



Fingal

Tourism Strategy

2024-2029





Foreword



Fingal has always held a unique place in the hearts of those who call it home, blessed as it is with a rich heritage, a coastline that boasts amazing beaches, a vibrant and welcoming network of communities from urban to rural right across the county.

With our region having so much to offer, and as someone fortunate enough to be born and bred in Fingal, I am always delighted to extend a warm invitation to all those seeking an extraordinary escape into a world of natural wonders, charming villages, and an authentic Irish experience. to come and experience Fingal for themselves.

The new strategy builds upon our existing strengths and propels us toward a future where tourism not only enriches our local economy but also enhances the quality of life for all residents. By fostering strategic partnerships and innovative initiatives between businesses, residents, and government entities, we aim to solidify Fingal's reputation as a destination that not only mesmerizes with its landscapes but also embraces with its warmth and authenticity.

In developing this strategy, we also recognise that sustainable tourism is one of the key themes to helping us preserve what makes Fingal special for generations to come. As such, this strategy emphasizes responsible practices that prioritize the conservation of our environment, the celebration of our cultural identity, and the empowerment of our local communities, to grow the sector throughout the County in a sustainable manner that protects our abundant resources.

Cllr Adrian Henchy,
Mayor of Fingal



Tourism brings opportunities for investment and growth which in turn helps us to further enhance those places which make us an attractive place to live and visit. This strategy will help us to harness Fingal's inherent charm and boundless potential, allowing domestic and international visitors alike to connect with our heritage, culture, and natural wonders.

Fingal County Council has always consistently invested considerable resources in supporting tourism. It works closely with Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland in the development and promotion of Ireland, Dublin and Fingal as tourism destinations, directly manages and develops a number of significant visitor attractions, festivals and events; and directly funds and supports Fingal promotion, marketing and tourist information services.

This strategy continues that commitment, it is a vision to strengthen Fingal's status as a special tourism destination offering an array of options for natural amenities and heritage, local arts and culture, recreation and leisure, with an emphasis on culinary delights, coastal relaxation, and outdoor adventure. It's also a shared endeavour to help nurture the very essence of what makes our region special. I invite you all to be a part of this journey that will define the future of Fingal's tourism sector.

AnnMarie Farrelly,
Chief Executive, Fingal County Council



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Introduction

Context

Fingal is hugely diverse in population and geography, and tourism is no different. The Fingal motto 'Flúirse Talaimh is Mara' (rich in land and sea) is reflected in the equally rich variety of natural amenities including Special Amenity Areas such as Howth and the Liffey Valley, heritage, arts, culture, recreation and leisure within its borders.

A stunning landscape includes 88km of coastline from Balbriggan to Howth, urban centres such as the County seats of Swords and Blanchardstown, and picturesque towns and villages in idyllic rural settings with the breathing room of the countryside, stretching all the way from the Naul across to the magnificent Liffey Valley and Phoenix Park.

With long sandy beaches, rugged coastline, stunning heritage properties, ancient castles, majestic gardens, a wide range of arts and cultural venues offering a year long programme of events, indoor and outdoor sport and leisure activities, combined with a thriving hospitality sector encompassing diverse culinary traditions, and local producers, there is truly something for everyone in Fingal.

Rationale

Tourism is one of Fingal's most important economic drivers. The sector plays a key role in Fingal's rural and urban local economies and accounts for a significant amount of employment characterised by large numbers of SMEs, with 800 businesses providing accommodation and catering services. Guest accommodation supports an estimated 3,000 full time job equivalents and the catering sector provides a further 2,000 jobs (Source: Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029). Through Dublin Airport, Fingal also provides the primary national link between Ireland and international tourists.

This Tourism Strategy 2024-2029 builds on the Fingal Tourism Strategy 2015-2018, Statement of Tourism Strategy 2017-2022, Fingal Corporate Plan 2019-2024 and the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029, and related policies and plans.

It outlines a roadmap for Fingal to realise its tourism potential in order to gain maximum sustainable, economic and social benefit in the coming years.

Based on a strategic review including extensive stakeholder consultation, product and experience audit and development; it presents a compelling strategic vision, objectives and goals, growth targets, and high level implementation roadmap from which detailed action plans will be developed over its lifetime.



Executive Summary

“A dynamic and inclusive strategy including a refreshed and clearly articulated vision that will enable Fingal to drive sustainable, innovative, resilient and inclusive tourism growth.”

This strategy outlines a roadmap for Fingal to realise its tourism potential in order to gain maximum sustainable, economic and social benefit in the coming years. In this regard, the strategy aims to:

- > **Support, enable and drive** destination development in the county whilst working to unlock the potential of clustered product and experiences across the county
- > **Evaluate options and opportunities** for the development of the county’s unique product and experience offerings enabling tourism across the county to make a meaningful impact to the local economy
- > **Consider the strength** of overall visitor experience and areas in need of development that will allow Fingal, as a destination, to adapt to ever-changing consumer needs and expectations, as well as the identification of gaps and proposed solutions in the resulting implementation plan
- > **Optimise and amplify** the marketing and promotion of the county, aligned with the key tourism bodies development plans for Ireland and the Dublin region, and the Council’s development and corporate plans



Overview



Asset Driven

Dispersed Growth

Maturity Model

Resource Focus

Value Led

Natural Amenities & Heritage

North

Pioneering

Marketing & Promotion

Smart

Arts & Culture

South East

Progressing

Collaboration

Sustainable

Recreation & Leisure

South West

Enhancing

Infrastructure

Accessible

Hospitality, Food & Drink, Festivals and Events

Vision

Consolidate Fingal's position as a tourism destination with a choice of local, cultural, culinary, coastal and outdoor experiences across the county that showcase the strengths, assets and opportunities of the area and lead to sustainable and inclusive tourism sector growth.



Mission

Provide a sustainable and collaborative road-map which supports all tourism stakeholders in working together to deliver a tourism proposition which will deliver maximum sustainable, economic and social benefit for Fingal.



Approach

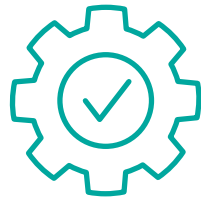
Lead with mature, well known products and experiences, clustered with those less well known, to create a destination-based approach where gaps in one area are compensated for by other strengths and added to by future developments as they mature.



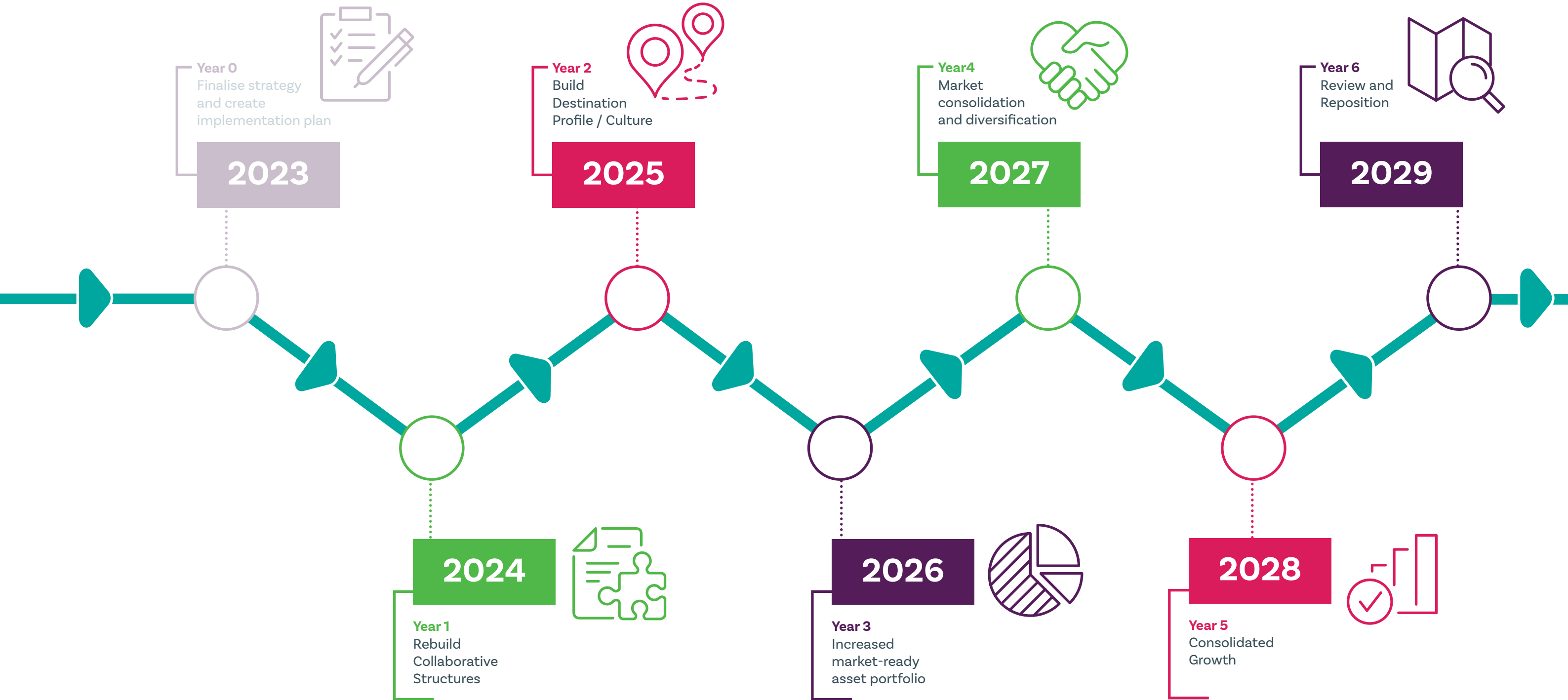
Objectives

- 1** Dispersed Growth
- 2** Product & Experience Development
- 3** Branding, Marketing & Promotion
- 4** Collaboration & Partnerships





Roadmap



Dispersed Growth



Product & Experience Development



Branding, Marketing & Promotion



Collaboration & Partnerships



Fingal County Council Role

The collaborative model below shows the way in which key tourism stakeholders will be led by the Council to work together to achieve growth that is of benefit to all.



Malahide Castle



Fingal Tourism Strategy 2024-2029

Findings

Research & Consultation

To inform this strategy and identify growth opportunities for a sustainable, innovative, resilient and inclusive tourism sector in Fingal, a broad and representative range of stakeholders were consulted via in person interviews, focus groups, workshops, and surveys to capture their views, experiences and insights.

Interviews

A series of 1:1 interviews were conducted with representatives of the following organisations:

- > Fingal County Council
- > Fingal Tourism
- > Fáilte Ireland
- > Tourism Ireland
- > Fingal PPN
- > Waterways Ireland
- > Heritage Council
- > Fingal Chamber
- > Dublin City Council
- > South Dublin City Council

Focus groups

Six focus groups were held in total. Two of the focus groups were internal (within Fingal County Council) and four were external. External focus groups consisted of key tourism stakeholders from towns and villages in Fingal.

Survey

A survey was distributed by an online survey tool to the project partners. Each participant on received a “personal link” or access code” to complete and submit the survey. An open survey

link was also sent to the Public Participation Network (PPN), Waterways Ireland, Heritage Council and the Fingal Chamber to distribute. The aim of the survey was to gather feedback, to gain insights and views into motives for visitors, strengths, challenges, opportunities, threats, ambitions and strategic objectives for the tourism strategy.

Key tourism stakeholder Product Audit & Experience Workshop

A Product Audit and Experience Workshop was held with key tourism stakeholders, including representatives from:

- > Fingal County Council
- > Fingal Tourism
- > Agencies (Fáilte Ireland, DAA, NTA, Sport Ireland, UNESCO Biosphere)
- > Fingal tourism industry

The workshop focused on market ready tourism products and experiences under the following themes:

- > Natural Amenities
- > Heritage & Culture
- > Leisure & Recreation
- > Food & Drink
- > Festivals & Events
- > Accommodation
- > Infrastructure

Under each of the themes, the towns and villages of Fingal were divided up into three areas North, South East and South West.



Key Insights

Unique Offering

- > Fingal has broad range of natural outdoor amenities and good green infrastructure e.g. 88km of coastline with blue flag beaches, Liffey valley, forests, harbours, parks, canals etc., in close proximity to city centre
- > Opportunity to dial up the outdoors, slow tourism and the urban to rural accessibility of nature on the city's doorstep
- > Focus on sustainable tourism e.g. UNESCO Dublin Bay biosphere, Dublin Coastal Trail, Fingal Greenway, waterways activities. Champion clean and green credentials, balancing developing the county but maintaining the beauty of natural environment



Food & Drink

- > Food offerings in the county considered strong e.g. restaurants, producers, retail, food festivals
- > Suggested need to develop scalable food experiences which are bookable and create dwell time e.g. restaurant visit, meet a food producer, go out fishing
- > Food provenance is an undersold story e.g. spotlight farm to fork authentic food offerings and the history of organic growing and indigenous companies such as Keelings, Kehoes Crisps and Fyffes



Competitive Edge

- > Close proximity to Dublin and Dublin airport, though potential competitive edge has not delivered to date, there could be opportunities to capitalise on 15-20% capacity increase through the airport with strong return of UK, US, French and German markets
- > The county is a one-stop-shop with everything on the visitor's doorstep in a small e.g. coast, heritage (castles and great houses), culture, towns and villages, nature and shopping within 40 minutes
- > Strength of the coastal locations and beaches
- > Well known domestically for events and festivals, particularly in North and West of the county and villages e.g. Flavours of Fingal, Howth Maritime and Seafood Festival



Identity & Awareness

- > Lack of knowledge or awareness about what Fingal is, where it is situated, what villages and towns form Fingal County, what to do, visit or stay i.e. questions around whether visitors intentionally or accidentally visit Fingal
- > Lack of definition around the brand / identity and questions around whether Fingal is known outside of the county
- > Perceived gaps/uneven spread of current marketing activities across the various channels
- > Visitor experience
- > Not seen as a visitor destination i.e. due to less awareness, considered more as a day trip location



Key Challenges

- > Collaboration with other Dublin locations and attractions e.g. in city centre and other Dublin areas
- > Requirement to develop offerings inland, promote choice across the county, particularly the towns and villages who can feel ignored by tourism authorities
- > There is a need to develop a coherent proposition, trails, naming conventions and signage to support visitor flow
- > Communication of packages / routes and sharing knowledge locally and nationally is a big challenge in terms of awareness, identity, clear marketing messaging and joint promotion
- > Insufficient hotel stock in some areas in the county which limits potential bed nights
- > Labour shortage, training and retention



Transport Infrastructure

- > Transport needs further development to have connectivity and links across the county (excellent access to Fingal through airport, the M50 and extension of the DART line north to Drogheda)
- > Access issues for FIT (Free Independent Traveller) whilst transport links from South to North Dublin are excellent but connecting to areas outside of this rail lane accessibility to get to places is non-existent. Significant as 67% of international visitors do not use a car
- > Traffic calming issues in the popular towns and villages such as Howth and Malahide. Provides opportunities to develop cycle tourism e.g. cycle infrastructure being developed by Active Travel Department



Data & Metrics

- > Use data capture and monitoring to assess economic contributors and set targets to help stakeholders do more and work together to improve tourism
- > Need for key metrics to measure baseline targets and success rates and ROI. These should include tracking visitor numbers, visitor spend, social media spend and cost per acquisition etc. and be reviewed on quarterly and annual basis



Reporting & Collaboration

- > Reporting structures to support implementation, communication, and adaptation of strategy
- > Collaboration structures and reporting required



Branding

Fingal tourism branding is currently aligned with the Fáilte Ireland Dublin brand. The Dublin brand position, “Dublin living thrives side by side with the natural outdoors so you can constantly jump between completely unique, different and often unexpected experiences.” (Fáilte Ireland, 2023). This approach should continue given the level of investment in the brand and related reach and awareness, supported by Fingal specific signature destination and clustered visitor experiences.

Branded Visitor Experience



Signature Destination Experiences



Clustered Visitor Experiences



SCOT Analysis

Utilising the key insights, a SCOT analysis was performed to:

- > Identify economic opportunities and strategic tourism initiatives.
- > Identify natural, recreational and cultural signature experiences that can be developed across Fingal.
- > Consider the maritime / green potential of Fingal.
- > Consider the role of key areas of Fingal in developing tourism specific products and initiatives such as attractions, festivals and events.
- > Propose thematic experiences and opportunities based on location profile, assets and visitor product (with the aims of increasing bed nights, encouraging visitor spend and increasing the duration of stay, and encouraging visitor dispersal where relevant).



Product Audit and Product Experience Development

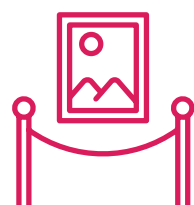
Product Overview

Fingal has a wide variety of tourism products available to domestic and international tourists. The tourism products include:



Natural Amenities & Heritage

Fingal possess an abundance of natural landscapes including 88km of coastline, blue-flag beaches, cliff walks and rivers.



Arts & Culture

There are approximately 1,300 heritage sites in Fingal on both public and private land. Sites including castles, tombs and mills.



Recreation & Leisure

Outdoor and indoor activities from golf courses, greenways, blueways, gardens, water activities, museums, and shopping centres.



Food & Drink

Fingal has a strong food producing, food, and drink offering. with establishments including cafes, restaurants, bars, pubs and cookery schools..



Festivals & Events

Fingal festivals include Flavour of Fingal, The Irish Maritime Festival and recently Tradfest. There are events/ concerts also held in Malahide Castle.



Accommodation

There is currently one 5*Hotel, thirteen 4* Hotels and two 3* Hotels in Fingal. There is alternative accommodation available in Fingal including B&Bs, guesthouses, holiday parks and caravan parks.

Current Tourism Offering Workshop Overview

The Product & Experience Audit Graph clearly highlights the concentration of products and equally the current gaps in particular areas. The graph depicts the current presence and absence of product and experiences under these themes:

- > Natural Amenities & Heritage
- > Arts & Culture
- > Recreation & Leisure
- > Food & Drink
- > Festivals & Events
- > Accommodation
- > Infrastructure

Under each of the themes, the towns and villages of Fingal were divided up into three areas, North, South East and South West.

The table below displays the town and villages under each of these areas.

North	South East	South West
Balbriggan	Baldoyle	Blanchardstown
Balrothery	Balgriffin	Castleknock
Ballyboughal	Dublin Airport	Clonsilla
Barnageera	Howth	Mulhuddart
Donabate	Malahide	Ongar
Garristown	Portmarnock	
Lusk	Santry	
Oldtown	Sutton	
Portrane	Swords	
Rush		
Skerries		

The stakeholder workshop session reviewed the audit of current tourism assets in the county and discussed:

- > Potential opportunities to optimise or expand existing product and experiences.
- > Gaps in offering and potential proposed solutions.
- > Opportunities for improvement and product/experience development.
- > Key success factors in terms optimal product/experience development (use and future growth).
- > Existing and potential partnerships.

These discussions are reflected in the strategic actions identified for each of the objectives contained in the strategy.

Tourism assets are colour coded based on the research and survey findings as follows:

- > Green includes “hero” or “lead” products / experiences that were ranked in the top three in the survey as being the main visitor attraction or the greatest strengths of Fingal as a tourism destination or were mentioned most often in the focus groups and interviews as being the best known / biggest draw to the county for visitors.
- > Yellow includes products / experiences that were ranked in the top ten in the survey for main visitor attractions and were mentioned in some interviews as being the best known / biggest draw to the county for visitors but less frequently.
- > Grey includes products / experiences that did not rank in the top ten for main visitor attraction but could present opportunities to attract visitors in a cluster with “hero” or “lead” tourism assets.
- > White space represents where there are gaps in a specific area.

	“Hero” or “Lead” Well-known Products / Experiences that draw visitors
	Top Ten Main Visitor Attractions but not in top three
	Could / should cluster with the above
	Product or Experience gaps

Current tourism offering - Product & Experience audit table

The presented product audit table at the workshop.

North			South East			South West		
Natural Amenities & Heritage			Natural Amenities & Heritage			Natural Amenities & Heritage		
3 x Blue Flag Beaches (Rush, Donabate and Balcarrick Bay)			2 x Blue Flag Beaches (Portmarnock and Velvet Strand)					
Lambay Island			Howth Cliffs					
			Looped Walks (Black Linn, Bog of Frogs, Cliff Path and Tramline)					
			Ben of Howth					
Arts & Culture			Arts & Culture			Arts & Culture		
2 x Castle & House Ardgillan Castle and Demense	Newbridge House and Farm		3 x Castles Malahide	Swords	Howth			
Skerries Mills			Howth Portal Tomb					
Music (Irish Institute of Music and Song, Seamus Ennis Arts Centre)			Music (Irish Institute of Music and Song, Seamus Ennis Arts Centre)					
Recreation & Leisure			Recreation & Leisure			Recreation & Leisure		
Balbriggan & The Island Golf Courses			Portmarnock and Roganstown			Luttrellstown		
7 x Links and Parkland Golf Courses (Rush, Beaverstown, Skerries, Hollywood Lakes, Corballis, Donabate, Balcarrick)			Ferry Trips (Ireland's Eye, Dublin Bay Cruises, Malahide Charter Boat)			3 x Walking Activities Phoenix Park	Royal Canal Greenway	National Famine Way
Outdoor Activities (Kayaking trips around Skerries Islands)			Outdoor Activities (Cairns Howth Head, The Summit, Howth Lighthouse, Bailey Lighthouse, Kayaking Trips)			Sports Centre (Sports Campus Ireland, National Aquatic Centre)		
Sea Sauna			3 x Museums (Casino Model Railway, National Transport Museum, Swords Cultural Quarter)			Blanchardstown Shopping Centre		
The Herb School			Swords Pavillions Shopping Centre			Parkland Gold Course (Elmgreen)		
Flynn Adventure Park						Fort Lucan		
						Shackleton Gardens		
Food & Drink			Food & Drink			Food & Drink		
Food Producers	Food	Drink		Food	Drink			Drink
Festivals & Events			Festivals & Events			Festivals & Events		
Flavours of Fingal			Irish Maritime Festival			South West		
Accommodation			Accommodation			Accommodation		
						5* Luttrellstown Castle Resort		
3 x 4* (Bracken Court House, Kettles House Hotel, Roganstown Hotel & Country Club)			6 x 4* (Maldron Hotel Dublin Airport, Clayton Hotel Dublin Airport, Hilton Dublin Airport, Grand Hotel, White Sands Hotel, Portmarnock Hotel and Links)			4x 4* (Carlton Hotel Blanchardstown, Crown Plaza Dublin, Castleknock Hotel, Clayton Hotel Liffey Valley)		
Glamping - Planning Approved						National Sports Campus Hotel		



Developing tourism offering - Product & Experience audit table

The presented product audit table at the workshop.

North	South East	South West
Natural Amenities & Heritage		Natural Amenities & Heritage
Promote and develop tourism offerings that take advantage of local climate conditions utilising solar gain and daylight		
Arts & Culture		Arts & Culture
Fingal Heritage Plan 2018 - 2023 and support the preparation and implementation of the Fingal Heritage Plan 2023 - 2029		
Protect and conserve the special character of the historic core of Lusk including the area or archaeological notification in the centre of town		
Bremore Castle is being considered for further development		
Recreation & Leisure		Recreation & Leisure
Fingal Coastal Way from north of Balbriggan to Kilbarrack	Swords Castle Cultural Quarter	Protect and enhance the built and natural heritage of the Royal Canal and ensure that development along it or in its vicinity does not have a detrimental effect on the character of the canal
Bremore Regional Park in Balbriggan	Dublin Coastal Trail (collaborating with Fáilte Ireland)	
Secure the development of the Greenway, ensure biodiversity net gain, and promote as a new active method of travel. Baldoyle Portmarnock Greenway is part of the longer-term plan. Sutton to Malahide Greenway, ultimately linking to the permitted Broadmeadow Greenway and the Sutton to Sandycove Cycleway is and will continue to bring significant active travel and recreational opportunities to these areas.		Shackleton Mills and Gardens
Promote and facilitate the development and growth of Balbriggan and Skerries as primary service, social, cultural and local tourist centres in North Fingal		
Continue to implement, promote and support the "Our Balbriggan" Rejuvenation Plan		
Food & Drink		Food & Drink
Fingal Food Policy		
Red Barn planning approved in Skerries Mills	Howth Castle addition of restaurant / wedding venue	Sport Ireland plan for food facilities (restaurants and cookery school)
Festivals & Events		Festivals & Events
The 2023 Cricket World Cup and capitalise on American Football game with Notre Dame vs Navy in the Aviva Stadium on the 26th August 2023		
Red Barn planning approved in Skerries Mills	Howth Castle addition of restaurant / wedding venue	Sport Ireland plan for food facilities (restaurants and cookery school)
Tradfest		
Flavours of Fingal	Irish Maritime Festival	Malahide Castle Concerts / Events
Accommodation		Accommodation
Glamping site in Holm Patrick		Sport Ireland Athlete Accommodation
Infrastructure		Infrastructure
National Transport Authority (NTA) are implementing two strategies in 2023 called "Connecting Ireland" and "Bus Connects"		
Develop a strategic network of regional level bus and rail based Park and Ride facilities in the Greater Dublin Area at appropriate locations		
Implementation of Demand Management measures on the M50 motorway to ensure that it retains sufficient capacity to fulfil its strategic functions, including freight movement. Facilitate the implementation of the M50 Demand Management Study.		
Metropolitan cycle network set out in the Greater Dublin Area Cycle, Network Plan inclusive of key commuter routes and urban greenways on canal, river and coastal corridors.		
Extension of LUAS to Finglas (St. Margarets Road)	Metrolink to Swords and serving Dublin Airport	Feasibility study of agricultural and recreational amenity lands.
Extending of LUAS line to Balbriggan (6 year strategy)	Enhanced electric vehicles charging infrastructure - Swords	Planning and delivery of the N3 upgrade between the M50 and Clonee.
Local Transport Plan for Balbriggan	DART+ Coastal North (Drogheda)	DART+ West (M3 Parkway)

Vision



Fingal is a destination with a vibrant tourism identity. It is rich in heritage and culture, natural amenities, coastal offerings and food culture all within accessible reach of Dublin's city centre, Ireland's main airport and excellent road connectivity. Within this context a future focused, innovative and deliverable vision is central to supporting Fingal County Council's growth ambitions for the sector, supporting jobs, the local economy and the sustainable impact on the wider community across Fingal.

Developing a vision for tourism in Fingal

The vision statement below lays out an inclusive and future focused vision for tourism in Fingal, one which positions the county to, over time and in line with product, experience and infrastructure developments, increase its share of Dublin's growing tourism economy, domestically and internationally.

The process of formulating this vision took account of stakeholder feedback gathered through consultation with tourism and hospitality businesses, statutory bodies, partner agencies, representative community groups and other local authorities.



The vision should provide direction and clarify where Fingal is going.



Clarity allows individuals across the county to have a shared sense of what is important and what is not.



The vision should articulate what kind of future the tourism stakeholders want to create.



A vision is a goal that should challenge, stretch and set a high standard for the county.



An effective vision should ensure that all efforts are focused on achieving a common end result and creating a shared ideal future.



The vision should engage and inspire all stakeholders to commit to a cause and achieve the ambition.

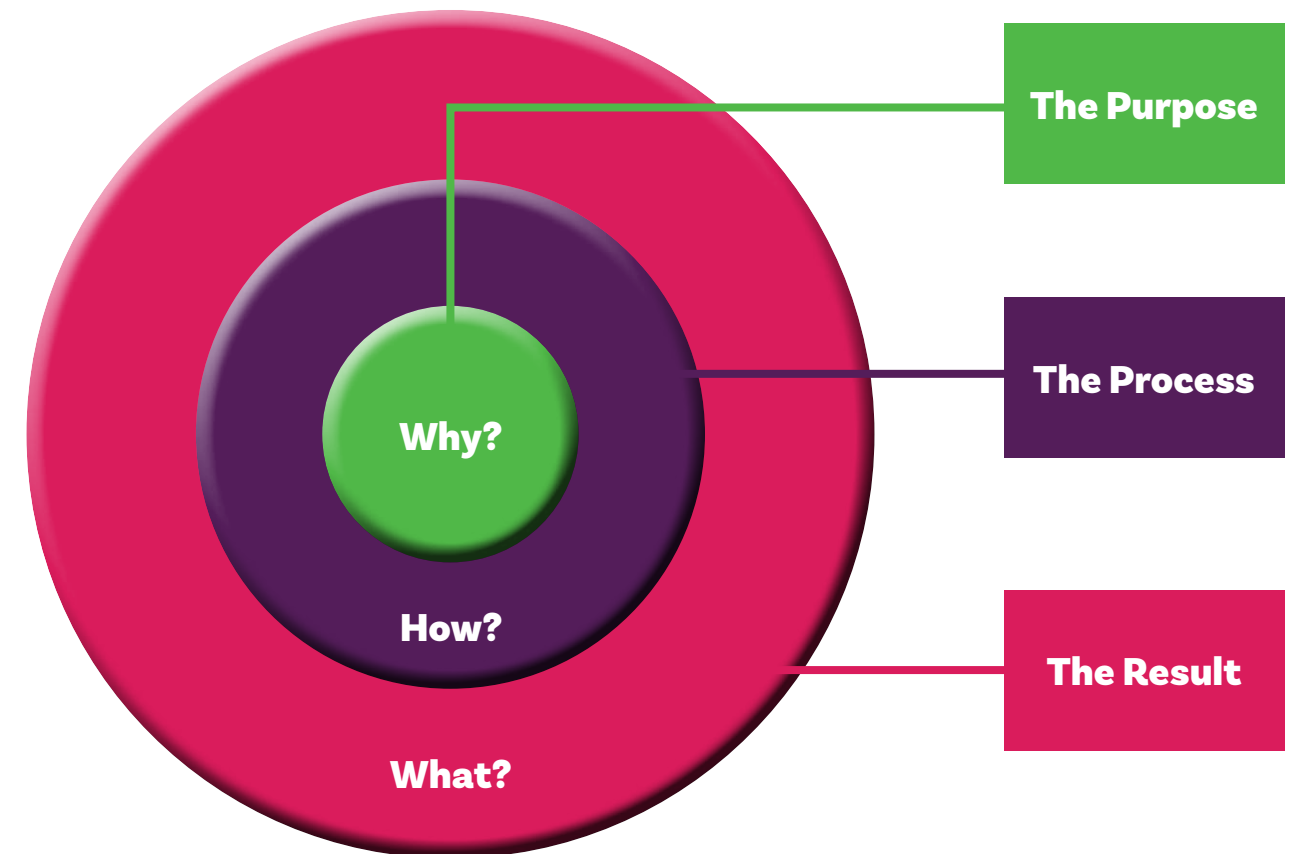
Vision

“Consolidate Fingal’s position as a tourism destination with a choice of local, cultural, culinary, coastal and outdoor experiences across the county that showcase the strengths, assets and opportunities of the area and lead to sustainable and inclusive tourism sector growth.”

Mission

In support of Fingal County Council’s strategic vision to establish Fingal as a tourism destination, the mission articulates why the strategy is required, how it will be achieved and what will be involved.

As with the vision, the stated mission is informed by consultations and the survey in relation to questions on how to avail of opportunities, overcome challenges and what would make the strategy successful.



Mission

“Provide a sustainable and collaborative road-map which supports all tourism stakeholders in working together to deliver a tourism proposition which will deliver maximum sustainable, economic and social benefit for Fingal.”

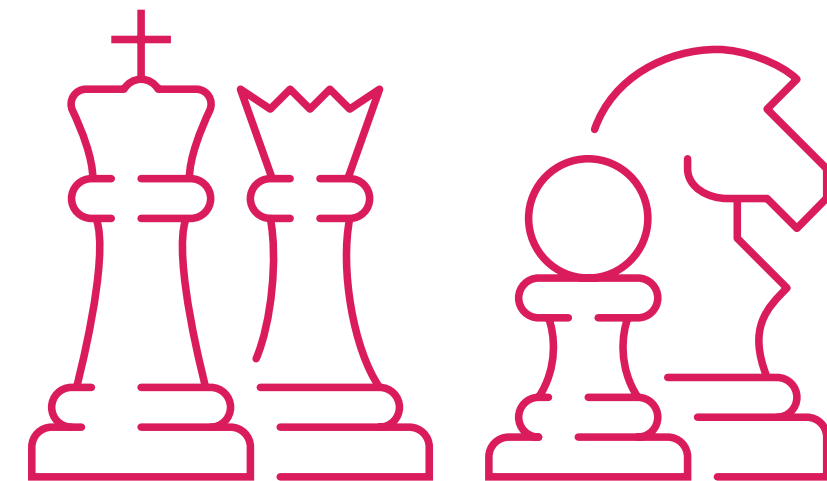
Approach



The vision and mission are built on the idea that to raise awareness, compete effectively, and convince visitors to choose Fingal, it's essential to start with what's already known and likely to attract visitors. This principle emerged frequently during consultations. This central principle guides this strategy and the actions and decisions that will need to be made during implementation.

The strategic approach is driven by the need to acknowledge that while there is a diverse range of tourism assets in the county, there is an equally diverse mix of stages of development, with some tourism assets unlikely to be fully developed and available for the lifetime of the strategy. Equally, tourism assets are at different stages of development in terms of ability to scale and a large amount of what is available is best scaled in collaboration i.e. through clusters with itineraries based on visitor needs and interests.

All of this will take time and this is why a phased approach is recommended and has influenced the objectives, goals and actions and should also influence implementation and risk management.



Approach

Lead with mature, well known products and experiences, clustered with those less well known, to create a destination-based approach where gaps in one area are compensated for by other strengths and added to by future developments as they mature.



Objectives

Objectives

The Strategic Objectives come from the findings and analysis of research and consultation phase and will influence the shape and content of the Implementation Plan. The Strategic Objectives centre on developing a supportive and collaborative framework that will provide a solid foundation for the Implementation Plan.

1 Dispersed Growth



Grow Fingal Tourism by consolidating past performance and creating growth opportunities across the county in targeted market segments.

2 Product & Experience Development



Develop and enhance the range, quality and availability of tourism products and visitor experiences through ongoing product and experience development to ensure an authentic visitor experience.

3 Branding, Marketing & Promotion



Create a targeted marketing and promotional plan which clarifies the Fingal proposition and brand(s) and showcases what distinguishes Fingal as a unique tourism destination, with a view to directing future marketing activities towards clearly defined and achievable key performance indicators.

4 Collaboration & Partnerships



Build collaborative, integrated industry structures and coordinate strategic networks across the county capable of enabling the successful delivery of Fingal's tourism strategy.

1 Dispersed Growth



Grow Fingal Tourism by consolidating past performance and creating growth opportunities across the county in targeted market segments.

Dispersed Growth - Context

Attracting domestic and international visitors to Fingal is important for the Council, the tourism industry and wider tourism in Dublin and is a significant component in sustaining the local economy. Ambitions to achieve growth will require all tourism stakeholders working together to help attract and disperse visitor spend throughout the county.

To build and accelerate visitor numbers and capture new segments in an increasing competitive environment, a more collaborative, distributed and inclusive growth model is required. This aligns with the Council's ambitions, and also those of Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland. This supports a focus on sustainable and balanced growth. It is vital that tourism businesses play their part, especially in working together and with the Council and relevant agencies.

Arising from the Product and Experience Audit, the best known, most market ready tourism assets should be a hook for any clusters/campaigns. They should be marketed in tandem with less well known assets within the context of these cluster/campaigns. As new products, experiences and infrastructure developments come to market, that best meet visitor need and provide reasons to stay longer and more often, these should be added to the overall package and promoted as part of the overall Fingal destination experience.

Skerries Mills



Swords Castle Summer Concerts

Dispersed Growth Strategic Actions

- > Identify all development and expansion plans (Council and tourism industry) and ensure these are included in ongoing targets and projections to understand combined growth potential.
- > In conjunction with the industry, define the county-wide growth objectives based on the most relevant product / experience theme in each area and set targets based on stages of market development, identified market potential and growth gaps.
- > Support the development of appropriate alternative accommodation options with the required facilities where necessary in line with the County Development plan.
- > Work with Fáilte Ireland to identify solutions to building / meeting demand for MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events) business in the county and address gaps e.g. gala dinner space, concentration of hotels in a small number of areas, scale of meeting space.
- > Advocate for digital infrastructure in the county sufficient to meet the needs of large and hybrid events.
- > Consider the Council support resources that can be allocated to support the implementation of the strategy.
- > Explore data capture option in conjunction with industry stakeholders.
- > Define the required stakeholder and governance structure(s).
- > Define the optimal system / structure to report on and monitor growth in tourism across the counties (this will be dependent on data sharing agreements with tourism businesses).
- > Carry out regular market analysis to identify insights, trends and resulting opportunities to focus targeted efforts towards balanced growth and adapt the competitive growth strategy and targeted marketing and promotions accordingly.



Key Performance Indicators	Measurement Tracking Systems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Expansion of infrastructure in line with Fingal County and Dublin Metropolitan region planned investments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Submission of data to Tourism Working Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Appropriate accommodation capacity aligned with tourism proposition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Infrastructure investment updates via Council and Dublin Metropolitan region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Growth planned and achieved across 3 county areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Monitoring and reporting planning applications granted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Achievement of Product and Experience Development targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Monitoring and reporting zoning/rezoning applications granted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Required supports being provided / used by tourism industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Each county area to get growth targets and report into Fingal Tourism Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Fingal Tourism Working Group standing item on agenda
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Ongoing needs analysis and tracking resources/supports requested/provided across 3 county areas



Portmarnock Golf and Country Club



2 Product & Experience Development



Develop and enhance the range, quality and availability of tourism products and visitor experiences through ongoing product and experience development to ensure an authentic visitor experience.

Product & Experience Development - Context

Promoting Fingal on a county wide basis should initially focus on established product and experiences, supported by the required infrastructure and services and the optimal channels mix to reach target markets at the awareness and booking stage of their path to purchase.

To grow Fingal's position as a destination, a targeted approach is needed based on:

1. Segments and geographies where the established product is currently most known.
2. Others where awareness building and persuasion is required.
3. Positioning Fingal as a destination with a range of products and experiences to choose from when the time is right (i.e. when a sufficient level of development has happened and clusters and itineraries are created / market-ready).

A coordinated omni-channel activation plan is needed, which increases awareness, is based on reasons to stay developed around clustered scalable experiences (trails, food culture and heritage, blueway and greenway activities, festivals and events) and emphasises sustainable / slow tourism, particularly in Special Amenity Areas such as Howth and the Liffey Valley.

Product and Experience Development will focus on developing and maximising return by clustering the appropriate mix of tourism products and experiences aligned primarily to three strategic themes, based on the primary assets available within Fingal.

1. Natural Amenities & Heritage
2. Arts & Culture
3. Recreation & Leisure

These will be augmented by related products and experiences aligned to the supporting asset themes of Hospitality, Food & Drink, Festivals and Events.

Due to the need for comprehensive food-related economic growth strategy and food tourism development in Fingal, the Department of Economic, Enterprise, Tourism and Cultural Development has commissioned a separate dedicated review of the Agri Food Strategy 2019-2021 and the development of a new Food and Drink Policy for Fingal.



Product & Experience Development Actions

- > Create a destination approach by working through a tourism working group representing all three locations and combining existing assets in product and experience clusters at each location based on the theme that best matches the best known, most mature tourism assets.
- > Update the product and experience audits (current and future developments) on a regular basis to continually assess the tourism offering, plan for continuous product improvement and keep track of investments that position Fingal as a competitive tourism destination in all areas of the product and experience portfolio (accommodation, business tourism, outdoor activities, culture and heritage, leisure and recreation).
- > Develop themed signature experiences for each cluster location, designed to appeal to key target markets. Experiences should combine different attractions, activities, transport, food/ beverage and accommodation and should build sustainable tourism credentials. Plans should include goal setting and go to market timelines. Cluster itineraries should be linked to ongoing capital and infrastructure investment (by the Council, agencies and industry).
- > Create a conducive environment for increasing accommodation capacity, business tourism and experience development e.g. accessibility, active travel, developing events/festivals, food/ beverage experiences and slow tourism.
- > Share data on approved plans for tourism developments.
- > Define metrics to measure visitor experience and agree a system for data collection, sharing and monitoring.
- > Set targets for:
 - 1 additional showcase event per year with the potential to attract a loyal audience who will travel.
 - Addition of 1 gala dinner space and increased meeting room capacity at all hotels (for association business).
 - Addition of 1 showcase new product e.g. Liffey Valley Trail in collaboration with South Dublin County Council.
 - Addition of 1 trail (cycling), hiking/walking trail (greenway) and 1 blueway activity.
- > Create scalable, bookable food experiences that incorporate all that is on offer across the county from restaurants and cafés, to food and beverage producers, to food trails, cookery schools, farmers markets, agritourism to foodbased activities e.g. fishing, foraging etc.

Key Performance Indicators	Measurement Tracking Systems
> Achievement of new product and experience development targets	> Ongoing addition of new product and experiences and related serviced infrastructure
> Achievement of booking targets	> Agreed tracking mechanism e.g. code, passport etc.
> Referral of business within the county	> Providers to inform each other of referrals and record resulting business
> Visitor satisfaction	> Visitor satisfaction surveys

3 Branding, Marketing & Promotion



Create a targeted marketing and promotional plan which clarifies the Fingal proposition and brand(s) and showcases what distinguishes Fingal as a unique tourism destination, with a view to directing future marketing activities towards clearly defined and achievable key performance indicators.

Branding, Marketing & Promotion - Context

To define and clarify Fingal's proposition as a Dublin destination, is a required starting point. The approach of aligning with Fáilte Ireland Dublin branding should continue given the level of investment in the brand and related reach and awareness.

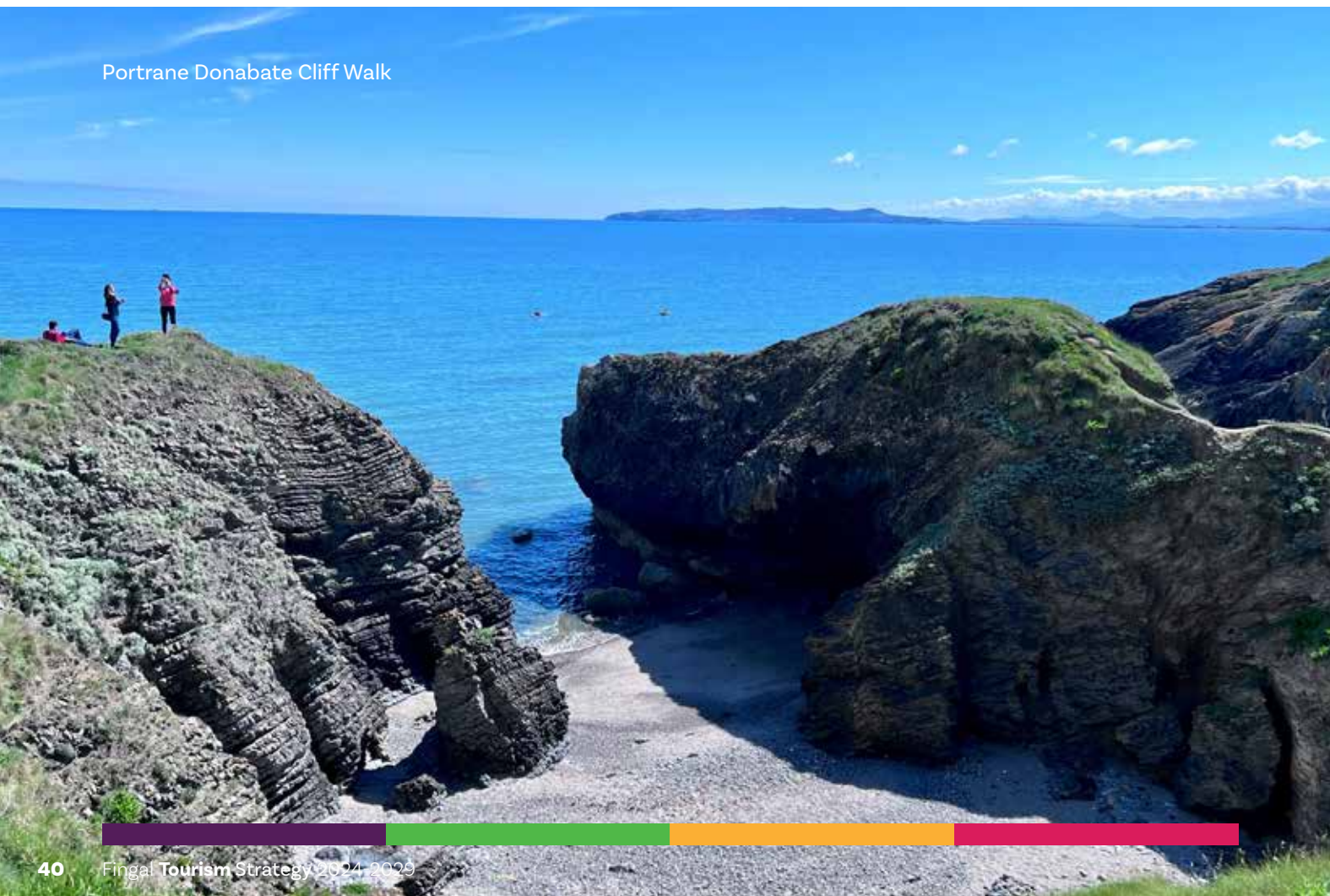
Where the importance of using "Fingal" in branding was mentioned in the consultation, it was mostly related to the domestic brand and even more so to the brand within the county (for residents). The majority agreed that branding was best adapted in line with the Dublin brand, while clarifying what differentiates Fingal as a Dublin destination.

Clarifying Fingal's positioning and related awareness building, through a tailored and coordinated omnichannel activation plan should include: B2B and B2C segmentation, digital first strategies and channel activation specific to attracting identified segments and growing visitor numbers to established and emerging assets across the county.

Branding, Marketing & Promotion Actions

- > Define and clarify Fingal's brand and a brand hierarchy which shows the relationship and alignment of the brands under the Dublin brand.
- > Circulate the Dublin brand toolkit with clarification as to how to customise to the Dublin brand when used in Fingal.
- > Work with Fáilte Ireland on a branding survey to review of levels of awareness and understanding, level of use and consistency.
- > Devise a coordinated marketing and communications plan based on the county as a destination through the Council and tourism businesses marketing and promotions.
- > Develop an integrated promotion programme for the county incorporating online and offline content which targets local (Dublin and bordering counties), domestic, NI and international visitors. The campaign should include:
 - Marketing goals, objectives and targets e.g. engagement, information, activation.
 - Definition and profile of domestic, international and NI target markets and communication channels to target these markets.
 - Schedule of activities.
 - Agreed messaging.
 - Estimation of resources required to effectively and efficiently implement the promotion programme.
 - Definition of implementation monitoring to measure effectiveness'.
- > Promote Fingal as an outdoor destination with activities like hiking, walking, greenways, blueways, bird watching, natural habitats, organic food producers etc, accessible via active travel with a developed and developing cycling infrastructure and accessible (in parts) by public transport.
- > Integrate the Fáilte Ireland domestic consumer motivation framework (launched in February 2023) into future marketing and promotions.
- > Ensure close collaboration between the Council and Ireland's national tourism bodies, Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland, regarding marketing activities to ensure co-ordinated messaging is agreed as part of the marketing plan and the county is given optimal campaign coverage.
- > Map out existing and planned trails in Fingal indicating "instagrammable" vantage points and stop-off points along each trail (to increase dwell time).
- > Explore potential supports, including financial supports, available from the council and tourism and other agencies for joint marketing campaigns.
- > Define metrics to measure brand sentiment and marketing/promotion impact and agree a system for data collection, sharing and monitoring.
- > Explore the potential to extend the audience appeal of existing festivals / events beyond local audiences.
- > Share knowledge on opportunities and provide updates on product and experience developments on an ongoing basis and promote developments in the planning phase (to create awareness) and once brought to market (to create interest/bookings) e.g. clusters, outdoor activities (cycling, hiking, walking, on and off water activities, redeveloped heritage assets etc.
- > Support Fáilte Ireland in a digital 'Marketing Support Hub' for use by relevant tourism and hospitality businesses, events organisations and community groups with marketing materials and collateral.
- > Align marketing with the food policy and support an increase in locally sourced food at venues, festivals and events across the county.
- > Ensure that all Fingal tourism products and experiences are all listed on the appropriate national and international channels such as www.discoverireland.ie and www.visitdublin.ie

Portrane Donabate Cliff Walk



Key Performance Indicators	Measurement Tracking Systems
> Attendance at brand activation workshop	> Numbers attending and subsequent alignment with the brand proposition
> Tourism industry engagement with brand proposition across the county	> Survey findings from tourism providers annually on their use of the brand
> Integrated brand proposition into all marketing messaging and campaigns	> Consistent and clear use of brand proposition and marketing messaging
> Use of key messages in media	> Fingal Tourism monitor social and press coverage
> Alignment with Dublin brand in marketing campaigns	> Fingal Tourism and Fáilte Ireland to both monitor brand alignment
> Shared campaign(s) with tourism industry for presence on individual websites and social media platforms	> Fingal Tourism and individual tourism businesses to track impact of campaign and feed into Fingal Tourism measurements
> Engagement with content across the website and 3rd party sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Google AdWords: video traffic > PPC reports > SEO reports
> Engagement across social media platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Social media followers, likes, comments, competition entries and shares > Facebook Insights: ad campaigns and sponsored posts > Twitter Analytics: sponsored Tweets > Instagram Analytics



4 Collaboration & Partnerships



Build collaborative, integrated industry structures and coordinate strategic networks across the county capable of enabling the successful delivery of Fingal's tourism strategy.

Collaboration & Partnerships

- Context

The ambition to position Fingal as a tourism destination requires a coordinated and collaborative effort with cross-county industry structures and strategic partnerships with key agencies.

A concerted and coordinated effort is needed which will only succeed if long-term commitment is made to effective collaborative with all stakeholders taking responsibility for their role in the success or failure of working together effectively. No single or small number of tourism business, Council or agency personnel can create a sufficiently integrated implementation structure separately.

Fingal's strategy will only succeed if the oversight, implementation, management and review structures are (re)created and maintained to ensure the strategy is adequately managed and the ongoing focus, time and collective resource is provided to progress required actions.

Coordinated effort and maintaining momentum via proactive and committed collaboration is vital, as is the understanding that the success of the strategy will be realised on a phased basis (in line with product and experience development).

Collaboration & Partnerships

Strategic Actions

- > Create a Tourism Advisory Group focused on policy, strategy, access etc. made up of key agencies and representatives of tourism businesses. Advisory Group to define and address any product or infrastructure gaps working with local government, key tourism agencies, national transport authorities and the private sector to advocate for the product and infrastructure development necessary to further develop Fingal as a tourism destination.
- > Create a Fingal Tourism Working Group which includes representatives from sub-sectors / themed product and experiences in the county. Group representatives to liaise with tourism colleagues in their sub-sector / area to communicate plans and encourage cluster development, collaborative marketing and promotion, cross-selling etc.
- > Work with tourism partners such as Fáilte Ireland to identify strategic proposed solutions to building / meeting demand for MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events) business in the county.
- > Council to liaise with internal departments and relevant outside agencies such as the Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, National Transport Authority (NTA), Sport Ireland, Waterways Ireland, Irish Lights regarding:
 - Industry supports.
 - Joint domestic and overseas marketing and product, experience and event promotion opportunities.
 - Sufficient and appropriate signage and wayfinding.
 - Explore options to create transport options around and across the country that link various places, experiences and trails.
 - Parking, traffic calming and active travel initiatives.
 - Coordinate and promote commitments to sustainable practices.
- > Coordinate county wide networking events and cross-county visits to ensure tourism stakeholders are aware of new developments and to facilitate information sharing and cluster development.
- > Work with food producers and farmers to explore the potential of agritourism experiences.
- > Include the Fingal Food Network as key stakeholders in working groups and promote their activities and brand(s).
- > Co-ordinated marketing messages, aligned with Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland messaging should be agreed as part of the marketing plan, with the Fingal Tourism Working Group to reflect national messaging and campaigns e.g. "Keep Discovering", "Winter in Dublin" and local messaging specific to Fingal e.g. #LoveFingalDublin.



Howth Castle Cookery School

Key Performance Indicators	Measurement Tracking Systems
> Creation of signature experiences	> Number of providers involved in signature experiences across the county
> Referral of business within the city and county	> Providers to inform each other of referrals and record resulting business
> Infrastructural collaboration within Council and with other agencies	> Number of fully serviced infrastructural developments a. planned and b. completed
> Number of collaborative projects within the county	> Number of new products and experiences brought to market
> Number of joint projects	> Number of active and completed projects with other Councils, other agencies and development agencies



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