

The EcoCore Project

Green Transition in Small Cities along Transport Corridors

BALBRIGGAN INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN



Co-created by the
Balbriggan EcoCore ULG

Comhairle Contae
Fhine Gall
Fingal County
Council



URBACT



Co-funded by
the European Union
Interreg



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**BALBRIGGAN
ECO CORE
PROJECT TEAM:**

Aoife Sheridan	Project Leader
Eileen Crowley	Lead Expert
Áine Donlon Kavanagh	ULG Coordinator
Alison Foster	Finance Officer
Gavin Cusack	Communications Officer
Keith Hammond	Graduate – Data Analyst

A INTRODUCTION

In the **EcoCore Project**, Fingal County Council is focusing on the coastal town of Balbriggan, situated 32km north of the capital city, Dublin, and located in the transport corridor connecting Dublin to Belfast.

Given Balbriggan's strategic location and the green transition policy context which the Council embraces, the town is earmarked for future industrial development with a focus on sustainable development. The EcoCore Project is an important learning and action planning process in this regard.

Fingal County Council as the lead partner of The EcoCore Project is also working with a network of eight other small European cities, all similarly located in strategic transport corridors and who want to accelerate the green transition in the industrial areas of their cities, namely Dubrovnik (Croatia), Ormož (Slovenia), Alba Iulia (Romania), Ķekava (Latvia), Santo Tirso (Portugal), Pärnu (Estonia), Villena (Spain) and Tuusula (Finland). Funded by URBACT, the European Union's

Programme for Sustainable Urban Development, these partner cities are working together over a period of two and a half years through a programme of transnational exchange and learning, focusing on the topic of green industrial transition.

In summary, participation in the EcoCore Project is helping to build the capacity of small cities, like Balbriggan, to address climate change by pursuing a green economy agenda, helping local stakeholders to transition to low-carbon economic activities, especially in their choices of energy for transportation, heating and electricity. The EcoCore Project is creating significant momentum locally for a green transition with the added focus of advancing gender equality and the digital transformation.





B

THE PURPOSE AND PROCESS OF MAKING AN INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

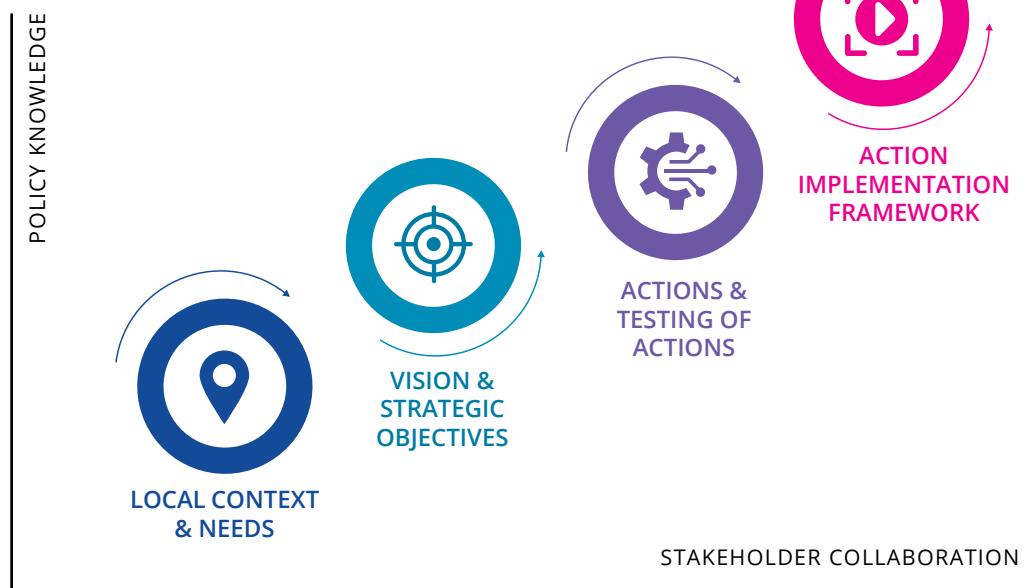
An Integrated Action Plan (IAP) is a city-level output plan that defines actions to be implemented within the city in order to respond to a specific urban policy challenge which is defined and addressed through a process of action planning with reflection on the lessons learned from local stakeholders, transnational partners and the testing of actions at local level.

The process starts with the assembling of representatives from key local stakeholders to form an URBACT Local Group (ULG), which has the goal to make the journey of action planning and produce the Integrated Action Plan (IAP). This process starts with an understanding of the local context and needs (baseline information) and progresses to the ULG identifying the main policy challenge / problem to be addressed and developing a vision and strategic objectives to direct a set of actions which can achieve intended outcomes specific to the challenge. The process of identifying actions and testing actions is a co-creative

process meaning that ideas are gathered and tested internally among stakeholders as well as externally among project partners, before agreement is reached in the ULG on those actions to be considered for implementation. The final phase in the journey is to negotiate the resources and commitments among stakeholders that will ensure action implementation as well as to create a framework for monitoring and evaluation of the IAP.

The action planning journey is however not an individual journey for the ULG of Balbriggan. The EcoCore Project gives structure and context for all nine partner cities to jointly make the journey and to ensure that both local-level discussions within the Balbriggan ULG and transnational exchange between the partners have a practical focus on arriving at a coherent set of actions to address the local policy challenge in each participating city, as well as to embed an integrated and participative approach to planning and implementation.

The journey of making an IAP can best be described by highlighting the following components:



C LOCAL CONTEXT & NEEDS



01

FINDINGS FROM THE BASELINE STUDY



The baseline study prepared by the lead expert of the EcoCore Project, Eileen Crowley, summarises the local context and needs for Balbriggan as follows:

- Balbriggan is a commuter town of Dublin, with a job ratio of 0.4 (i.e. approximately 4 local jobs for every 10 residents of working age). Classified as relatively disadvantaged, it also has access barriers to education and employment.
- According to the 2022 Census, the town's population is 27,300. Between 1991 and 2022, the population increased by 215%.
- The area is ethnically diverse with the 2022 Census showing almost 30% of Balbriggan's population were born outside of Ireland.
- The average age of the population is 30.8 years making it the youngest town in Ireland.
- Balbriggan was the first town in Ireland to be named as a Smart District due to its growing, youthful and culturally diverse population. The Smart Balbriggan programme aims to ensure that Balbriggan benefits from 'smart' and 'digital' initiatives and its core focus will be to enhance community life, support economic opportunities and drive innovation through several smart district projects.
- The town has a rich maritime and manufacturing history and is well served by local and international companies including Techcrete, Wavin and Bridgestone. The area is also home to the National Passport Office. Balbriggan is also an attractive location for well-known agri-food and distribution businesses such as Fyffes and Country Crest.
- It is strategically located in the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor, and it is close to large logistics hubs. It sits just north of Dublin International Airport with a 2022 throughput of 28.1 million passengers. It is also close to Dublin Port with a 2022 throughput of 36.7 million gross tonnes and 7,473 ship arrivals. To the north of Balbriggan off the Dublin – Belfast M1 motorway is the commercial port of Drogheda handling over 1 million tonnes of cargo and containers annually.

YOUNGEST TOWN IN IRELAND

30.8

AVERAGE AGE OF POPULATION

(2022 Census)

POPULATION

27,300

(2022 Census)

ETHNICALLY DIVERSE

30%

BORN OUTSIDE IRELAND

(2022 Census)





DUBLIN AIRPORT

28.1M
passenger throughput

(2022 Data)

DUBLIN PORT

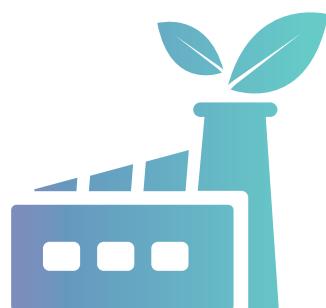
7,473
ship arrivals

(2022 Data)

DUBLIN PORT

36.7M
gross tonnes

(2022 Data)





“BALBRIGGAN A SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE”:

The population of Balbriggan Town reached over 24,300 at the time of the 2022 Census, split 51.3% to 48.7% female and males. The 2022 Population of the town reflected a continuation of growth from the preceding inter-Censal periods, and indeed an acceleration of growth. As shown in the figure below, the population expanded by 12% between 2016 and 2022 as 2,600 more people were residents in the town.

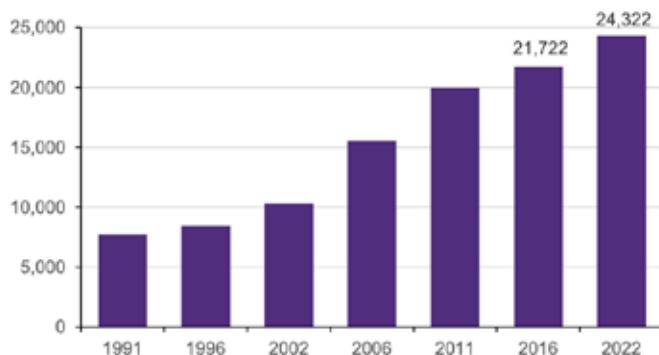


Figure: Population of Balbriggan Town 1991 – 2022. Source: CSO Census.

The strong rate of population growth in Balbriggan Town from 1991 to 2022 is further illustrated in the graph. On a base of 100 in 1991, Balbriggans population reached an index reading of 315 in 2022. This far outstripped Fingal (216), Dublin (142) and State (146) over the period - thus underlining the seismic growth of the town since the early 1990s.

The town is characterized by its relatively youthful population and was the youngest town in Ireland with a population of more than 10,000 in 2022.

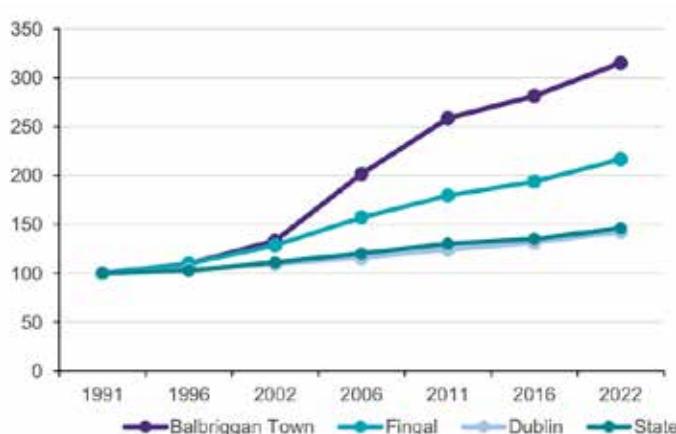


Figure: Population growth in Balbriggan Town, Fingal, Dublin and Nationally, 1991- 2022 (1991= 100). Source: CSO Census.

GENDER

51.3%

male

48.7%

female

(2022 Data)

LABOUR FORCE

10,000

people

(2022 Data)

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

11%

(2022 Data)

Balbriggans Towns labour force as of the 2022 Census consisted of 18,141 people. The vast majority (10,430) were at work. A total of 1,283 people were either unemployed or looking for their first job. This equates to an unemployment rate of 11%, with a higher proportion falling within the 'long term unemployed' category. The unemployment rate of the town was higher than the respective Fingal and national averages of 7.8% and 9.2%, which indicated close to 'full employment'.

As of January 2024, close to 2,100 people were signing on the Live Register at the Balbriggan Intreo Centre. This was marginally below the five-year average (2,184) through Covid-19 had a complexity of effects over that period. Importantly, the number on the Live Register in the town in January 2024 was also considerably lower than the peak of over 5,200 in 2012.



Figure: Persons on Live Register, Balbriggan Intreo Centre, 2019- 2024.

Source: CSO Census.

In terms of employment and industry groups, the largest proportion of employed residents of Balbriggan Town worked in Commerce & Trade (26.2%) and Professional Services (24.1%) in 2022. Compared to the National averages, the town had relatively high proportions working in Transport & Communications (13.9%) and Public Administration (7%).

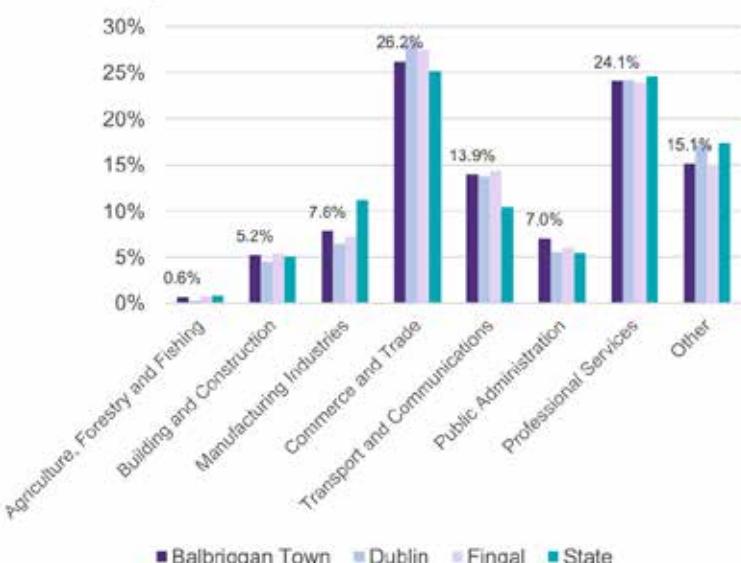


Figure: Breakdown of Workforce by Industry group for Population of Balbriggan Town, Dublin, Fingal and the State, 2022. Source: CSO Census.

LABOUR FORCE

18,141
people

(2022 Data)

COMMERCE & TRADE WORKFORCE

26.2%

(2022 Data)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES WORKFORCE

24.1%

(2022 Data)



02

BALBRIGGAN URBACT LOCAL GROUP (ULG)

The structure for implementing the EcoCore Project in Balbriggan is a multi-stakeholder working group called the Balbriggan URBACT Local Group (ULG) supported by a project management team based in the Economic Development Section of Fingal County Council.

The following table lists the membership of the core ULG group:

TEAM MEMBER	ROLE IN BALBRIGGAN ULG		GROUP
Aoife Sheridan Áine Donlon Kavanagh Alison Foster Gavin Cusack	Project Leader – Fingal County Council ULG Coordinator – Fingal County Council Finance Officer – Fingal County Council Communications Officer – Fingal County Council	F F F M	EcoCore Project Team
Declan Ryan Martina Hilliard Natalie Dineen Bridget Loughlin Mark Walsh Aishling Hyland Deirdre Carroll Breffni O'Rourke	Fingal County Council – Regeneration Office Fingal County Council – Regeneration Office Fingal County Council - Property Services Fingal Climate Action Coordinator Balbriggan/Drinan Enterprise Centre Manager Smart Balbriggan – Fingal County Council Business Advice Manager – Fingal Local Enterprise Office Our Balbriggan Project	M F F F M F F M	Fingal County Council
Richard Berney (RIP) Anthony Cooney Eamonn Donlyn Amanda Smyth	Farrelly Dawe White / Balbriggan Chamber of Commerce Fingal Chamber of Commerce Smart Balbriggan Programme Manager – Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC)	M M M F	Business & Business Supports
Caroline Power Conor Simpson	Programme Manager – Dublin Regional Enterprise Plan, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) IDA, Government Development Agency	F M	National Body
Deiric O'Briain Pat O'Connor	Dublin City University (DCU) Technological University Dublin (TUD)	M M	Education
Tony Murphy Tom O'Leary Grainne Maguire Brendan Ryan Malachy Quinn	Councillor (Elected Representative) Councillor (Elected Representative) Councillor (Elected Representative) Councillor (Elected Representative) Councillor (Elected Representative)	M M F M M	Local Authority Elected Members

ULG members were invited to serve because of their roles and responsibilities and their ability to deliver agreed actions in this Integrated Action Plan. The approach was to bring people together who will plan for their own organisations to deliver on shared actions.

ULG MEETINGS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Balbriggan's ULG had seven formal meetings during the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) creation process to mould and improve the project's course, activities, and delivery methods. Reflecting the integrated, participatory spirit of the URBACT process, each meeting included a mix of internal and external stakeholders and concentrated on a key component of the plan. As can be seen in the pictures on the following page.

MEETING 1	Commenced the ULG journey by outlining to members Project EcoCore's Action Planning Network goals and objectives whilst brainstorming to co-create the project's vision statement through a SWOT analysis process. 8 external and 5 internal ULG members attended this session.
MEETING 2	The meeting concentrated on reviewing the structure of the IAP as outlined by URBACT and explaining same to members whilst agreeing the outline content of the IAP. It involved 7 internal and 2 external members.
MEETING 3	Focused on marketing the IAP and promoting broader participation while addressing project visibility and communications taking learnings from other partners. This session included 8 internal and 7 external members.
MEETING 4	Delivered and discussed the Draft Stephenstown and Folkstown Framework Plan and how it pertains to the IAP whilst gathering input and feedback from 6 internal and 7 external members.
MEETING 5	The meeting was committed to determining possible obstacles and challenges in the execution of the IAP and more general EcoCore goals. This was attended by 6 internal and 5 external participants.
MEETING 6	This ULG meeting was used to coordinate logistics and expectations around the transnational learning visits, with 9 internal and 6 external stakeholders in attendance.
MEETING 7	Presentation of the draft IAP, following the Peer Review to the ULG members with discussions around the final event and future story telling with regard to the IAP, including discussions on branding and marketing.

The goals, delivery methodology, and engagement approach of the plan were all influenced by the important insights gained from these discussions.



JULY 25TH 2023



NOVEMBER 11TH 2023



APRIL 17TH 2024

Proposed Small Scale Test Actions



- Masterplan Stephenstown
- Investors Guide
- Marketing Plan (raise profile)
- Promotional Videos ~ film Ballyboggan /Sustainability
- Sustainability business brief
- Chamber
- Stephenstown pilot public improvements with business
- Investigate circular economy

The EcoCore Project
Green Transition in South Ulster along Transport Corridors

URBAC

JULY 25TH 2024



OCTOBER 24TH 2024



DECEMBER 9TH 2023

The ULG did a SWOT analysis of the town of Balbriggan to determine which opportunities and challenges should be considered in developing future actions. The rationale is that actions build on the strengths of the town, utilising the opportunities for the town, while addressing the threats and its weaknesses.

The graph below shows the findings of the analysis exercise conducted by the ULG:



From the analysis stakeholders should work together to leverage the town's strengths:

Its proximity to Dublin, young and diverse population, and position in the economic corridor (Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor). Initiatives like Smart Balbriggan and local creative enterprises can boost innovation and attract investment.

The weaknesses are largely related to the town centre including its retail offering', as well as a long-held external negative perception of the town. The town is also at a disadvantage because of poor planning and a lack of appropriately zoned land and active travel infrastructure (i.e. bike lanes and footpaths). These weaknesses are being addressed with the implementation of the comprehensive Our Balbriggan Strategy which includes ambitious public realm regeneration projects.

Minimizing external threats for the town depends on national policy and the delivery of national programmes (e.g. housing, water, and electricity infrastructure). Two threats can also be mitigated locally, namely future proofing land use and seeking investment in 3rd level education and childcare facilities.

For Balbriggan's economic growth and green transition to be sustainable and fair, gender and environmental factors must be considered. The town's industrial growth offers both potential and problems. Balbriggan must reduce carbon emissions, which amount to 12.5 million tonnes per year in Ireland's industrial sector, despite its advantageous location within the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor. Nitrogen dioxide (NO²) concentrations in transport-heavy regions frequently surpass 40 µg/m³, indicating that urban air pollution is still a problem. Fingal County, which is home to 20 protected habitats, must strike a balance between robust conservation measures and industrial expansion to solve biodiversity challenges.

Targeted measures are also necessary to address gender differences in economic

involvement. In Ireland, women make up 60% of university graduates, yet only 35% go on to pursue STEM fields, and just 20% of start-ups are led by women. Balbriggan's economic resilience will be increasing women's labour participation, which in Ireland was reported to be 10% lower than men's. Balbriggan may become a paradigm for fair and sustainable industrial growth by including gender-inclusive policies, renewable energy sources, and green infrastructure

Through stakeholder participation, access to infrastructure and services, and monitoring of representation and benefit distribution, all efforts under these objectives shall embrace the concepts of social inclusion and gender equality.

The EcoCore Project will be highly beneficial in assisting the town's stakeholders to explore opportunities including how to leverage its location in an economic corridor, how to attract new businesses especially in the green economy, and how to create a green brand for the future marketing of the town.



04

VISIONING EXERCISE & SHARED VISION

The ULG envisioned what success could look like if a successful green transition was to be achieved in Balbriggan. The following graphics provide an insight into the thinking of the ULG.



WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

FOCUS

Sustainable Community
Young People
Local Jobs
Gender
Skills
Quality of Life
Landbank and Economic Corridor

PLACE

History of Industry
Stephenstown Potential
Fast-Growing Corridor
Diversity

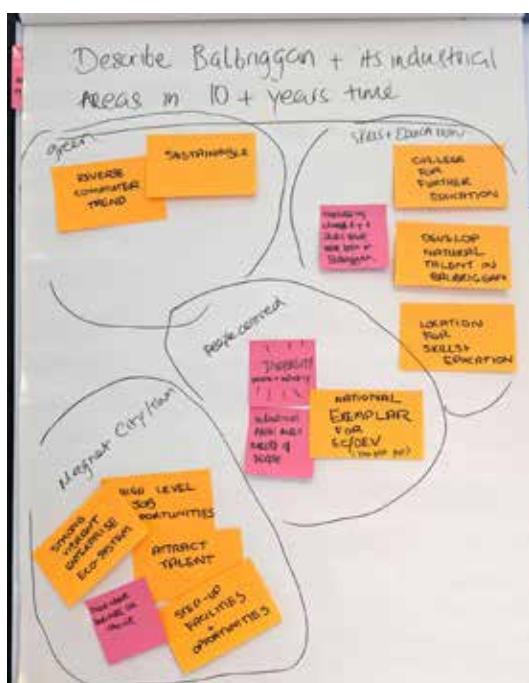
POTENTIAL

Hydro-Generation Potential
Knowledge Capacity Building
Securing Funding for Implementation
Training Ethos & Apprenticeships
Connected Hubs & Remote Working
Offshore Wind Energy



HOW WILL BALBRIGGAN BE DESCRIBED – 10 YEARS TIME?

- Employment & Sustainable Business
- Strong Vibrant Enterprise Eco-System
- High-Level Job Opportunities
- Attract Talent
- Place where Business can Thrive
- Eco-System of Agencies Supports
- SMART
- Future Proofed
- Diversity – People & Industry
- Industrial Area meet need of people
- National Exemplar for Economic Development
- Location for Skills/Education
- Develop Natural Talent in Balbriggan
- College for Further Education
- Sustainable – Reverse Commuter Travel



The ULG identified the potential for economic development that a green transition holds, including the town benefitting from its close location to offshore wind farms, building a strong knowledge base on new green economy skills and having the local entrepreneurial ecosystem for nurturing start-ups in the green economy.

Success in 10 years will be that the town has transformed from its present status as a commuter town of Dublin, to a thriving town with a self-sustaining economy embedded within the green economy.

VISION STATEMENT

"To create a location to support the opportunity to work in varied employment sectors and enjoy the values that sustainable industry delivers for the Local Community"

"Balbriggan is a sustainable industrial town, delivering high quality jobs in an attractive environment, contributing significantly to national emissions targets and is a role model for the rest of the country."

"Balbriggan is a sustainable and innovative location where its industrial infrastructure meets the current and future demands of its business workforce."

"An attractive town for business to locate, leading the way nationally in sustainability, innovation and talent development and supporting a diverse and sustainable eco-system."

"Balbriggan – an exemplar for leading future businesses supported by a diverse and sustainable eco-system."

"Balbriggan Town – the place where our sustainable future lies. Where Community is part of the vision. A role model for future innovations."



BALBRIGGAN



Following the Visioning Exercise, multiple variations of the Vision Statement were presented to the ULG for discussion and review with the group agreeing on the vision below:

“

BALBRIGGAN, A TOWN THAT ATTRACTS GREEN BUSINESS, LEADING THE WAY NATIONALLY IN SUSTAINABILITY, INNOVATION AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT, WITH A SUPPORTIVE ENTERPRISE ECO-SYSTEM AND WITH ENGAGEMENT OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

”

05

POLICY CONTEXT

The integrated sustainable economic development of Balbriggan is guided by a set of policies from national to regional to local level.



EU PROJECTS/CIRCULAR CITIES DECLARATION

Fingal County Council is actively engaged in EU projects and partnerships, including URBACT, Interreg, Horizon, and CERV.

The Council's dedication towards circularity is evident through its signing of the Circular Cities Declaration and the preparation of an action plan that aligns with the Climate Action Plan and Sustainable Fingal Initiative.



FUTURE FINGAL: FINGAL SKILLS STRATEGY

Recognised as leaders in developing future skills and talent pipelines, Fingal County Council has been working to address current and future skills gaps through the development and implementation of Future Fingal: Fingal Skills Strategy and the Green Skills Committee.



ACTIVE TRAVEL

As part of the Balbriggan Rejuvenation Plan, Fingal County Council has developed Public Realm and Active Travel Strategies, providing valuable data on how people move around the town and highlighting best practices for sustainable travel. The active travel policy of Fingal County Council also informs the thinking on the future sustainable development of the industrial lands.



DUBLIN BELFAST ECONOMIC CORRIDOR (DBEC)

DBEC is a regional collaboration of eight local authorities and includes universities in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. DBEC has developed a profile of the economic corridor and promotes regional economic development and collaboration between partners. A DBEC feasibility study on innovation hubs in the region will also inform the EcoCore Project. The involvement of DBEC staff in the ULG will help disseminate best practice lessons throughout the region.



FINGAL INTEGRATION & SOCIAL COHESION STRATEGY

The policy objectives of the Strategy are applicable to Balbriggan as one of Ireland's youngest and most diverse towns. These objectives inform the intended impacts of actions in this plan.

KEY POLICIES & STRATEGIES

NATIONAL	<p>Project Ireland 2040</p> <p>National Smart Specialisation Strategy for Innovation 2022 – 2027</p>
REGIONAL	<p>Dublin Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024</p> <p>Eastern & Midlands</p> <p>Regional Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES)</p> <p>Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022 – 2024</p>
LOCAL	<p>Our Balbriggan Rejuvenation Plan 2019 – 2025</p> <p>Fingal Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029</p> <p>Fingal Active Travel Strategy</p> <p>Fingal Digital Strategy (2020-2023) Smart Balbriggan</p> <p>Migrant Integration & Social Cohesion Strategy 2019-2024</p> <p>Future Fingal: Fingal Skills Strategy 2024-2029</p> <p>Fingal County Council Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) 2023-2028</p> <p>Future Fingal: An Economic Development Strategy</p>

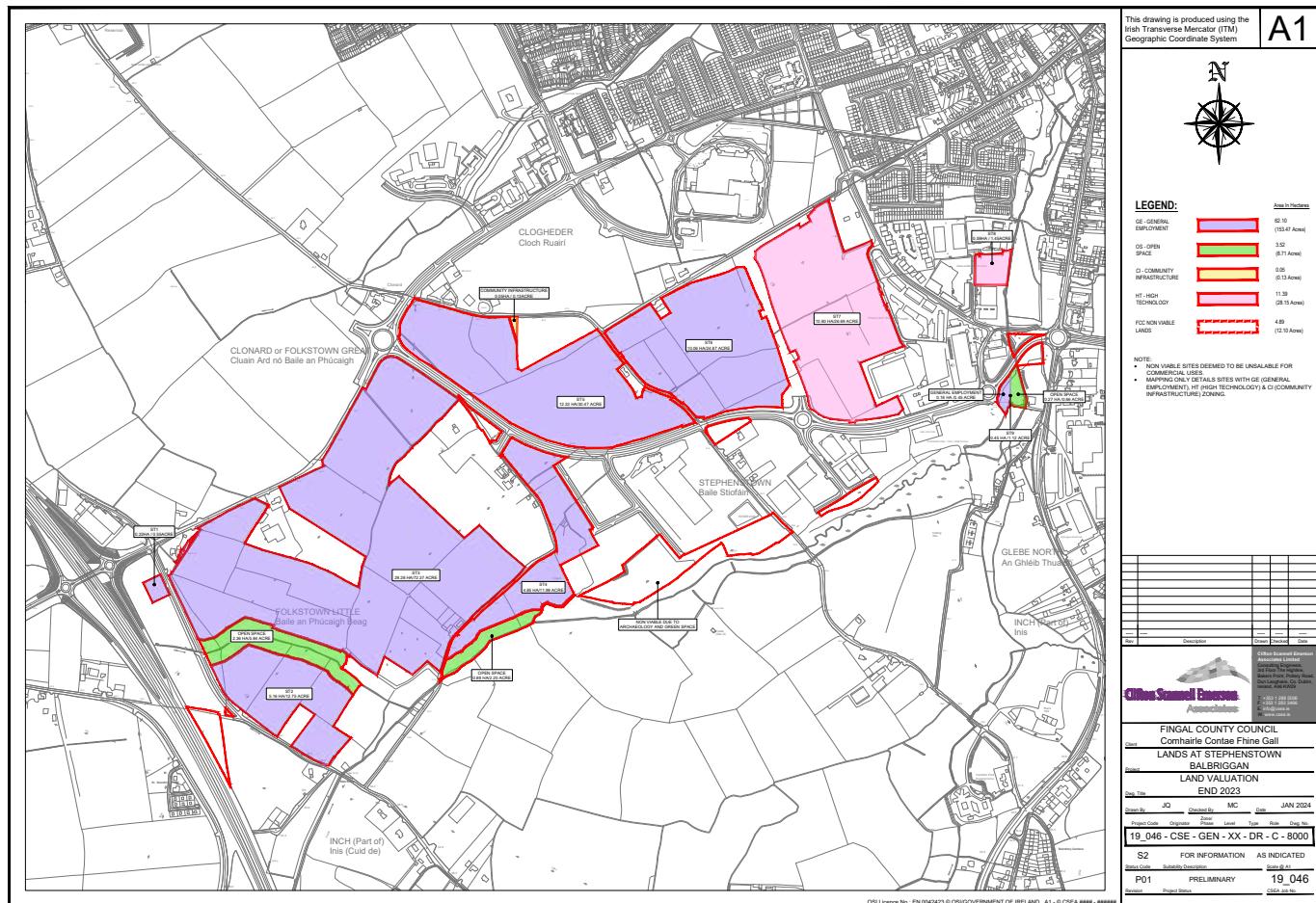
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SPATIAL PLANS

Balbriggan has been identified for significant new industrial development with the development of 200 acres of rezoned industrial land in the Stephenstown Industrial Estate. See the map below.

Fingal County Council is in the process of consolidating the ownership of the lands which in total will be one of the largest new industrial estates in the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor.

The aim of the EcoCore Project is to harness the learning and good practices at a European level to inform the sustainable development of these new industrial lands.





07

THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND FOCUS FOR BALBRIGGAN

The needs of the town for future sustainable economic growth are summarised below.

FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF BALBRIGGAN:

1 To secure more local employment and training opportunities.

2 To realise the potential of a young diverse population.

3 To leverage the current investment in the regeneration of the town.

4 To maximise the town's strategic location in the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor.

5 To prioritise minimising the town's carbon footprint, in particular with regard to the activities of the companies based in the town and those who intend to locate in the new industrial lands of Balbriggan.

6 To attract new investment from actors in the green, clean and blue economy.

The focus for Balbriggan is to participate in the EcoCore Project with the aim to shape the Stephenstown Industrial Estate Framework Plan and harness the opportunities that new industrial development present for the wider integrated sustainable development of Balbriggan from a social, economic and environmental perspective.

Taking into account land acquisitions currently under negotiation, the Stephenstown landbank will eventually incorporate 200 acres of commercial land. There is the potential to create significant new employment here which will eventually change the jobs ratio to approximately 1:1. This will also make it possible for Balbriggan to make the transition from a principally commuter town to become a 15-minute city where housing, employment, services and leisure are all reachable with sustainable transport modes.

To create the impetus for this transition process, stakeholders in Balbriggan are working together and have developed this Integrated Action Plan. The emphasis is on learning and testing ideas and actions that will address local demographic challenges by launching new initiatives to grow the local economy in a low-carbon and sustainable way in accordance with the EU's Green Deal. Another challenge that the Plan addresses is to support existing businesses in Balbriggan to switch to sustainable energy sources and practices and to harness regional strategic industrial development opportunities in a sustainable and future-focused way.

08

TESTING OF ACTIONS



Following extensive discussions with local stakeholders, the Balbriggan team identified 8 test actions which were carried out during our URBACT journey. These actions are listed below.



Prepare development guide (framework plan) for Stephenstown Industrial lands which sets out vision & guidance for future development.



Liaise with existing businesses in Balbriggan to do video case studies of good sustainability practices & promote across FCC social media platforms under Sustainable Fingal Initiative.



Arrange business briefings on Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive & Sustainability.



Prepare Investors Guide for potential investors and corporate best practice on green investment attraction from other cities.



Increase profile with potential investors through marketing measures, targeted articles to relevant publications & applications to investment ranking competitions ie. FDI Intelligence European Cities & Regions of the Future.



Investigate & document waste streams from existing businesses for potential circular economy projects



Liaise with existing businesses on pilot sustainability measures



Pilot improved green landscaping in public realm areas of existing industrial sites at Techcrete/Grimme ie. tree/shrub planting & replace existing concrete security measures to improve air quality/carbon capture.





D IAP ACTION PLAN



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of the EcoCore URBACT project is to accelerate the green transition in industrial regions through the development of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP). This plan addresses important environmental, economic, and social issues while offering a methodical way to transform Balbriggan into a model of sustainable economic growth incorporating green transition elements. The IAP sets out the framework for the sustainable economic development of the industrial lands in Balbriggan and for a resilient and sustainable future for the town by using collaborative approaches with key stakeholders and smart investments in innovative solutions.

In developing this IAP, the Balbriggan ULG has identified several issues that Balbriggan needs to address:

- Balbriggan needs local job creation in a diverse range of industries for resilience;
- Local companies need encouragement and support to reorient to sustainable energy sources, embrace active travel options, biodiversity conservation initiatives and meet new European Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) requirements;
- The Council wants to encourage companies to embrace the principles and opportunities presented by the circular economy in line with the Council's commitments under the Circular Cities Declaration and to support the Council's Climate Action Plan and Balbriggan's designation as a Decarbonising Zone;
- The Council needs to build the brand identity for the municipality, and in particular for Balbriggan, in the area of green industrial development and develop a marketing plan;
- Build collaboration between the Council and the education/training sector to support local education/training in Balbriggan to meet existing and future skills needs.





As a result, the IAP has been developed to build on local stakeholder participation, identify potential economic and educational opportunities, identify funding opportunities, set out an implementation timeframe with integrated monitoring and evaluation, and which aligns with national and EU policy.

The IAP outlines the actions required to deliver on the objectives and the key performance indicators which quantify results. In delivering on the IAP the Council aims to establish Balbriggan as a model for the green industrial transition and contribute to the delivery of objectives under the Our Balbriggan Rejuvenation Plan, the Council's Climate Action Plan, the Future Fingal: Economic Development Strategy and the Future Fingal: Fingal Skills Strategy. Actions within the IAP have the potential to scale up and be implemented throughout Fingal and to the wider Dublin Region through feedback via the Dublin Regional Enterprise Plan (DREP) and to the wider region of the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC) through feedback to the nine partner organisations of the DBEC Partnership. The ambition within the Balbriggan IAP is to improve the standard of living for residents of Balbriggan town, providing citizens with local education/training opportunities and providing local economic prosperity and resilience balanced with a sustainable economic development approach which balances social needs while respecting the ecological boundaries of the local environment.

INTEGRATION OF URBACT GOOD PRACTICES ARISING FROM TRANSNATIONAL EXCHANGE

As part of the EcoCore URBACT Action Planning Network, Balbriggan took part in many transnational city visits to partner cities to explore innovative approaches for the green and digital transformation of industrial areas and to exchange best practices. These city visits had a major impact on the direction and formation of Balbriggan's Integrated Action Plan.

Each EcoCore network partner demonstrated strong URBACT best practices during the transatlantic exchange, offering helpful illustrations in areas such as public involvement, industrial growth, sustainability innovation, digital transformation, storytelling and governance. The lessons drawn from these exchanges helped shape both the structure and the ambition of the IAP, ensuring that Balbriggan's local response remains rooted in tested European good practices.





Alba Iulia (Romania)

had a strong influence on Balbriggan's approach to strategic communications and city branding. Even smaller communities may take the lead nationally in smart governance and sustainability promotion, as demonstrated by their capacity to create an engaging narrative around green transformation. Alba Iulia shown that a city can greatly increase its exposure and draw in investment by implementing a clear, consistent branding plan that is based on sustained political backing and community involvement. In order to establish Balbriggan as a centre for innovation in the low-carbon and circular economy, these findings had a direct influence on Objective 3 of the IAP, which included initiatives like sustainability storytelling, a green investment marketing plan, and yearly showcase events. Their shift to electric buses and dedication to the EU's 2030 carbon-neutral target further supported Balbriggan's incorporation of public transport issues in the development of the industrial region.



DURA

Dubrovačka razvojna agencija
Dubrovnik Development Agency

Dubrovnik (Croatia)

provided a solid framework for designing and implementing green business zones that integrated energy-efficient architecture, smart transportation, and the concepts of the circular economy. Under Objective 4, these guidelines were especially helpful in establishing the Stephenstown Framework Plan and associated infrastructure projects. Balbriggan's dedication to enhancing public transport connections to Stephenstown and making the site accessible by foot, bicycle, and bus was directly influenced by their integrated approach to energy-efficient street lighting, low-energy buildings, and initiatives to make it easier to live and work without relying on cars.



M.I. AYUNTAMIENTO DE
VILLENA

Villena (Spain)

helped fuel Balbriggan's desire to establish itself as Ireland's leader in sustainability. Villena's function as a regional hub for logistics shows how even medium-sized towns can establish a reputation as cutting-edge, ecologically conscious industrial hubs. This supported the IAP's strategic goal of transforming Stephenstown into a green business park and emphasised the significance of clear policies and obvious aspirations in Balbriggan's regional, national and global positioning.



Pärnu (Estonia)

gave a clear illustration of how sectoral conferences and networks between the public, private, and educational sectors may be organised by local governments to promote sustainable economic growth. Under Objective 1 of the IAP, which covers events, briefings, and possible collaborations with higher education institutions, Balbriggan's activities were framed around knowledge-sharing, capacity building, and green business involvement.



Ormož (Slovenia)

provided insightful guidance on lowering the usage of private vehicles by integrating bike-sharing programs with cycling infrastructure. This example served to highlight the significance of integrating active transport infrastructure, including as bike lanes and pedestrian walkways, into the Stephenstown development strategy, which is part of Objective 2.



Kekava (Latvia)

provides a valuable example of industrial symbiosis through the collaboration between CleanR and Kekava Foods. By reusing treated wastewater between facilities, both companies reduced resource consumption and environmental impact. This aligns with Strategic Objective 1 of the Balbriggan IAP, which promotes business sustainability through circular economy practices, resource efficiency, and collaboration between industry and local stakeholders.



Santo Tirso (Portugal)

showed how early investments in the physical infrastructure of industrial areas may help a municipality attract foreign direct investment and accelerate industrial growth. To ensure that the land is development-ready for sustainable enterprises, Balbriggan prioritised the requirement of upfront infrastructure in Stephenstown. Their illustration reaffirmed the significance of matching market readiness with spatial planning, which is a fundamental component of IAP Objectives 2 and 4.



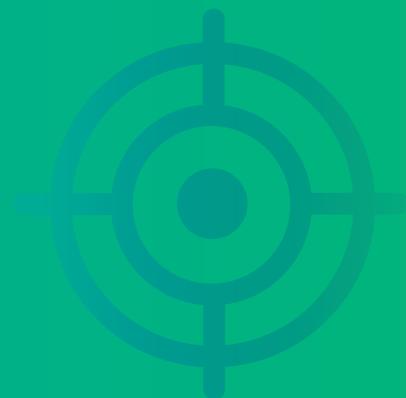
Tuusula (Finland)

are part of the Helsinki Ring of Industry. This strong example of regional collaboration for investment promotion. Ten municipalities joined forces to create a shared brand and central contact point for investors, boosting visibility and reducing marketing costs. This directly supports Strategic Objective 3 of the Balbriggan IAP, which aims to position Balbriggan as a green investment destination through unified branding, proactive lead generation, and regional partnerships like the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.

Balbriggan's IAP is now not just a locally based plan but also one that incorporates tried-and-true methods and solutions from all around Europe thanks to the combined efforts of our project partners. The plan's vision and design benefited greatly from the URBACT exchange process, and Balbriggan remains open to incorporating partner best practices throughout the implementation stage.

2

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



To initiate measures to improve sustainability in Balbriggan including renewable energy transition, circular economy and biodiversity

SO1:

SUPPORT BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY

SO2:

DEVELOPING BALBRIGGAN AS A MODEL OF GREEN INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

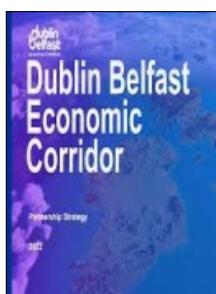
SO3:

POSITIONING BALBRIGGAN AS A DESTINATION FOR THE GREEN ECONOMY

SO4:

STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE COUNCIL AND THE EDUCATION SECTOR IN BALBRIGGAN

To achieve these objectives this IAP sets out actions to progress delivery, with targets and timelines for achievement, anticipated results, the identification of relevant stakeholders to support delivery and an assessment of the financial resources required and the risks to successful delivery. The Strategic Objectives align with Strategic Documents as below:





1. OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

The Balbriggan Integrated Action Plan is built around the following core objectives:

1. Support business sustainability

by encouraging companies to reorient to renewable energy sources, embrace active travel options, participate in biodiversity conservation initiatives. With the Council aiding companies in meeting new European Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) requirements, hosting sustainability briefings and working in collaboration to adopt the principles and opportunities presented by the circular economy

2. Developing Balbriggan as a model of green industrial development

through incorporating best practice in green and sustainable practices into the development of the industrial lands in Balbriggan and adding value to the town as a Decarbonising Zone. Collaboration between the Council, academia, private industry and the local community to promote the adoption of circular economy principles and working with Smart Balbriggan to use Balbriggan as a test bed. The Council strengthening green procurement in the delivery of infrastructure on the industrial lands in Balbriggan, including active travel, biodiversity measures and public art.

3. Positioning Balbriggan as a model of green industrial development

by developing a marketing plan and attracting new investment into the Balbriggan industrial lands, with a focus on companies committed to the green transition. The Council using its communications platforms to tell the sustainability stories of local companies and encouraging companies to adopt their own sustainability measures.

4. Strengthening collaboration between the Council and the Education Sector in Balbriggan

through Future Fingal: Fingal Skills Strategy 2024-2029 the Council aims to strengthen collaboration with education/training stakeholders to expand and promote education/training provision in Balbriggan, build on existing collaborations with academia through Smart Balbriggan and other programmes, encourage the use of Balbriggan as a test bed for sustainability and circular economy initiatives and explore the potential for the development of new education/training facilities in the town.



INITIATE MEASURES TO IMPROVE SUSTAINABILITY IN BALBRIGGAN



CIRCULAR ECONOMY

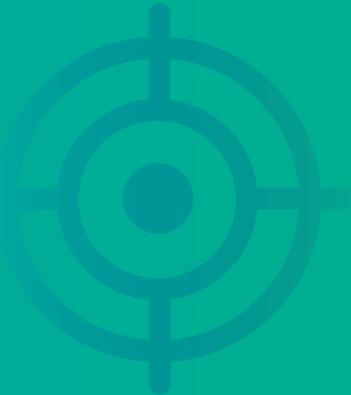


BIODIVERSITY



RENEWABLE ENERGY TRANSITION





OBJECTIVE 1: SUPPORT BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY

Engaging with and supporting local companies in Balbriggan to actively participate in the green industrial transition is a key objective in the IAP. Under this objective the Council will seek to identify gaps and challenges for business implementing green/sustainable business measures with a view to providing targeted supports to businesses to adopt sustainability measures and assist businesses in the transition to a low carbon operating model. The Council will seek to promote to business the advantages of implementing green/sustainable measures including financial, operational efficiency, reputational, marketing and CSRD/ESG compliance.

The Council will support business in the areas of energy, waste management, water, biodiversity, active travel and training for their employees, provide information and signposting on sustainability, sustainability reporting and circular economy initiatives and support collaborations with academia and the local community on sustainability and circular economy initiatives.

Engagement and participation by the local business community is vital to advancing the green industrial transition and sustainable economic growth.



KEY ACTIONS:

- i. Engage with business, key stakeholders and sustainability experts to identify existing challenges and gaps in information/financing of sustainability measures and incorporate feedback into a framework to support businesses implementing sustainability measures to 2030 "Future Fingal: Sustainable Fingal Strategy". Strategy Implementation Plan to include targeted supports for business.
- ii. Host sustainability business briefings on an annual basis which address key issues for business including waste, energy efficiency, financing options for green projects and collaborations on circular economy.
- iii. Explore collaborations with business on local initiatives ranging from renewable energy, active travel, biodiversity conservation & circular economy.
- iv. Investigate the development of a digital platform to support sustainability/circular economy initiatives which offers resources, expert guidance, materials/waste stream data, information and networking opportunities.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- i. Adoption of the Future Fingal: Sustainable Fingal Strategy by Fingal County Council.
- ii. Strong attendance by companies at Sustainability Briefings.
- iii. Increased number of, and increased business participation, in sustainability pilots/initiatives.
- iv. Feasibility determination on the development of sustainability/circular economy digital platform.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI'S):



- i. Successful adoption and initial implementation of the "Future Fingal: Sustainable Fingal Strategy" by Fingal County Council by Q1 2026, evidenced by the formal approval of the strategy, allocation of necessary resources, and establishment of a monitoring and reporting framework to track progress on key sustainability measures.
- ii. Increase in both the number and diversity of companies attending annual sustainability business briefings in Fingal from 25 in 2024 to 50 companies by 2027 and 75 companies by 2030, with participant feedback indicating improved understanding of key sustainability topics and increased interest in implementing green initiatives.
- iii. Achieve participation of at least 50% of existing businesses in the Balbriggan Industrial Zone in one or more sustainability initiative by 2030, with annual progress tracking and ensure at least 75% of participating businesses report positive outcomes from their involvement.
- iv. Complete a comprehensive feasibility study on the development of a sustainability/circular economy digital platform by Q4 2026. The study should include stakeholder engagement with a minimum of approx. 20 key businesses and organisations, an assessment of existing resources and gaps, a cost-benefit analysis and a detailed implementation plan. Additionally ensure the study outlines clear next steps and a timeline for development is the platform is deemed feasible.

ESTIMATED TOTAL BUDGETARY COST FOR PERIOD 2025 – 2030:
€700,000



IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME:



Phased implementation of actions under Objective 1 over 5 years with annual reporting to Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee, EcoCore Balbriggan ULG and Our Balbriggan Leadership Group
Commencing in 2025, Mid-term Review in 2027/2028, Review in 2030

RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS:



Lead

- Fingal County Council (FCC)

Supporting Stakeholders

- Fingal Chamber
- Balbriggan Chamber of Commerce
- Fingal LEO
- Beat Centre (Innovate Fingal)
- Smart Balbriggan
- Business and Industry

RESOURCES REQUIRED:



- Funding for development of Future Fingal: Sustainable Fingal Strategy & Feasibility Study on circular economy digital platform
- Funding for implementation of measures in the Sustainable Fingal Strategy
- Funding & expert knowledge for sustainability business briefings
- Human resources to engage with business and progress collaborations with business & academia

POTENTIAL FUNDING STREAMS:



Fingal County Council; Fingal LEO; Fingal Chamber; Balbriggan Chamber of Commerce; SEAI; Enterprise Ireland; EU Funding Streams

RISK ASSESSMENT:



- **Risk:** Low business participation; lack of funding
- **Likelihood:** Medium.
- **Impact:** High.
- **Mitigation:** Proactive engagement with business to identify and address key sustainability challenges and proactive identification of potential funding streams to finance actions



OBJECTIVE 2: DEVELOPING BALBRIGGAN AS A MODEL OF GREEN INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Guiding the development of the industrial lands in Balbriggan to ensure that economic development incorporates sustainability best practice and is future-proofed for renewable energy and active travel measures, and ensuring that the delivery of physical and green infrastructure is cohesive and occurs on a phased basis is a key objective of IAP. Integral to developing Balbriggan as a model of green industrial development is the incorporation of sustainability best practice in the construction and delivery of the physical infrastructure and collaborating with local companies on local green initiatives and the greening of the industrial sites owned by businesses and the public realm within the industrial area.

The EcoCore Project seeks to balance economic development with the environment and to advance the green industrial transition through collaboration with business and academia. The IAP aims to add value to Balbriggan's designation as a Decarbonising Zone in the Council's Climate Action Plan by progressing decarbonising initiatives within the adjacent industrial lands.

Promoting collaboration between the Council, academia, private industry and the local community to adopt circular economy principles, investigate potential renewable energy projects and local green projects will advance delivery on the Council's commitments under the Circular Cities Declaration, and progress delivery on actions within the Council's Climate Action Plan and the Future Fingal: Economic Development Strategy. Working with local business

and the local community the Council seek to develop the amenity potential of the Matt River and associated riparian corridor through the industrial lands.

The Council will work with Smart Balbriggan, academia and private business/industry to make Balbriggan available as a test bed for sustainability and circular economy pilots and explore the use of smart technology for data collection for environmental monitoring and future planning purposes. The potential for the expansion of the Balbriggan Education and Training (BEAT) Enterprise Centre will also be investigated to provide additional space for potential spinouts and start-ups from collaborations.

The Council will lead on the developing and driving green procurement in the delivery of infrastructure on the industrial lands in Balbriggan, including active travel, biodiversity measures and public art through its approach to procurement and in its approach to land sales of Council owned land with the incorporation of green criteria into its land sale assessments.



KEY ACTIONS:

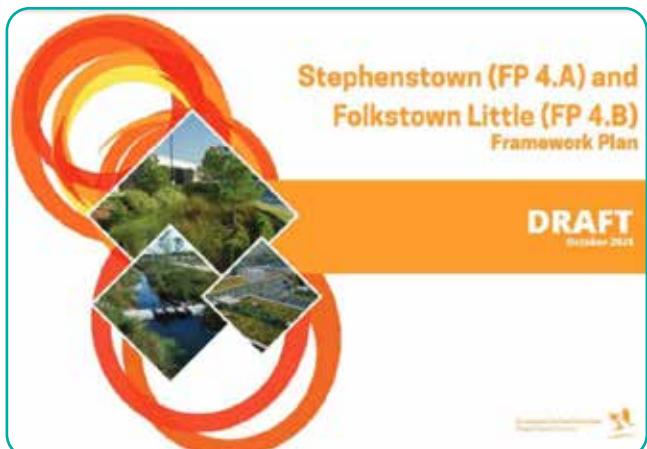


- i. Develop the Stephenstown and Folkstown Little Framework Plans as outlined the Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2028 to guide development on the industrial lands in Balbriggan.
- ii. Develop a guidance document for investors in industrial lands in Balbriggan to set the green ambition for future industrial development, give developers guidance on sustainable construction standards expected and to set expectations for the collaborative approach the Council wants to foster between the municipality, business and academia.
- iii. Council to strengthen green procurement criteria in its tenders.
- iv. Infrastructure delivery on the industrial lands in Balbriggan to incorporate sustainable and green best practices to future-proof the infrastructure and lead on green construction methods and materials.
- v. Upgrade the Naul Road (R122) to facilitate access from the Dublin-Belfast M1 Motorway to the industrial area and Balbriggan town.
- vi. Deliver required road and active travel infrastructure within the industrial lands in Balbriggan to open up the land for development and facilitate connectivity to the town.
- vii. Investigate the potential for collaboration on renewable/sustainable energy projects on the industrial lands in Balbriggan to add value to the town's designation as a Decarbonising Zone and leverage opportunities arising from offshore wind energy projects and local solar/alternative energy projects.
- viii. Organize regular Meetings to discuss Progress and address Concerns.
- ix. Delivery of public art which embodies the principles of sustainability/circularity in its use of materials.
- x. Explore collaborations between the Council, business and academia to promote the circular economy and the use of the the industrial lands as a test bed.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:



- i. Framework Plans in place setting the planning context for sustainable economic development of the industrial lands in Balbriggan.
- ii. Document which provides clear guidance to investors/developers interested in locating in Balbriggan on the green ambition for the industrial lands and expected standards for sustainable construction methods, materials and operation of facilities.
- iii. Incorporation of robust green criteria into Council procurements for infrastructure projects on the industrial lands.
- iv. Specifications on infrastructure construction projects within the landbank in Balbriggan to include strong green/ sustainability requirements.
- v. Completion of Naul Road (R122) upgrade to increase capacity to cater for industrial development of the landbank and associated increased residential development in Balbriggan.
- vi. Phased completion of road and active travel infrastructure within the landbank and connections to Balbriggan town as industrial development progresses.
- vii. Development of a minimum of 1 local green energy project within the industrial lands by 2030.
- viii. Delivery of a green energy project on the landbank by 2030.
- ix. 2 pieces of public art using green/sustainable materials delivered within the landbank by 2030.
- x. Showcase Balbriggan as a test bed for circular innovation through collaboration between the Council, academia and business on a minimum of 1 circular economy project/initiative in Balbriggan by 2028.



OBJECTIVE 2 (CONTD.): DEVELOPING BALBRIGGAN AS A MODEL OF GREEN INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI'S):



- i. Adopt the Stephenstown and Folkstown Little Framework plans by Q3 2025. The plans should include comprehensive engagement from key businesses and community organisations, detailed assessments of current and future land use, infrastructure needs, and environmental impact. Additionally ensure that the plans outline clear next steps and a timeline for implementation to guise sustainable economic development in the industrial lands of Balbriggan.
- ii. Complete a Development Guidance document for potential investors in the Balbriggan industrial lands by Q3 2025. The document should include comprehensive stakeholder engagement with key businesses, developers, and academic institutions, detailed guidelines on sustainable construction standards, materials, and operational practices, and a clear outline of the collaborative approach the Council aims to foster. Additionally, ensure that the document provides actionable steps and a timeline for implementation to support the green ambition for future industrial development.
- iii. Ensure that all infrastructure delivery on the industrial lands in Balbriggan incorporates sustainable and green best practices by Q4 2026. Achieve at least 70% adoption of green construction methods and materials in new projects. Conduct timely reviews to assess the sustainability and resilience of the infrastructure.
- iv. Increased sustainability quality of constructed infrastructure i.e. use of recycled materials in roads.
- v. Complete the upgrade of Naul Road (R122) by Q4 2026 to facilitate access from the Dublin-Belfast M1 Motorway to the industrial area and Balbriggan town. The upgrade should increase road capacity to support a number of new industrial development buildings and associated residential growth adopting/ implementing sustainable design principles.
- vi. Complete the development of Naul Road (R122) and active travel infrastructure within the industrial lands in Balbriggan by Q4 2026. Ensure that the infrastructure increases connectivity to the town and supports sustainable development. Aim for new developments to incorporate active travel options and achieve measurable improvements in traffic flow and accessibility.
- vii. Complete an investigation into the potential for collaboration on renewable/sustainable energy projects on the industrial lands in Balbriggan by Q1 2026. Identify at least three viable projects and establish partnerships with key stakeholders. Aim to initiate at least one renewable energy project by Q4 2027, contributing to the town's Decarbonising Zone designation.
- viii. Delivery of a green energy project on the landbank by 2030.
- ix. Deliver two public art installations in Balbriggan by Q4 2026 that embody the principles of sustainability and circularity in their use of materials. Ensure that each installation is created using at least 50% recycled or eco-friendly materials and engages the community in sustainability education.
- x. Establish at least 2 collaborative projects between the Council, businesses, and academia to promote the circular economy on the industrial lands in Balbriggan by Q4 2027. Use the industrial lands as a test bed for innovative circular economy practices. Monitor and report on the outcomes and scalability of these projects annually.

RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS:

Lead

- Fingal County Council (FCC)

Supporting Stakeholders

- TII
- NTA
- IDA
- Smart Balbriggan
- Innovate Fingal & BEAT
- DCU
- TU Dublin
- Trinity College Dublin
- Fingal Chamber
- Balbriggan Chamber of Commerce
- Business and industry
- Codema
- Residents of Balbriggan/Local Community
- Balbriggan Tidy Towns
- Balbriggan Sustainable Energy Community (SEC)
- ICLEI – Circular Cities Declaration – Circular Economy Support Office



RESOURCES REQUIRED:



- Funding for preparation of the Stephenstown & Folkstown Little Framework Plans; feasibility studies; planning & delivery of required road and active travel infrastructure on the Balbriggan industrial lands; installation of Smart sensors; project collaborations
- Human resources to engage with business and progress collaborations
- Smart Sensors to gather environmental data
- Engineering expertise for road, active travel and energy projects
- Biodiversity and water expertise for projects around green/blue corridor along Matt River
- Artists working with sustainable materials for public art installations
- Procurement expertise for the development green procurement criteria
- Circular economy expertise support from ICLEI Circular Cities – Circular Economy Support Office
- Business engagement: time and funds invested in collaborations and local projects
- Community engagement and time invested in local community projects

ESTIMATED TOTAL BUDGETARY COST FOR PERIOD 2025 – 2045: €750,000



POTENTIAL FUNDING STREAMS:



Fingal County Council; NTA; Business/industry; EU Funding Streams; Central Government

IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME:



Delivery of required Framework Plans and Development Guidance document in 2025

Phased delivery of physical and green infrastructure over 20 years (2025 – 2045) with delivery of the Naul Road (R122) upgrade by 2028 and annual reporting to Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee, EcoCore Balbriggan ULG and Our Balbriggan Leadership Group.

Delivery of collaboration projects over the period 2025 – 2030.

RISK ASSESSMENT:



● **Risk:** Resistance from investors/developers on green ambition for the industrial lands and recommendations within Development Guidance document; planning and environmental issues arising during development/construction; construction delays; supply chain issues; availability of financing; construction inflation; level of engagement from relevant stakeholders; availability of FCC resources to progress projects; lack of data to inform decision-making/reporting

● **Likelihood:** Medium.

● **Impact:** High.

● **Mitigation:** Proactive engagement with stakeholders to identify and address key challenges and develop project proposals; proactive identification of potential funding streams to finance actions; assignment of required number of suitably qualified resources to progress delivery of projects; engagement with experts in relevant fields to support project proposals and collaborations.



OBJECTIVE 3: POSITIONING BALBRIGGAN AS A MODEL OF GREEN INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Attracting new investment into Balbriggan with a focus on business/industry which shares the Council's commitment to advancing the green industrial transition, promoting sustainable economic development and the principles of the circular economy aligns with the core aim of the EcoCore Project and is vital to positioning Balbriggan as a model of green industrial development in Ireland, Europe and globally.

A crucial element of attracting new and green investment to Balbriggan is developing a brand identity for Balbriggan and telling the story of Balbriggan's green transition journey, including the stories of local companies which share the Council's green vision for the future development of the industrial land. Sharing these sustainability stories and collaborative projects over the Council's communications platforms strengthens Balbriggan's identity as a model of green industrial development and will inspire other businesses/industry to commence/continue their own sustainability journeys in partnership with the Council and attract likeminded business to locate in Balbriggan.



KEY ACTIONS:

- i. Develop a Marketing Plan for Fingal to attract investment to Ireland, to Dublin, to Fingal.
- ii. Develop a brand identity for the Balbriggan industrial lands.
- iii. Proactive lead generation and engagement with potential investors by the Council.
- iv. Review the Council's land sales criteria to incorporate green elements to encourage the location of companies which share the Council's commitment and vision for green industrial development in Balbriggan.
- v. Develop business video testimonials of companies choosing Fingal as an investment location. These business case studies documenting and sharing the sustainability journeys of local business to encourage other companies to start/continue their sustainability journeys.



EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- i. Increased lead generation and interest in site acquisition in Balbriggan.
- ii. Recognition of Balbriggan as a leader in green/sustainable industrial development and green technology.
- iii. Investment in Balbriggan's industrial lands, particularly from companies with strong records/interest in green/circular economy sectors.
- iv. Increased employment in Balbriggan and associated indirect benefits to the town.
- v. Increased number of businesses with a strong commitment to sustainability/circular economy locating in Balbriggan.
- vi. Increased number of spinouts/start-ups, particularly in sustainable/circular economy/green technology sectors seeking space in BEAT.
- vii. Increased participation by business in sustainability/green projects in Balbriggan.



RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS:

Lead

- Fingal County Council (FCC)



Supporting Stakeholders

- IDA
- Fingal Chamber
- Balbriggan Chamber of Commerce
- Innovate Fingal & BEAT
- Business and Industry
- Residents of Balbriggan/Local Community

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI'S):

- i. Receive at least 10 investment enquiries annually by Q4 2025. Track and analyse the nature of these enquiries to identify trends and opportunities for further engagement and development.
- ii. Monitor media coverage to assess public perception and adjust communication strategies accordingly.
- iii. Secure new investments totalling at least €20 million in Balbriggan by 2030. Focus on attracting investments that support sustainable and green industrial development.
- iv. Achieve and maintain a high investment rating for Balbriggan by Q4 2026 to gauge the Council's and town's commitment and credibility for green industrial development. Regularly review and improve policies to enhance the investment climate."
- v. Aim to increase local employment numbers by at least 10% by 2030 through the development of sustainable industrial lands and the attraction of green businesses. Monitor employment trends and provide support for workforce development.
- vi. Establish at least 10 sustainability-focused businesses in Balbriggan by 2030. Ensure these businesses adopt green practices and contribute to the town's sustainability goals.
- vii. Number of enquiries being made to BEAT. Target: 15 enquiries annually.
- viii. Conduct annual business sentiment and employee satisfaction surveys on sustainability and green measures starting in Q1 2026. Aim for at least 80% positive feedback from businesses and employees regarding the Council's sustainability initiatives. 5

ESTIMATED TOTAL BUDGETARY COST FOR PERIOD 2025 – 2045: €100,000

IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME:

Delivery of Marketing Plan and Brand Identity in 2025
Lead generation, marketing to investors and ongoing engagement with existing businesses over the period 2025 – 2030 and annual reporting to Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee, EcoCore Balbriggan ULG and Our Balbriggan Leadership Group



RESOURCES REQUIRED:

- Funding for the development of a marketing plan and brand identity for Balbriggan
- Human resources to engage with business to develop testimonials and case studies
- Human resources to follow up on lead generation
- Business engagement; time and human resources invested in the development of testimonials and case studies, green upskilling for employees and work on sustainability projects
- IDA marketing resources, lead generation and business engagement



POTENTIAL FUNDING STREAMS:

Fingal County Council; IDA; Fingal Chamber; Balbriggan Chamber of Commerce; Business/industry



RISK ASSESSMENT:

- **Risk:** Lack of interest from investors/developers in location; lack of engagement from existing business; availability of investment finance; level of engagement from relevant stakeholders; availability of FCC resources to engage with business and follow up on leads
- **Likelihood:** Medium.
- **Impact:** High.
- **Mitigation:** Engagement with investors; proactive lead generation and follow up; engagement with IDA; proactive engagement with existing business; increased engagement with international investors and targeted trade missions to attract investment; engagement with DUBLIN Place brand; participation in DBEC; participation in EU Projects





OBJECTIVE 4: STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE COUNCIL AND THE EDUCATION SECTOR IN BALBRIGGAN

Building on the success of the Future Fingal: Fingal Skills Strategy continue to strengthen collaboration between the Council, education/training providers and business/industry to expand and promote education/training provision in Balbriggan. Smart Balbriggan is established in Balbriggan and the Council plans to build on the pilot actions tested in Balbriggan and developed through the EcoCore Hackathon to advance sustainability projects and support the development of the circular economy using Balbriggan town and the industrial lands as a test bed.

Balbriggan has a young population which presents a large talent pool for future job creation for businesses locating in the town. The attraction of businesses in the renewable energy, circular economy and green technology sectors offers the opportunity for local employment and associated opportunities for local education/training programmes for new employees and for upskilling and reskilling employees. The green focus of Balbriggan's industrial lands offers a further opportunity for research & development in the green sector with the potential for spinouts from collaborations and new start-ups seeking local enterprise space to develop a green cluster along the DBEC corridor. A potential model for Balbriggan

is Brainport Eindhoven, which is a high-tech innovation hub in the Netherlands, known as "The Home of Pioneers", where technology, research, and entrepreneurship come together to develop groundbreaking solutions for global challenges and drive innovation in fields such as AI, robotics and sustainable energy. The region has a strong reputation for collaboration and a multi-disciplinary approach with business working together with academia and government to develop cutting-edge technologies.

The future development of offshore renewable energy projects and infrastructure presents a unique opportunity for Balbriggan as a well-connected coastal town with easy access to Drogheda Port and Dublin Port by rail and within 20 minutes of Dublin Airport. The prospect of employment in this sector makes Balbriggan ideally suited to business in this sector and an opportunity to develop education and training facilities for the marine industry.





KEY ACTIONS:



- i. Expand education/training provision in Balbriggan through collaboration with providers.
- ii. Promote participation in upskilling & reskilling programmes with local business through the Fingal Skills Strategy.
- iii. Carry out a Feasibility Study on the potential for a marine training centre in Balbriggan.
- iv. Increased engagement with academia and education/training providers including Smart Balbriggan on sustainability and circular economy projects.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:



- I. New education/training courses available locally in Balbriggan.
- II. Increased participation in upskilling and reskilling courses offered by providers.
- III. Increased participation by business in the Fingal Skills Strategy.
- IV. New education/training facilities located in Balbriggan.
- V. Feasibility determination on the requirement for and viability of marine training facilities in Balbriggan.
- VI. Increased collaboration between the Council, academia and business on sustainability and circular economy projects in Balbriggan.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI'S):



- i. Over the next five years, increase the provision of education and training programs in Balbriggan, with a strategic emphasis on courses that support local industry requirements and sustainability objectives, contingent on funding availability. Education providers will undertake annual reviews and evaluations of course offerings to ensure alignment with evolving industry trends and emerging sectors, in accordance with Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy and funding priorities.
- ii. Complete a comprehensive feasibility study on the potential for a marine training facility in Balbriggan by Q1 2026. The study should include stakeholder engagement, market analysis, cost-benefit analysis, and identification of potential locations. Ensure the study provides clear recommendations and an implementation plan.
- iii. Identify and secure at circa €1 million in potential funding sources for new collaboration projects on sustainability and the circular economy by 2028. Focus on grants, partnerships, and investment opportunities that support innovative and impactful projects. Track and report on the progress of funding applications and the success of funded projects.

OBJECTIVE 4 (CONTD.): STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE COUNCIL AND THE EDUCATION SECTOR IN BALBRIGGAN



RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS:

Lead

- Fingal County Council (FCC)

Supporting Stakeholders

- Dublin Regional Skills Forum (DRSF)
- Education/training providers i.e. DDLETB/Skillnet
- Solas
- DCU
- TU Dublin
- Trinity College Dublin
- National Maritime College of Ireland
- Smart Balbriggan
- Innovate Fingal & BEAT
- Business and industry
- Balbriggan Sustainable Energy Community (SEC)
- Residents of Balbriggan/Local Community



RESOURCES REQUIRED:

- Funding for the development new training/education courses and expansion of provision; development of feasibility study on potential marine training facility in Balbriggan; collaboration projects
- Human resources to engage with academia & business to develop collaborative projects
- Smart Balbriggan resources to support collaborative projects on sustainability and the circular economy
- Business engagement: time and human resources invested in the training & development of new & existing employees



ESTIMATED TOTAL BUDGETARY COST FOR PERIOD 2025 – 2045: €300,000



IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME:



Completion of Feasibility Study on potential marine training centre by Q1 2026

Development and expansion of education/training courses by education/training providers over the period 2025 – 2030

Development of new collaborations between the Council, business and academia over the period 2025 – 2030

POTENTIAL FUNDING STREAMS:



Fingal County Council; Solas; Department of Education; DCU; TU Dublin; Trinity College Dublin; Smart Balbriggan; Smart Dublin; Skillnet; Business/Industry

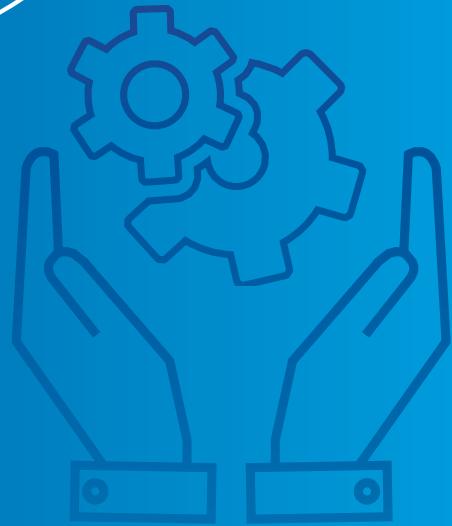
RISK ASSESSMENT:



- **Risk:** Lack of interest from students/employees/business in education/training provision; lack of engagement from existing business in collaborative projects; availability of project finance; level of engagement from relevant stakeholders; availability of education/training resources to deliver training/education
- **Likelihood:** Medium.
- **Impact:** High.
- **Mitigation:** Engagement and feedback between business and education/training providers facilitated through the Fingal Skills Strategy; ongoing engagement with universities and Smart Balbriggan; participation in collaborative projects.



EE



GOVERNANCE



4.1

GOVERNANCE PROCESS FOR THE INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN (STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY)

A strong and inclusive governance structure based on strong leadership, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, ongoing accountability, and active stakeholder participation is essential to the successful execution of the EcoCore Balbriggan Integrated Action Plan's (IAP). The IAP has been developed in with knowledge that strong cooperation between local government, business, community leaders, academic institutions and regional agencies is necessary to bring about a significant green transformation in Balbriggan.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

For the successful implementation of the Balbriggan IAP, a wide range of stakeholders must actively participate, each one contributing significantly to certain actions. These stakeholders provide local and expert knowledge and bring forward a variety of assets to ensure that initiatives are appropriate, feasible, and align with local and regional demands and policy goals.

The following participation procedures have been used in the engagement approach to encourage open exchange of ideas, transparency, and co-creation with members of Balbriggan ULG and the Council intends to continue to work with these stakeholders to progress the implementation of the IAP:



● **Balbriggan ULG:**

Stakeholders from the public, education and business sectors will communicate through continued ULG meetings/workshops beyond the lifetime of the project. Stakeholders will continue to co-create and improve project goals, identify and address obstacles, and co-ordinate priorities for implementation.

● **Co-Creation Workshops:**

Through targeted design-thinking workshops, public-private co-operation will be encouraged, allowing stakeholders to influence operational models, infrastructure design, and project specifics.

● **Public Consultations:**

Several public consultations and feedback sessions will be held to get gather feedback on proposals, discuss issues and potential collaborations and ensure alignment with local and business needs to preserve community involvement and local relevance.

To facilitate the execution of the IAP's goals, this inclusive approach seeks to promote co-operation, trust, and community buy-in.



KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR ROLES IN THE URBACT LOCAL GROUP (ULG)

STAKEHOLDER	ROLE IN ULG/IAP IMPLEMENTATION
Fingal County Council (FCC), Lead Partner	Overall leadership, governance, and policy alignment. Responsible for planning, implementation oversight, and inter-departmental coordination. The Economic Development Department to drive strategic investment, liaison with stakeholders and supporting green industrial growth and innovation.
Fingal County Council (FCC), Lead Partner Fingal Chamber and Balbriggan Chamber of Commerce	Represents local business interests, facilitates business engagement, and promotes private sector participation.
Local Enterprise Office (LEO)	Provides advisory services, supports SMEs with training, grants, and innovation funding.
Smart Balbriggan	Leads digital and smart infrastructure integration, supports data platforms and innovation.
Beat Centre	Hosts training, development and networking for green businesses and startups.
Academic Institutions	Potential collaborators for educational facility feasibility, R&D, and sustainability skills training.
Community Groups	Act as civic voices, participate in public consultations, and promote environmental and social equity.
IDA Ireland	Supports investment promotion, facilitates links with national and international sustainable industries.

GENDER EQUALITY IN THE IAP

The EcoCore Project is cognisant of incorporating URBACT IV's cross-cutting themes such as digital, environmental and in particular gender equality as part of the IAP formation and future implementation to align with The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, enshrined in Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, mandates that public bodies in Ireland must actively consider equality and human rights when performing their functions. This duty requires public bodies to eliminate discrimination, promote equality, and protect human rights.

Transitions to incorporate the cross-cutting themes must be equitable for all. The needs, abilities, and aspirations of all Balbriggan residents must be represented as part of the city's green industrial transformation.



EMBEDDING GENDER EQUALITY AS A CROSS-CUTTING PRINCIPLE

Each IAP goal and action incorporate the following strategies:

INCLUSIVE PLANNING & CO-DESIGN

- **Action:** Make sure that inclusive facilitation techniques actively involve women to contribute in public consultations, ULG meetings, and co-creation workshops.
- **Indicator:** Women representation in all stakeholder engagement ≥ 40%
- **Implementation:** Collaborate with women's networks, youth services, and local multicultural organisations to co-host or co-design events.

PLANNING FOR SAFETY AND COMFORT

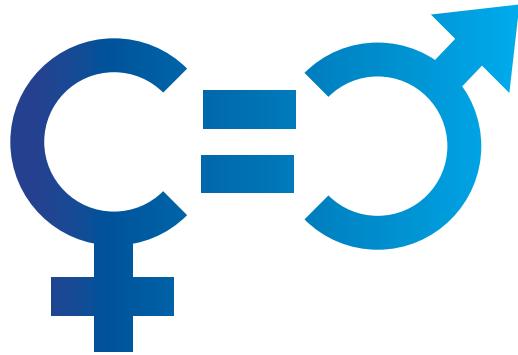
- **Action:** Ensure corridors and pathways are well-lit, avoiding dark, isolated areas. Covered bike parking also needs extra lighting to remain safe in winter and evenings.
- **Indicator:** Extend activity throughout the day and week, preventing dead zones that feel unsafe
- **Implementation:** Ensure women are well represented in public consultations, events, and decision-making.

SUPPORT GESI-FOCUSED ENTERPRISE AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- **Action:** Collaborate with educational implementors to ensure the integration of gender equality into curriculum design under Objective 4 (Education Facility) by supporting training pathways for under-represented female groups in green jobs.
- **Resources:** Employers, Education providers and the Fingal Skills Strategy can collaborate to create pathways for gender inclusion in future cross-cutting theme industries.

PUBLIC ART AND BIODIVERSITY WITH GENDER LENS

- **Action:** Endeavour to reflect Balbriggan's community's diversity is reflected in the green areas through public art displays for the Stephenstown Business Park.
- **Implementation:** Communities storytelling trails or school art contests as examples of participatory approaches.



LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Lead Governance Body: Fingal County Council's Economic, Enterprise, Tourism & Cultural Development Department (EETCD) co-ordinates the overall governance framework with Fingal County Council (FCC) serving as the lead authority of the project liaising into the EcoCore Balbriggan ULG, the EETCD Strategic Policy Group (SPC) and the Our Balbriggan Leadership Group.

Support Functions: IDA, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE), Fingal Chamber of Commerce, Balbriggan Chamber of Commerce, DCU, TUDublin, DBEC, FCC internal departments including the Local Enterprise Office and technical partners such as Smart Balbriggan offer sector-specific assistance while specific expertise is drawn from IDA and educational bodies such as the universities.

TRANSPARENCY AND DATA SHARING:

- Stakeholders involved in collaborative projects will utilise a standardised data sharing agreement to guarantee GDPR compliance and facilitate efficient data transmission.
- Stakeholders involved in collaborative projects will use shared folders e.g Basecamp and uniform templates as provided by URBACT (e.g., surveys, reporting forms) for transparency and consistency and publish reports and where possible provide open data in line with local authority policy.

ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS:

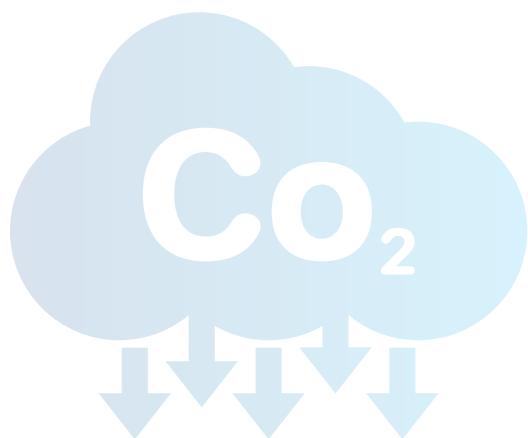
- Annual reporting on the progress of the IAP objectives to EcoCore Balbriggan ULG, the Economic Development Strategic Policy Group (SPG), The Economic Forum and the Our Balbriggan Leadership Group and all of which have a diverse range of stakeholders including those from academia, local community and business.

STRENGTHENING VERTICAL INTEGRATION: ALIGNING WITH NATIONAL/REGIONAL POLICY AND FUNDING

The effect, legitimacy, and resource alignment of local action plans such as this IAP are all improved by vertical integration. The Balbriggan IAP is aligned with a wide range of regional and national strategies which guarantees that the IAP is not developed in isolation but rather actively supports national commitments and regional development goals, such as biodiversity plans, climate action targets, SDG's and circular economy legislative commitments as outlined below.

Where applicable, the IAP will help to leverage external funding sources such as ERDF, the Climate Action Fund, and Just Transition to name a few. Fingal County Council commits to establishing partnerships with external agencies to ensure consistency and co-investment in the implementation of the plan.

FCC will engage national stakeholders through a coordination group to ensure vertical integration of the IAP with government policy and funding streams. These include DBEC, Enterprise Ireland, and the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly.



POLICY ALIGNMENT IN THE IAP

Sustainable Industrial Lands:

- Aligns with Ireland's Climate Action Plan 2024 (Decarbonisation Zones, District Heating)
- Supports Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) priority on compact growth and green economy
- Incorporates elements of the Fingal Climate Action Plan 2024-2029



Education Facility Feasibility:

- Directly supports Future Fingal: Fingal Skills Strategy 2024-2029 Action Plan.
- Project Ireland 2040
- Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025
- National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development to 2030.



4.2

MONITORING & EVALUATION

A thorough Monitoring & Evaluation framework is part of the Balbriggan Integrated Action Plan (IAP), which is intended to gauge implementation progress, quantify effect, and direct adaptive adjustments over the course of implementation. The three stages of this framework are Initial Evaluation, Ongoing Performance Monitoring and Final Evaluation which are all based on the learning, accountability, and the improvement stages of URBACT's methodology.

INITIAL EVALUATION: ESTABLISHING BASELINES

Initial evaluation was carried out through the EcoCore Baseline study to evaluate the status, establish the baseline, highlighting important indicators prior to commencing the project. This starting point included:

- Offer a benchmark by which advancement may be evaluated.
- Determine any gaps or early implementation difficulties.
- Give each Key Performance Indicator (KPI) an attainable goal.

The initial evaluation used pre-existing data sources e.g. Smart Balbriggan data, Our Balbriggan Socia Economic Profile and Fingal County Council's inhouse data along with baseline study research and consultation with key stakeholders.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING: ONGOING TRACKING AND LEARNING

Throughout the implementation phase, performance monitoring will be carried out to make sure the IAP stays on course and enable data-driven and responsive decision-making. This comprises:

KPI CATEGORY	INDICATOR	MEASUREMENT METHOD
Community and Business Engagement	Number of participants in planning sessions, workshops, public consultations	Event attendance logs, survey participation rates, stakeholder feedback
Road, Active Travel & Green Infrastructure	m ² of newly developed road and active travel infrastructure, green space available to public, number of biodiversity-enhancing projects	Planning permissions, infrastructure delivery, GIS mapping, biodiversity audits
Circular Economy Progress	Number of circular projects/initiatives launched, business adoption of green and circular practices	Local business surveys, initiative tracking via Smart Balbriggan platform



MONITORING TOOLS & PRACTICES:

- Continue to meet with the established EcoCore Balbriggan ULG to evaluate progress.
- Smart Balbriggan dashboard with insights on relevant KPIs and publishing of open datasets
- Feedback mechanisms to gather input from stakeholders, such as online forms, workshop debriefs, and recurring satisfaction surveys.
- Adaptive management strategies that permit adjustments in the middle of a project to respond to stakeholder feedback and results monitoring.

FINAL EVALUATION: ASSESSING IMPACT & LESSONS LEARNED

A Final Evaluation will be carried out at the conclusion of the implementation period in 2030 to evaluate the IAP's overall efficacy, sustainability, and reproducibility. It will consist of:

- A comparison of the end outcomes with the mid-term goals and baseline.
- In-depth stakeholder engagement.
- Lessons learned and suggestions for future initiatives in Balbriggan/Fingal.

To maintain openness and promote wider learning within the URBACT network, the final assessment report will be made available to all parties involved.



FUNDING STRATEGY (FINANCIAL PLAN & RESOURCES)

IAP STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	ACTION	AMOUNT PER ACTION	FUNDING SOURCE
1. Support business sustainability	1.1 Engage with business to identify existing gaps and challenges in implementing sustainability measures	€100,000	Fingal County Council
	1.2 Provision of targeted supports to business as a result of the Sustainable Fingal Strategy	€500,000	Fingal County Council; SEAL; Fingal LEO; Enterprise Ireland; Skillnet; Fingal Chamber; EU Funding Streams
	1.3 Collaboration with business to encourage use of renewable energy sources, active travel options, biodiversity conservation initiatives and circular economy initiatives	€50,000	Fingal County Council; SEAL; Fingal LEO; Enterprise Ireland; Skillnet; Fingal Chamber; EU Funding Streams
	1.4 Provision of information, support & training on sustainability reporting	€50,000	Fingal County Council; SEAL; Fingal LEO; Enterprise Ireland; Skillnet; Fingal Chamber; EU Funding Streams
2. Developing Balbriggan as a model of green industrial development	2.1 Development of the Stephenstown & Folkstown Little Framework Plans	€350,000	Fingal County Council
	2.2 Development of Investment Guidance document for industrial lands in Balbriggan	-	Fingal County Council
	2.3 Fingal County Council to strengthen its green procurement criteria in tenders	-	Fingal County Council
	2.4 Infrastructure delivery by Fingal County Council in Balbriggan to incorporate green best practices	-	Fingal County Council
	2.5 Upgrade Naul Road (R122)	TBD	Fingal County Council
	2.6 Provision of road & active travel connections within the industrial lands in Balbriggan	TBD	Fingal County Council; NTA; TII
	2.7 Development of pilot green/sustainable initiatives with existing business within the industrial lands in Balbriggan	€250,000	Fingal County Council; Central Government Funding; EU Funding; Private investors

IAP STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	ACTION	AMOUNT PER ACTION	FUNDING SOURCE
2. Developing Balbriggan as a model of green industrial development (contd.)	2.8 Investigate potential for energy projects on the industrial lands in Balbriggan	TBD	Fingal County Council; Central Government Funding; EU Funding; Universities; Private Investors
	2.9 Delivery of public art at the industrial lands in Balbriggan which embodies the principles of sustainability/circularity in material use	€300,000	Fingal County Council; Central Government Funding; Private Investors
	2.10 Collaboration between the Council, academia & business to promote the circular economy & use of Balbriggan as a circular economy test bed	€100,000	Fingal County Council; Central Government Funding; LEADER; EU Funding; Universities; Private Investors
3. Positioning Balbriggan as a model of green industrial development	3.1 Develop a Marketing Plan for Fingal	€30,000	Fingal County Council
	3.2 Develop a Brand Identity for the industrial lands in Balbriggan, including marketing collateral	€30,000	Fingal County Council
	3.3 Proactively market industrial lands to investors	€50,000	Fingal County Council Fingal County Council; IDA; Fingal Chamber
	3.4 Review Council's land sale criteria to advance green transition	-	Fingal County Council
	3.5 Develop video business case studies documenting & sharing the sustainability journeys of local business & testimonials from companies choosing to locate in Fingal	-	Fingal County Council
4. Strengthening of collaboration between the Council & the Education Sector in Balbriggan	4.1 Expand education/training provision in Balbriggan through collaboration with providers	-	Solas; National Training Fund; Skillnet; Fingal LEO; Universities
	4.2 Promote participation in upskilling & reskilling programmes with local business through the Fingal Skills Strategy	-	Solas; National Training Fund; Skillnet; Fingal LEO; Universities
	4.3 Carry out a feasibility study on the potential for a marine training centre in Balbriggan	€50,000	Fingal County Council
	4.4 Increased engagement with academia & education/training providers including Smart Balbriggan on sustainability & circular economy projects	€250,000	Fingal County Council; Central Government Funding; LEADER; EU Funding; Universities; Private Investors



The IAP's underlying financial strategy seeks to identify potential funding streams to support delivery of actions, including:

- **EU Funding** which offers funding for initiatives aimed towards sustainable urban development, the circular economy and capacity building.
- **Central Government Funding** which offers funding for infrastructure projects i.e. roads, active travel etc. and education/training programmes
- **Fingal County Council Funding** which provides funding for marketing, infrastructure delivery, collaboration projects in areas such as energy, biodiversity, business training
- **Third level institutions** which can provide access to research & development funding and funding for pilot projects
- **Private investment and public-private partnerships** which would support training and sustainability projects



4.4

RISK ASSESSMENT

The IAP has included a proactive risk management approach to identify potential risks, evaluate their consequences, and put mitigation plans in place to lessen the risk.



RISK IDENTIFICATION

Five main categories have been established:

1. Operational Risks:

Project execution difficulties, administrative/ logistical delays, capacity & resource limitations.

2. Financial Risks:

Lack of funding, unforeseen cost increases, reliance on alternative funding sources.

3. Political Risks:

Potential modifications to legislative objectives, changes in government policy/leadership/ priorities, geo-political factors influencing investment decisions.

4. Environmental Risks:

Hazards brought on by severe weather and erratic climatic patterns, environmental factors around development.

5. Social Risks:

Lack of information or disinformation on projects, resistance to change, or difficulties gaining community support.

RISK ANALYSIS & MITIGATION MEASURES

RISK	LIKELIHOOD	IMPACT	MITIGATION STRATEGY
Lack of funding	High	High	Develop diversified funding streams, leverage additional funding streams i.e. EU grants and private sector investments.
Lack of engagement	Medium	High	Active engagement with stakeholders, Stakeholder enhanced communication strategies, regular communications on progress.
Policy changes	Low	High	Maintain policy flexibility, establish ongoing dialogue with government authorities.
Project delays	Medium	High	Implement robust project management frameworks, ensure clear milestone tracking.
Resources	Medium	High	Cross train staff to cover roles and responsibilities, prioritize critical tasks and phase implementation to match available capacity.
Environmental risks	Low	High	Integrate climate adaptation strategies into project designs, conduct environmental impact assessments and studies as required for projects.

RISK MONITORING & CONTINGENCY PLANS

To monitor issues that may arise and deal effectively with those issues, a systematic framework for risk monitoring will be put in place:

- **Regular progress reviews and reporting:**
Making certain that any new hazards are identified early and dealt with right away.
- **Stakeholder feedback mechanisms:**
Interacting with industry partners and the community to obtain information and gauge project acceptability.
- **Contingency planning:**
Ensure project planning includes consideration of potential risks & mitigations and considers contingencies scenarios
- **Adaptive management strategies:**
Allowing for execution flexibility to meet unanticipated obstacles while upholding project objectives.

The Balbriggan IAP is designed to be robust and flexible plan as a result of the implementation of these risk mitigation measures. The Council seeks to ensure the delivery of the IAP's objectives and actions, subject to funding, resources and the necessary supports and engagement with stakeholders which will ultimately lead to the realisation of the ambition to position Balbriggan as a leading innovator in the green industrial transition, a worldclass leader in sustainable industrial development and a highly sought after investment location with a strong collaborative ethos supported by a highly skilled local talent pool.

4.5

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

The implementation of the IAP will commence in 2025 with a mid-term review in 2027/2028 and a final review in 2030, while the Council's plans for the full development of site are projected to 2045 and over a time horizon of 20 years.



Establishing initial framework plans, commencing feasibility studies and horizon scanning for potential collaborations and funding streams to support projects and active engagement with stakeholders.



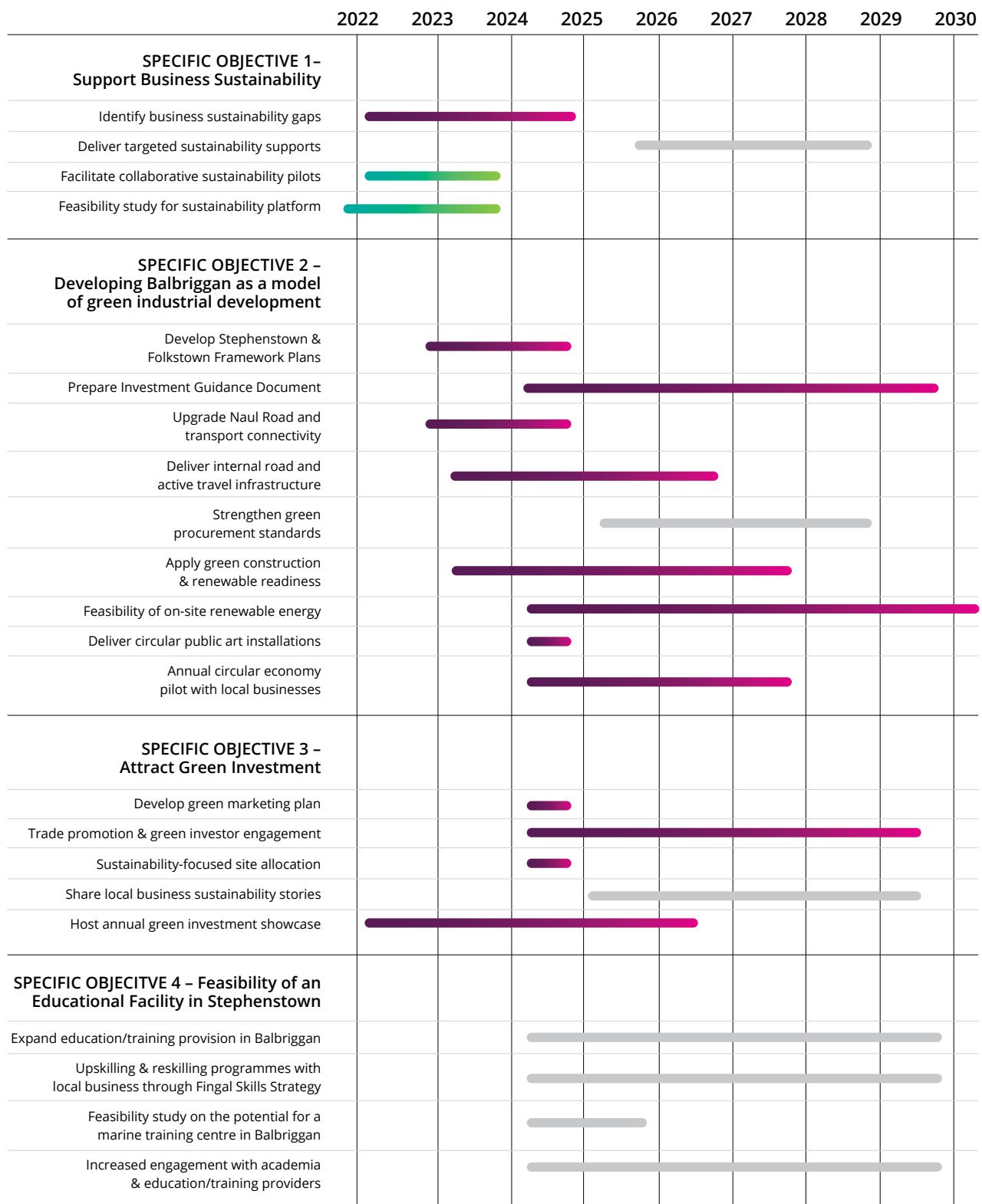
Mid-term review of progress to assess success of key projects and engagement and requirements for reorientation of actions in response to new information/factors



Final IAP implementation evaluation and consideration of lessons learned and potential next steps to build on progress to date.



GANNT – TIMESCALE FOR THE STRATEGIC ACTIONS:



- Complete
- Underway
- Yet to start



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CONCLUSION

The Balbriggan Integrated Action Plan (IAP) sets out a clear and ambitious roadmap for transforming Balbriggan into a leading example of green industrial development. Through strategic objectives focused on sustainability, innovation, education, and investment, the IAP provides a framework for inclusive and resilient economic growth. The collaborative approach taken—rooted in stakeholder engagement, transnational learning, and evidence-based planning—ensures that the actions outlined are both practical and impactful. The IAP is not an endpoint but a foundation for long-term transformation, with implementation, monitoring, and adaptation built into its core.

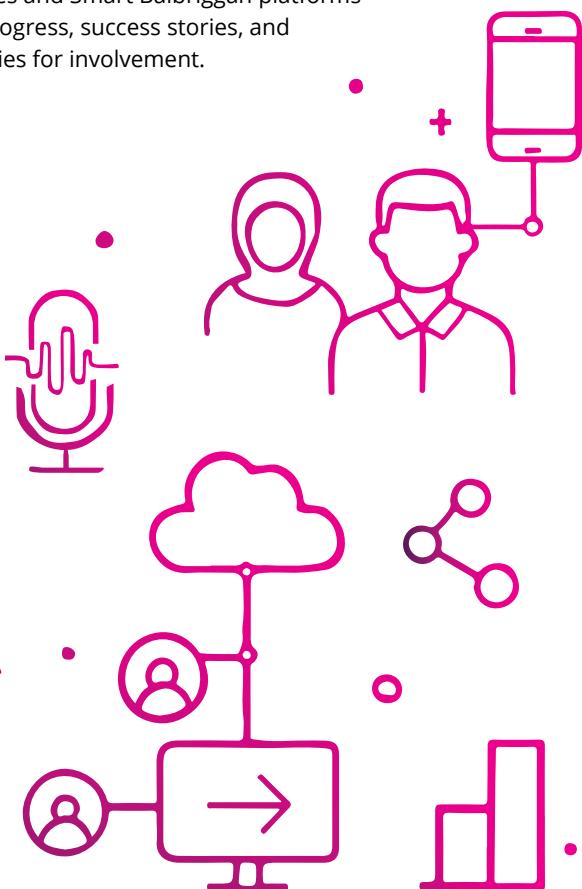
COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION PLAN:

To ensure transparency, accountability, and stakeholder engagement, the following communication tools will be used:



SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE:

Regular updates via Fingal County Council website, Economic Development Teams social media pages and Smart Balbriggan platforms to share progress, success stories, and opportunities for involvement.



PODCASTS:

A series of short episodes featuring project partners and local stakeholders, sharing their experiences and insights from the project. To be recorded in September 2025.



PRINTED MATERIALS:

Summary brochures and infographics for distribution to local stakeholders, schools, and businesses.



IAP LAUNCH EVENT:

A public event to launch the Balbriggan IAP, showcase key actions, and celebrate the contributions of the URBACT Local Group and wider community.

NEXT STEPS – ULG

The URBACT Local Group (ULG) will continue to play a central role in the implementation phase. Key next steps include:

Convening a post-IAP launch meeting to prioritise early actions and assign responsibilities.

Establishing a monitoring sub-group to track progress against KPIs.

Continuing quarterly meetings to review implementation, share updates, and adapt actions as needed.

Supporting ongoing collaboration with transnational partners to embed European best practices.



CONTACT INFORMATION:

For more information, please contact Fingal County Council's Economic Development Team at EconDev@Fingal.ie

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Integrated Action Plan was co-created by the Balbriggan EcoCore Project Team and the Balbriggan ULG with thanks to:

- Our transnational partners in the EcoCore Network for sharing best practices and inspiration
- The URBACT Programme and the European Union for funding and guidance.
- The Irish URBACT National Contact Point, Dr Karl Murphy and EMRA for their support throughout the entire URBACT journey.





NOTES

The EcoCore Project

Green Transition in Small Cities along Transport Corridors

Comhairle Contae
Fhine Gall
Fingal County
Council



URBACT



Co-funded by
the European Union
Interreg