

Baldoyle Tidy Towns Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2022-2027



An Action of the Fingal County Biodiversity Plan 2010-2015







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Biodiversity and Local Biodiversity Action Plans

There are many definitions of 'Biodiversity'. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD, 2019) defined Biodiversity as "the variability among living inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic systems and the ecological complexes of which they are part: this includes diversity within species, between species and between ecosystems". In layman's terms, it is how all elements of nature work together to preserve functioning ecosystems.

The Convention on Biological Diversity was signed by Ireland in 1996. One of the obligations of Signatories is the publication of National Biodiversity Reports. A relevant Action of Ireland's first National Biodiversity Action Plan (2002) was for Local Authorities to produce their own Biodiversity Action Plans. The production of these Tidy Towns Local Biodiversity Action Plans is an objective of Fingal's Biodiversity Action Plan (2010).

The changing face of Ireland's landscape; Tidy Towns Competitions, the All Ireland Pollinator Plan and Local Biodiversity Action Plans

The 2010 Handbook for the National Tidy Towns Competition describes the category; 'Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities'. This category requires local groups to manage spaces for wildlife, instead of simply for tidy aesthetic reasons. Groups are awarded for leaving spaces wild, for planting perennial species and for taking note of the wildlife and flora in their surroundings.

This Tidy Towns category is in sync with the first All Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP) (2015-2020) and the latest AIPP (2021-2025) which provide tools to groups to fulfil the Tidy Towns Wildlife category. The AIPP changed perceptions of untidiness in public spaces and provided the practical tools to local groups to know what and when to plant and when to leave nature alone in order to help our declining pollinator species.

In 2016, The Tidy Towns Competition introduced the Tidy Towns Local Authority Pollinator Award which again, added to the interest by Community groups in pollinator actions.

Tidy Towns groups and Community Groups all over the country have embraced this change in landscape management. This Fingal Local Biodiversity Action Plan project validates their efforts and provides further tools to enhance the biodiversity of their areas.





Project Description

Fingal County Council acknowledged the many pollinator initiatives of Tidy Towns and Community groups across the County and realised the importance of assisting these groups in their endeavours. This Local Biodiversity Action Plan project was initiated to provide these groups with additional tools to protect and enhance local biodiversity. Ecological Contractors were hired to assist Tidy Towns and Community Groups groups to identify local biodiversity opportunities; to advise on ecological best practice methods and to write subsequent Local Biodiversity Action Plans.

The areas covered within the remit of this LBAP are public spaces where the Tidy Towns groups already carry out activities or wish to do so in the future.

Private spaces were also visited where that stakeholder was interested in participating e.g. Pitch and Putt Clubs, Scout Dens, Churches, Schools etc. Biodiversity reports were written for these private sites as part of this LBAP, as these would prove to be valuable in terms of adding to the network of nature-friendly stepping stones across the whole Tidy Towns area. A list of these private site reports in Baldoyle is found in Table 1.

Biodiversity Connectivity

Much of this Plan is focused on providing biodiversity connectivity across the Baldoyle Tidy Towns area (Figure 5). By its nature, a LBAP is limited in size and thus must acknowledge man-made green connections between naturally occurring biodiversity to enable flora and fauna to adapt to change and survive.

'Biodiversity hotspots' in Baldoyle were identified by the Tidy Towns group (Figure 6) and Actions to conserve and enhance their biodiversity identified (Tables 2 and 3). Naturally occurring or manmade linkages between these Hotspots and to other natural spaces were identified and informed Actions recommended in this Plan. These man-made linkages are termed 'Green Infrastructure' and they are corridors along which animal and plant species can co-exist with man's uses of this same infrastructure e.g. train line, pedestrian or cycling pathway and football pitches.

A number of Green Infrastructure corridors were identified within the Baldoyle Tidy Towns area and with adjacent areas while writing this Plan:

- A new Greenway linking Baldoyle with Portmarnock provides an opportunity for recreation and nature. It borders the coastline and provides habitat for local coastal plants, a variety of local wildflowers and grasses. It forms an important link in the pollinator corridor along Fingal's coastline.
- The larnród Éireann railway line through Baldoyle provides a corridor allowing movement of wildlife from Baldoyle to Portmarnock, Sutton, Bayside, Kilbarrack and Donaghmede.
- The 2013 Baldoyle-Stapolin Local Area Plan (LAP) includes two proposed cycle and pedestrian Greenways in the west of the Tidy Towns area which will form a biodiversity conduit between the Baldoyle Tidy Towns Area and Clongriffin to the west. There is also a proposed Mayne Marsh Conservation Area proposed for this LAP that will link directly with Baldoyle's Racecourse Park at the north.

These man-made green connections form links to connect naturally occurring biodiversity hotspots in this Local Biodiversity Action Plan.





Baldoyle and its environment

Baldoyle is a coastal town situated on the south east part of Fingal County. It is a former fishing village and is now a busy residential town that is undergoing development and renewed interest as a place to live and work.

Baldoyle is fortunate to look out over Dublin Bay and have views of Howth Head, Ireland's Eye, Portmarnock Point and Cush Point in Sutton.

Natural biodiversity features in Baldoyle include the Mayne River, Baldoyle Bay and Racecourse Park which supports important habitats like Saltmarsh and Salt Meadows. Internationally protected Light bellied Brent Geese (*Branta bernicla hrota*) feed on grasslands in Seagrange Park and Racecourse Park each year.

The Tidy Towns group in Baldoyle is very active and involved in biodiversity initiatives locally. It has already implemented many useful biodiversity actions and identified a number of locations that should to be conserved and interpreted.

Survey

Desktop survey:

A Desktop Study was carried out to research existing Baldoyle biodiversity information. A review was taken of previous biodiversity surveys, of information relating to protected species and habitats and any National or Local policies or Plans that might impact biodiversity. The Desktop survey also attempted to identify and liaise with groups that might like to participate in the LBAP. During this time, the true boundary of the Tidy Towns area was finalised with the help of the Tidy Towns groups.

The Desktop Survey noted the following information pertinent to Baldoyle biodiversity:

- Baldoyle Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (Site Code 0199)
- Baldoyle Bay Special Protection Area (SPA) (Site Code 4016)
- Feeding areas of Light Bellied Brent Geese (Branta bernicla hrota)
- Baldoyle-Stapolin Local Area Plan (2013)
- Mapped biodiversity features e.g. Mayne River

Google Earth Pro software was used to produce maps illustrating information derived from the Desktop Survey. Fingal County Council Development Plan (2017-2023) Open Spaces, High Amenity area, Nature Development Areas and Ecological Buffer Zones were added. Biodiversity hotspots identified by local groups were then added to this map to create a visualisation of potential wildlife corridors across Baldoyle and to reveal major gaps in this connectivity.





Field survey:

A series of site visits was carried out so that areas of biodiversity that were important to the community were identified. As much of the Tidy Towns area was visited as possible.

Maps generated in the Desktop Survey phase were used to identify locations not suggested by Tidy Towns groups and these were visited for their potential biodiversity significance. The following categories of information were recorded during any site visit:

- Notable habitats/species (flora or fauna)
- Challenges to these notable habitats/species
- Existing uses if any of these identified habitats/sites
- Potential biodiversity outcomes for that site
- Wishlist of the Tidy Towns/Community Group
- Best practice methods to be employed at a location
- Potential for site enhancement for biodiversity
- Need for biodiversity interpretation

Many of the spaces of interest were quite small so habitat classification e,g. Fossit (2000) was not usually applied as could not be mapped on a large scale. Instead, 'Biodiversity Hotspots' were noted and described (Figure 6).

Community groups and other interested parties also participated in these site visits on occasion. Any of these additional groups for whom a biodiversity report written for their site, as part of this LBAP, are identified in Table 1. Many of these groups offered to assist the Tidy Towns groups going forward e.g. Transition Year classes or Scout Troops. This was considered to be an important outcome of this LBAP as all the Tidy Towns groups stated that they were already overworked due to lack of volunteers and the age profile of volunteers.

Additional Biodiversity Report	Actions recommended Y/N	Report available Y/N
Baldoyle Family Resource Centre	Yes	Yes

Table 1: List of Biodiversity reports written for private stakeholders as part of the Baldoyle LBAP

As a result of the site visits; a better understanding of the of the local community, of the local biodiversity and of previously unidentified biodiversity emerged. This allowed for the formulation of a Local Biodiversity Action Plan that would be specific to this particular Tidy Towns area and community.

Generic Actions and points to note for all Local Biodiversity Action Plans

a) Monitoring Actions and recording results

Any Community Group implementing biodiversity initiatives should familiarise themselves with the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) website (www.biodiversityireland.ie). It is here that many practical resources are made available to local groups. It is also here where biodiversity data are recorded. Community groups should monitor the effectiveness of their actions to see what is working and what is not. The best way to do this is to participate in Citizen Science surveys. Many of these are described on the NBDC website. The results of these surveys may change over the period of a project, thus giving us a picture of the effectiveness of efforts.





Any wild species, whether flora or fauna, should be recorded on the NBDC website and any pollinator sites created within an area, should be logged on the All Ireland Pollinator Plan website (www.pollinators.ie).

This will create a true map of pollinator corridors across the country. Thus, Citizen Science surveys are not included in the Tables of Actions (Table 2 and Table 3) as it is a given that they will be conducted as part of this LBAP and results logged on the NBDC website. See Appendix 10 for a list of Citizen Science surveys and instructions on how to log results.

b) Actions Requiring Consent for SACs and SPAs

If your area falls within the boundary of a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Area for birds (SPA), then certain activities that can be carried out here are limited without specific permission. There is a list of activities called Activities Requiring Consent (ARC) that cannot be carried out here without permission from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). The list of ARCs is found in the Statutory Instrument (S.I) for that SAC or SPA (www.irishstatutebook.ie). Schedule 4 of the relevant S.I. will list the ARCs for that site.

Description of some of the projects in this Plan:

The Tables of agreed Actions to implement this Local Biodiversity Action Plan are given in Tables 2 and 3. Table 2 is the list of Actions to be undertaken by Fingal County Council over the 5 year period. Table 3 is the list of Actions that will be undertaken by the Tidy Towns Group, with the support of Fingal County Council and with the assistance of other named local community groups.

Four of the larger Baldoyle Tidy Towns LBAP projects are described below. Detailed site reports are available for all projects of the LBAP and can be made available as a resource to implement all Actions in the Plan.

13 Appendices have been included at the back of this Plan. The objective of including these Appendices is to provide a practical tool to the Tidy Towns groups when carrying out the Actions. There are myriad resources available to help groups and it can become overwhelming to figure out which to use. These Appendices have pulled together information from many sources so that a single location can be used as a source of practical guidance.

Target species are identified in Tables 2 and 3 to allow for monitoring of effectiveness of Actions.





1) Baldoyle Biodiversity Hub

A number of green spaces and unused areas are in a close proximity to each other at the northern end of the Promenade in Baldoyle. Each has a variety of planting and offers different possibilities for biodiversity education. The total unit of these proximate spaces lends itself to being a Biodiversity Education Hub. For the purpose of this LBAP these spaces have been given arbitrary names and identified by Letters in Figure 1 below.







Fig. 1a: Small grass area with border

Fig. 1b: Village Green 2

Fig. 1c: Unused space



Figure 1: Proposed Baldoyle Biodiversity Hub

Some of the spaces are narrow and offer opportunities to plant perennial bushes along perimeter walls (Appendix 2). Others are vacant and could be excellent Compost Corner and hedgehog hibernation education points. Bird boxes of different sizes and shapes can educate about the different needs of different birds and bat boxes can raise awareness of the presence of these nocturnal mammals (Appendix 7).





Existing bulb planted areas could be enhanced by planting the favourite foods of the Red listed Large Carder Bee (*Bombus muscorum*) (Appendix 2) while a low stone wall can be a demonstration of how to sensitively manage these stone urban wildlife habitats (Appendix 9). Existing annual bedding plant spaces can be transformed by adding in pollinator friendly or seed producing perennial flowers and shrubs (Appendix 2).

2) Seagrange Park:

Seagrange Park is a linear park running in a North South direction in the mid-southern area of Baldoyle. It has a variety of recreational spaces including football pitches, tennis court and basketball court. A significant area is managed as meadow and a large expanse was planted in trees in 2020 by the Tidy Towns group. A number of small tree copses occur along the western edge and the Seagrange Park Stream runs along the eastern boundary. Light bellied Brent Geese (*Branta bernicla hrota*), an Internationally protected species, feed on the football pitches in the Winter (C. Merne, pers. comm.).

Many biodiversity possibilities present themselves here as well as many challenges to biodiversity. Dumping of garden waste and unauthorized planting, presence of unwanted plant species such as Winter Heliotrope (*Petasites fragrans*), 3 Cornered Garlic (*Allium triquetrum*) and Alexanders (*Smyrnium olusatrum*) and disturbance to Brent Geese are some issues faced here.

Biodiversity Actions recommended for this Park include a Nature Trail through the park to identify common trees, habitats and urban species. The continued management of the Meadow is a priority as is insuring that the meadow does not encroach onto Brent Geese feeding grassland.

Planting native Irish trees such as Whitebeam, Irish Ash and Wych Elm into the existing tree copses will enhance biodiversity and leaving grass uncut in tree copses will provide additional habitat to invertebrates and in turn food for birds and bats.







Fig. 2a: Tree copse

Fig. 2b: Amenity grassland

Fig. 2c: Seagrange Pk. stream









Fig. 2d: Woodland area

Fig. 2e: Unauthorised planting Fig. 2f: Unauthorised garden waste

Planting a native hedgerow along the bare wall on the western boundary will provide habitat to birds, bats, invertebrates and terrestrial mammals. Erecting bird and bat boxes throughout the park in woodland spaces will not only provide necessary shelter and hibernation sites for these animal groups but also create an educational tool for the public. An immersive woodland experience is suggested for the small woodland inside the entrance gate at Brookstone Road. The hedgerow surrounding the Tennis Club was alive with bees on the site visit and would benefit from a greater buffer zone of uncut grass along its length.

3) Burrowfield Road Open Space:

This is a small public green space along this residential road. It is arbitrarily divided into two for the purpose of this LBAP; a corner planted area with a 'Welcome to Baldoyle' sign at the junction of Burrowfield Rd. and Strand Rd. and the larger main green area on Burrowfield Rd. This space lends itself to many biodiversity possibilities. The 'Welcome to Baldoyle' sign planted corner is directly across Strand Rd. from Dublin Bay and would be a suitable interpretation area for coastal plant species which are excellent for biodiversity and pollinators (Appendix 2).



Fig. 3a: Treeline with gaps in Burrowfield Rd. open space



Fig. 3b: Snowberry growing in hedgerow





The main green area is left uncut at present which is beneficial for wildlife. However, there is opportunity to increase the mosaic of habitats here by creating an uncut buffer zone along the treeline and allowing some cut grass to frame the uncut meadow area. Native trees or hedgerow species could be planted to fill the gaps in the perimeter hedgerow (Appendix 5). Garden variety plants have escaped from nearby gardens and are filling these gaps presently and should be removed. Snowberry is one such example and should be removed before it takes over (Appendix 6). Bird boxes in the trees would provide additional nesting space for birds and a logpile along the perimeter could provide hedgehogs with winter hibernation space (Appendix 7).

4) Biodiverse Brown Roof:

The Mens' Shed at Baldoyle Community Centre and a flat roofed annex to the same Community Centre have been identified as a possible locations for Biodiverse Brown Roofs in Baldoyle. Appendix 4 describes the benefits of Biodiverse Brown Roofs in terms of biodiversity and ease of retrofitting. In Baldoyle, the biodiversity benefits would focus on safe habitat for ground nesting birds along Dublin Bay and as habitat for invertebrates and wildflowers. A number of ground nesting Tern species use artificial flat roofed platforms provided by Dublin Port in Dublin Bay and these flat roofs in Baldoyle could augment this. Rare invertebrates and flora have colonised Biodiverse Brown Roofs elsewhere (Livingroofs.org, 2019).



Figure 4a: Men's Shed flat roof



Figure 4b: Community Centre flat roof





Table 2: Fingal County Council Actions as part of Baldoyle Tidy Towns Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Theme	Animals benefitting	No.	Action	Appendix	Location	I.D.	Year	Partners
Grass Maintenance Schedule Target species: • Bee species • Butterflies	A, B, BT, EF OIS,P, R, TM	1	Meadow cut once a year and remove cuttings	1	 Baldoyle to Portmarnock Greenway Seagrange Park Walled green space adj. train stn. 	1 2 3	1	FCC
Target species: • Bee species	A, B, BT, EF OIS,P, R, TM	2	Leave long grass uncut	-	 Seagrange Pk. under tree copses Seagrange Pk. Tennis Court boundary Burrowfield Rd. green space 	4 5 6	1	FCC
Target species: • Brent Geese	В	3	Brent Geese feeding areas	3	 Baldoyle Racecourse North Baldoyle Racecourse South Seagrange Park Seagrange Road Green 	7 8 2 9	1	FCC/Irish Brent Goose Research Group
Planting Schemes Target species: Bee species Butterflies	B, BT, OIS, P, R, TM	4	Baldoyle Biodiversity Hub: • Wildlife friendly Shrubs/Fruit bushes	2	 Narrow green space along Strand Rd. Annual bedding plant area beside Village Green 1 Community Centre green space Community Centre green space 	10 11 11	2	FCC/BTT/Schools/Scouts

 $\mathbf{A}\!:$ Amphibians e.g. Frog, Common Newt

AI: Aquatic Invertebrates

B: Birds

BT: Bats

EF: Endemic flora e.g. local wildflowers

BoCCI: Birds of Conservation Concern Ireland

OIS: Other Invertebrates and Spiders

P: Pollinators e.g. Bees, Moths, Butterflies, Hoverflies

R: Reptiles e.g. Common Lizard

TM: Terrestrial mammals e.g. Hedgehog, Shrew, Field Mouse, Fox, Badger





			 Perennial wildlife plants Coastal plants Large Carder bee food Biodiverse Brown Roof 	2 2 4	Burrow Rd. 'Welcome to Baldoyle' sign Village Green 1 Baldoyle Community Centre flat roof	11	3	
Target species: • Bee species • Butterflies	A, B, BT, EF OIS, P, R, TM	5	Seagrange Park: • Wildlife bulbs • Hedgerow management for wildlife • Remove unauthorized planting and garden waste and liaise with homeowners	2 5	 Existing bulb planted areas Western boundary wall Along western boundary 	2	2 1 2	FCC
Target species: • Bee species • Butterflies	A, B, BT, EF OIS,P, R, TM	6	Burrowfield Rd. Open Space • Plant native trees • Remove Snowberry	2, 5 6 2	Fill gaps in existing treeline/hedgerow	6	2 2 2	FCC

A: Amphibians e.g. Frog, Common Newt

OIS: Other Invertebrates and Spiders

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EF: Endemic flora e.g. local wildflowers

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TM: Terrestrial mammals e.g. Hedgehog, Shrew, Field Mouse, Fox, Badger R: Reptiles e.g. Common Lizard

BoCCI: Birds of Conservation Concern Ireland





			Coastal garden		• 'Welcome to Baldoyle sign			
Target species: BoCCI Amber List birds: Swift Tern species	В	7	Swift bird boxes: Biodiverse Brown Roof	7	Baldoyle Community Centre	10	2	FCC/BTT
Red List Bees			Biodiverse Brown Roof	4				
Target species: Annex IV: Bats	Bt	8a 8b	Bat boxes Countywide Urban Bat Survey	7	Seagrange Park woodlands All	15	1-5	FCC/BTT/Schools/Scouts
Target Group: Unwanted and Invasive species	All	9	Find alternative to herbicide use	-	• All	1	1	FCC
			Remove Giant Hogweed	6	Baldoyle to Portmarnock Greenway	1	1	
Education	All	10	Interpretation Panels:	-	 Walled green space adj. train station Burrowfield Rd. green space Seagrange Park Baldoyle Biodiversity Education Hub Community Centre green space 	3 6 2 10 10	4/5	FCC/ Dublin Bay Biosphere
Target species: • Birds	В	11	Countywide Urban Bird Survey	-	• All	-	1-5	FCC/BTT/Schools/Scouts

 ${\bf A}$: Amphibians e.g. Frog, Common Newt

AI: Aquatic Invertebrates

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R: Reptiles e.g. Common Lizard

TM: Terrestrial mammals e.g. Hedgehog, Shrew, Field Mouse, Fox, Badger

BoCCI: Birds of Conservation Concern Ireland





Table 3: Baldoyle Tidy Towns Group actions as part of Baldoyle Tidy Towns Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Theme	Animals benefitting	No.	Action	Appendix	Location	I.D.	Year	Partners
Target species: Solitary Bees	P, OIS	T1	Drill holes for solitary bees in wooden blocks	7	Baldoyle Community Garden	11	1	ВТТ
Target species: Annex IV: Bats	Bt	T2	Bat survey	7	Seagrange ParkBaldoyle Racecourse ParkBaldoyle to PortmarnockGreenway	2 7/8 1	1	ВТТ
Target species: Hedgehog	A, B, Bt, EF, OIS, P, R, TM	Т3	Log pile hibernacula/Compost corner	7	 Village Green 2 Seagrange Pk. woodlands Baldoyle Community Garden Adjacent ESB building Baldoyle Community Garden 	10 2 11 10 11	3	BTT/BCG/Schools/Howt h Sea Scouts
Target Species: Common Lizard	R	T4	IWT Irish Reptile Survey	10	Baldoyle Racecourse Pk. stone wall	12	2	BTT/ Pobalscoil Neasáin
Target habitat: Freshwater habitats	All	T5	Liaise with LAWPRO staff	-	Seagrange Park Stream	13	2	BTT
Target group: Endemic Flora	All	Т6	Control unwanted plant species: • Winter Heliotrope	6	Seagrange ParkBurrowfield Rd. green space	2 6	1	BTT/Schools/Scouts

A: Amphibians e.g. Frog, Common Newt

AI: Aquatic Invertebrates

B: Birds

BT: Bats

EF: Endemic flora e.g. local wildflowers

OIS: Other Invertebrates and Spiders

P: Pollinators e.g. Bees, Moths, Butterflies, Hoverflies

R: Reptiles e.g. Common Lizard

TM: Terrestrial mammals e.g. Hedgehog, Shrew, Field Mouse, Fox, Badger T: Tidy Towns Actions





		 Alexanders 3 Cornered Garlic Ragwort		Baldoyle to Portmarnock Greenway	1		
B, Bt, EF, OIS, P, R, TM	T7	Collect and store wildflower seed	8	 Baldoyle to Portmarnock Greenway Baldoyle Racecourse Park Seagrange Park wild meadow 	1 7/8 14	1	BTT/Schools/Scouts
EF, P	Т8	Clear space for woodland flora	2	Treeline along ESB building Seagrange Park woodlands	10 15	2	BTT/Schools/Scouts

A: Amphibians e.g. Frog, Common Newt

AI: Aquatic Invertebrates

BT: Bats

EF: Endemic flora e.g. local wildflowers

OIS: Other Invertebrates and Spiders

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Maps generated as part of the Baldoyle Tidy Towns Local Biodiversity Action Plan

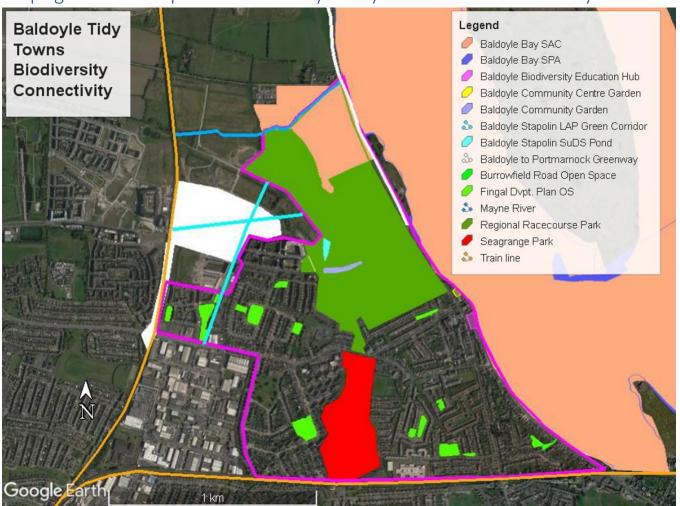


Figure 5: Biodiversity Connectivity in Baldoyle Tidy Towns Area







Figure 6: Biodiversity Hotspots identified in Baldoyle Tidy Towns Local Biodiversity Action Plan







Figure 7: Baldoyle Tidy Towns Local Biodiversity Action Plan Action Locations





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