

GET INVOLVED!

Public Webinar

7pm, 12th October, 2021

With your help, we're now well on the way to creating a new vision for Swords. Take a look at the progress we've made, and together we'll make a more vibrant town for all

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Project Aim

The aim of the Sustainable Swords project is to increase the resilience of the local economy and to provide for an enhanced, accessible, inclusive, child-friendly, and healthy urban environment.

During the last few months the project team have been hard at work undertaking detailed analysis of Swords town centre including public realm, architecture, environment, traffic, community and economy. We have considered the opinions provided to us by those who undertook the online survey, many one to one conversations, as well as national and international good practice in placemaking and the future role of town centres.

The project team have now developed a list of strategic priorities that are based on solid evidence, voices from the community and that align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This research and analysis have been drawn together in the Sustainable Swords Health Check, which is available on fingal.ie/sustainableswords

Over the next few pages are a number of proposed projects and recommendations. We want your views on these. What do you think of these projects? Are there projects you would change or ones you would add? What will help transform your Swords?

We have included a number of images where elements of the proposed projects have worked successfully in others towns and countries. These should be considered as examples of best practice to open discussion.





Improving Access, Permeability and Connectivity

Enabling connectivity and permeability to facilitate more active travel is critically important. This will enable delivery on ambitions with regards to reducing private car-use and enhancing access to future Metro-link and Bus Connects locations. In turn this will have a positive impact on the environment, physical health and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. These interventions will seek to showcase Swords rich natural and built heritage and capitalise on public investment in Metrolink, BusConnects and the R132.

Proposed Projects

1.1	Western Link Road i. Feasibility Study / Detailed Design – Southern Section ii. Delivery/critical infrastructure.	Delivery of a Western Link Road will be critically important in enabling traffic movements to be directed away from the town centre, enabling future phases of town centre enhancement to take place. Detailed feasibility and design would take place as part of future studies.
1.2	Swords Multi-Purpose Mobility Hubs-Mobility Points/Park and Ride i. Feasibility Study ii. Detailed Design iii. Delivery.	Best practice regeneration proposals in the UK and the Netherlands increasingly feature Mobility hubs. These can facilitate a transition to car-sharing, bike maintenance and storage, Electric Vehicles (EV)’s and other forms of emerging mobility as a service. Other aspects can include active ground floor uses and parcel collection and drop off.
1.3	Swords Greenway Network Initiative i. Feasibility Study including environmental assessment ii. Detailed Design iii. Delivery.	The aim would be to facilitate more sustainable modes of transport to places of work and study as well as enabling recreation and tourism. The network could, subject to feasibility studies, link Swords town centre to Rivermeade via the Ward River Valley; Ward River Valley to Broadmeadow Valley Greenway via Town Park; town centre to Malahide via new off-road estuary greenway, as well as provide linkage to parks/green space and schools. An immediate benefit could come from provision of better linkage to Swords Community College.
1.4	Swords Pedestrian Linkages/Quietways/Home Zones i. Feasibility Study including environmental assessment ii. Detailed Design iii. Delivery.	A range of initiatives to enhance suburban streets, enhancing linkages and biodiversity and multifunctionality e.g. Play Streets.



THEME ONE

1.5 Swords Safe Routes to School/ School Zones

Safe Routes to School, an initiative of Fingal County Council will deliver a suite of proposed solutions to school environs including crossing points, pedestrian islands, speedbumps etc.

Preliminary Recommendations

- Work with NTA to enable low emission public bus (Local Link) to link residential developments with transport hubs (Metrolink) and places of work, play and study.
- Future temporary road closures for events and markets.
- Continue to encourage and facilitate sustainable transport infrastructure e.g. electric bike share. (Bleper Bikes) and private sector provision of last mile delivery infrastructure at mobility hubs/points, and car-sharing.





Reimagining Our Public Realm

This envisages a step change in the quality of the urban realm of Swords town centre, encouraging people to stay longer and have a more enjoyable experience. The focus is upon a phased enhancement of the urban realm that provides space for all.

Proposed Projects

2.1	Swords Main Street Transformation i. Design ii. Delivery.	Coordinated and phased upgrade of public realm in Swords town centre. An immediate benefit could involve de-cluttering, parking rationalisation, SUDS, parklets, market and event infrastructure.
2.2	Swords Laneways Strategy i. Feasibility Study ii. Detailed Design iii. Delivery.	Focussing on the laneways that run east and west from Main St would see laneways enhanced and animated through upgraded surfacing, lighting and art.
2.3	Swords Shopfront Improvements Grant scheme.	Recognising that some shopfronts detract from the character of Swords town centre, this project is envisaged to take the form of a grant scheme with common design guide building on the existing ' <u>Fingal Shopfront and Main Street Residences Painting and Improvement Grant Scheme 2021</u> '
2.4	Swords Smart Streets	Smart streets will have solar powered lighting, WiFi provision, smart lighting (to monitor air pollution/noise/footfall), bottle filling stations.





THEME TWO

2.5	Swords Green Space i. Feasibility Study including Environmental Assessment ii. Detailed Design iii. Delivery.	Including: environmental improvements to existing parks and green spaces e.g., pollinator friendly planting, recreational amenity enhancements, with community involvement; enhancement of playing facilities e.g. Balheary Park; Play Streets to encourage children to play outdoors; and new green spaces e.g. corner of Church Road and Brackenstown Road.
2.6	Amenity Provision for All	Fingal's 'Space for Play - A Play Policy for Fingal' includes detail on creating safe and inviting spaces for young children and teens. Seating areas can also be provided for older citizens.

Preliminary Recommendations

- Public art programme.





Facilitating Major Infrastructure

Enabling the ambition to grow Swords to a city of 100,000 people means providing necessary infrastructure which will reduce the need for car-based journeys and providing key community facilities. Provision is envisaged to be through public-private partnership initiatives.

Proposed Projects

3.1	Feasibility study for major integrated recreation and leisure facility	Any initiative would need to be based on a detailed feasibility study that considers gaps in provision of existing facilities and optimum location.
3.2	Feasibility study for major health facility	Any initiative would need to be based on a detailed feasibility study that considers gaps in provision of existing facilities and optimum location. The HSE would be a key partner.

Preliminary Recommendations

- Engage with private sector regarding opportunities for provision of leisure and health facilities.
- Engage with HSE regarding requirement for health infrastructure.





Involving Our Community

The community are the essence of what makes Swords a special place. While the needs of the community underpin all of the actions proposed here, it is important to focus on initiatives that can have a positive impact on community cohesion and the environment of Swords.

Proposed Projects

4.1	Community Driven Sustainability Initiatives Fund	The local community in Swords are currently actively involved in many projects that are linked to an ethos of more sustainable development. Many of these are led by the Tidy Towns group. It is envisaged that a dedicated fund would be established to support several key projects annually.
4.2	Swords Community Forest i. Feasibility Study including environmental assessment ii. Detailed Design iii. Delivery.	The Swords Woodland Association has an advanced plan for a tree planting initiative around Swords. It is envisaged that this project would be supported as a Swords Community Forest and progressively implemented where feasible to provide a green corridor around the town and into the town centre.

Preliminary Recommendations

- Support the Biodiversity Action Plan being developed with Tidy Towns.
- Investigate opportunities for alternative energy production e.g. solar panels on roofs of key buildings such as The Swords Pavilions to power community infrastructure such as the Swords Cultural Quarter and/or street lighting.
- Consider opportunities for an enhanced senior citizen facility.





Protecting and Promoting Our Heritage

The built heritage of Swords provides the basis for the story of the evolution of the settlements. The projects included here enhance and protect that heritage for future generations as well as providing a basis for encouraging increased tourism spend in the town.

Proposed Projects

5.1	Swords Cultural Quarter Delivery.	The Swords Cultural Quarter will provide a high-quality library, theatre, event space, community space, and café for the centre of Swords adjacent to Swords Castle. Detailed design is currently underway.
5.2	Swords Stories heritage attraction i. Feasibility Study including concept development ii. Detailed Design iii. Delivery.	Swords has a rich and evocative history. Many people in the town have stories of the past that would be of interest to current and future generations. This attraction would capture these stories and provide an immersive and compelling experience.
5.3	St Columba's Church and Round Tower Visitor Experience Feasibility Study.	St Columba's Church and Round Tower are distinctive heritage features in the town and can enable the story of the town's early history to be told. The feasibility of enabling sensitive visitor access would be investigated.

Preliminary Recommendations

- Engage with Church of Ireland regarding opportunity at St Columba's.
- Consider opportunities for re-use of heritage buildings.





Supporting Our Local Businesses

Swords has a thriving business community. The aim is to support this community and position Swords as the best place to live, work and visit in County Dublin, and to progressively capitalise on its enhanced sustainability credentials.

Proposed Projects

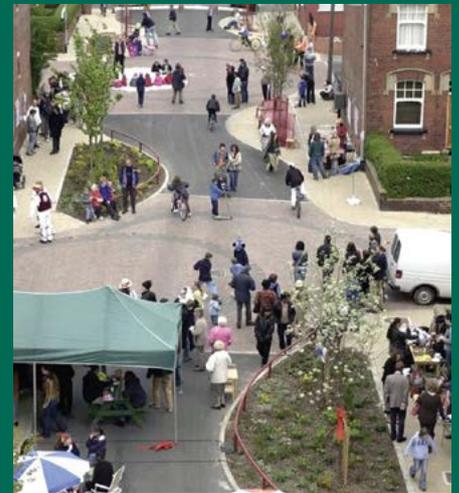
6.1	Swords promotional and branding initiative	Business community initiatives aimed at rebuilding the local economy in Swords will encourage the public to shop local and support the town's service and retail providers. A campaign developed off the success of the 'In It Together' initiative will encourage business to network, collaborate and provide support for each other, and give them the online and branded resources to inspire their customers. A concurrent social media campaign aimed at the public will encourage purchasing in Swords and develop pride and advocacy among customers.
6.2	Development of town centre enterprise/remote working hub	Remote/hybrid working is very likely here to stay. This model encourages reduced commuting and facilitates increased local footfall. Provision of a high-quality centre will encourage more people to work in Swords town centre.

Preliminary Recommendations

- Seek provision of third level educational facility linked to DIT or other third level institute.
- Establish Swords Business Improvement District (BID).



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