



OUR BALBRIGGAN
Help us shape
the public
realm for Our
Balbriggan
GET INVOLVED

Our Balbriggan Public Realm Strategy

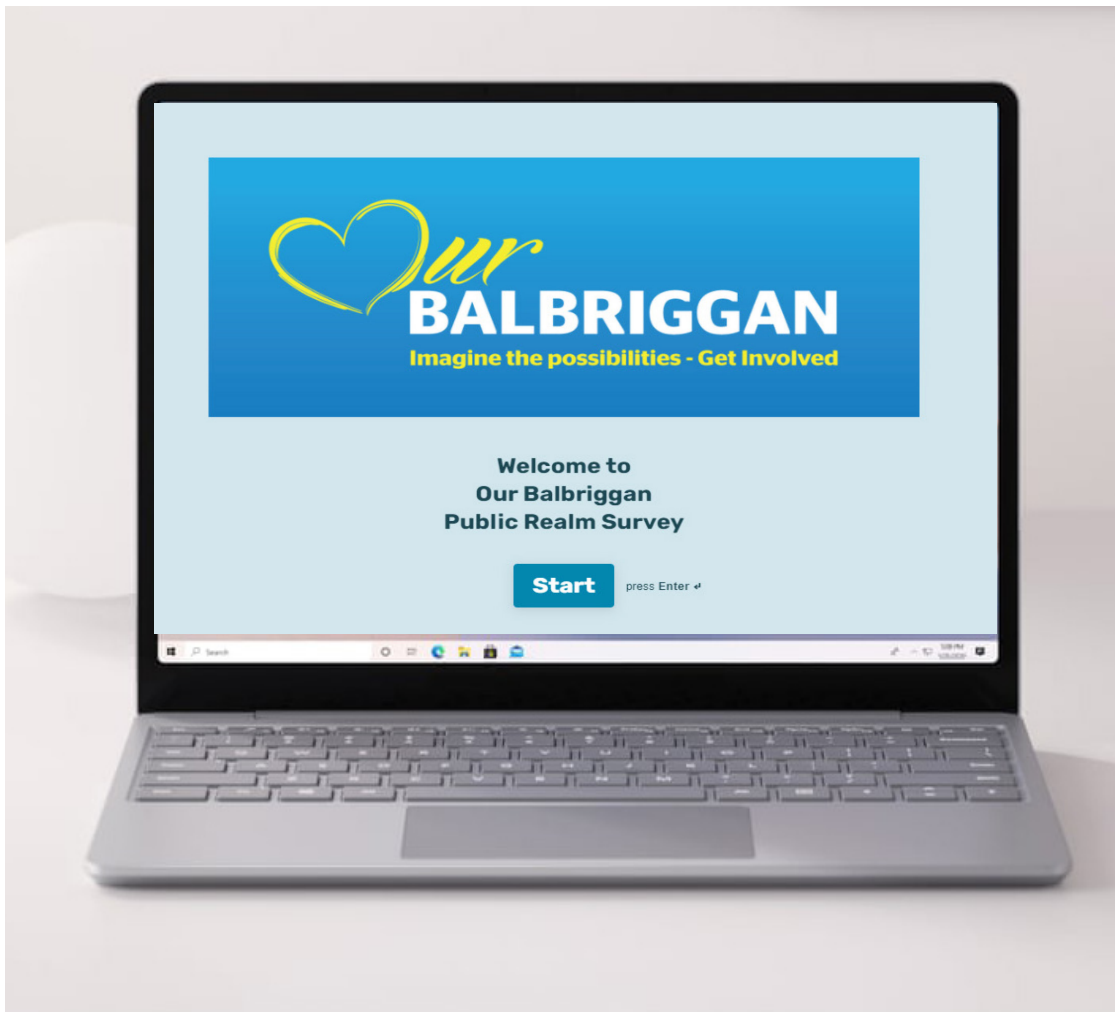
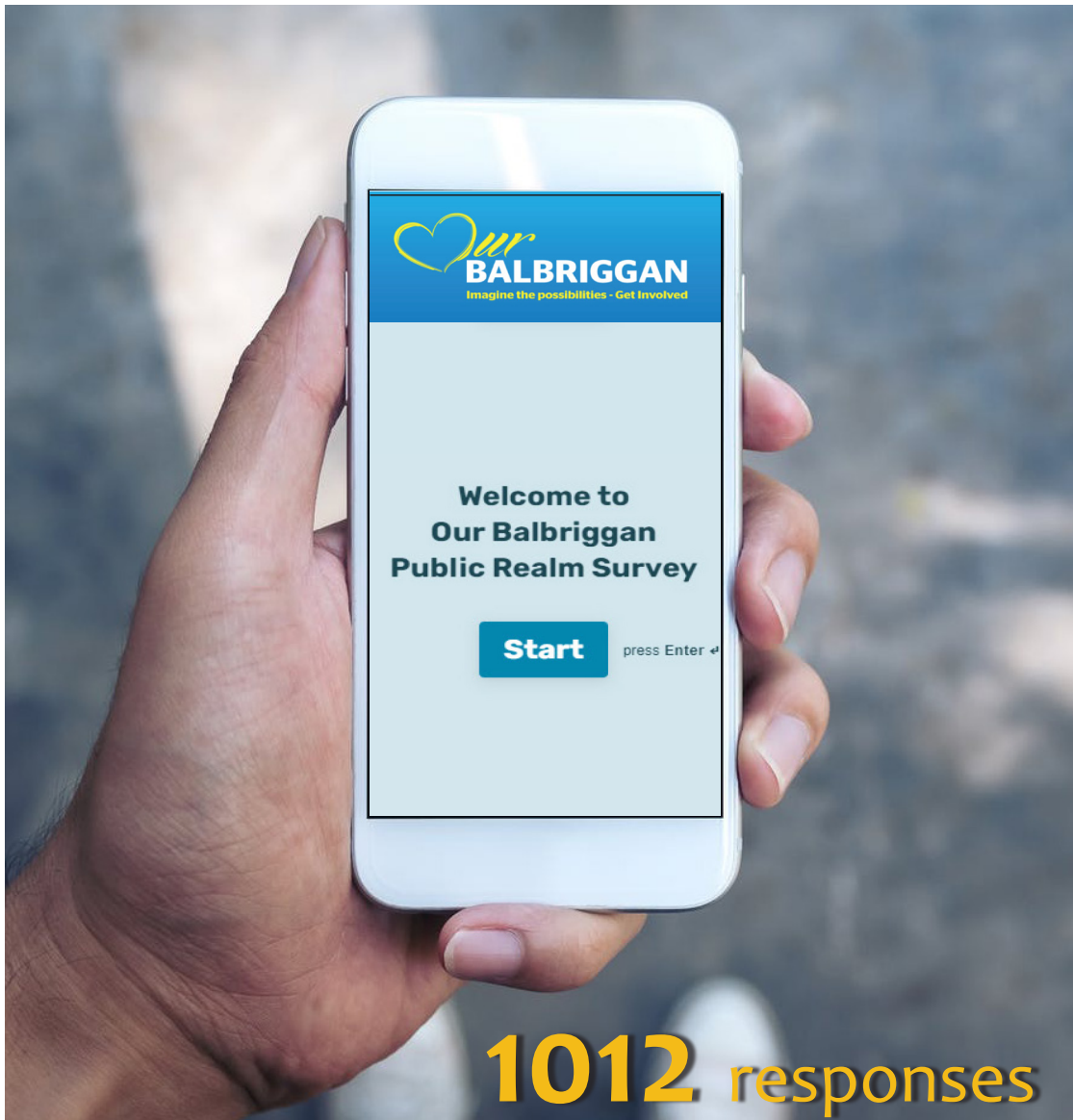
MAKE SPACE

Introduction

Welcome to the public consultation process for the Our Balbriggan Public Realm Strategy. These panels explain the process to date and present a series of proposed aims and themes for Balbriggan’s public realm. It is being prepared by consultancy The Paul Hogarth Company on behalf of Fingal County Council.

Based on extensive public engagement, The Our Balbriggan 2019 - 2025 Rejuvenation Plan found that “The ideas within “public realm and placemaking”, are key to successful rejuvenation and to making Balbriggan a “destination”.

When complete, the Public Realm Strategy will set in place evidence based objectives, concepts and guidance for Balbriggan’s public realm, defined here as all streets and other publicly accessible outdoor spaces throughout the town. It will be used to inform projects being advanced through the Our Balbriggan process, while generating new initiatives and future policy.



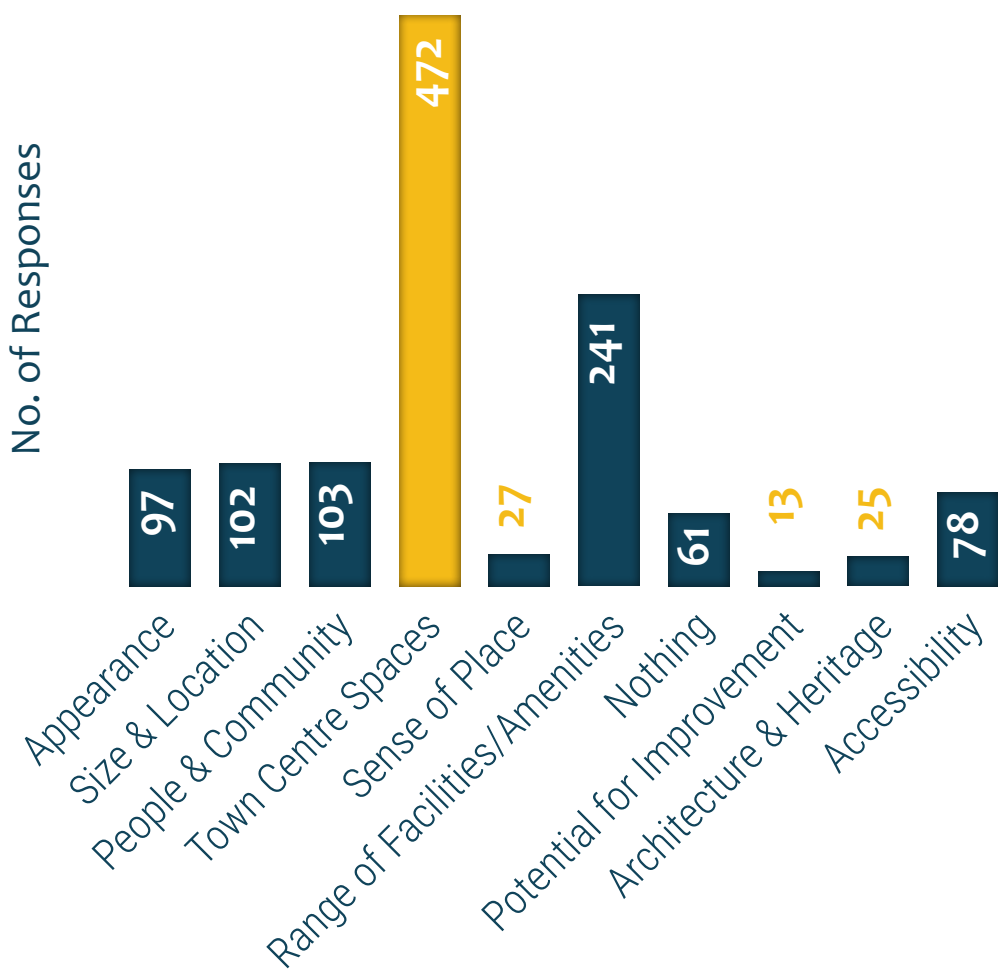
2021 Public Realm Survey

To succeed in its objectives the Our Balbriggan Public Realm Strategy must closely reflects with views, needs and aspirations of local people. Therefore at the outset a consultation process was held to gain insight into what residents had to say about Balbriggan’s public realm.

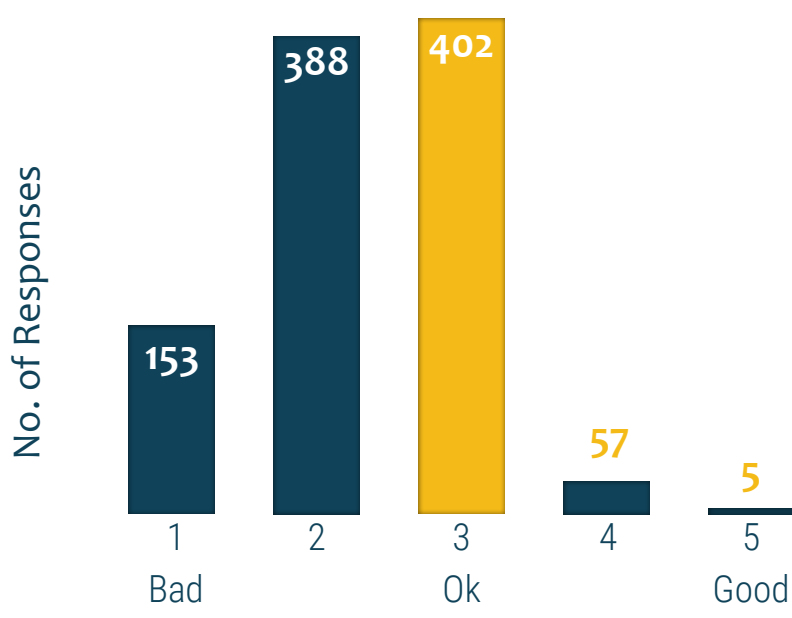
Stage 1 consultation consisted of a public survey and a series of focus group workshops, building upon the work of the Our Balbriggan Rejuvenation Strategy.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, public health restrictions necessitated all public engagement to take place online, when the survey was taken in 2021.

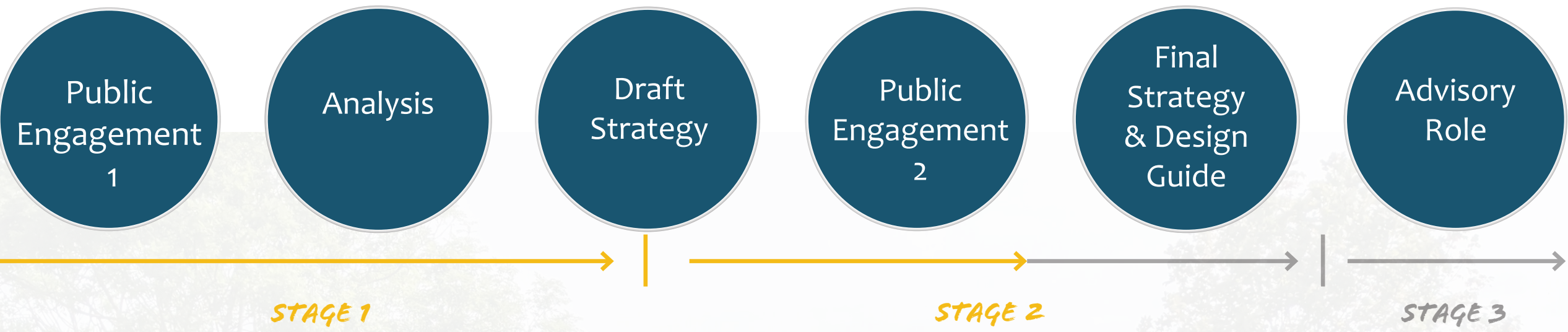
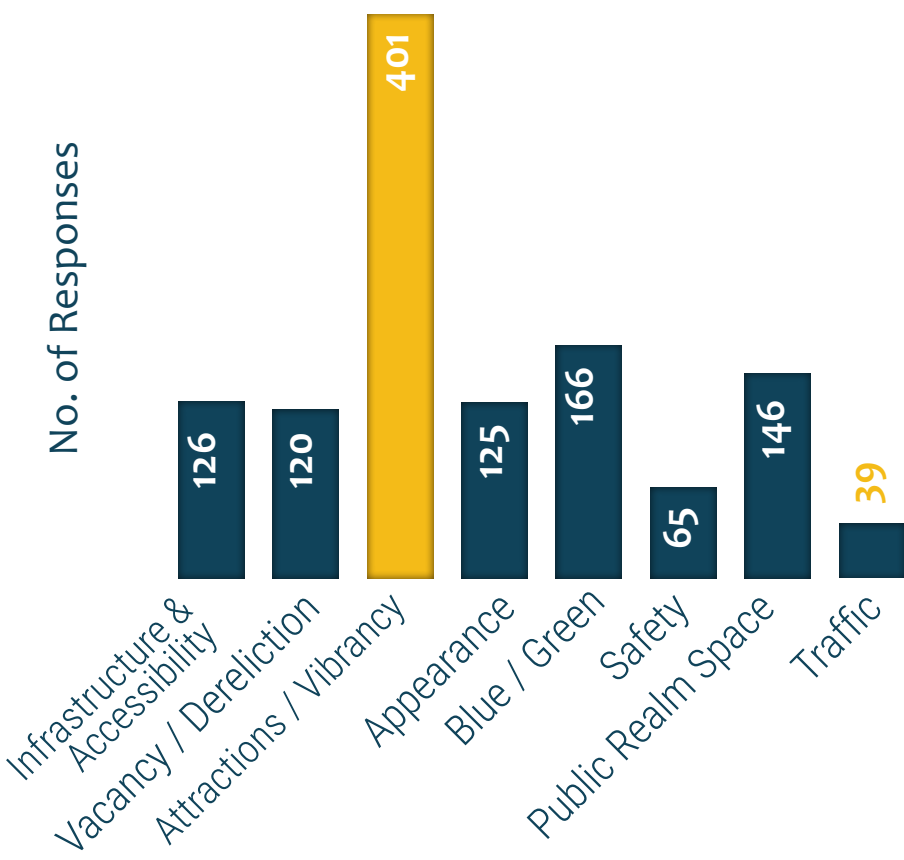
What do you like about Balbriggan Town Centre?



Overall, how would you rate the quality of Balbriggan’s public realm at present?



What are your top priorities for Balbriggan’s Town Centre Public Realm?





Analysis

What makes Balbriggan unique?

The planning and design of Balbriggan's Public Realm must be founded upon a comprehensive process of analysis. This means developing a solid understanding of how the town and its spaces both look and function so that the value of new interventions, large or small, can be maximised.

While there is much to be learned from public realm projects elsewhere in the county or further afield, there can be no 'one size fits all'. Each intervention must carefully respond to its specific context and the needs of the town. In doing so, a response to two interrelated questions should be sought: **What Makes Balbriggan Unique?** and, **What is Balbriggan's Sense of Place?**



Urban Form

The physical extents of the town have spread considerably to the north west and south. While of reasonable urban density, they are primarily connected by large roads, reflecting but also affirming a relationship with the car.

Where is the centre?

Often a town or village has a very clearly demarcated central point such as a square, town hall or other landmark building such as a church. Yet for Balbriggan this is not immediately apparent. Similarly while the beach and harbour are a short walk away from Bridge Street, they are not necessarily deemed by locals to be town centre locations.



First Impressions



Where is the sea?

The sea is largely invisible from the town centre and there are few cues in the design and character of these spaces to suggest they lead to such an important destination. At present some connections can sometimes deter use due to how they look, feel and are used, especially after dark.





Analysis

The Coast

Balbriggan is fortunate to have a long stretch of coastline providing wildlife habitat, views and attractive walks that are greatly enjoyed by locals and the visitor alike. An especially interesting feature of this landscape is the diversity of character areas along its length. Any interventions within these zones must be very carefully planned and designed so to avoid negatively impacting their natural value nor their intrinsic qualities of character.



The River

The river and its parkland are greatly valued by local people, although largely hidden from view as it meets the town centre at Bridge Street. Great potential exists for the river to be sensitively developed as an amenity, as well as an improved wildlife habitat.



Connectivity

Like all historic towns comprised of relatively narrow streets, Balbriggan must contend with the challenges of traffic and car parking. Prior to construction of the M1 Motorway, Balbriggan had a reputation for heavy traffic en-route between Dublin and the north. While today the situation has greatly improved, traffic remains an issue at peak times, along Drogheda / Bridge Street, as well as the vicinity of the railway station.

Connectivity and achieving the most appropriate balance between transport modes will be a key exercise for Balbriggan as it seeks to transform its public realm. In many places space is limited and the decision will be required on the priority given to pedestrians, cyclists, public and private transport.



Qualities & Character

The qualities and character of Balbriggan's public realm also extends to both remnants of the historic streetscape and its landscape and the vegetation that finds home in its streets and spaces.





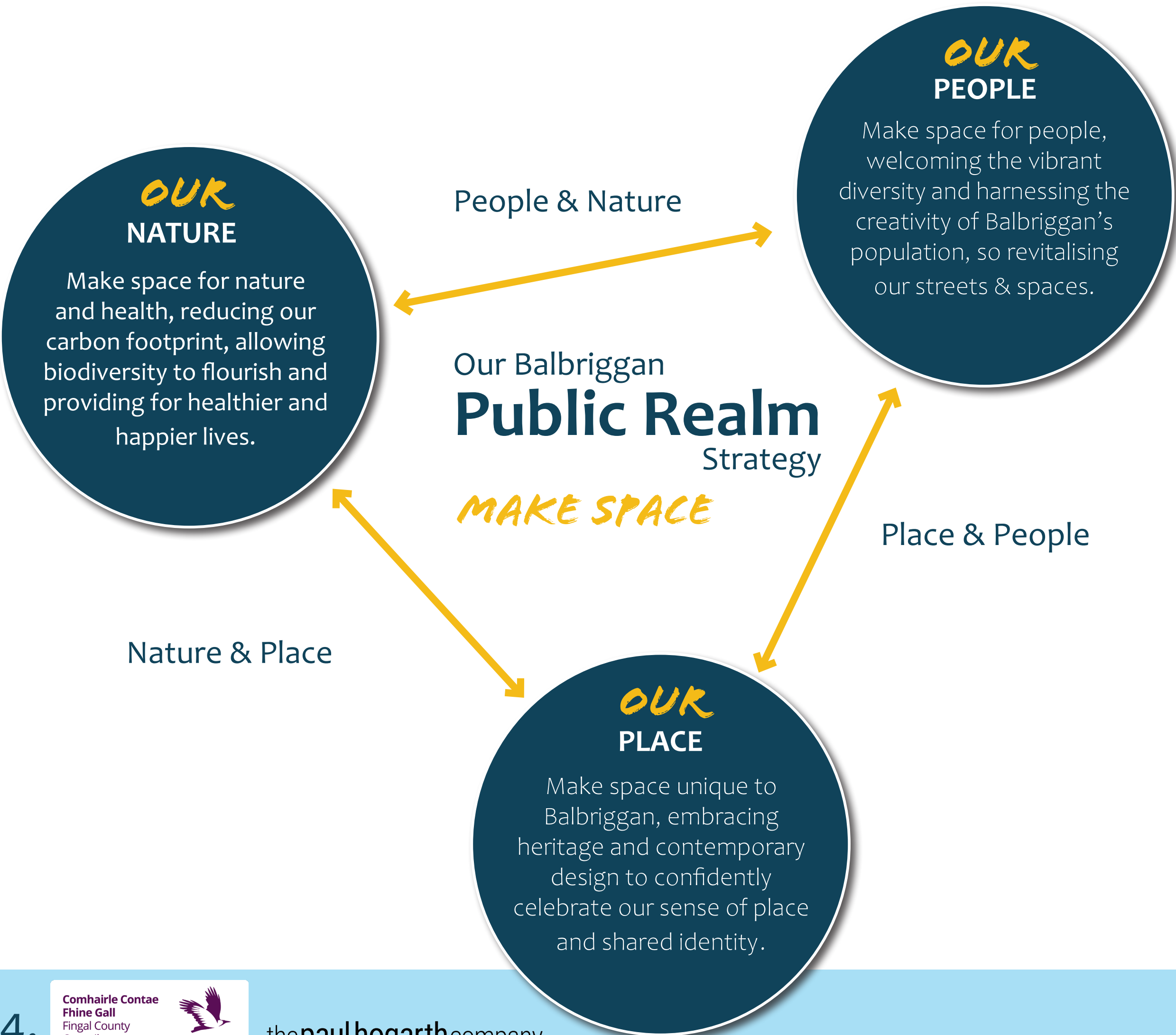
Vision, Aims & Objectives

Vision

Through the Our Balbriggan 2019 - 2025 Rejuvenation Plan a vision for the town has been established which encapsulates the view to creating a more attractive, connected place that people want to live and spend time in, with a focus on community driven renewal. This fulfilment of this vision provides the central focus for the public realm strategy. In doing so it is necessary to consider the role played by the public realm.



Through the Public Realm Strategy there is an **opportunity to unlock the potential of Balbriggan**, building on it's strengths and creating far reaching positive implications for the quality of the town centre. **Strengthening the connections between people, place and nature** will shift the focus to a town centre environment where people feel comfortable spending time. Streets and spaces will become the veins of local public life to carry out daily activities where people no longer feel pushed to the edges or away from the spaces altogether.



OUR Nature

Make space for nature and health, reducing our carbon footprint, allowing biodiversity to flourish and providing for healthier and happier lives.



OUR People

Make space for people, welcoming the vibrant diversity and harnessing the creativity of Balbriggan's population, so revitalising our streets & spaces.



OUR Place

Make space unique to Balbriggan, embracing heritage and contemporary design to confidently celebrate our sense of place and shared identity.





Draft Public Realm Strategy

Our Nature

The public realm strategy provides a real opportunity to begin realising the strength of Balbriggan's existing spaces, which range from the river corridor to a series of coastal areas, each with their own distinct characteristics and features. The strategy provides an opportunity to build resilience into the future of the town with on emphasis on making Balbriggan a healthier, more sustainable environment.

- HABITAT RESTORATION
*RIVER CORRIDORS,
COASTAL MEADOWS,
WOODLAND*
- URBAN PLANTING
*POLLINATORS,
STREET TREES*
- WATER MANAGEMENT
*RAIN GARDENS,
SDPS*



Our Place

Balbriggan's history can be seen through clues and details sprinkled throughout the town. There is potential to build and develop this hidden story, highlighting important landmarks and communicating stories through interpretation and art.

Improved streets and spaces which are attractive and accessible for residents and visitors will encourage activity and life. Well designed functional spaces will give room for town life to take place as well as providing an environment for events and gatherings.

- OUR HERITAGE ASSETS
*PROTECT, CONSERVE,
RESTORE & REVIVE
INTERPRET & COMMUNICATE
(TELLING STORIES)*
- CIVIC STREETS & SPACES
*ACCESS FOR ALL,
HIGH QUALITY DESIGN,
REBALANCED SPACE*
- WAYFINDING & GATEWAYS
*MAPPING,
SIGNAGE,
ARRIVAL
(BOTH TOWN WIDE & TOWN CENTRE)*
- POP-UP EVENTS & ACTIVITIES
*MARKETS,
OUTDOOR DINING,
PERFORMANCES*



Our People

By bringing people and nature closer together an exciting opportunity is presented for everyone in Balbriggan, making the most of their abundant public spaces and natural assets.

And by better connecting Balbriggan by foot and cycle, greater numbers of people can be encouraged to leave the car at home, enjoy Balbriggan's landscapes and contributing to their health , as well as the wider environmental quality of the town.

- BLUE SPACE ACCESS
*ACCESS FOR ALL,
SEA & RIVERS*
- GREEN & BLUEWAYS
FOOT & CYCLE NETWORK
- COMMUNITY GREEN SPACES
*RESIDENT LED,
PLAY SPACES*





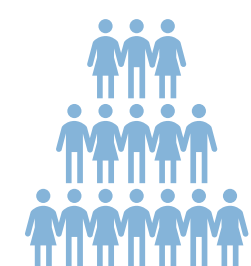
Our Balbriggan

Active Travel & Transport Plan

Introduction

Alongside the Public Realm Strategy Fingal County Council have commissioned an Active Travel and Transport Plan.

Balbriggan Today




21,722 people living in Balbriggan (CSO, 2016). Fastest growing town in Ireland with a young and multi-cultural population.




Strategically located on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and in proximity to Dublin Airport.



Direct rail connectivity to Dublin City Centre, with a centrally located rail station. However, poor interchange with bus and other modes of transport.



Important natural and built environment assets including the Harbour, Mill Pond Park, historic town core, etc.



Car dominated town centre with a lot of public space dedicated to the movement and parking of cars, and a legacy of heavy highways engineering.



Overall poor quality environment for pedestrians and cyclists, including poor wayfinding and legibility, street clutter and hostile junction design.

Poor Junction Design for Pedestrians & Cyclists



Existing Travel Patterns in Balbriggan

50% of **all commuter journeys** (employment and education) are done **by sustainable modes**, with the other half by private car.

46% of **journeys to school are done by walking and cycling**, with significant potential to further increase this number with Safe Routes to School interventions.

9% of **journeys to work are by walking and cycling**, and a further 19% by public transport.

18% of **households** in Balbriggan **do not own a car**. This indicates that there is a cohort of residents who depend on walking, cycling and public transport to get around.

Narrow & Missing Footpaths





Existing Active Travel & Transport Conditions

Healthy Streets Check



- Virtual Healthy Streets Check
- Sample group comprised a mix of ages and genders
- Focused on Drogheda St/Bridge St/Dublin St and Quay St areas
- Using each of the 10 indicators, a rating was applied from:

0 – Poor
1 – Good
2 – Excellent

“Fresh eyes” corroborated and identified same issues as ‘Our Balbriggan’

Main Street - 5/20

- Easy to Cross - 1**
 - Regular intervals of signalised crossings
 - Lack of dropped kerbs
 - Parked cars block sight lines
- Shade and Shelter - 0**
 - Lack of street trees, awnings
 - Few doorways – private space
- Places to Stop and Rest - 0**
 - Narrow footpaths
 - Lack of formal/informal seating areas
 - St. George’s Square – exception – bare
- Not Too Noisy - 0**
 - Noise from traffic (revving stop/start) – car dominated space
 - No “soft” landscaping/greening to mitigate noise
- People Feel Safe - 1**
 - Mix of daytime and night-time activity
 - Car dominated - 50kph speed limit
 - Narrow footpaths in places
- People Choose to Walk, Cylce, PT - 1**
 - No cycle provision (except cycle parking at St. George’s Square)
 - Not a pleasant environment to walk or cycle
- Things to See and Do - 1**
 - Shops, services, library, etc.
 - Limited things to see and do for all ages/interests
- People Feel Relaxed - 0**
 - Car dominated space
 - Lack of space to stop and linger
 - Narrow footpaths
- Clean Air - 0**
 - Pollution associated with car traffic/congestion/HGVs
- Pedestrian from All Walks of Life - 1**
 - Evidence of older adults, parents with children

Quay Street / Harbour - 6/20

- Easy to Cross - 1**
 - Lack of formal/informal crossing provision would prevent those with mobility or visual impairments/older adults/vulnerable pedestrians from crossing easily/safely
 - However narrow section of Quay St/low traffic volumes may be easier for some
- Shade and Shelter - 1**
 - Archways and some trees in the park
- Places to Stop and Rest - 1**
 - Picnic bench, seating in the park, low walls and built in benches along the Harbour
 - Poor maintenance of these
- Not Too Noisy - 1**
 - Noise from traffic/train station (whistle/braking), harbour activity
- People Feel Safe - 0**
 - Feelings of isolation/desolate space, esp. at night-time
 - Downward lighting causes shadowing on face at night-time
 - Shutters on Quay St.
 - Little passive surveillance - no “eyes on the street”
- People Choose to Walk, Cylce, PT - 0**
 - Little evidence of people walking or cycling
- Things to See and Do - 1**
 - Limited things to see and do for all ages/interests
 - Recreational opportunities - playground, park, harbour and beach
- People Feel Relaxed - 0**
 - Not at night - feelings of isolation/desolate space
- Clean Air- 1**
 - Emissions from traffic/train station/harbour activity
 - Coastal location/nearby green space may mitigate some of this
- Pedestrian from All Walks of Life - 0**
 - Limited evidence at time of survey of a mix of people from all walks of life

Railway Street and Environs



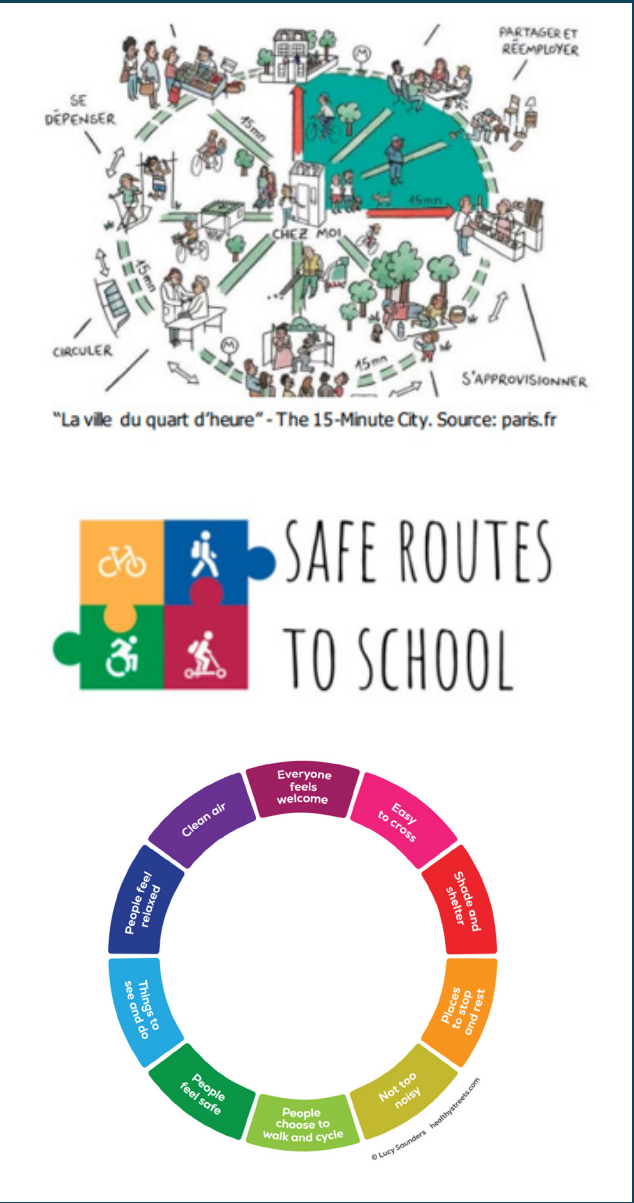
S.W.O.T Summary

STRENGTHS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong policy basis for prioritisation of sustainable transport and compact growth.• Provisional URDF funding for the realisation of Balbriggan Rejuvenation projects.• Natural and built environment assets incl Harbour, Mill Pond Park, etc.• Direct rail connectivity to Dublin, with a centrally located rail station	WEAKNESSES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall poor-quality environment for pedestrians and cyclists.• Poor wayfinding and legibility between different areas of the town.• Poor interchange between bus and rail services.
OPPORTUNITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Significant potential to transform Balbriggan’s public realm to make a more attractive, vibrant and liveable town centre.• Approx. 60% of journey to school are by sustainable modes (46% by active modes), which indicates potential to further increase this mode share with targeted Safe Routes to School interventions and improvements.	THREATS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A change in the economic outlook and political climate leading to uncertainty about required capital infrastructure funding and private investment.• A ‘Business as Usual’ approach to land use, transport planning, sustainable transport provision and parking policy.



Our Balbriggan Transport Objectives

Transport Objectives



Provide a multi-modal transport plan to identify interventions to encourage a transition to sustainable and low carbon transport modes.

Apply the 15-Minute Town concept where the majority of Balbriggan residents' living needs are met within a 15-minute safe walk or cycle from their homes.

Identify Safe Routes to School opportunities to ensure that more children can travel safely to school by walking and cycling.

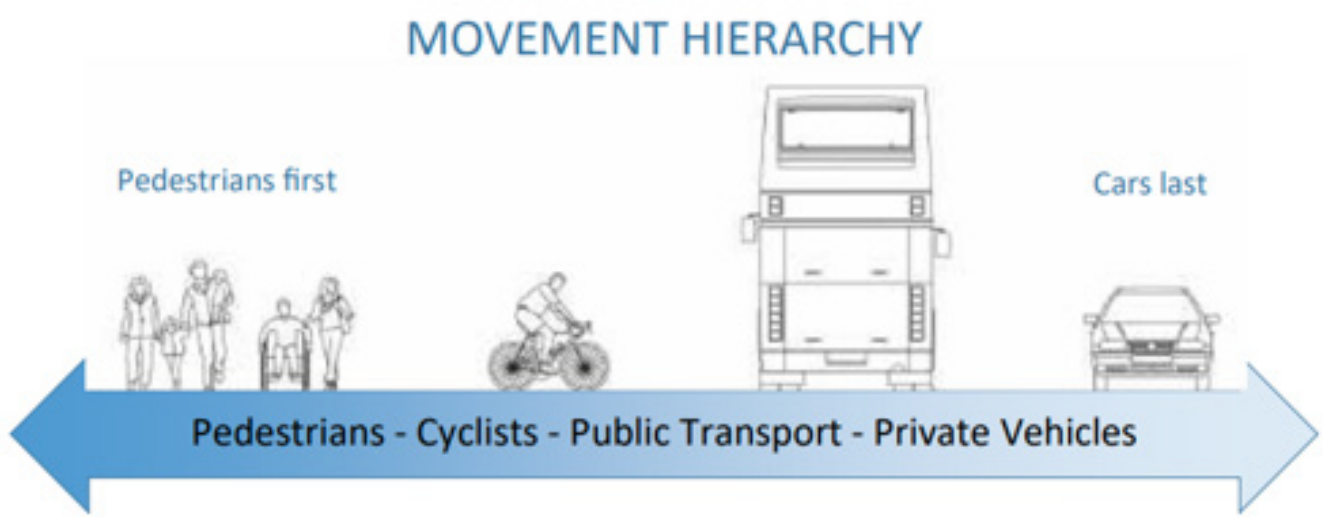
Maximise the ability of Balbriggan's natural and built environment assets such as Mill Pond Park and the Harbour to facilitate safe and permeable walking and cycling.

Enhance the vibrancy, accessibility and liveability of Balbriggan through place-making and a better balance of public space.

Improve the air quality and noise levels of Balbriggan town centre and its environs utilising a Healthy Streets approach.

Concepts & Principles

- DMURS User Hierarchy
- Low Traffic Neighbourhoods
- Healthy Streets Approach (public realm-led)
- Filtered Permeability
- Woonerfs / Home Zones
- Transit Orientated Development (TOD)
- Reallocation of carriageway space
- High-quality interchange



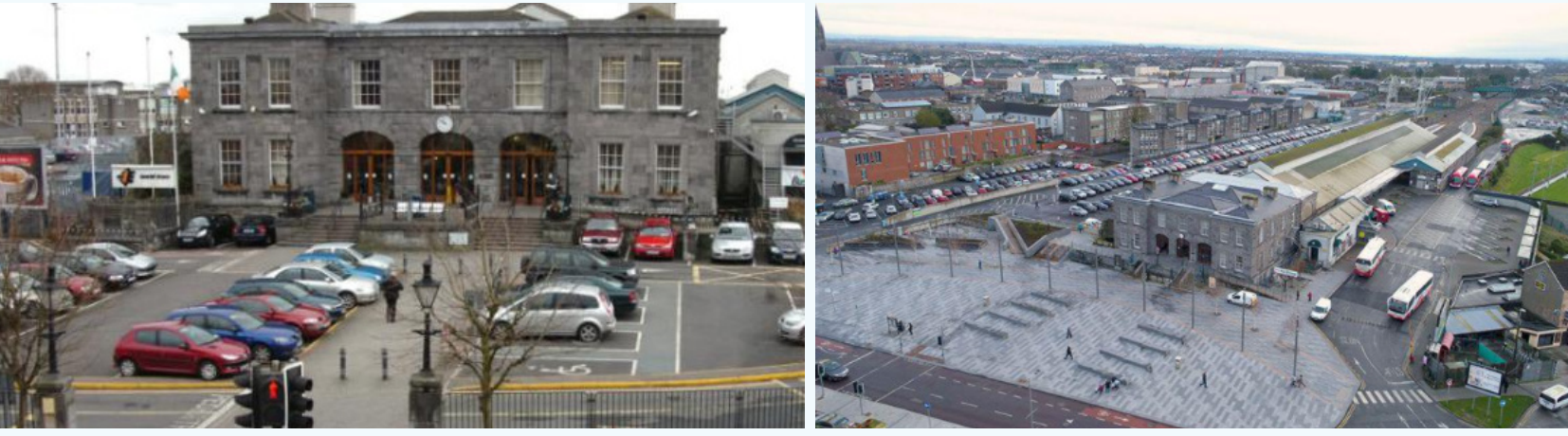
Filtered Permeability



Home Zones, Woonerfs and Fiestraats



Railway Station Plaza



Multi - Modal Mobility Hub



- Elements:
- High-quality interchange facilities, e.g. ticketing
 - Cycle parking hub
 - Bike share facilities, e.g. BleeperBikes
 - E-Scooters
 - Car sharing, e.g. GoCar
 - Real Time Passenger Information
 - Bus shelter
 - E.V.C.P.
 - Café
 - Parcel Motel / storage lockers

Preliminary Movement Strategy



How to give your feedback

To help us shape both the Public Realm Strategy and Active Travel and Transport Plan we would like to hear your thoughts and ideas for the town.

Please take your time to read the boards and give us your feedback by completing the survey.