

PART TWO PLACES FOR ALL



2 Places for all

The overarching vision of the plan is the realisation of Balbriggan as: a people-orientated place that is accessible, inclusive and balances the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists; an active place which builds on the strength of existing uses and activities, promotes new, compatible uses and the sustainable re-use of vacant buildings and spaces; an attractive place where buildings and public spaces are clean, secure, well-maintained and sympathetic to the heritage of the town; a harbour town with strong environmental and recreational qualities and excellent connections to its rural hinterland.

2.1 Vision

The vision is the foundation for all the strategies and projects proposed within the plan and the basis upon which they should be judged and prioritised.

People places

People places balance the needs of all the users of the place, including pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, that are safe, well maintained and easy to navigate. Proposals to achieve this are focussed on measures to improve the pedestrian environment by increasing the amount and quality of pedestrian space, improving public lighting and passive surveillance of public spaces, better cycling facilities and routes, better way-finding and signage and rationalising car parking arrangements (subject to an integrated access and parking study).

Active places

Active places build on the strengths of existing uses while seeking to manage invasive uses, promote new compatible uses and address vacancy, while also seeking to promote greater use of public spaces for outdoor events and festivals. Proposals for active places acknowledge the interdependence between good public spaces. Active places are healthy places, and the strategy seeks to develop walking and cycle links both within the town centre and to integrate with planned connections between the town, the shore and the countryside.

Attractive places

Attractive places are places where buildings and open spaces are clean and well maintained and sympathetic to the heritage character of the town. This will involve making improvements to buildings and streets to improve their appearance and to remove visual clutter, improve the seafront, address eyesores and the park. Once improvements are made it will be important to market the town's attractiveness and attractions and to put in place an organisational framework to bring forward priority projects and events.



Pedestrians: Making streets and public spaces safe and accessible to all

Cyclists: Improving provision for cyclists

Motorists: Facilitating access for motorists and car parking

Way-finding: Improving legibility, visitor information and signage



Distinctive uses: Building on existing strengths while maintaining diversity

New uses: Nurturing new uses and managing invasive uses

Addressing vacancy

Tourism attractions and trails

Festivals and events



Buildings and streets: Improving the attractiveness of:

- Buildings and streets
- The seafront
- The river route

Addressing eyesores

Branding Balbriggan

The three strands of the vision for places in the town centre and the main elements of each strand (above).

The function and image of a place can be greatly improved by the hosting and marketing of events. Many of Ireland's most popular towns and cities are synonymous with festivals and events: Kilkenny for Comedy, The Galway Arts Festival, The Rose of Tralee. In addition to infusing to the local economy with direct spending, such events put their host towns on the 'mind-map' as attractive and interesting places to visit. The staging, and spill out, of festival events into the streets and public spaces also transforms the image and perception of a place. In successful town centres this has provided the impetus for physical improvements of streets and spaces and the re-colonisation of space for pedestrians.

Early wins in the roll-out of the Plan can be the enlargement of Balbriggan's calendar of events and festivals. The Summerfest now runs for a full week and could be enhanced. Likewise, the existing St. Patrick's Day festival could be enhanced and/or extended to a long weekend.

Festivals and events piloted in 2010 included a Food Festival and a Christmas Market. The Food Festival was a single afternoon held in a local hotel and the Christmas Market was facilitated by temporary traffic restrictions in the Square. Both events enjoyed strong local participation and patronage and have scope for enlargement. A farmers' market is held each Friday (and occasionally on Saturday) on The Square.

A summary of initiatives to enlarge and improve the calendar of events could be as follows:

- Saint Patrick's Day celebrations extended to a festival over a weekend;
- Enhancement of the Summerfest, with possible emphasis on the beach, sports and watersports;
- Enlargement of food festival and staging in public spaces over multiple days with possible emphasis on seafood and local horticulture - an objective significantly progressed at a Balbriggan harbour location in 2011;
- Ethnic festivals; Chinese New Year, African Festival;
- Summer school; and
- Staging of Farmers' Market in a larger space to facilitate a greater number and range of stalls.

Town marketing could be greatly enhanced by the initiation of a coordinated marketing strategy between the key local business and community stakeholders and the Balbriggan Town Council. The marketing strategy can build on existing website resources incorporating information on events, local businesses, accommodation, heritage trails, walking and cycling routes.

The function and image of a place can be greatly improved by the hosting and marketing of events.



It is an objective of the plan to promote features of other successful places, such as farmer's markets and street life

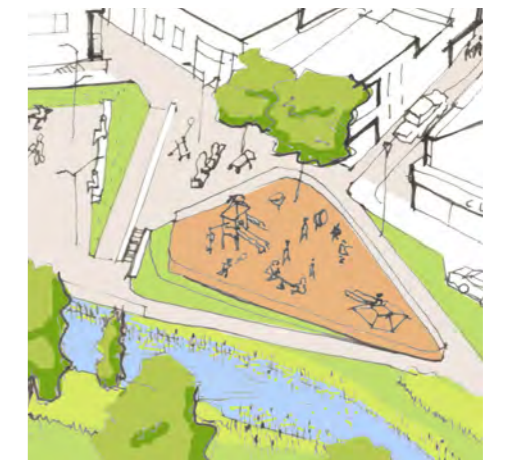


It is an objective of the plan to promote features of other successful places, such as outdoor events and festivals



Quality public space can lead to a range of new informal uses such as street entertainment

PART THREE GREAT SPACES



3 Great spaces

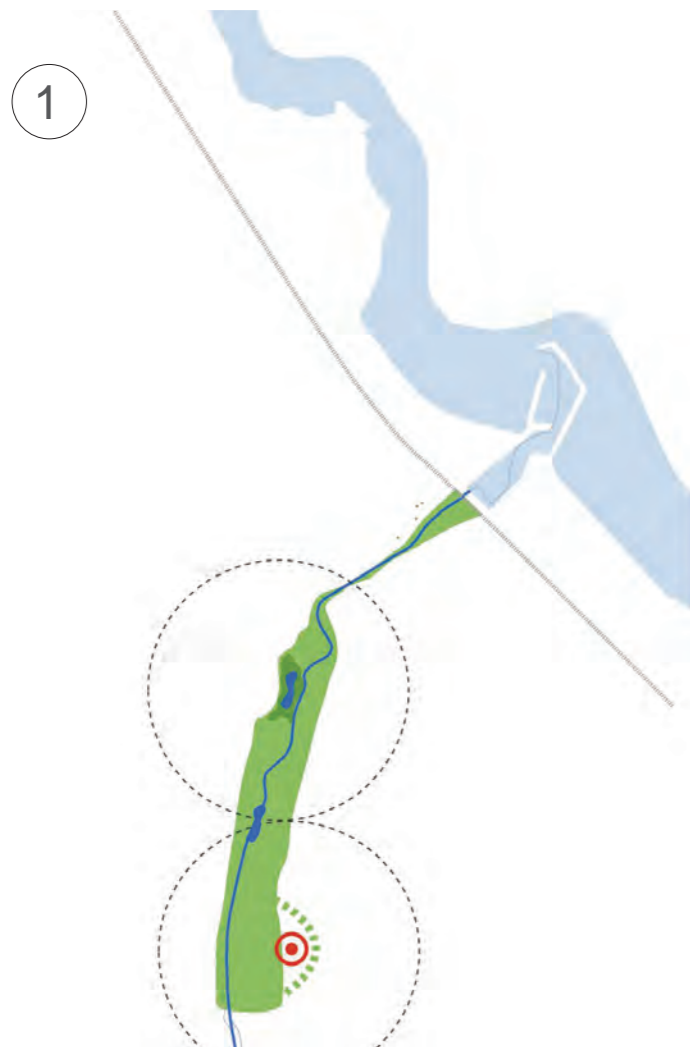
The town centre can provide an extensive and connected network of public spaces to cater for all in the community. This network will improve quality of life by strengthening sense of place and identity, promoting social interaction and healthier, more active lifestyles. It will also reinforce the attractive and convivial environment for business in the town centre.

3.1 Strategy for spaces

The strategy identifies a network, framework, projects and actions that will achieve the vision. The network for the streets and public spaces is focused on the three, main elements of the town's urban and landscape structure, which impart their unique character and have been identified in consultation as having the greatest need and potential for improvement.

They are:

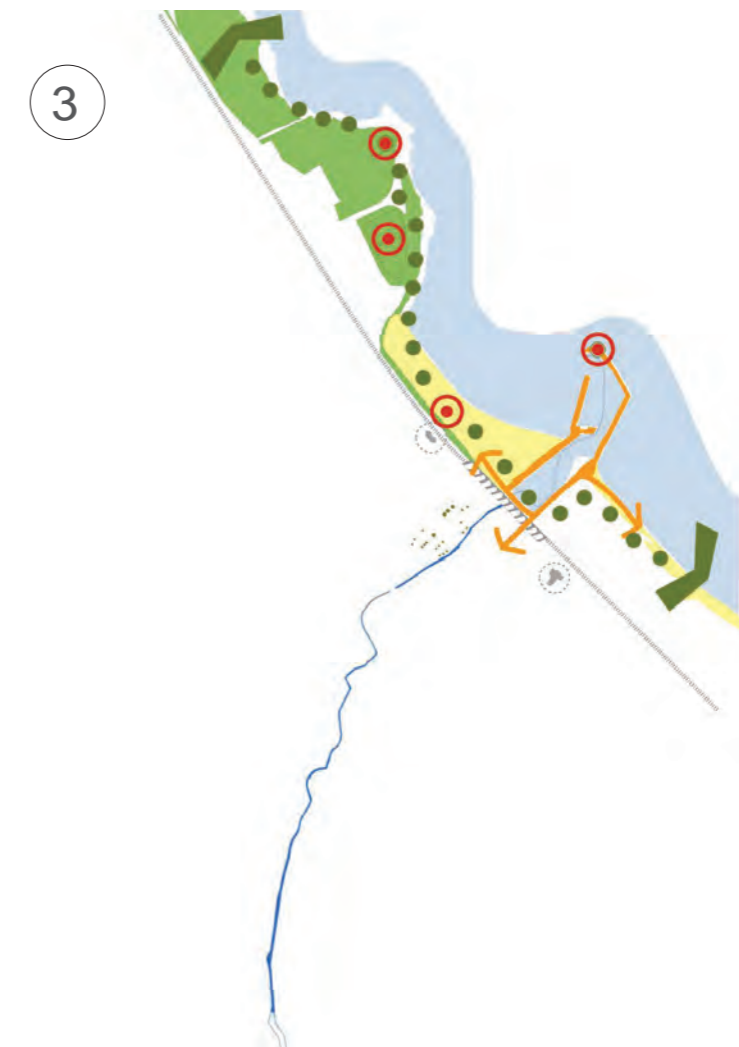
1. The river and park;
2. The main street (Dublin Road, Bridge Street, Drogheda Street), Railway Street and Quay Street; and
3. The harbour and seafront.



The Bracken River Corridor



The Main Street



The Harbour and Seafront



Overall strategic concept



Beach and Railway Viaduct



The Square



The Harbour