilities

October 2019, followed by a Playlot in children at the Bandstand, Martello Tower in February 2020.



Progress the process of acquisitions of derelict land, buildings or dwellings in town centre

The Council are actively engaged in negotiations for the acquisition of identified in the Rejuvenation plan. 2 - 4 Dublin Street (beside the courthouse) has artistic and digital sectors.



Start refurbishing the RNLI Boathouse

Background safety, structural surveys complete, remedial works delayed to the interior and exterior to be completed by September 2020. Fingal County Council will issue expressions of interest for a commercial operator by end September 2020.



Install Lighting inside the towns Historic **Viaduct Bridge**

The viaducts were lit up for St. Patrick's Day. Permanent lighting inside will be



Secure inward investment and jobs into **Stephenstown Industrial lands**

The Stephenstown Link Road was completed in 2019 opening up access to c. 53 acres of serviced land. The Council is actively working to attract new investment into Stephenstown and sold 3 sites in the last year which aim to create 65 jobs, we will continue to actively work at attracting new investment into Stephenstown over the next number of years.



Establish an Our Balbriggan Operations Team with responsibility for general upkeep and cleaner and greener initiative

More frequent route cleaning, additional and reconditioned litter bins and dog refuse bins have been implemented, this regime will continue.



Publish provisional design options for the Ardgillan to Bremore section of the **Fingal Coastal Way**



Following a series of public consultations in late 2019 on the opportunities and constraints for the greenway, an assessment of the route options is underway. When the route options report is complete a public engagement will follow shortly.



Improve the Harbour area

October 2019 with the removal of 3 derelict vessels, some additional upgrades including the installation of electricity supply and fresh water commenced in November 2019 and is ongoing. outlined in Plan.



Consult on a Bio Diversity plan for Balbriggan as a model of excellence

Local Authority Waters Programme, working in partnership with Tidy Towns have appointed assessment of the Bracken river, including an assessment of the Biodiversity of the Riverbanks. OWLS, the nature charity have been appointed to run a biodiversity program in 4 primary schools. A bio-diversity plan for the whole town is to be retendered.



Subject to planning permissions, to tender for the construction of cycle routes along Harry Reynolds road to be completed, the beginning of an improved sustainable transport network across

Following public consultation in late 2019, a Part 8 Planning Application will be submitted for Harry Reynolds Road pedestrian and cycle route in Q3 2020. If planning is granted, detail design and tender would follow with construction possibly commencing in 2021.



Increase the number of public art installations

In partnership with Irish Rail a large-scale public the back of our railway station. A commission for a large-scale mural on the gable wall of the Central Lounge, will form a part of the Sack of Balbriggan Commemoration programme. A visual with local youth and global migration collective will be prominently displayed. A call for artists has been arranged in partnership with Dublin Canvas for three ESB Kiosks. All of these works will be completed in the next 6 months.



Balbriggan Library with a particular focus on digital technology and improved meeting spaces

New Office pods a meeting hub and high spec I.T hardware were installed in October 2019. A further extensive upgrade and refurbishment of the Library space will be completed by the end July 2020.



Publish an Our Balbriggan directory of services

www.balbriggan.ie, facility to be updated.







The conversation so far has generated a huge amount of engagement. Please continue to be part of the Our Balbriggan journey, follow progress and share ideas. Help create positive change, support local and celebrate #ourbalbriggan.

More detailed information on the Our Balbriggan Rejuvenation Plan 2019-2025 on www.balbriggan.ie







