

Our Balbriggan

Public Realm Strategy

MAKE SPACE

2024 - 2034



the paul hogarth company

Comhairle Contae
Fhine Gall
Fingal County
Council



Our Balbriggan

Public Realm Strategy

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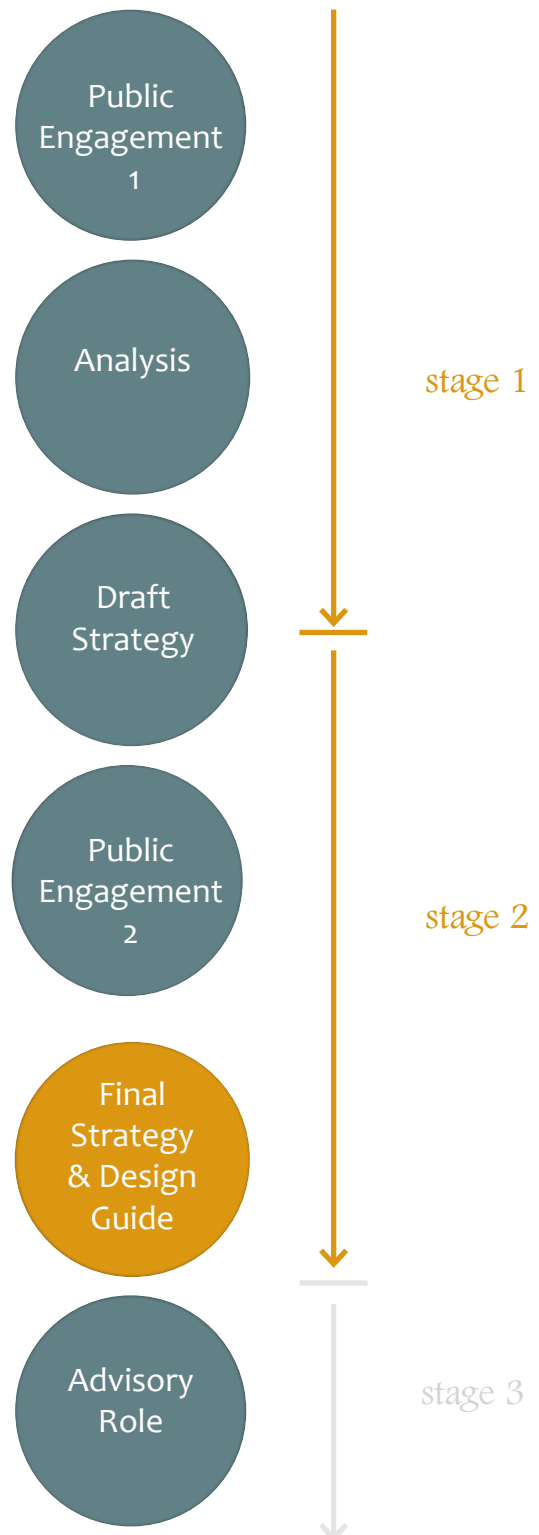
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Introduction

This Report for the Our Balbriggan Public Realm Strategy has been researched and written by Landscape Architecture and Urban Design 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".*

The Public Realm Strategy sets 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 informing new initiatives and future policy. The public realm strategy was also developed in tandem with the Balbriggan Active Travel Strategy.



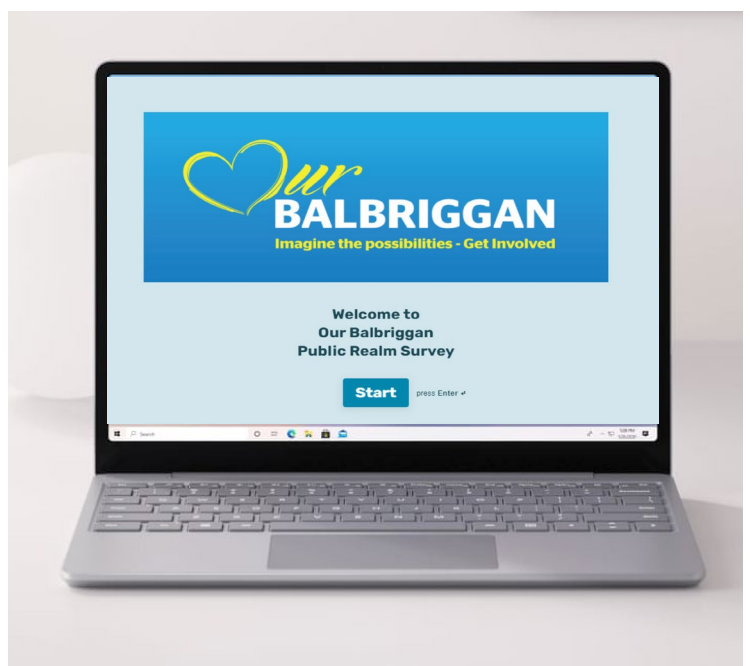
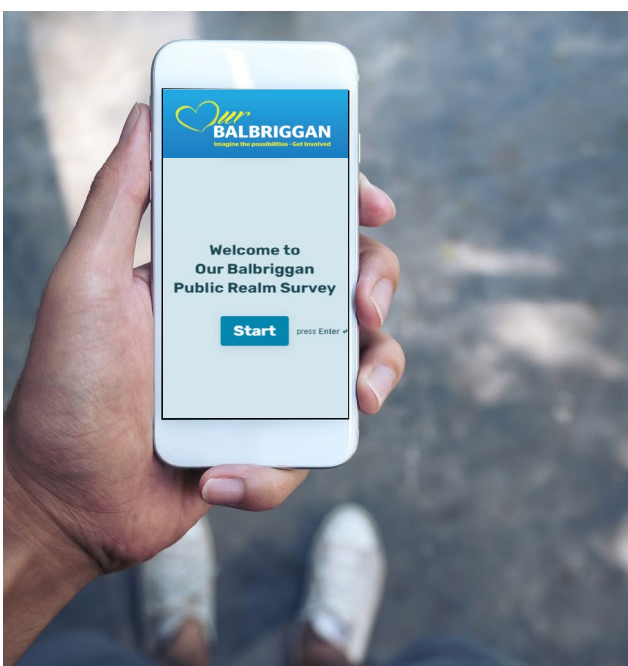
Consultation Findings

Public Realm Survey

To succeed in its objectives the Our Balbriggan Public Realm Strategy must closely reflect the 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. This was augmented by visits to the town by the consultancy team, including two socially distanced 'walkabouts' with representatives of Fingal County Council.



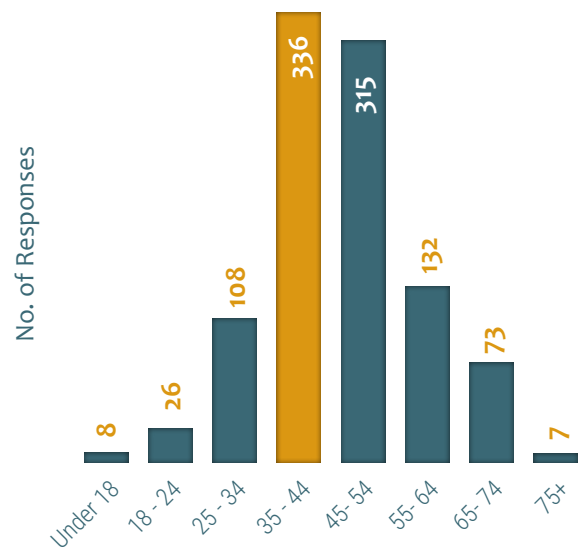
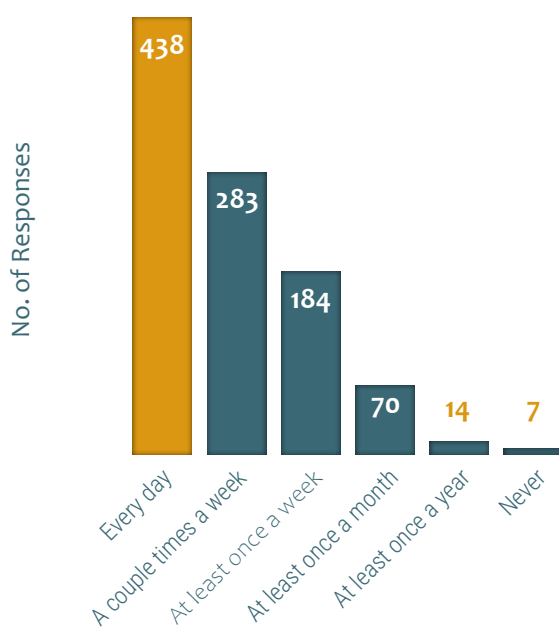
- 1012 Responses

A total of 1012 people responded to the on-line survey which was hosted on the 'Our Balbriggan' website. A large proportion of respondents visit the town centre on a regular basis with the majority (44%) visiting on a daily basis and 28% visiting a couple times a week.

A large number of people who filled out the survey were aged between 35 to 54 with just over 64% falling within this range.



Q1 How often do you visit Balbriggan Town Centre? **Q2** Age Range

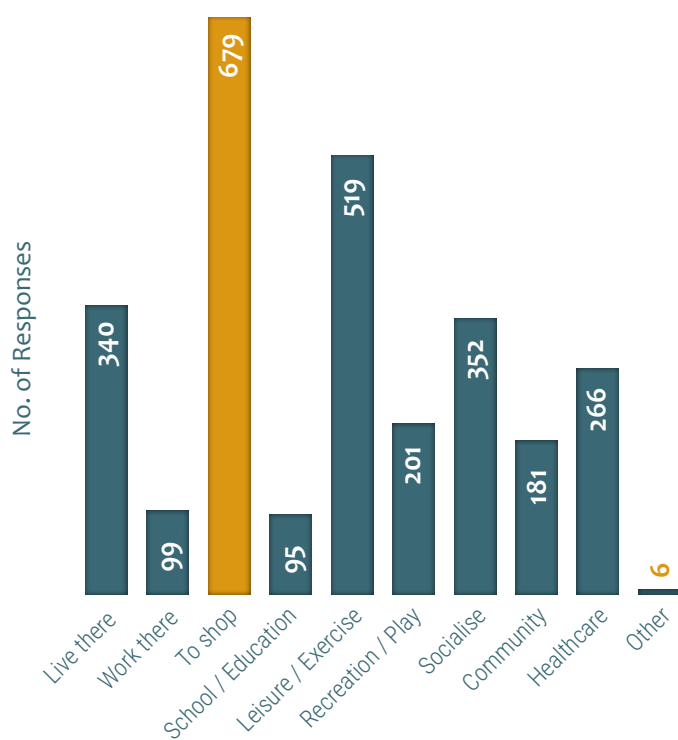


There was a low response rate in the younger age categories, including under 18's and people between 18 to 24. The lower number of respondents in the under 18 category reflects the timing of the survey during the school vacation period, highlighting the need to engage further with young people as the process proceeds.

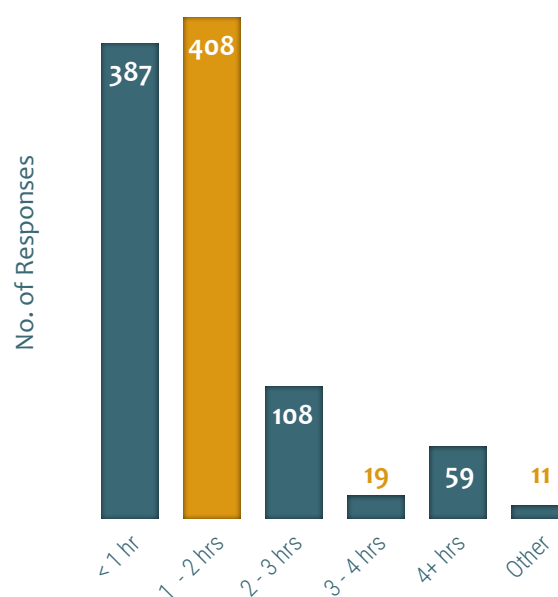
The majority of respondents visit the town centre to shop or for leisure and exercise reasons. Only 10% of people who filled out the survey work within the town centre.

The survey identified the short amount of time people spend when visiting the town centre, with 41% spending 1-2 hours and 39% spending less than 1 hour. Only 19 people spend 3-4 hours, highlighting the need for more to encourage people to linger within the town centre.

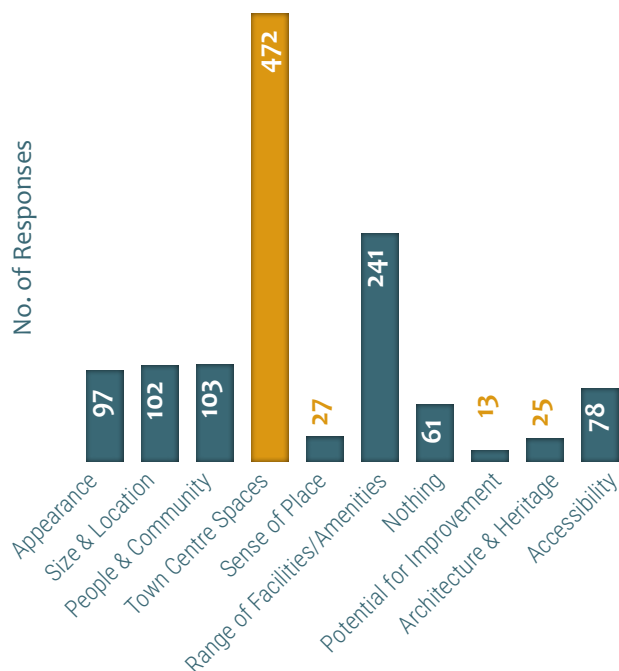
Q3 Why do you visit the centre?



Q4 When you do visit the centre, on average how long do you spend there?



Q5 What three things do you like about Balbriggan town centre at present?



Like 1

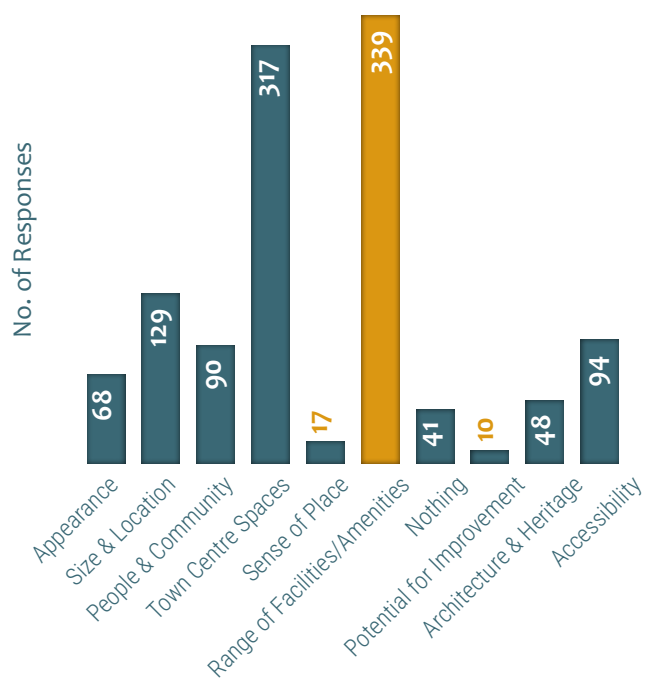
When asked about things they like about the town centre people identified the existing town centre spaces with a strong response. 472 people cited this category with areas such as the beach, the sea, harbour, lighthouse and the square being mentioned.

The amount of open space and ability to be able to access it was also referenced in answers and the fact these spaces are all within close proximity of each other.

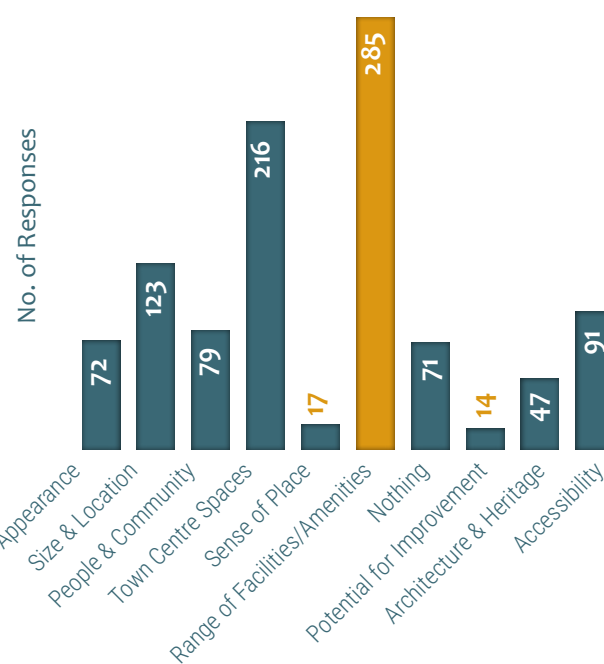
The range of facilities and amenities was also identified as a prominent like. The range of local shops and amount of sports facilities was discussed. The library was identified as an important amenity within the town centre.

Other categories included the size and location with the sentiment that the town centre was a convenient size with everything in walking distance. The location of the town beside the sea was also referenced within the likes.

People and community was also highlighted within this question and in particular the friendliness and community feel within the town centre.

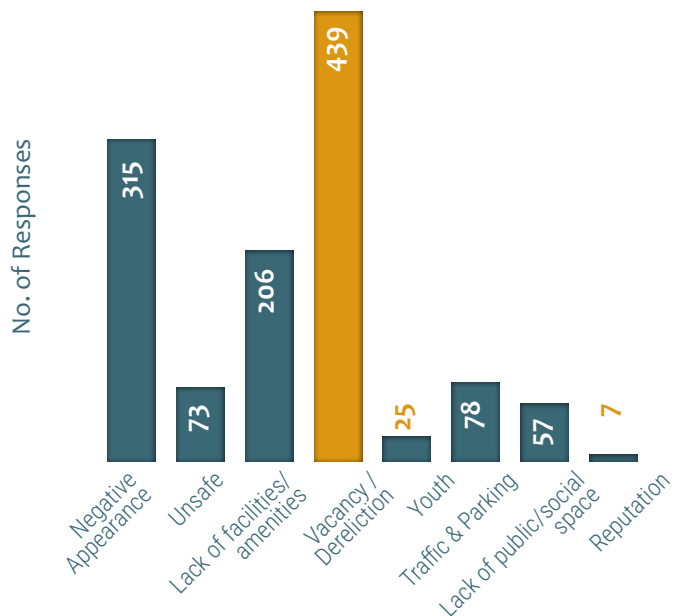


Like 2



Like 3

Q6 What three things do you **dislike** about Balbriggan town centre at present?

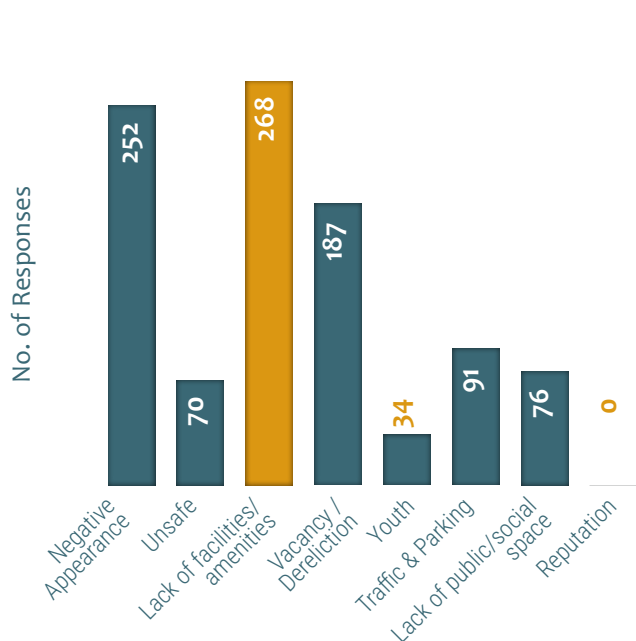


Vacancy and dereliction was identified as a strong dislike in the town centre with 439 responses. Although there is not a large number of vacant and derelict units it appears the prominence and location of those that do exist has large bearing on people's perceptions of the town centre as whole.

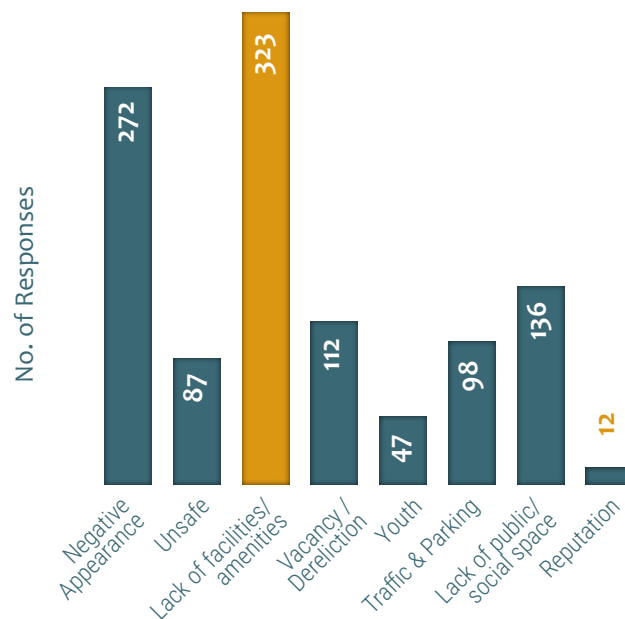
A lack of facilities and amenities was a prominent sentiment in the responses. Lack of attractions, such as restaurants and places to socialise and interact, was identified as an issue. It was highlighted that there is little to attract people to spend time within the town centre and that people feel the need to travel outside Balbriggan for activities and things to do.

The negative appearance of the town centre was also a category with a strong response. People mentioned litter, dirty buildings and the town centre having a dated and run down appearance.

Dislike 1



Dislike 2



Dislike 3

Q7 Thinking about Balbriggan Town Centre, please score the following aspects of the existing public realm?

The survey asked respondents to rate the quality of several aspects of the existing public realm.

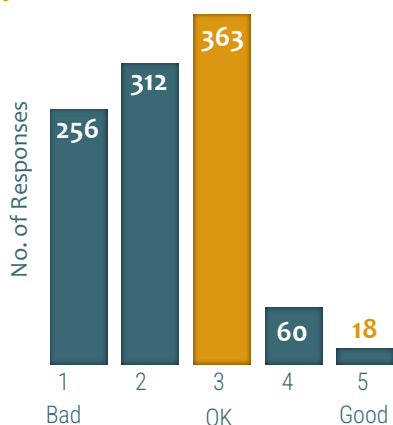
92% of people rated the first impressions of the public realm between 1 (bad) and 3 (OK), with very few people rating it as good.

For both car parking and signage respondents generally felt these aspects were OK.

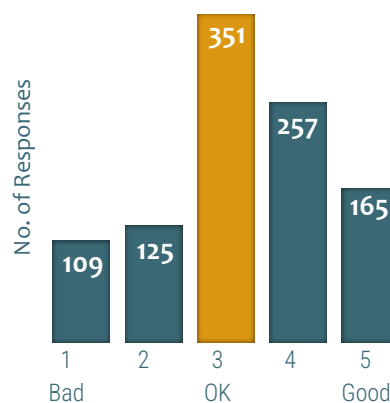
Public transport connections were predominantly rated as 3 (OK), but with larger numbers spread between 3 and 5, highlighting a general consensus that this aspect was generally good.

The opposite consensus is reflected in the rating of pavements and footpaths with very few people rating this as good and a larger concentration of respondents spread between 1 (bad) and 3 (OK).

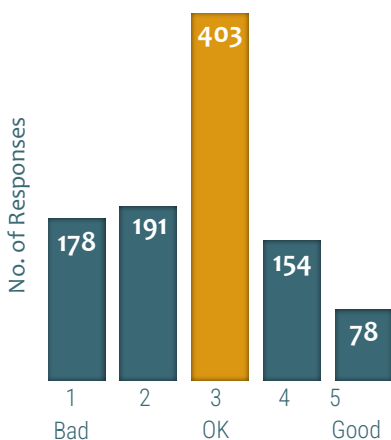
The Quality Of:



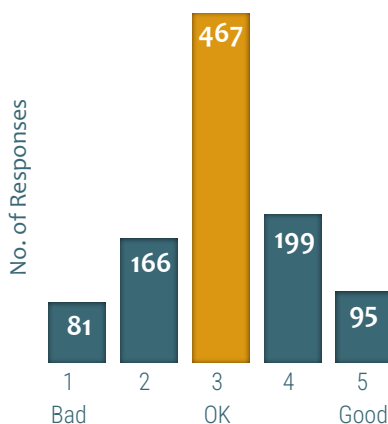
First impressions



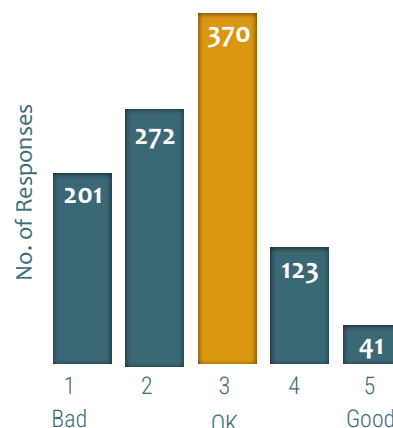
Public transport connections



Car parking



Signage & finding your way around



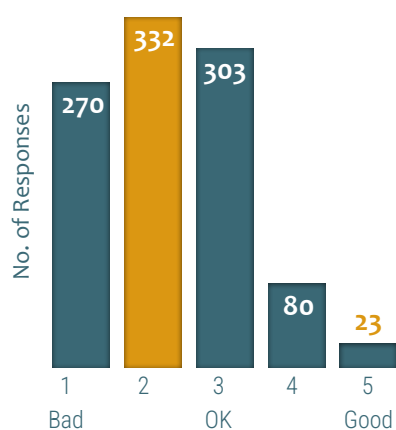
Pavements & footpaths

When asked to rate access for wheelchairs, buggies and those with physical difficulties a significant number of people selected between 1 (bad) and 3 (OK) with the largest number (332) rating it as 2.

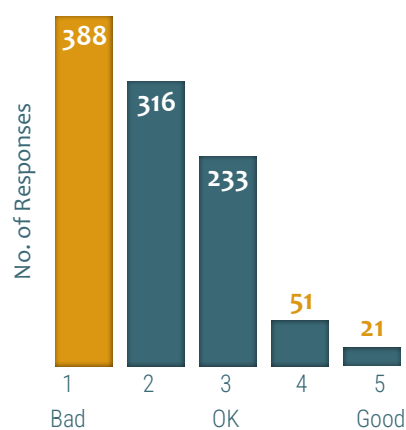
Pedestrian crossings were generally felt to be OK but when asked about cycle paths and facilities there was a large number of people selecting a rating of 1 (bad), with 388 responses.

Very few people rated the cleanliness of the town centre as good with a much larger concentration, of just over 65%, rating this aspect as bad (1 & 2).

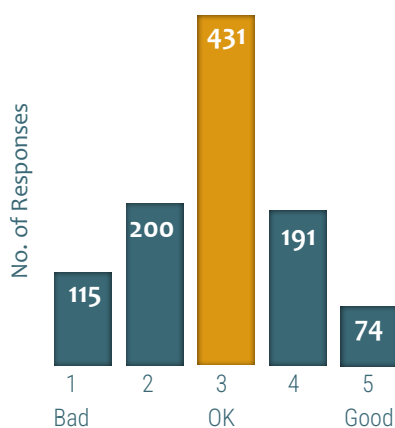
When asked about the quality of the lighting the majority of people felt this aspect to be OK.



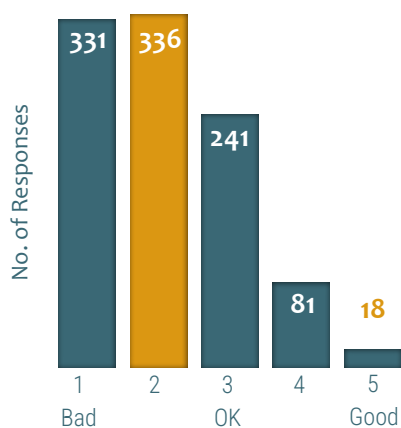
Access for wheelchairs, buggies and those with physical difficulties



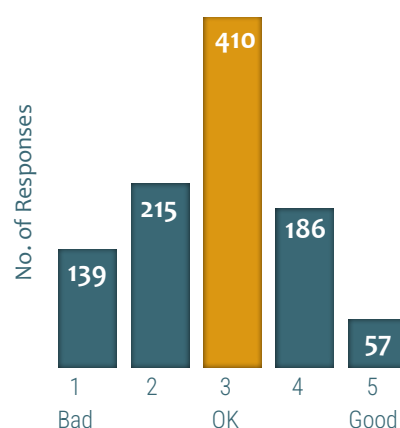
Cycle paths and facilities



Pedestrian crossings & road safety



Cleanliness and provision of bins



Lighting and the town centre after dark

Q7 Thinking about Balbriggan Town Centre, please score the following aspects of the existing public realm?

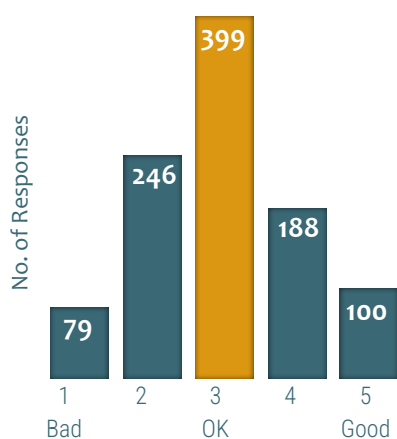
The survey then went on to ask respondents to rate the access to several aspects of the public realm.

Both green and blue spaces were predominantly rated as OK but access to squares and car free spaces had a large number of responses rating between 1 (bad) and 3 (OK), totalling 88%.

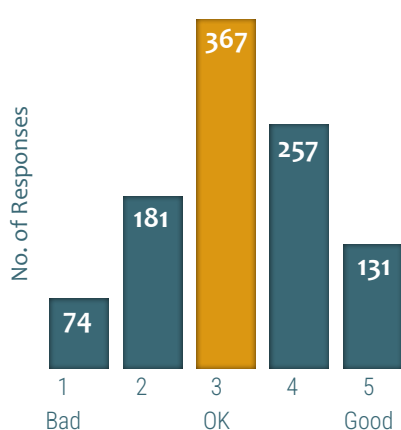
This sentiment was similarly reflected when asked about access to natural spaces, again a large number rated between 1(bad) and 3 (OK).

The question then reflects a poor perception of access to places to sit and eat and drink outside. Both received a low rating with the majority of respondents selecting the bad end of the scale.

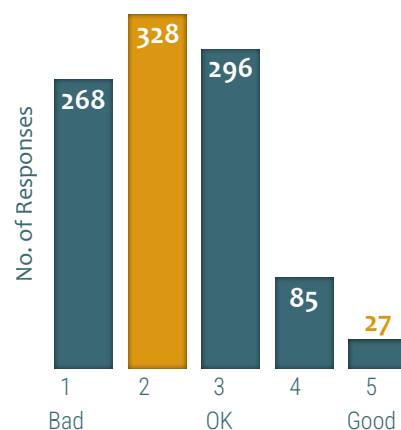
Access to:



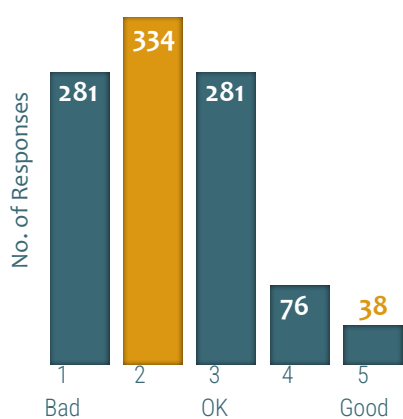
Parks & other green spaces



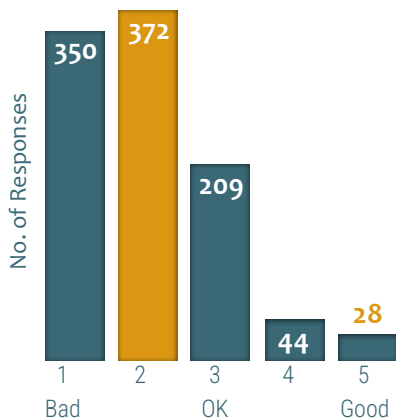
The beach and other blue spaces



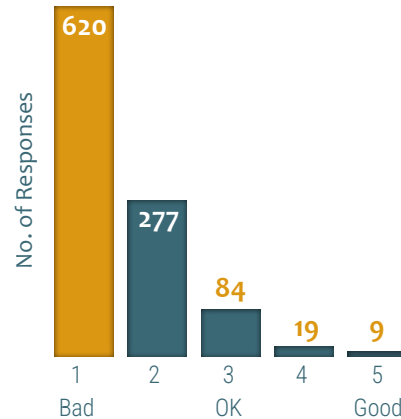
Squares & other car free pedestrian spaces



Natural spaces - wildlife habitats and biodiversity



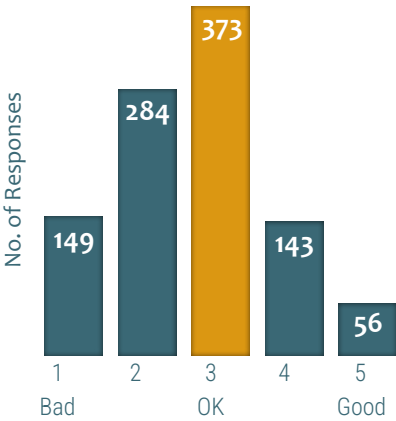
Places to sit outside (benches etc)



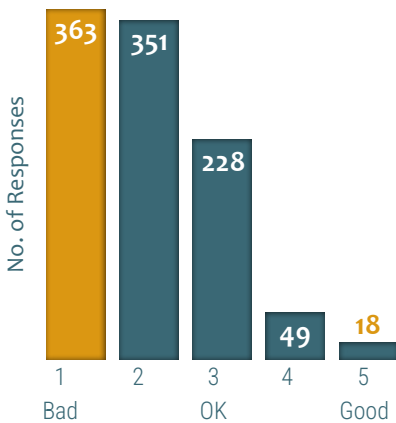
Places to eat or drink outside (cafes, restaurants etc)

Access to places to play outside was generally considered as OK but when asked about places for events a large number people rated this aspect between 1 (bad) and 3 (OK).

Finally the survey asked respondents for an overall rating of Balbriggan’s public realm at present which received a majority of responses rating this as 2 or 3, with just over 78%.

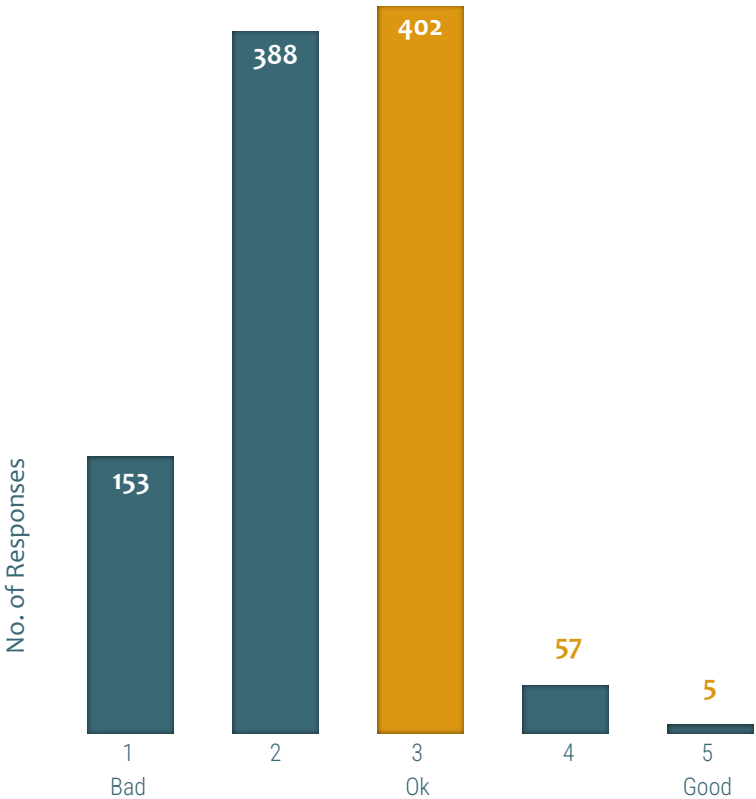


Places to play outside

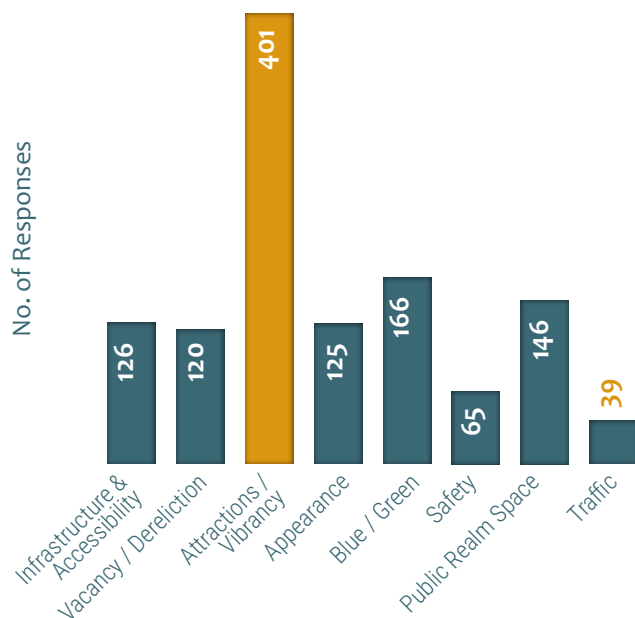


Places for events outside

Q8 Overall, how would you rate the quality of Balbriggan’s public realm at present?



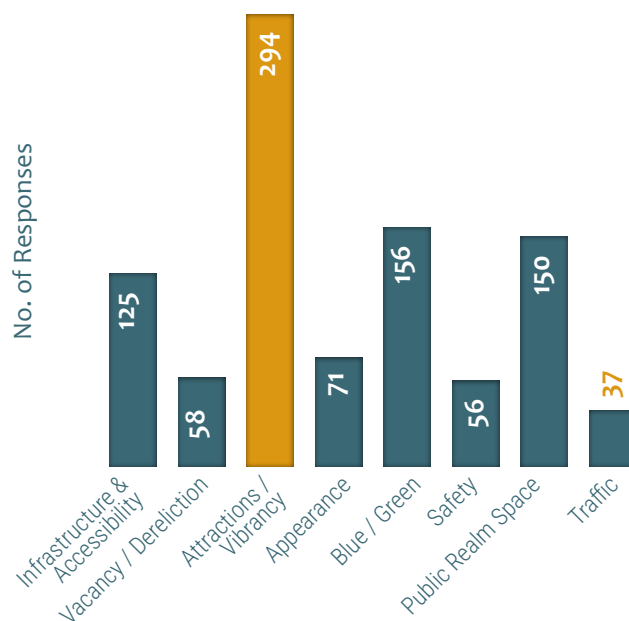
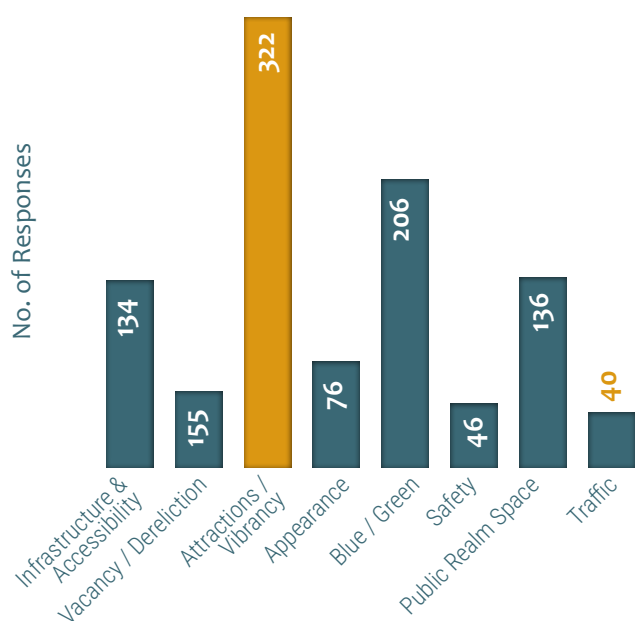
Q9 What are your top 3 priorities for Balbriggan's Town Centre Public Realm?



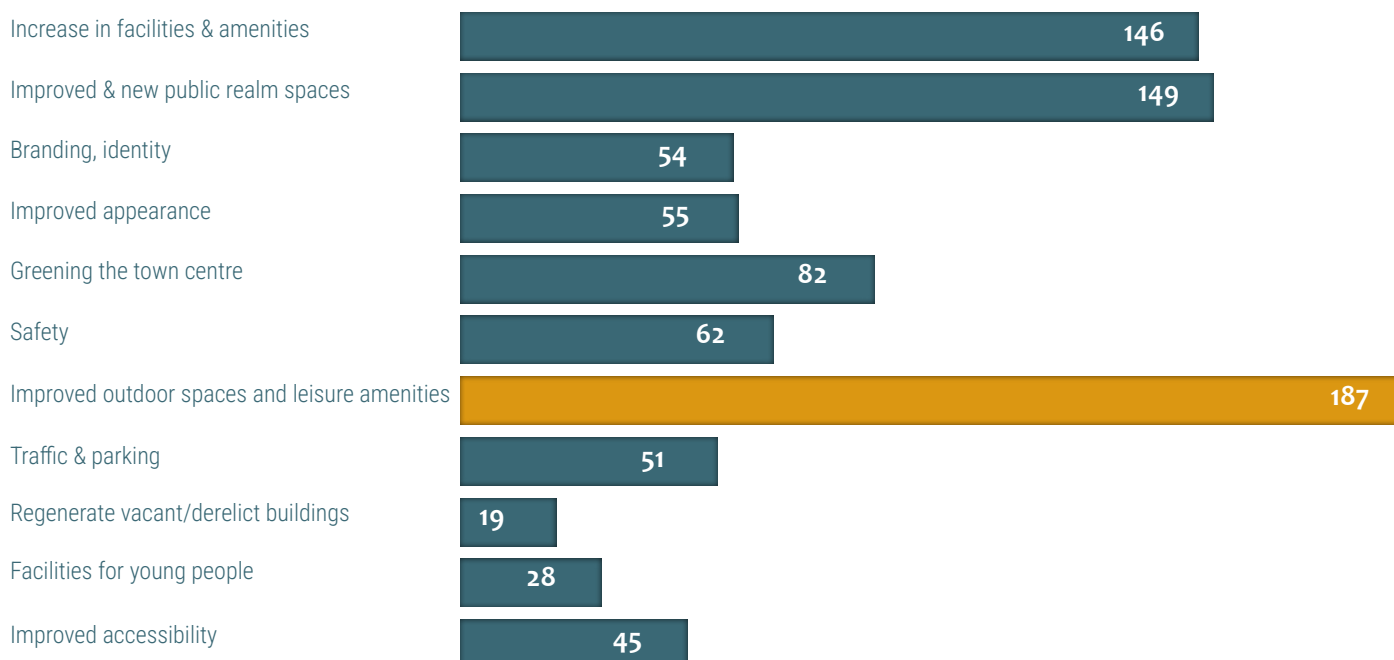
When asked about their top 3 priorities a large number of people identified the need for more attractions within the Town Centre. Responses included the need for more opportunities and facilities to draw people into the town centre and in particular the main street area. The need for outdoor dining and also a tidal swimming pool were highlighted.

A significant number of people suggested better access to the blue and green areas of the town, such as improved amenities on the beach, developing the harbour and marine activities as well as reclaiming the river and mill pond park.

Several people suggested a need for places to sit outside that would allow interaction and the ability to linger in public realm spaces.



Q10 Do you have any other ideas or suggestions for Balbriggan's streets and public spaces?



A significant number of people suggested improved outdoor spaces and leisure amenities, such as a board walk onto the beach, tidal pool, more open green spaces, taking advantage of the coastline and also more spaces for outdoor socialising with a greater provision for younger people.

Several suggested an increased variety of facilities with markets, pop-up shops, outdoor dining and the need for more local shops and restaurants.

Other ideas highlighted the need for improved public realm such as pedestrianizing parts of the main street, improvements in pavement quality as well as more opportunity for outdoor seating.

There was also a strong desire for a more green approach to the town centre with suggestions of more trees and planting as well as increased wildlife and biodiversity opportunities.

It is clear to see from number of responses that Balbriggan has a wide variety of existing public realm spaces and just how important they are to the people that live in the town.

People recognise the opportunity to improve the access and functionality of these spaces through wanting to use them more to meet friends, socialise and spend time in both the town centre and green and blue spaces.

Workshops

A series of themed workshops were held online in June and July 2021 involving residents, business owners and representatives from the council and other agencies. The sessions sought to further explore issues and opportunities raised through the public survey, the findings of which are summarised below. The client and consultancy teams wish to thank all who participated in this process.



Accessibility & Inclusion

- Never too sure where I am going.
- Speed of traffic and volume is a significant safety issue.
- Pedestrian crossings - are they in the right place?
- If we want to be a living town with interaction with retailers it needs to be comfortable.
- Footpaths are quite slippery.
- Few places to meet, sit and say hello.
- Need for a community space that can be used by everyone.
- Amount of people that stop to watch cricket matches - opportunity for social interaction around sport.
- Lively and active spaces make people feel safe - how do we help people use them in winter?

Children, Play & Sports

- Travel to Dún Laoghaire for water sports - access, storage & water sports would be great in Balbriggan.
- Space in the estates but could there be more in the town centre.
- Play space in Quay Street is very well used and works well.
- If kids are not part of a club then not much provision for sports - if there were 3 basketball courts with a couple of benches it would be really well used.
- Huge number of clubs but all very formalised.
- Places for young people to turn up and play is missing - it's not always about playing but the social side and watching.
- Young people have fantastic graffiti skills - but no one sees them, it would be great to have somewhere outside.

Evening Economy

- Balbriggan gets a lot of bad press, lots of different cultures that merge but cannot badge multicultural as the problem.
- Young people congregate anywhere where there is shelter, alleyways, car parks etc.
- The volume of young people begins to make people intimidated. Youngest town in Ireland so large number of young people.
- Dublin Street to Drogheda Street has good lighting but out with this area it is problematic.
- Will lighting the tunnels bring more young people there? It would make it safer for people walking to the beach.
- From 6pm retail is closed. Skerries has a much more superior offer compared to Balbriggan.
- Not sure the town is best served after dark in hospitality services. Can we make use of mural art to create a more attractive offering?

Walking, Cycling & Wayfinding

- It would be great to have cycle lanes all over the place, even if that meant the town became more one way.
- Walk through Balbriggan from the south – no view of the sea or any idea the harbour is there.
- Coming out of the Train Station at night – does not feel very safe.
- A good town should not rely on signs to get around – when at train station should know where to go.
- There is a Main Street but not a town centre.
- Public streets are the key parts of the main structure – good structure of public domain then uses will follow along.
- More scope for cycling and walking as leisure. Surprised to hear about bikes to rent as where do people go?

Green & Blue Spaces

- Improve the green in concrete areas
- We do have a lot of spaces but need to make them more diverse and improve the aesthetics in the town centre.
- Urban rivers not given the same amount of attention.
- Sea bathing and baths, that is why the hotel developed. Bath house on Bath Road – derelict now.
- Could Balbriggan become a tourist destination where you learn about biodiversity and nature. Lots of green and blue spaces that are not available everywhere else.
- Balbriggan is hiding in plain sight – closeness but people don't understand how to get from A to B!
- Indicators that water was important has now been lost.

Young People

- There are not enough facilities, we have cafés etc. but there is not anywhere you can go and hang out with friends.
- Playgrounds are great for smaller kids but nothing for teenagers.
- Strict environment for supervised clubs - not enough spaces to go in and hang out that is not a school facility.
- Should be asking young people what they want and not having older people deciding for us.
- The town is phenomenal now – all the sports facilities. Can we canvass the energy from the clubs to work towards future plans and future improvements.
- If the golf club is too expensive – how do we make that more accessible?
- Lack of lighting at Martello tower area - it can be quite intimidating at night.

Analysis

Findings

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?

Planned Projects

A number of important projects with sizeable public realm components have been identified as integral parts of Our Balbriggan Rejuvenation process. While at the time of writing they are at different stages of development, all projects must be set in the context of an analysis of the town and the site in question.



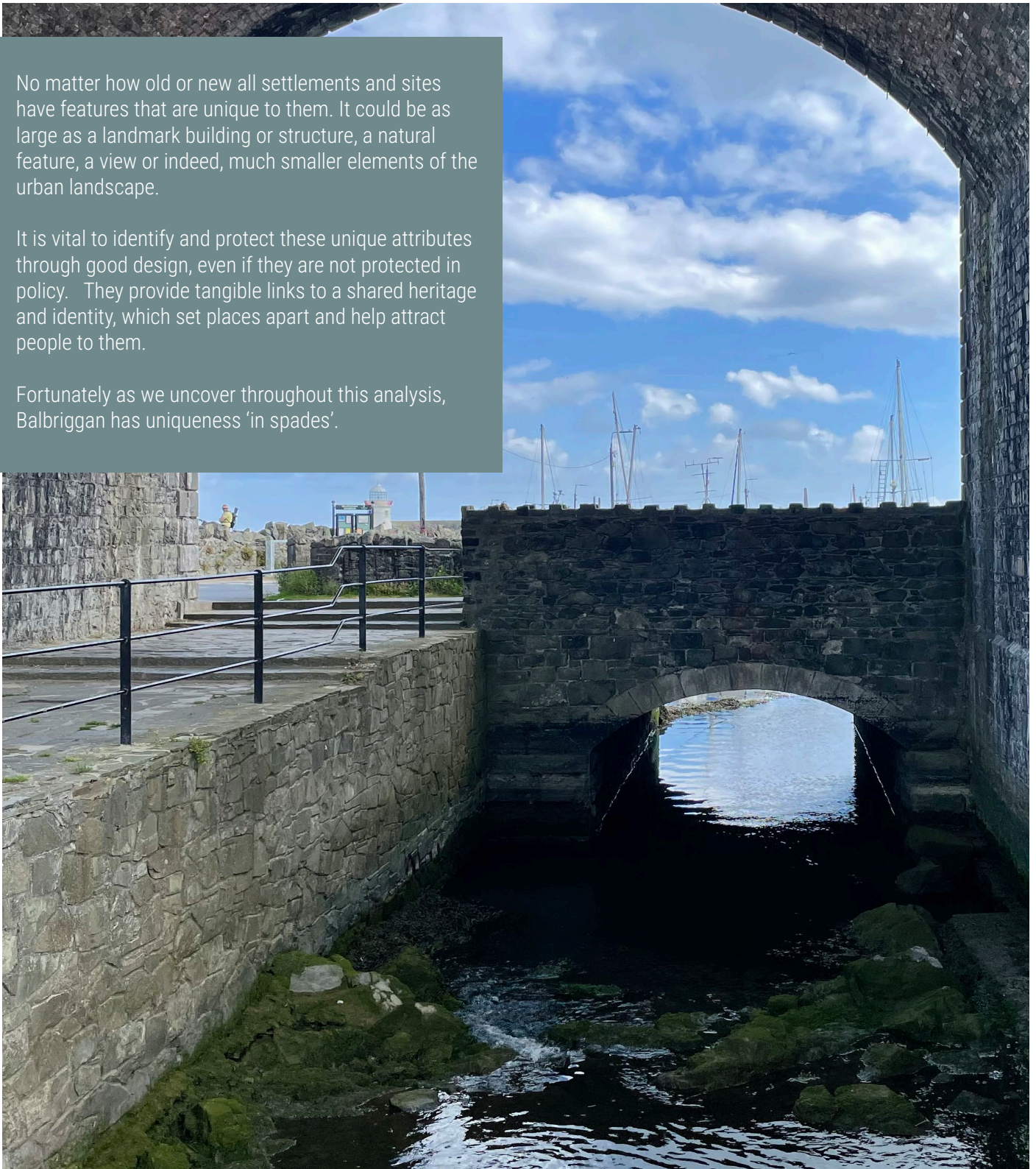


What makes Balbriggan Unique?

No matter how old or new all settlements and sites have features that are unique to them. It could be as large as a landmark building or structure, a natural feature, a view or indeed, much smaller elements of the urban landscape.

It is vital to identify and protect these unique attributes through good design, even if they are not protected in policy. They provide tangible links to a shared heritage and identity, which set places apart and help attract people to them.

Fortunately as we uncover throughout this analysis, Balbriggan has uniqueness 'in spades'.



What is Balbriggan's Sense of Place?



Uniqueness is also derived from the relationships between public realm elements and their character - shapes, colours and textures. These along with other factors, help to inform our 'sense of place' and the positive attachment we have with them.

Good public realm design should work to accentuate Balbriggan's Sense of Place. This will mean site specific design that responds to context and a thoughtful use of materials and natural vegetation.

Historic Evolution

To understand the streets and spaces of Balbriggan it is necessary to first consider the history and evolution of the town.

Balbriggan began life as a small fishing settlement within the estate of the 14th Century Norman stronghold at Bremore Castle. By the 17th century it had two mills in operation and in 1761 the harbour was built to support these industries and its growing population. The early 19th century saw the establishment of important businesses in the town including Smyth & Company's famous hosiers. At this time the town and its harbour were afforded added military protection in 1801 with the construction of the Martello Tower, one of a series along Ireland's coastline.

Construction of the Dublin to Drogheda railway line in the 1840s would have major impact on the town, cementing its role as an industrial centre and bringing forward its urbanisation, with for example, the introduction of street lights. The railway also began to attract visitors to the town and its beach, although to a lesser extent than purpose built holiday destinations elsewhere along the shore.

Through much of the 20th Century, Balbriggan's population remained stable, although as traditional industries waned by the 1940s, it became evermore reliant on Dublin as a place of employment and services. The advent of the 21st century however, saw Balbriggan become a major growth centre, with a 215% increase in population between 1991 - 2022, helping making it today one of Ireland's youngest and most ethnically diverse urban centres.



Martello Tower circa 1930-1950



Smyth & Co circa 1877 - 1958



Bremore Castle Drawing



Balbriggan Harbour circa 1930-1950



Balbriggan Harbour circa 1930-1950

Urban Morphology

The adjacent map is an extract of the first edition 6" Ordnance Survey produced between 1837 - 1842. By this time it shows the recognisable urban form of Balbriggan centred along Drogheda Street, Bridge Street and George's Square.

The network of streets can be seen largely lined with terraced properties, giving them their narrow, built up appearance that remains in central areas today. Within these 'perimeter blocks' however are generously proportioned rear gardens, orchards and woodlands.

In common with many fishing towns, Balbriggan emerged with it's back to the sea, shielding it from inclement weather. Connections towards the coastline were to be found on Convent Lane, Church Street and of course Quay Street as it met the harbour along the route of the Bracken River. Upstream can be seen two large water bodies - the Mill Pond and the Reservoir - serving industry and the local population.

The last edition map of 1908 is in many regards very similar in extent and structure, although very noticeable is the advent of railway line between the town and coast, along with larger foot print industrial buildings.



Historic Plan 1906



Historic Plan 1837 - 1842

Current Urban Form

Over a century later the major population growth of Balbriggan is clearly visible on this contemporary map. 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.

Larger footprint buildings are also apparent, including apartment blocks in the centre and schools, commercial buildings and the Millfield shopping centre on the periphery.



Balbriggan Current Urban Form

First Impressions

The public realm plays a very important role in shaping our first impressions and experience of arrival into an urban settlement. This is a key factor for Balbriggan, whereby new development and the advent of the M1 Motorway have greatly changed the way in which the town is approached, especially by car.

As the following online photographs show, the edges of the town retain a rural character. While views of the countryside and coastline positively contribute to this experience, there is little sense of a clearly defined welcome point into Balbriggan at present.

Furthermore, arrival into the centre is not always entirely clear, especially on Chapel Street where vehicles are encouraged onto the Harry Reynolds Road rather than proceeding ahead. This suggests a need to strategically plan the approaches into Balbriggan to improve first impressions and aid navigation and legibility.

Finally the railway station is another vital point of entry to Balbriggan. While sweeping coastal views are wonderful aspect of the journey, exiting the station building into the car park is much less favourable.





Approach from South



Approach from North



Town Centre Approach - junction with Harry Reynolds Road



Town Centre Approach - Dublin Street

Drogheda Street, Bridge Street and Dublin Street (sometimes collectively referred to as Main Street) also play a significant role in shaping our impressions of Balbriggan.

With some exceptions, these routes retain a distinctive historic character, lined with continuous frontages and important businesses. In places the streets are narrow, which combined with undulating topography, gives them an enclosed character.

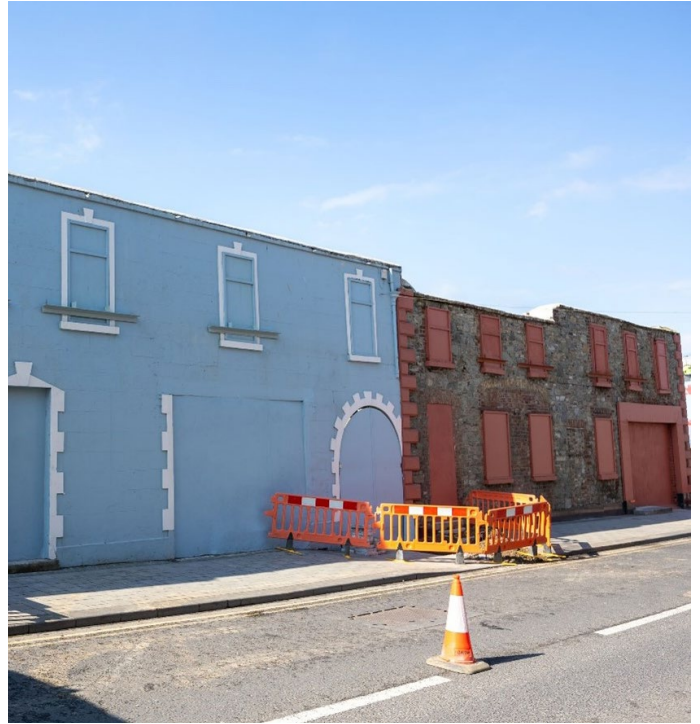
However the streets are heavily trafficked, making them often very noisy and difficult to cross. While environmental improvements on Bridge Street undoubtedly improved the visual character and accessibility of this important area, the footpaths remain narrow and the road space relatively wide. A lack of crossing points and long stretches of double yellow lines combine to prioritise through movement, effectively 'funnelling' people and cars through this important space, instead of encouraging them to stop. This is a key issue for Balbriggan and its businesses, as the public realm should seek to encourage an increased 'dwell time' of people in the centre.



Bridge Street



Drogheda Street



Main Street



Dublin Street approach towards St George's Square

“Where is the centre?”

A question raised during the initial consultation process was “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.

George’s Square is and has long been the central civic space of Balbriggan and it is bordered by two important civic buildings, the library and courthouse. The space has recently been the subject of public realm improvements, including new seating which is generally agreed to have made a difference.

However George’s Square does not quite function in the traditional sense of a town square, with it rarely used for gatherings or functions. A key reason for this is topography, with its sloping terrain making it unsuitable for many uses. Another is traffic, with the high volumes of vehicles passing through the space so affecting levels of safety and general comfort.





Balbriggan Context Plan

“Where is the sea?”

Another commonly raised question during consultation was “Where is the Sea?”. This is of course obvious to many, not least those who live in the town. However, the question points to the fact that the sea is not visible from many areas within Balbriggan and especially along the central artery of Drogheda, Bridge and Dublin Street. Conversely much of the town centre is not visible from the sea.

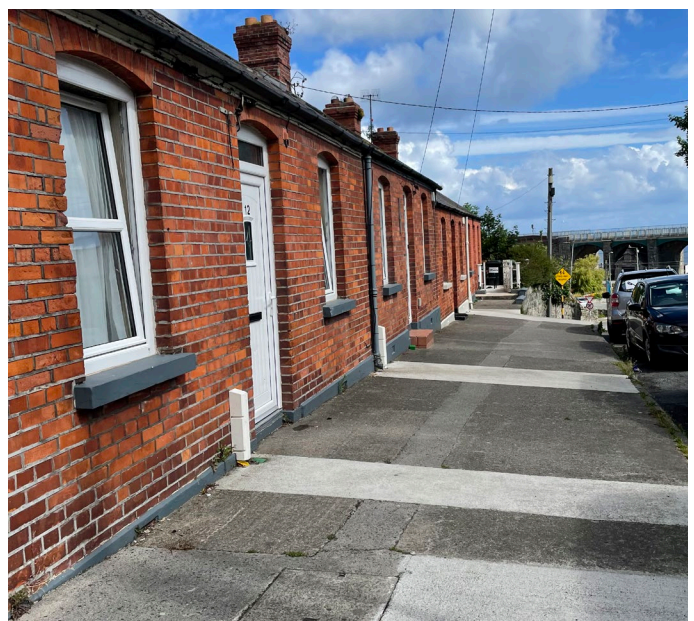
As highlighted through the historic mapping, this arrangement dates right back to the origins of Balbriggan as a ‘working town’, as opposed to a ‘seaside town’, further underlined with the arrival of the coastal railway line. However, a lack of visual connectivity between the town and its primary natural asset does have a considerable bearing on how one orientates and navigates through Balbriggan. It also has implications for how the town functions socially and economically and the extent to which businesses can benefit from the out-of-town footfall that coastal attractions inevitably generate.





Balbriggan Context Plan

The adjacent photographs show some of the main routes between the town and its coastline. Not only do they demonstrate how the sea is largely invisible from these locations, but also that there are few cues in the design and character of these spaces to suggest they lead to such an important destination.



High Street towards Quay Street



Quay Street towards seafront



Mill Street towards seafront



Railway Street



Path next to GAA pitch

Street Hierarchy & Gateways

A Street Hierarchy is a system in which the role and importance of different streets is recognised, planned and designed accordingly. Interestingly the first edition Ordnance Survey Map (below) illustrates a coherent network of town centre streets, as opposed to one dominated by the central through route as it is today.

Another key aspect of this relationship are the points of access beneath the railway. In addition to the arches of the railway viaduct, these generally consist of short brick built underpass tunnels. The quality and character of these passages, as well as the outdoor spaces to each end, is a vital consideration to improving connectivity between the town and coastline for pedestrians and cyclists. At present they can sometimes deter use due to how they look, feel and are used, especially after dark.



Historic Plan 1837 - 1842



Balbriggan Context Plan

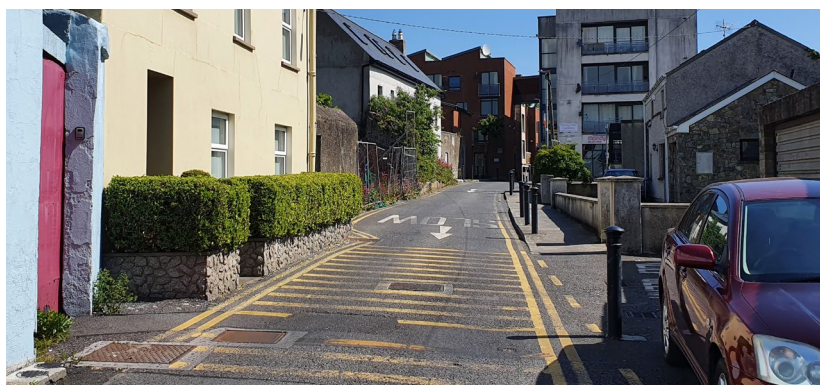
Images illustrating connections to the coast



Convent Lane



Mill Street



George's Hill

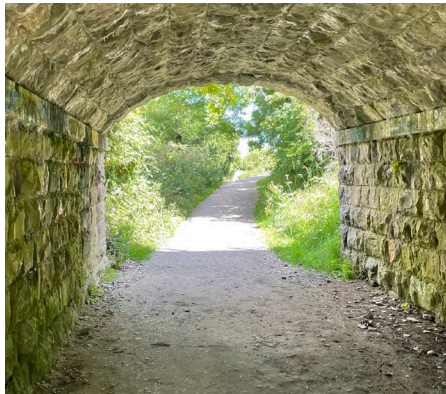


Railway Street



Quay Street

Images illustrating connections to the coast



Underpasses

The River

The River Bracken flows through Balbriggan from bog and farmland to the south west of the town. The watercourse and its former mill pond played an important role in the industrial life of the town and the route is now predominantly lined with public spaces on its journey to Balbriggan Harbour.

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. While much smaller, the Bremore River in the north of the town is another natural asset which warrants greater integration with the surrounding townscape.



River Bracken Corridor



Historic Mill Pond

Connections to residential areas

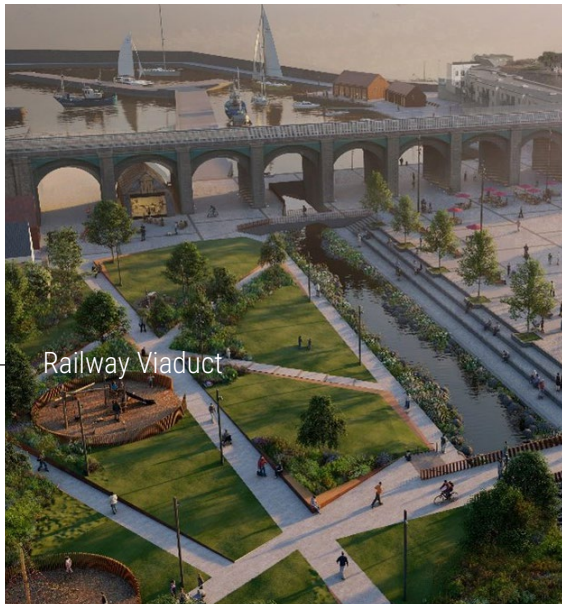
Skate Park



River Bracken Corridor

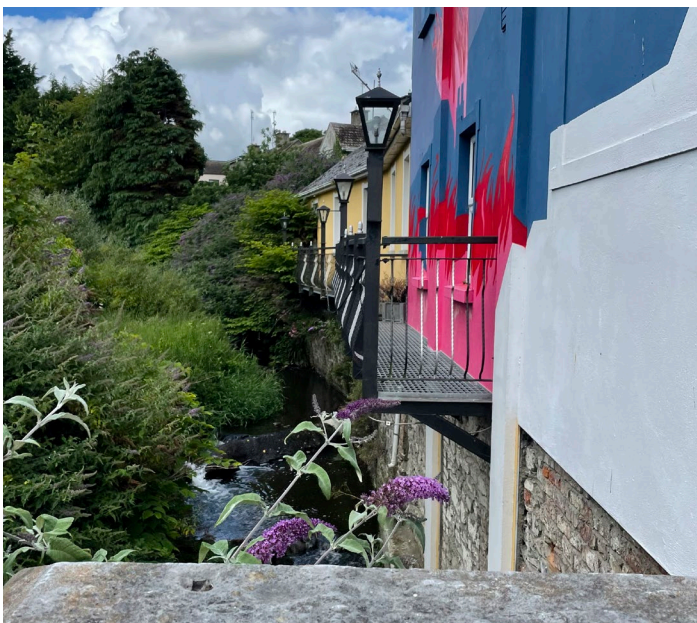


River Bracken Corridor



Quay Street

Bridge Street



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.





Balbriggan's Coast

The Harbour

First built in the 1760s Balbriggan Harbour with its lighthouse is a fascinating location within the town, full of charm and stories to tell. While no longer used as intensively as it was in the past, the harbour is still home to a small fishing fleet and other vessels, some of which are permanently moored. The harbour's stone piers and sea walls provide shelter and an attractive sense of enclosure, with the recently restored lighthouse an appealing destination at the harbour's mouth.

The harbour does however feel tired and somewhat unloved. This stems from a combination of factors including some poorly maintained vessels, containers, and concrete additions to the stonework.



Front Stand

The Front Stand at Balbriggan is a wonderful asset, enjoyed for generations by many a local and visitor alike. Measuring some 300m in width it is smaller than nearby strands at Laytown or Bettystown, which combined with its secluded nature, sees it less visited than may be otherwise the case. This sense of enclosure is part of its attraction, studded by the three landmarks of the Martello Tower, Lighthouse and the spire of St George's Church. Wild flowers such as Valerium and Buttercup also give fantastic summer displays, giving the beach a wilder, less 'municipal' character.

A key issue for Balbriggan beach however is the quality of the infrastructure around it. Notably this includes a pathway that is too narrow to accommodate those walking along it. Large sand drifts at the main entrance also make the beach very difficult to access for those with reduced mobility. Water quality can also at times be an issue here.



The Martello Tower

The Martello Tower is the northern most in a chain of defensive structures built in 1801 to defend Ireland's coast line from possible Napoleonic attack. It commands an elevated position with panoramic coastal views and is joined a short distance away by the stone ruins of a bathhouse and boathouse. The public realm surrounding these structures does little to complement them at present, dominated by asphalt, mown grass and parked cars. This represents another area with considerable potential for historic restoration and interpretation, while improving the town's coastal amenities.



Bremore Beach

The northernmost part of Balbriggan's coastline is Bremore Beach, comprising a mix of sand and shingle. It is lined by small crumbling cliffs and accessed by small narrow paths. Along the beach is a stone cairn called the Sailor's Grave, dedicated to the crew of the Bell Hill and all others lost at sea.

This beach certainly has its own beauty and sense of calm that should be preserved. Potential does exist though for some sensitive interventions to help safely guide the visitor.



Seapoint Beach

The third of Balbriggan’s beaches is located to the south of the harbour in the Seapoint area. This rocky beach has a distinctly different character to the other two and finds itself another quiet location in the town. Like Bremore Beach, Seapoint must contend with the impact of coastal erosion along its mostly private owned cliff top edge.



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 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. As noted earlier, vehicles compromise the environmental quality of certain streets and the experience of cyclists and pedestrians.

Fingal County Council continues to provide cycling infrastructure in Balbriggan although this is limited within its central core. Pedestrian connections and the quality of footpaths has improved over the years, although gaps in provision remain, along with a lack of coherent signage to aid orientation.

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. Crucially this must be set within the context of the environmental impact, health implications and inclusivity of each mode.



Other Public Spaces

Balbriggan is well endowed with public spaces, which in addition to those described thus far, include many dotted throughout residential areas of the town.

As the map overleaf shows, many of these are associated with the extensive new housing estates. Typically these green spaces consist of grass and trees, used primarily by residents from the immediate vicinity.

While the extensive provision of such green space is to be welcomed, consideration must given to how well they contribute to the lives of residents and the functioning of the town as a whole. The practical and financial implications of maintaining such spaces must also be considered.

Through the public realm strategy an excellent opportunity is afforded to take a strategic approach to these spaces and the role they play for local people, visitors and of course, the town’s indigenous flora and fauna.



Quay Street & Viaduct



Footpath along beach edge



Green spaces within residential areas



Bremore Castle





Plan illustrating Key Landmarks and Public Realm Areas

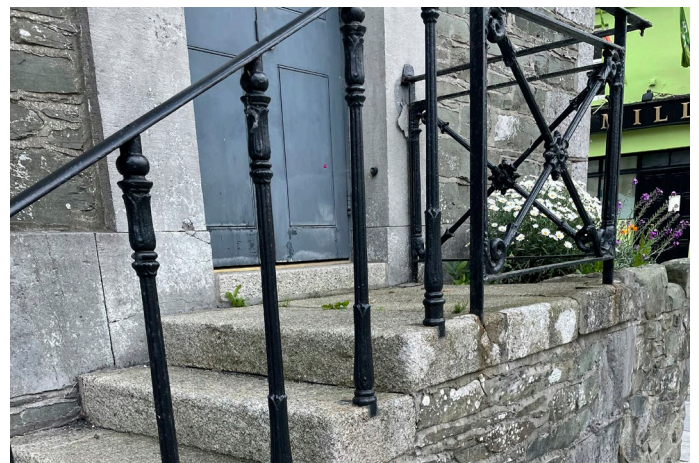
Qualities and Character

At the outset of this chapter we asked the questions What Makes Balbriggan Unique and What is its Sense of Place? So far we have established a range of factors that contribute to answering these questions, from the layout of the town to the definition of its various spaces.

Another important contributing element to this can be found in the details of the public realm. This is especially true of older settlements such as Balbriggan, where centuries of history have added layer upon layer to the urban landscape.

These include the characteristic soft grey limestone to be found in older structures including the harbour, viaduct and lifeboat house. They include remnant elements of the historic streetscape, such as steps, guard stones and metal work. And they include occasional recent interventions such as quality artworks or signage. While the importance of such elements is documented in the Balbriggan Town Core Architectural Conservation Area Statement of Character, this should be observed as a principle across the town.

In transforming Balbriggan through its public realm, the conservation and restoration of such elements will be essential, as will the use of carefully chosen materials and streetscape components that complement and enhance this underlying character.

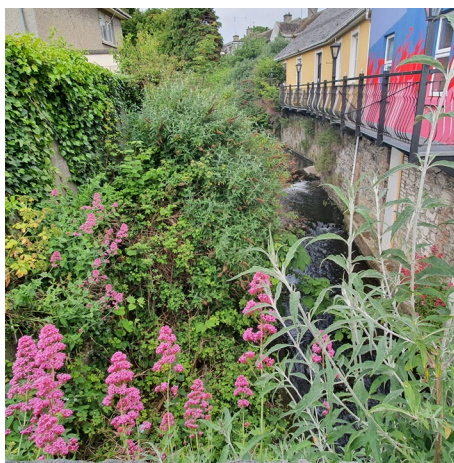
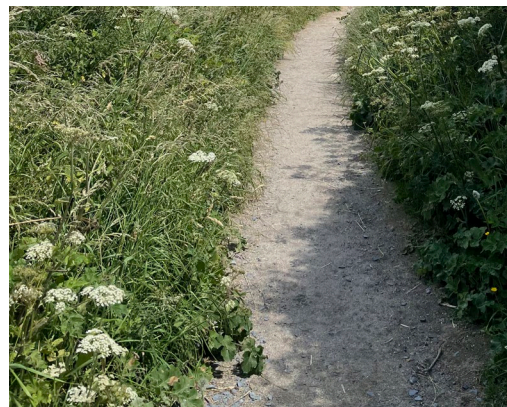




The qualities and character of Balbriggan's public realm also extends to its landscape and the vegetation that finds home in its streets and spaces.

This is especially apparent along its coastal stretches, where natural grasses and wild flowers inject colour and texture, not to mention providing vital habitat for insects and birds. Good quality floral planting is also in evidence in Balbriggan through planters and beds, including species chosen for their role in supporting pollinators.

Meanwhile trees also play an important role in certain locations, such as along the Bracken River. They are however noticeable by their relative absence in some other areas of the town, leading to the potential for tree planting as part of the public realm strategy.



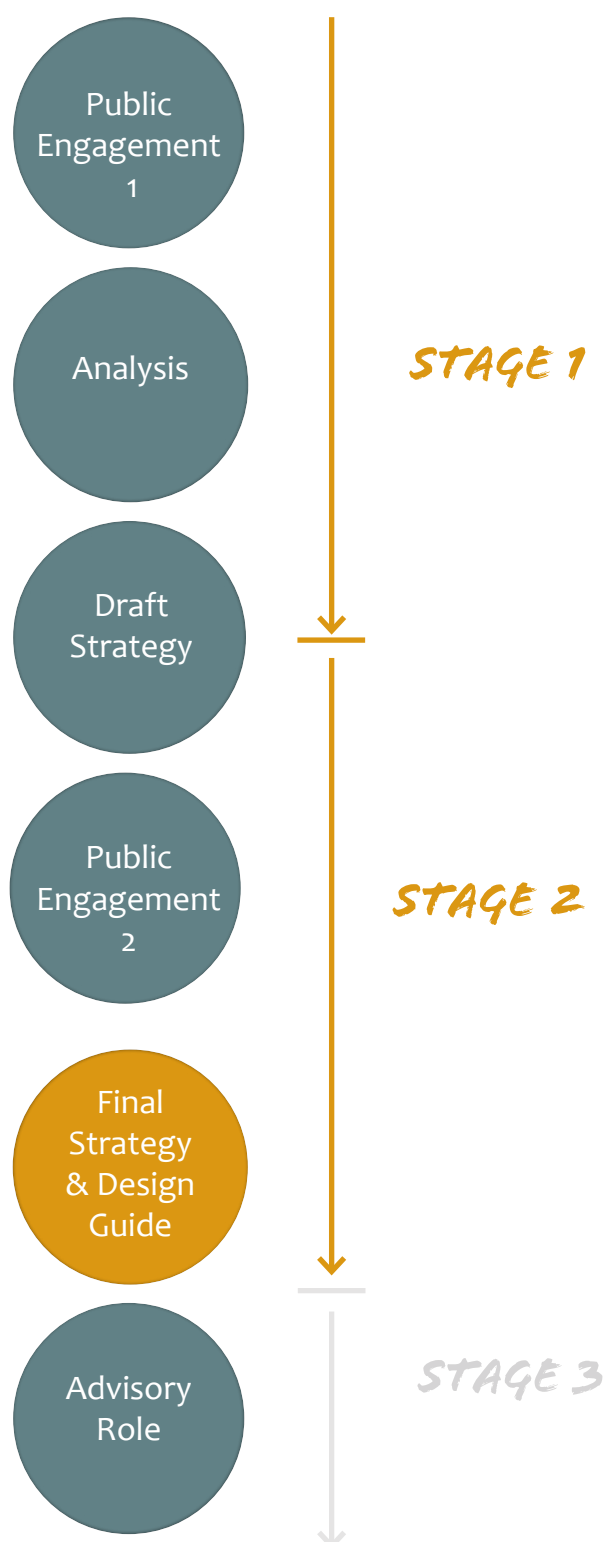
‘Our’ Balbriggan

Finally, an analysis of Balbriggan’s public realm would not be complete without acknowledging the fundamental role played by local people in caring for their environment. Planting and artworks by local groups and businesses give a glimpse of the passion and creativity of people in Balbriggan, holding much potential for everyone to play a greater role in the ensuring the vitality and vibrancy of the town’s public realm.



Vision, Aims & Objectives

Having analysed the town and consulted with its people, it is important to next set out the vision, aims and objectives for Balbriggan's Public Realm.

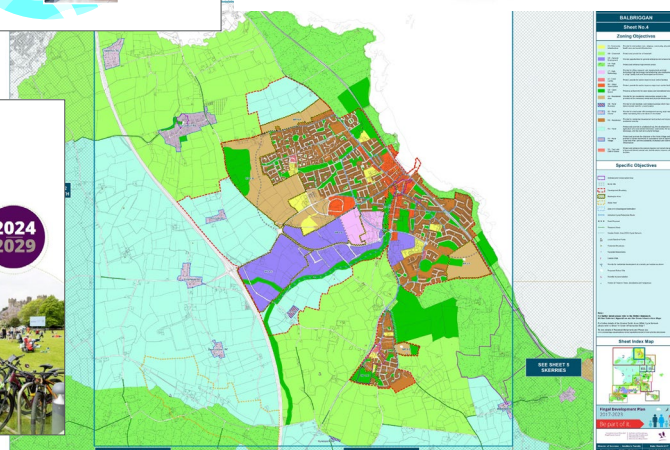
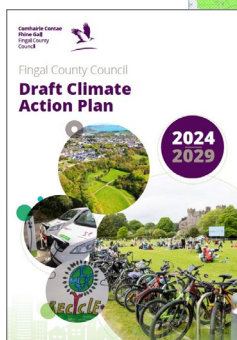


Shaping the public realm strategy for Balbriggan must be undertaken within the context of prevalent policy at local, regional, national and international level.

The primary point of reference is the Our Balbriggan 2019 - 2025 Rejuvenation Plan published in 2019 by Fingal County Council. The strategy sets out a vision for the regeneration of the town, putting people focussed public realm and placemaking at the centre of its approach.

The public realm of Balbriggan must also be brought forward in tandem with planning policy and in particular the Fingal Development Plan 2023 - 2029. This document sets out many strategic priorities of direct relevance to this strategy, including 3.5.1 Healthy Placemaking, 3.5.2 Successful Public Realms, 4.5.2 Open Space, 6.5.6 A Sustainable and Integrated Transport Network and 9.5.1 Green Infrastructure Themes.

Finally at the national and international level, public realm strategies have an ever important role to play in helping face the Global Climate and Biodiversity Crises. This includes taking into consideration Fingal County Council's Climate Change Action Plan and following the 17 Sustainable Development Goals prepared by the United Nations recognising that ending poverty and other deprivations much go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality and spur economic growth while tackling climate change. Both of which contribute to the fulfilment of Irish Government commitments on taking Climate Action and responding to specific local challenges to face Balbriggan now and into the future.



Through the Our Balbriggan 2019 - 2025 Rejuvenation Plan, and its renewal until 2030, 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. The 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.

Building on its Rich History - Conserving, restoring and revising historic buildings, spaces and features. Enhancing the setting of Balbriggan's Built Heritage. Interpreting and communicating its shared heritage within the public realm.

Diverse & Growing Talent Base - Providing amenities to attract, support and sustain people to live in Balbriggan. Attracting investment that will bring further employment and prosperity. Underpinning the retail, hospitality and tourism sectors to ensure a thriving town centre.

Ambitious, Inclusive & Prosperous Community - Aiming high to bring about a high quality transformation of the public realm. Designing a safe, accessible and welcoming public realm for all, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, background or beliefs.

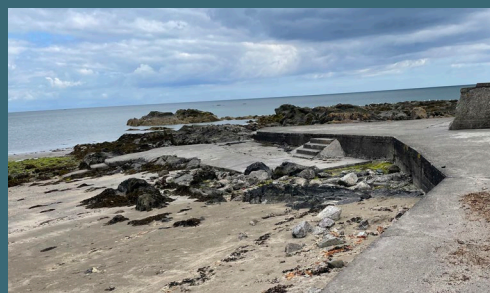
Harnessing Economic & Social Advantages - Playing to Balbriggan's strengths including its youthful and diverse population and its built and natural assets, including historic streets and dramatic coastline.

Enabling an Excellent Quality of Life for All - Designing with and for people and nature.

Building on its rich history and its diverse and growing talent base, Balbriggan will be an ambitious, inclusive and prosperous community, harnessing its economic and physical advantages and enabling an excellent quality of life for all its people.

The strategic priorities for Balbriggan's Public Realm must seek to harness its core strength. Based on the findings of the consultation and analysis process, these including sensitively adding to its rich sense of place, responding to its unique history and the stories Balbriggan has to tell and further developing its shared identity as a place for all.

It is therefore proposed to structure the Public Realm Strategy around three core aims - Our Nature, Our People and Our Place.



Sense of place



History



Shared identity

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

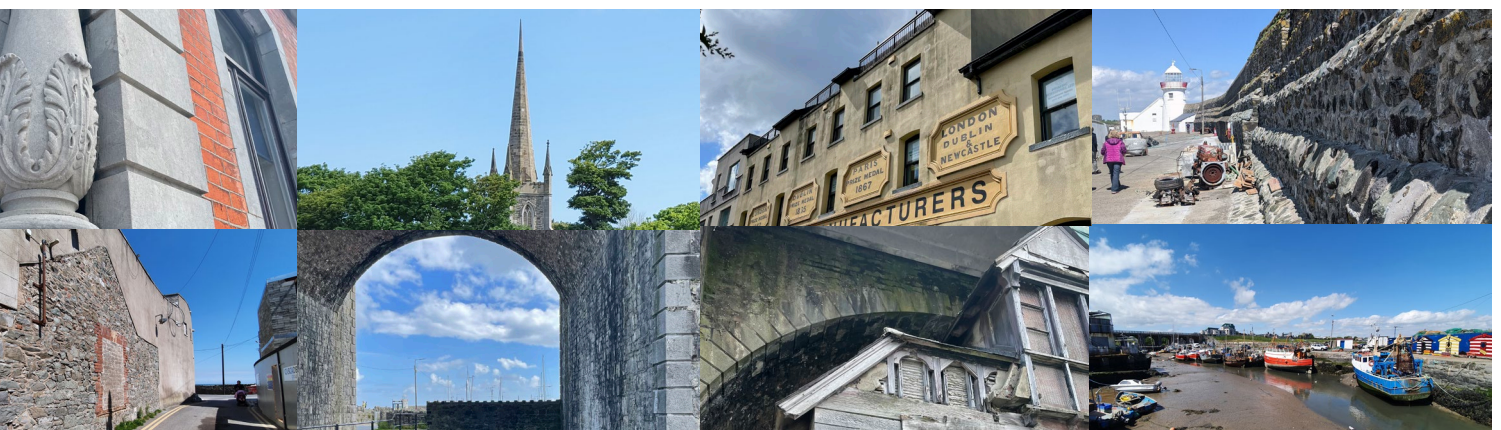
Make space for people, welcoming the vibrant diversity and harnessing the creativity of Balbriggan's population, so revitalising our streets & spaces.



OUR Place

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



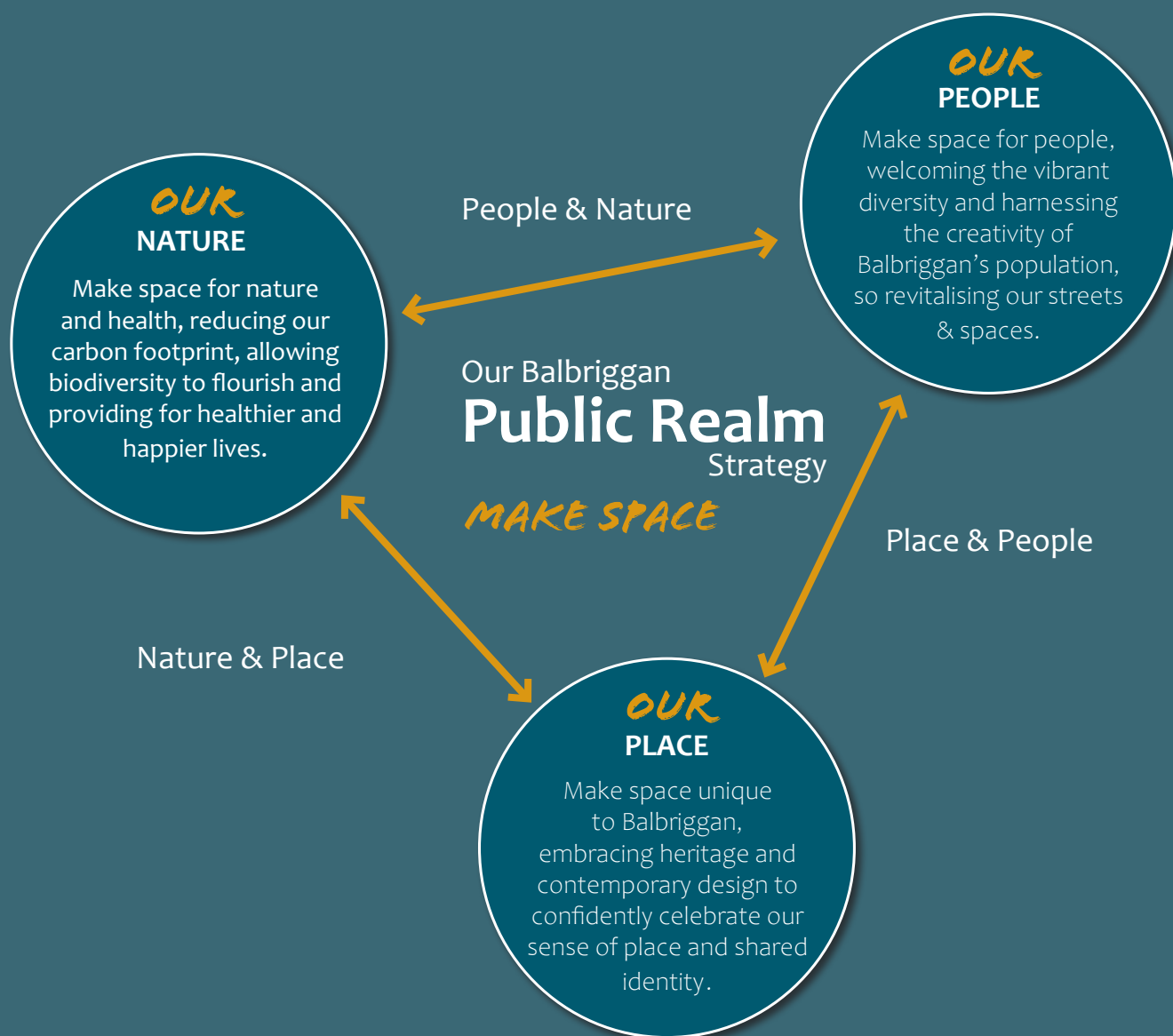


Public Realm *Strategy*

Through the Public Realm Strategy there is an opportunity to unlock the potential of Balbriggan, building on its 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.

Celebrating the unique qualities of the town and its array of green and blue spaces also presents the opportunity to build a climate resilient approach into the future of the town at a local scale. Developing these spaces and blending the built into the natural environment will work towards a greener, cleaner and more habitable town centre which links together existing spaces, people and biodiversity.

For most people the public realm is their first daily interaction with the natural world. Understanding the role public realm plays in the interaction between people and nature will contribute towards putting climate action towards the forefront of town centre regeneration.



OUR Nature

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

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 an emphasis on making Balbriggan a healthier, more sustainable environment, by considering the following themes:

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





Habitat Restoration

Balbriggan is fortunate to have a long stretch of coastline providing wildlife habitat, views and attractive walks. Habitat restoration, including river corridors and coastal meadows, will not only enhance biodiversity but also create resilient landscapes that rise to the challenge of climate change and beyond.

Existing ecology and natural habitats must be safeguarded, enhanced and new opportunities for increasing biodiversity should be explored.

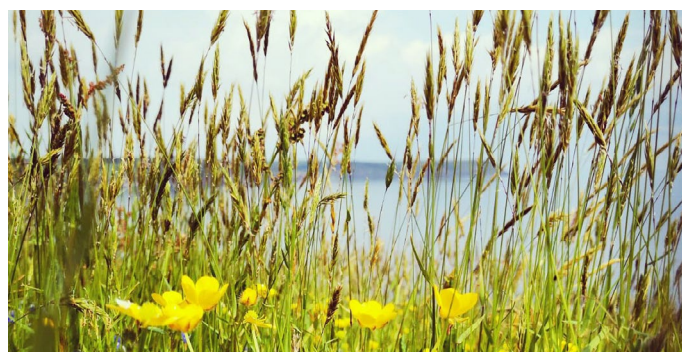
Balbriggan has two watercourses that flow through the town to the sea beyond. The health of these waterways and their ecosystems is a key consideration, and every effort is required to care for these special natural features. Safeguarding them against pollution is particularly important, be it from major spillages or the cumulative impact of smaller instances, including litter. Opportunities should be taken to restore the waterways to enhance their biodiversity with the involvement of expert ecologists and local communities. Activities could include the removal of invasive species, the planting of native riparian flora, the creation of pools and the addition of nest boxes. The most sensitive river habitats should be identified so that the best locations for safe public access can be chosen.

An attractive feature of Balbriggan's coastline are long grasses and coastal meadows along its length. An opportunity exists to restore this habitat through rewilding and changes to management practices. In doing so, species of insect and bird species can be supported, creating further interest to locals and visitors alike. Such practices can also reduce the maintenance costs associated with such areas.

Trees have a major role to play in improving habitat and the climate resilience of our urban areas. Great potential exists in Balbriggan to plant more and to establish woodland habitats that complement the few already in existence. Native species should be carefully selected, and local people should encouraged to plant and care for woodlands across the town.



Coll, Scotland - Coastal Meadow



Cornwall - Coastal Meadow

Urban Planting

Urban planting and green infrastructure can play a key role in providing attractive green routes, along streets, squares and parks, encouraging walking and cycling and adding to the sense of place.

The addition of urban planting will support greening of the town centre, enhance biodiversity and contribute towards making Balbriggan resilient to climate change.

Trees are a key ingredient of beautiful and inviting streets and open spaces, providing an attractive place to sit and a playground for children. They also add to the sensory richness of the public realm through light, shade, seasonal change, sounds and smells.

Not only do they add to the attractiveness of the public realm but also provide shade, habitat, reduce wind effects and contribute to the local identity of an area. Incorporating street trees and planting native species will help improve the quality of the environment.

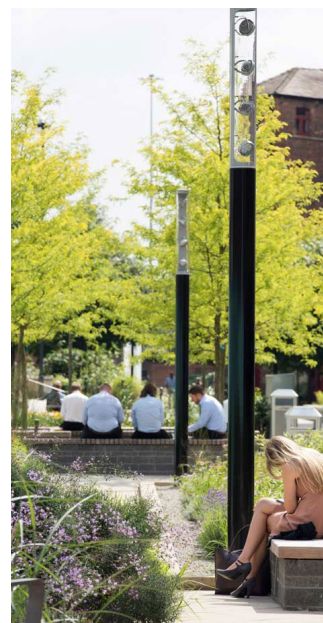
Urban environments can play a key role in pollinator conservation from increasing the number of flowers in green spaces to developing community gardens and allotments. There is an opportunity within Balbriggan to play a role in creating an environment which supports pollinators through increased urban planting.



The Meadow, Elephant Park, London



Ormeau Parklet, Belfast



Sovereign Square, Leeds



Bridget Joyce Square, London

Water Management

Water is a strong feature in Balbriggan, taking a variety of forms throughout the town, from the river corridor to the more dramatic coastline areas. There is an opportunity to reflect this connection by incorporating water management solutions into the public realm, weaving nature into the town centre, enhancing the visual and recreation amenity and adding to the sense of place.

Urban areas are having to cope with increased rainfall events due to climate change. The sustainable solution is to use natural systems to slow down, hold and allow storm and rainwater to infiltrate naturally back into a watercourse.

Water management presents an opportunity to overcome seasonal challenges in a way that adds to the sense of place and can be designed to be easy to manage as well as being environmentally and aesthetically pleasing.

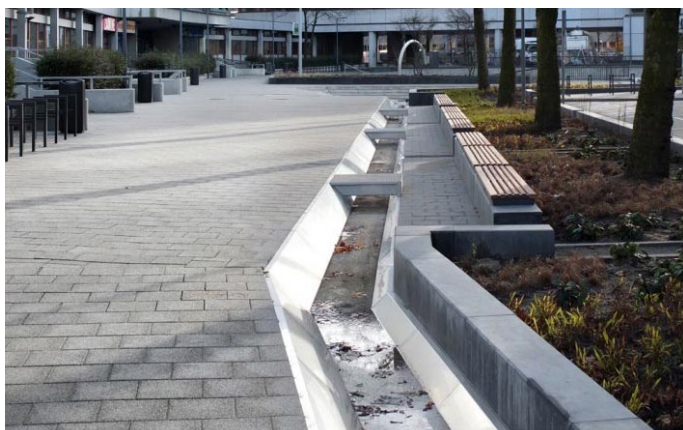
Measures such as rain gardens and SuDS can be incorporated as innovative solutions that add to the urban environment, creating play and interactive opportunities.



Sheffield- Grey to green, rain gardens



Lovedon Fields, Hampshire



Rotterdam - Water Square



Tasinge Square, Denmark



OUR Place

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

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. The side streets currently do not read as important connections linking the main street to the beach and could therefore benefit from a new hierarchy that makes it easier to orientate and move through the town.

The Strategy looks to celebrate the unique qualities of Balbriggan by considering the following themes:

- OUR HERITAGE ASSETS
*PROTECT, CONSERVE, RESTORE & REVIVE
INTERPRET & COMMUNICATE
(TELLING STORIES)*
- WAYFINDING & GATEWAYS
*MAPPING,
SIGNAGE,
ARRIVAL (BOTH TOWN WIDE & TOWN
CENTRE)*
- CIVIC STREETS & SPACES
*ACCESS FOR ALL,
HIGH QUALITY DESIGN,
REBALANCED SPACE*
- GREEN & BLUEWAYS
FOOT & CYCLE NETWORK





Our heritage assets

Balbriggan's heritage and identity is layered, with different characteristics scattered about the town centre. There is an opportunity to create an environment and setting for contemporary life, where people want to discover and explore. Ensuring that heritage assets and landmarks stand out in their context will not only help to communicate their qualities to locals and tourists but also play a role in strengthening the sense of place.

Alongside quality signage and wayfinding this will provide an important connection for those that already live in the town and also greatly assist visitors by improving navigation, both when arriving to Balbriggan and also when moving within the town centre.



Alec the Goose, The Paul Hogarth Company

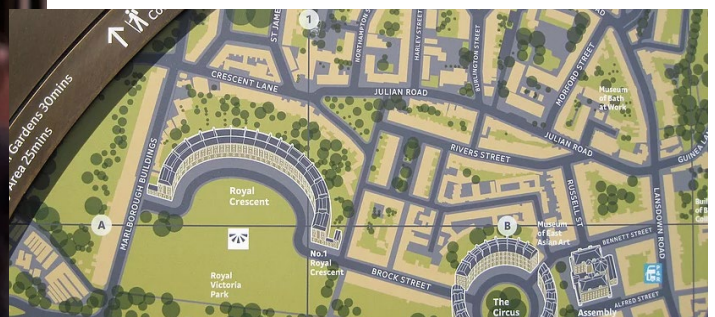
Wayfinding & gateways

First impressions have a major impact on the perceptions of a place. It is vital, therefore, that Balbriggan extends a positive welcome on both its approach roads and the arrival into the town centre.

Arrival into the town centre is not always entirely clear. There is an opportunity to create defined gateways indicating visually that users have arrived into the town centre and encouraging traffic to slow down. This could be through markers, signs, changing street trees and streetscape palette to distinguish the town centre and strengthen Balbriggan's sense of place.

Within the town centre itself enhancing intuitive navigation through wayfinding will help create a legible town, enriching the experience of Balbriggan's environment.

Introducing wayfinding at key decisions points will assist in navigation and provide reassurance to users that they are on the right path. Their design has the opportunity to add character while creating welcoming and accessible routes that help draw people through the town centre and to the currently hidden coastline.



Bath - Wayfinding

Civic streets & spaces

Making Balbriggan's streets and spaces as welcoming and accessible to everyone will help open up the town centre, making getting to, and moving around it, much easier.

Redressing the balance in favour of pedestrians and cyclists over vehicular traffic and upgrading the quality of the physical fabric, both hard and soft, will contribute towards the vision of Balbriggan becoming a place people want to live and spend time in.

Within Balbriggan there is a need to have a legible street network and hierarchy that clearly leads visitors and residents to the excellent offering of coastline spaces within the town. The current streetscape does not reflect their important role of connecting the main street area to the range of attractions the town has to offer. Most of these streets are dominated by vehicle traffic with pedestrian and cyclists overlooked.

The level of ambition and quality of materials must be raised to align with the role these spaces have to play in orientating visitors and encourage movement through the town centre.

Having places to dwell and sit will improve the accessibility of the town centre. Integrating seating within spaces should be considered where it can be accommodated without restricting movement.

The following should be considered:

- Rebalanced pedestrian and vehicular space
- Pedestrian crossings
- Inclusion of street furniture where appropriate
- Improved lighting
- Rationalisation of street clutter



Watford Parade Watford Town Centre, UK



Bonn Square, Oxford



New Road, Brighton

Green & blue ways

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 improved health and well-being, as well as the wider environmental quality of the town.

Fingal County Council continues to provide cycling infrastructure but there is an opportunity to improve connectivity between the residential areas, core of the town and the coastline, by utilising the green and blue spaces to create predominantly traffic-free routes.

Creating a series of routes has the potential to increase biodiversity, linking habitats which are fragmented and offering attractive and accessible routes that promote walking and cycling.

Creating a strong visual identity through consistent materials and having places for interaction and activity, such as seating, play, planting and art, will encourage people to be naturally drawn along the routes.



Ripple Greenway and Lost Words Art Trail, Barking, London



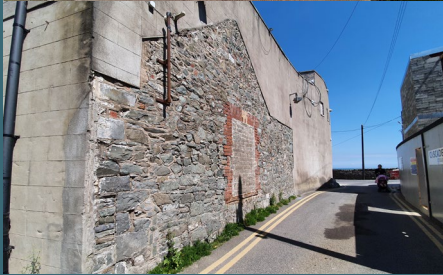
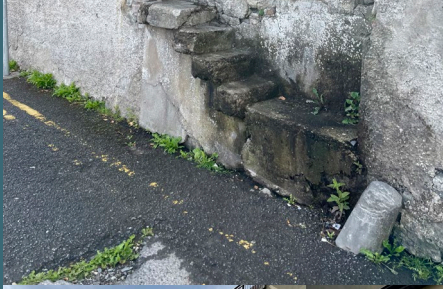
Connswater Community Greenway



Spenn Valley Greenway, Bradford



Shannon Blueway



OUR People

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

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.

The Strategy aims to build on the variety and function of spaces within Balbriggan through the following themes:

- BLUE SPACE ACCESS
*ACCESS FOR ALL,
SEA & RIVERS*
- COMMUNITY GREEN SPACES
*RESIDENT LED,
PLAY SPACES*
- POP-UP EVENTS & ACTIVITIES
*MARKETS,
OUTDOOR DINING,
PERFORMANCES*
- PLAY
INFORMAL PLAY FOR ALL





Blue space access

Balbriggan's coast and rivers have historically played an important role within the town. Opening up access to Balbriggan's blue spaces - the sea, its two rivers and even potential new spaces such as recreated Mill Pond - would reaffirm Balbriggan's relationship with water, while making the most of these special assets.

Critically, blue spaces must be for all, requiring interventions to ensure access to everyone, regardless of their age or ability. At the moment access to Balbriggan's blue spaces are variable, such as the narrow pathway along the edge of Balbriggan beach. Improving access would open up the opportunity for all to enjoy bringing benefits to the community, both from a health and economic perspective.

Water has a calming and restorative impact and the town's blue spaces should be an integral part of town centre life. There are a number of ways to interact with the water; directly through physical proximity; or indirectly through the senses by providing glimpses or opportunities to hear the water.

There is an opportunity for people to be able to experience the coastline through a range of activities on the water, such as kayaking and sea tours. Currently there is little on offer in Balbriggan, resulting in people travelling to other nearby towns. New experiences on the water would provide an excellent opportunity to showcase Balbriggan's coastline and create a draw for both visitors and locals.



Faaborg Harbour Bath, Denmark



Youghal Boardwalk, Cork



Cork Sea Safari

Community green spaces

Meanwhile a quiet revolution should be encouraged in every Balbriggan neighbourhood, supporting communities, schools and groups to get involved in reinvigorating their green spaces, making more space for nature and more space for people, including the provision of play, growing, wildlife watching, informal sports, social events and cultural celebrations.

Open space near our homes provides valuable space to socialise and within Balbriggan there are a wide variety of spaces sprinkled throughout the town and residential areas. These spaces provide an opportunity for people to reconnect with nature, enhance well-being and help mitigate the impacts of climate change.

These spaces should be multifunctional, providing amenity, and recreation space as well as creating a haven for wildlife and biodiversity within walking distance of the doorstep. Community green spaces should be locally-led initiatives that empower residents to contribute to the shaping of the future of Balbriggan.

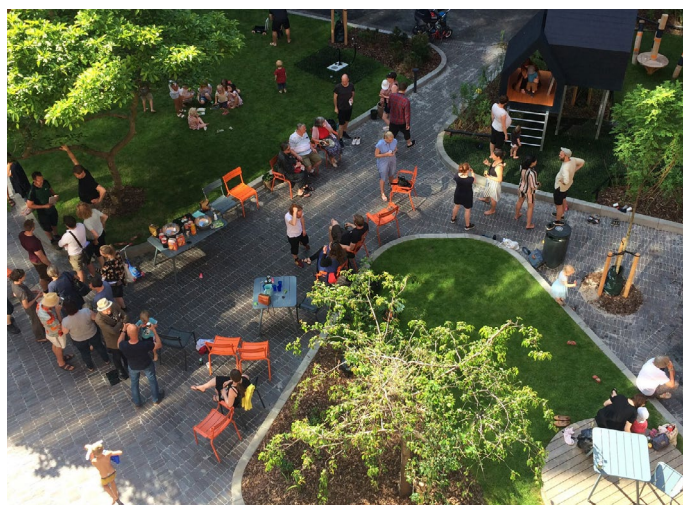
Turning these spaces into community hubs where people feel involved and valued has the potential to encourage activity and social interaction, thereby enhancing resident's health and positively impacting lifestyle choices.



The Orchard Project, Christ Chuch Primary School, Greenwich



Greener City Fund, London



Community Garden, Copenhagen

Pop up events & activities

Life and vibrancy are key to a thriving town centre, where many businesses are dependent on footfall. In Balbriggan, footfall is currently limited to key businesses and it is important that efforts are made to attract people, encouraging them to spend time and return on repeat visits.

Well designed functional spaces will give room for town life to take place as well as providing an environment for events and gatherings. Potential exists to animate these streets and spaces with a range of creating initiatives and events, appealing to the visitor, helping them explore the town, both during the day and into the evening.

The range of possible projects is almost endless, involving art (installations, performances), music and tours. Working with local traders, the opportunity for on-street retail, including market stalls, pop up events and themed tourism initiatives provide real opportunities to draw people into the heart of the town.

Key to this will be an adequately resourced programme suited to involving as many local people as possible, including resident groups, local businesses and schools.



Balbriggan



West Bay, Portrush



Cork Harbour Festival



Halloween, Galway

Play

The town centre should be engaging and inspirational for everyone, from children to adults, with all feeling welcome and safe with friendly places to go, have fun and play.

Balbriggan is fortunate to have a wide range of green space, formal sports and recreation spaces but there is an opportunity to increase opportunities for informal, unstructured play within the town centre. Increased liveliness and spontaneity in the urban environment can attract more people, and a fun and lively town centre is likely to be a safer town centre with more people and more eyes on the street.

Play has the ability to alleviate stress, promote creativity and boost well-being. It doesn't require playgrounds on every corner but considering what and who the spaces in Balbriggan are for and how can they be places that inspire and make people laugh, rather than just a movement route from A to B. Features within Balbriggan's public realm can be designed and thought of as playscapes.



City Park, Bradford



Trampolines, Copenhagen



Street Hammocks, Copenhagen



Lindevangs Park, Denmark



Planned Projects

OUR BALBRIGGAN PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY PLANNED PROJECTS	Our nature			our place				our people			
	HABITAT RESTORATION	URBAN PLANTING	WATER MANAGEMENT	OUR HERITAGE ASSETS	CIVIC STREETS & SPACES	GREEN & BLUE WAYS	WAYFINDING & GATEWAYS	BLUE SPACE ACCESS	COMMUNITY GREEN SPACES	POP-UP EVENTS & ACTIVITIES	PLAY
2-4 Dublin Street				✓	✓					✓	
Balbriggan Harbour				✓	✓			✓			
Quay St & Environs	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓	✓
8 - 14 Bridge Street	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Millpond Park	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Railway Street & Station Plaza		✓		✓	✓		✓				
Bremore Castle Redevelopment	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓	✓
Bremore Regional Park	✓			✓		✓		✓			✓
Fingal Coastal Way						✓	✓				
Harry Reynolds Road					✓	✓	✓				

Conclusion & Next Steps

This document has summarised the extensive process of consultation and research conducted thus far on the project. It has also set out the Vision, Aims, Objectives and the Strategy for Balbriggan's Public Realm.

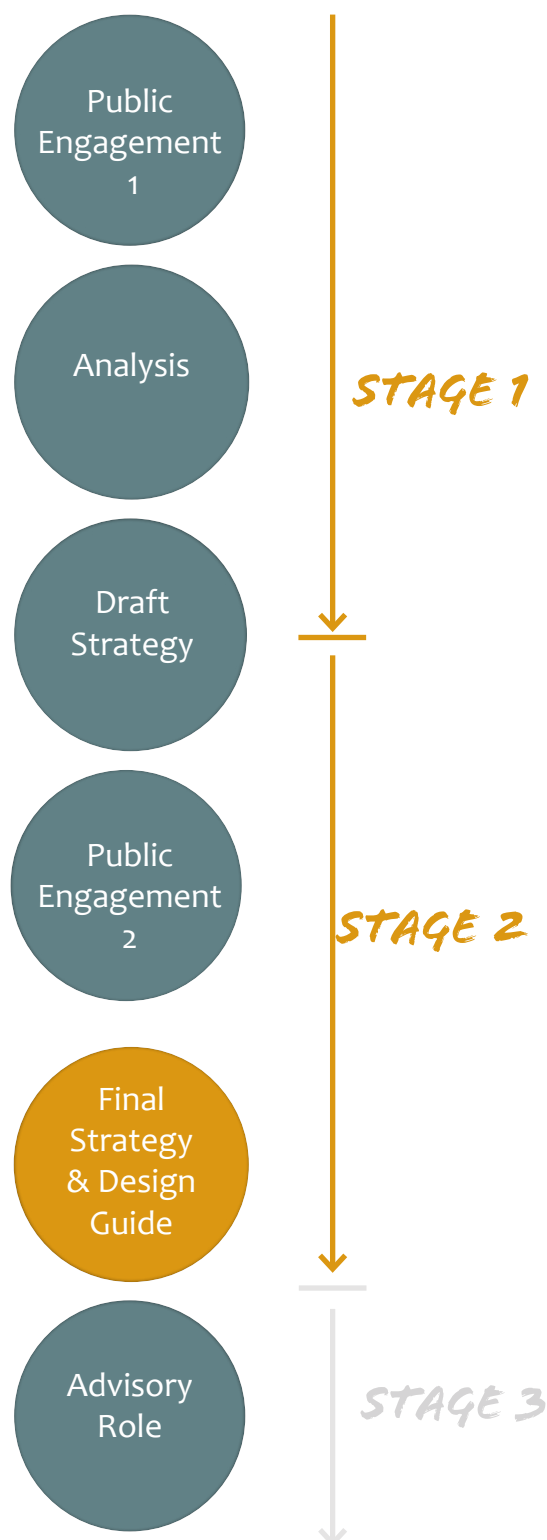
The analysis findings identified streetscapes and public realm in Balbriggan require improvement, to fully maximise the social, community and economic benefit of the Urban Regeneration Development Fund. The Public realm strategy puts in place new Projects that will be worked into the Council's ongoing operational plans and the Our Balbriggan Public Realm improvement projects as appropriate, in a continuous improvement process.

In response to the findings in the surveys and workshops a number of interventions have projects have been implemented in the intervening period. Improvements include new outdoor spaces and facilities, places to sit, green spaces and activities and events

The strategy has been presented to the have been presented to the Our Balbriggan Steering Group, chaired by the Chief Executive and including the Directors of Services who will collaborate to implement the identified projects over the period of the Our Balbriggan Rejuvenation Plan & beyond.

Projects will be prioritised using a multi criteria analysis: (a) Enabling Urban Regeneration Development Funded (URDF) reach full potential (b) Alignment with priority projects in the Fingal Active Travel Strategy & the Balbriggan Active Travel Strategy (c) Health & Safety. The scope of funded improvements and their implementation will be co-ordinated by Fingal County Council.

We acknowledge the importance of Local Representatives, Local Businesses, Tidy Towns, Balbriggan Chamber of Commerce, Community Groups, Schools and their input and collaboration on projects with the Council to continue to develop the town's public realm.





Our Balbriggan

Public Realm Strategy

MAKE SPACE

Appendix 1 - Projects



the paul hogarth company

Comhairle Contae
Fhine Gall
Fingal County
Council



Projects

Timeframes

Short Term: 0 – 3 years

Medium term: 3 – 5 years

Long Term: 5 – 10 years

No.	Project	Theme	Responsibility	Potential Locations	Implementation Time-frames
1	Improve appearance & perception of Main Street – Shopfront Improvement Scheme	OUR PLACE	1. OB Team 2. EETCD 3. Balbriggan Chamber	Main Street (Dublin Street; Drogheda Street; Bridge Street) Railway Street	Short
2	Mitigate appearance of vacant units with special targeted programme - Identify owners and engage to encourage renovation & use	OUR PLACE	1. OB Team 2. EETCD 3. Balbriggan Chamber	Main Street (Dublin Street; Drogheda Street; Bridge Street) Quay Street Railway Street Mill Street Convent Lane George's Hill High Street Chapel Street Clonard Street	Short – Medium
3	Improve appearance & perception of town centre - Declutter & rationalise streetscape - remove redundant items and consolidate provision	OUR PLACE	1. OB Team 2. Operations 3. Active Travel	Main Street (Dublin Street; Drogheda Street; Bridge Street) Quay Street Railway Street Mill Street Convent Lane George's Hill High Street Chapel Street Clonard Street	Short - Medium
4	Improve appearance & perception of Main Street & town centre & increase dwell times - rationalise and improve provision of seating, bike parking, litter bins. Place-making approach to maximise points of interest to increase sense of place	OUR PLACE	1. Operations 2. Active Travel 3. OB Team 4. PSI Parks	Main Street (Dublin Street; Drogheda Street; Bridge Street) Quay Street Railway Street Mill Street Convent Lane George's Hill High Street Chapel Street Clonard Street	Short – Medium
5	Counteract enclosure effect of Main Street and funnelling of people & cars through Main Street with traffic, active travel measures and place-making projects to encourage dwell time	OUR PLACE	1. OB Team 2. Operations 3. PSI Parks 4. Active Travel	Main Street (Dublin Street; Drogheda Street; Bridge Street)	Medium – Long

No.	Project	Theme	Responsibility	Potential Locations	Implementation Time-frames
6	Improve appearance & perception of Main Street & town centre - improve pedestrian crossings & provide additional crossing opportunities at a variety of locations, extend crossing timings & address areas considered 'slippery' i.e. Georges Square	OUR PLACE	1. Operations 2. Active Travel	Main Street (Dublin Street; Drogheda Street; Bridge Street) Quay Street Railway Street Mill Street Convent Lane George's Hill High Street Chapel Street Clonard Street	Medium - Long
7	Improve wayfinding around town at key decisions points – upgrade and consolidate signage	OUR PLACE	1. OB Team 2. Operations	Main Street (Dublin Street; Drogheda Street; Bridge Street) Quay Street Railway Street Mill Street Convent Lane George's Hill High Street Chapel Street Clonard Street	Short – Medium
8	Improve appearance & perception of Main Street & town centre - improve accessibility through pavement & footpath improvements at targeted locations (select a minimum of 1 location per annum for inclusion in ongoing Operations Works Programme – DBFL's Active Travel Study to inform selection of locations in consultation with Ops) Note – public consultation indicated this is a strong area requiring improvement	OUR PLACE	Operations	To be identified	Short – Long
9	Improve appearance & perception of main street - improve cycling accessibility through provision of cycle lanes Note – public consultation indicated this is a strong area requiring improvement	OUR PLACE	1. OB Team 2. Active Travel 3. PSI	Quay Street Main Street Fingal Coastal Way	Medium – Long
10	Improve appearance & perception of Main Street - improve lighting at targeted locations i.e. especially at Railway Station (select a minimum of 1 location per annum for inclusion in ongoing Operations Works Programme – DBFL's Active Travel Study to inform selection of locations in consultation with Ops) Note – improve feeling of public safety	OUR PLACE	1. OB Team 2. Operations 3. Irish Rail 4. An Garda Síochána	To be identified	Short – Long

Timeframes

Short Term: 0 – 3 years

Medium term: 3 – 5 years

Long Term: 5 – 10 years

No.	Project	Theme	Responsibility	Potential Locations	Implementation Time-frames
11	Improving greening of town centre – promotion of planting & place-making & transformation of hard landscaping to green landscaping at key locations - (select a minimum of 1 location per annum for inclusion in ongoing Operations Works Programme)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OUR NATURE • OUR PLACE 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. EETCD 2. Operations 3. Active Travel 4. PSI Parks 5. Environment 	To be identified	Short – Long
12	Reduce of speed in the town centre – amend speed limit in town centre (byelaws); adjust traffic flows; introduction of traffic calming measures; reduction of parking; promotion of cycling & walking (select a minimum of 1 location per annum for inclusion in ongoing Operations Works Programme – DBFL’s Active Travel Study to inform selection of locations in consultation with Ops)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OUR PLACE • OUR PEOPLE 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OB Team 2. Operations 3. Active Travel 	To be identified	Short – Long
13	Improve appearance & perception of Main Street, town centre, beach & harbour - Targeted litter campaign – potential gamification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OUR PLACE • OUR PEOPLE 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Smart Balbriggan 2. Operations 3. Environment 4. OB Team 	Main Street (Dublin Street; Drogheda Street; Bridge Street) Beach Harbour Millpond Park Railway Street Bremore Castle Bremore Regional Park	Short – Medium
14	Improve appearance & perception of main street Targeted dog fouling campaign – potential gamification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OUR PLACE • OUR PEOPLE 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Smart Balbriggan 2. Operations 3. Environment 4. OB Team 	Main Street (Dublin Street; Drogheda Street; Bridge Street) Beach Harbour Millpond Park Railway Street Bremore Castle Bremore Regional Park	Short – Medium
15	Reduce vacancy/ dereliction in town centre – place-making, economic stimulus measures – LEO supports – encourage diversification of offer in the town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OUR PLACE • OUR PEOPLE 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OB Team 2. Fingal LEO 3. EETCD 	Main Street (Dublin Street; Drogheda Street; Bridge Street) Quay Street Railway Street Mill Street Convent Lane George’s Hill High Street Chapel Street Clonard Street	Short – Long

No.	Project	Theme	Responsibility	Potential Locations	Implementation Time-frames
16	Increase town visitation rate of under 18 & 18-24 cohorts – create necklace of green spaces with informal/ unsupervised recreational space /opportunities for young people – alternating provision of MUGA; basketball facilities & spaces specifically for teenage girls with shelter/ seating/lighting/bins – provision to be commensurate with Balbriggan’s status as youngest town in Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OUR PLACE • OUR PEOPLE 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OB Team 2. PSI Parks 3. Community 	Flemington/Caslemill R122 adjacent to schools Harry Reynolds Road Millpond Park Beach Martello Tower Bremore Moylaragh Bremore Pastures Taylors Hill	Short – Medium
17	Improve sporting facilities – new provision and improved access to existing – explore other options for young people to access facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OUR PLACE • OUR PEOPLE 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. EETCD 2. Operations 3. PSI Parks 4. Community 	Bremore Recreational Hub Bremore Park Bremore Castle Flemington/Caslemill R122 adjacent to schools Harry Reynolds Road Millpond Park Beach Martello Tower Bremore Moylaragh Bremore Pastures Taylors Hill	Short – Long
18	Promotion of public art opportunities for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OUR PLACE • OUR PEOPLE 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OB Team 2. Arts Office 3. Community 4. Foroige 	Balbriggan Town	Short – Long
19	Improve informal/spontaneous play opportunities / spaces – extension of Let’s Play Rush lessons to Balbriggan in collaboration with community groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OUR PLACE • OUR PEOPLE 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. EETCD 2. Operations 3. PSI Parks 4. Community 	Quay Street Martello Tower Bremore Castle Bremore Park Flemington/Caslemill R122 adjacent to schools Harry Reynolds Road Millpond Park Beach Martello Tower Bremore Moylaragh Bremore Pastures Taylors Hill	Short – Long
20	Access to golf club for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OUR PLACE • OUR PEOPLE 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OB Team 2. Community - Sports Office 	Golf Club Schools	Short – Medium

Timeframes

Short Term: 0 – 3 years

Medium term: 3 – 5 years

Long Term: 5 – 10 years

No.	Project	Theme	Responsibility	Potential Locations	Implementation Time-frames
21	Improve access to green/natural spaces & promote placemaking & tactical interventions with Tidy Towns/Schools to improve amenity & use of green spaces associated with housing estates throughout Balbriggan – new school scheme proposed for Q3 2022	• OUR NATURE • OUR PEOPLE	1. OB Team 2. Operations	Areas adjacent to secondary schools	Short – Medium
22	Improve biodiversity – implementation of actions in the Balbriggan Local & Fingal Biodiversity Plan with community groups	• OUR NATURE • OUR PEOPLE • OUR PLACE	1. PSI Parks 2. Operations	River Bracken Coast River Bremore Site as identified in Biodiversity Action Plan	Short – Long
23	Development of a community orchard align with historical precedent	• OUR NATURE • OUR PEOPLE	1. OB Team 2. Operations 3. PSI Parks 4. Community	Locations to be determined	Short – Long
24	Development of a community allotment in a town centre location	• OUR NATURE • OUR PEOPLE	1. Operations 2. PSI Parks 3. Property	Locations to be determined	Medium – Long
25	Improve the amenity & biodiversity of Bracken River in collaboration with community groups	OUR NATURE	1. OB Team 2. Operations 3. Environment	Quay Street Millpond Park Bridge Street	Short – Medium
26	Improve the amenity & biodiversity of Bremore River/Clonard Brook in collaboration with community groups	OUR NATURE	1. OB Team 2. Operations 3. Environment 4. PSI Parks	Bremore Park	Medium – Long
27	Sensitive interventions to Bremore Beach	OUR NATURE	1. PSI Parks 2. OB Team 3. Operations	Bremore Beach	Medium – Long
28	Improve water quality	OUR NATURE	1. OB Team 2. Environment 3. Property	Quay Street Millpond Park River Bracken Harbour Beach Coast	Short - Long
29	Potential coastal erosion interventions required to private owned cliff top edge at Seapoint Beach and Kings Strand / Martello Tower area	OUR NATURE	1. PSI Parks 2. Operations	Seapoint Beach Kings Strand / Martello Tower area	Long
30	Targeted engagement of under 18 & 18-24 cohorts to increase civic engagement	• OUR PEOPLE • OUR PLACE	OB Team	Balbriggan Town	Short - Long

No.	Project	Theme	Responsibility	Potential Locations	Implementation Time-frames
31	Increase native tree planting & urban planting to promote pollinators	<i>OUR NATURE</i>	1. PSI Parks 2. Operations	To be identified	Medium – Long
32	Habitat Restoration Projects along river corridors	<i>OUR NATURE</i>	1. Operations 2. PSI Parks	To be identified	Short - Long
33	Habitat Restoration Projects in coastal meadows with rewilding and new mgmt. practices	<i>OUR NATURE</i>	1. Operations 2. PSI Parks	To be identified	Short - Long
34	Habitat Restoration Projects in woodland	<i>OUR NATURE</i>	1. Operations 2. PSI Parks	To be identified	Short - Long
35	Create traffic free routes linking habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>OUR PEOPLE</i> • <i>OUR PLACE</i> • <i>OUR NATURE</i> 	1. Operations 2. PSI Parks	To be identified	Short - Long
36	Sustainable water management in the town through rain gardens and SUDS	<i>OUR NATURE</i>	1. Operations 2. PSI Parks	Quay Street Dublin Street Bridge Street Millpond Park Bremore Castle Bremore Park Various green spaces to be identified	Short - Long
37	Removal of invasive species	<i>OUR NATURE</i>	1. PSI Parks 2. Operations	Bridge Street Millpond Park Coast Various locations to be identified	Short - Long
38	Installation of nesting/bat boxes	<i>OUR NATURE</i>	1. PSI Parks 2. Operations	Quay Street Dublin Street Bridge Street Millpond Park Bremore Castle Bremore Park Various green spaces to be identified	Short - Long

Timeframes

Short Term: 0 – 3 years

Medium term: 3 – 5 years

Long Term: 5 – 10 years

No.	Project	Theme	Responsibility	Potential Locations	Implementation Time-frames
39	Increase town visitation rate of 55K+ cohorts	• OUR PEOPLE • OUR PLACE	1. OB Team 2. Community - Age Friendly Team	MainStreet (Dublin Street; Drogheda Street; Bridge Street) Quay Street Millpond Park Beach Martello Tower Bremore Castle Bremore Park	Medium – Long
40	Increase work opportunities in town centre (currently only 10% visit for work reasons)	OUR PEOPLE	1. Fingal LEO 2. EETCD 3. OB Team	Main Street (Dublin Street; Drogheda Street; Bridge Street) Quay Street Railway Street Mill Street Convent Lane George's Hill High Street Chapel Street Clonard Street BEAT Stephenstown	Short – Long
41	Improve out-door dining opportunities – extension of pavements / pedestrianisation required at selected locations along with street furniture and alcohol licensing	OUR PLACE	1. Operations 2. Active Travel 3. An Garda Síochána (DoJ)	Main Street (Dublin Street; Drogheda Street; Bridge Street) Quay Street Railway Street Mill Street High Street	Short - Long
42	Improve public spaces for events	• OUR PEOPLE • OUR PLACE	1. EETCD - Events 2. OB Team 3. Operations 4. PSI Parks 5. Community	Quay Street Dublin Street Bremore Castle Bridge Street Millpond Park	Short - Long
43	Swimming Platform/& Tidal Swimming Pool to provide recreation/ leisure/amenity focal point	• OUR PEOPLE • OUR PLACE • OUR NATURE	1. EETCD 2. PSI 3. Operations	To be identified	Long
44	Development of a boardwalk/beach access to sea (potentially as part of Fingal Coastal Way)	• OUR PEOPLE • OUR PLACE • OUR NATURE	1. PSI Roads 2. OB Team 3. Operations 4. PSI Parks	Beach Martello Tower Coast	Medium - Long

No.	Project	Theme	Responsibility	Potential Locations	Implementation Time-frames
45	Regularise maintenance of beach and foreshore with Irish Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OUR PEOPLE • OUR PLACE • OUR NATURE 	1. Property 2. Operations 3. Irish Rail	Beach Foreshore Quay Street	Short
46	Development of the Harbour – including access to lighthouse; future dredging & berth mgmt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OUR PEOPLE • OUR PLACE • OUR NATURE 	1. OB Team 2. Operations 3. Environment 4. PSI Parks	Harbour Quay Street Bracken River	Medium - Long
47	Cultivation & promotion of marine/ water activities & provision of appropriate facilities for access & storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OUR PEOPLE • OUR PLACE • OUR NATURE 	1. EETCD 2. Operations 3. PSI Parks	Harbour Quay Street Martello Tower Beach	Medium - Long
48	Town/economic branding – Our Balbriggan branding in place) Economic development policy for Stephenstown including branding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OUR PEOPLE • OUR PLACE 	1. OB Team 2. EETCD	Balbriggan Town Stephenstown	Short - Long
49	Night economy policy & economic development interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OUR PEOPLE • OUR PLACE 	1. EETCD 2. OB Team	Balbriggan Town	Short - Long
50	Develop the boathouse at Martello Tower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OUR PEOPLE • OUR PLACE 	1. EETCD 2. PSI Parks 3. Heritage 4. Architects	Martello Tower	Short - Medium
51	Develop the bathhouse at Martello Tower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OUR PEOPLE • OUR PLACE 	1. EETCD 2. PSI Parks 3. Heritage 4. Architects	Martello Tower	Short - Medium
52	Develop bio-tourism proposition and/or themed tourism events – sea & River Bracken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OUR PEOPLE • OUR PLACE • OUR NATURE 	1. EETCD - Tourism	Balbriggan Tower River Bracken	Medium
53	Identification of historic streetscape elements & assets for protection, conservation & sensitive restoration	OUR PLACE	1. Heritage Officer	Balbriggan Town	Long

Timeframes

Short Term: 0 – 3 years

Medium term: 3 – 5 years

Long Term: 5 – 10 years

No.	Project	Theme	Responsibility	Potential Locations	Implementation Time-frames
54	Place-making projects on all approaches to town to increase attractiveness of the town & define welcome points including signage & the upgrade of R122	OUR PLACE	1. OB Team 2. Operations 3. PSI Parks 4. PSI Roads 5. Irish Rail	Chapel Street Harry Reynolds Road Railway Station	Short - Long
55	Interventions on Georges Square to make it the town centre focal point	OUR PLACE	1. OB Team 2. Community 3. Operations	George's Square	Short - Long
56	Improve visual connectivity between the sea visible and Main Street; wayfinding to sea; improve economic benefits from visitors to beach/sea	OUR PLACE	1. OB Team 2. Operations	Main Street (Dublin Street; Drogheda Street; Bridge Street) Quay Street Railway Street Mill Street High Street Millpond Park	Short - Long
57	Define a street hierarchy to lessen dominance of central Main Street (DBFL's Active Travel Study to inform definition of street hierarchy in consultation with Ops) (Pg 36)	OUR PLACE	1. OB Team 2. The Paul Hogarth Company 3. DBFL 4. Operations 5. PSI Roads 6. Active Travel	Balbriggan Town	Short
58	Improve appearance & connectivity of side streets	OUR PLACE	1. OB Team 2. The Paul Hogarth Company 3. DBFL 4. Operations 5. PSI Roads 6. Active Travel	Lambreecher Mill Street Convent Lane George's Hill High Street Chapel Street Clonard Street	Medium - Long
59	Improve connectivity to the sea at underpasses – place-making schemes at tunnels & lighting	• OUR PEOPLE • OUR PLACE	1. OB Team 2. Operations 3. Community	Tunnels at underpasses beneath railway line	Short - Long

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