

EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY



DRAFT PLAN FEBRUARY 2022

FINGAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2023-2029

7.1 Introduction

Fingal County has significant economic advantages, and the County has experienced significant growth in terms of population and employment in the past number of years. Fingal has major economic assets, including Dublin Airport, proximity to Dublin City and the Dublin Tunnel, road and rail infrastructure and a prime location on the Dublin–Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC). The preparation of this Plan comes at a time of economic change and uncertainty. The Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit have presented many challenges to the economy and in line with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) the economic strategy of Fingal County Council will be for growth that is sustainable, competitive, inclusive and resilient. Fingal already possesses a strong economic base and the focus will be to sustain this base, to ensure that same is resilient and to build on our strengths throughout the County. Fingal County Council are the co-ordinating Local Authority for the DBEC Project which aims to drive job creation and economic development along this strategic corridor.

The Council is working with key government departments, other state agencies and with cross-border collaboration to highlight the strategic importance of the corridor through the National Development Plan and to leverage that recognition from local to international level to attract investment in Fingal as the premier location within Dublin and along the DBEC corridor to do business.

The Economic Social Research Institute (ESRI) has stated that continued strong performance of the export sector in 2021, coupled with a significant recovery in consumption and investment, suggests that the domestic economy could grow substantially in the present year and that the Irish economy will grow by over 11 per cent in the current year with growth of almost 7 per cent likely in 2022. Unemployment, which peaked at 25 per cent in Q1 2021, is set to decline to 9 per cent by the end of the current year and will average 7 per cent in 2022. (Quarterly Economic Commentary – Summer 2021). This is encouraging news for the Irish economy and for Fingal's economic and employment sector.

The County is home to a wide range of key economic sectors, including retail, tourism, aviation, manufacturing, agricultural and agri-food, ICT and financial services, healthcare and pharmaceutical, marine and rural economic activity. The strategic policies and objectives for each sector will be detailed in Section 5 of this chapter. Aviation will be discussed in Chapter 8 Dublin Airport.

A key strategy for the future economic development in Fingal includes appropriately locating intensive employment uses adjacent to public transport networks and where appropriate, residential developments, encouraging existing economic clusters and developing new clustering opportunities and rejuvenating existing business and industrial parks, land and buildings. The need to transition to a low carbon society and provide support for the circular and green economy is central to the County's economic strategy.

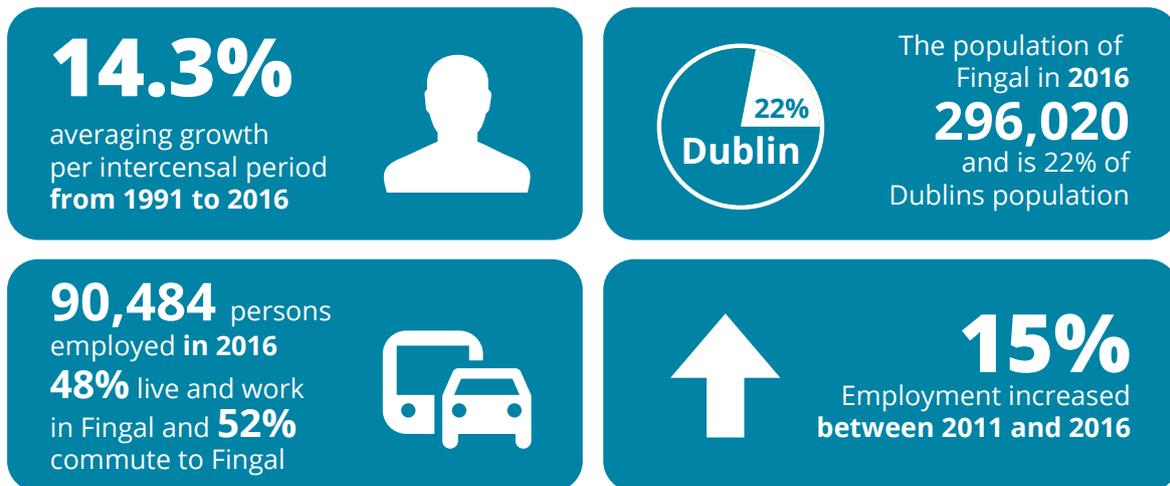
This chapter sets out the policy context by which economic development is guided. An outline of Fingal's economic and employment situation is provided in Section 2, including economic progress to date. Section 3 of the chapter outlines the opportunities for economic development in the County and the strategic aims are provided in Section 4. The final Section (5) of this chapter details the strategic policies and objectives that will form the basis for economic development and employment for the lifetime of this Plan. This chapter is informed by the *Fingal Economic and Employment Land Use Study KPMG, Future Analytics June 2021* and is prepared in accordance with National, Regional and local economic development policies and objectives.

7.2 Context

Fingal has a strong economic base and the Council has continuously supported economic development in the County. Successful economic development requires a synergy of several factors and the Council has to date been effective in achieving this at a number of locations throughout the County. Below is an account of the influences at play regarding economic development and how Fingal has worked to enhance and develop its economic activity in the last six years.

7.2.1 Expanding Labour Force

Fingal has displayed significant growth over the past few decades, averaging 14.3% per intercensal period in growth from 1991 to 2016. The population of Fingal reached 296,020 people in 2016 and accounts for 22% of the Dublin population and is therefore the second most populous local authority after Dublin City. In 2016, the labour force in Fingal numbered 133,971 and there were 90,484 persons employed in Fingal County. Employment in the County increased by 15% between 2011 and 2016. 48.0% of these workers (43,440 persons) both live and work within the County, while 52.0% (47,044 persons) lived outside of Fingal County and commute in each day for employment. The labour force participation rate in Fingal is the highest in the region at 66.9% compared to the state average of 61.4%. Notably, Fingal has one of the youngest, highly educated and most diverse populations in the state and over 30% of the population of the County have a university education.



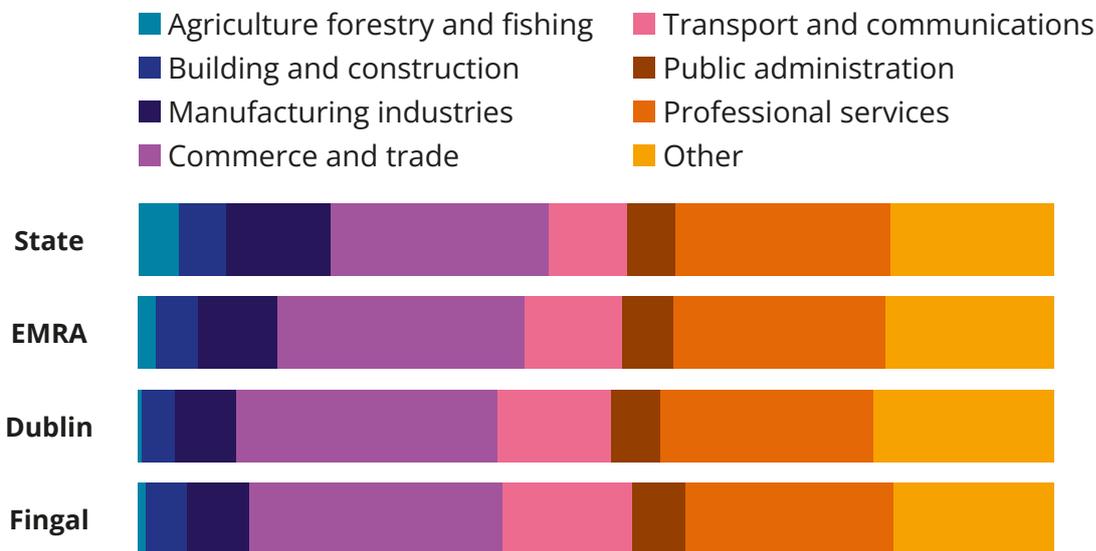
7.2.2 Variety of Employment Opportunities

In Fingal in 2020, 109,000 persons were employed in the SME sector within 8,286 businesses recorded. Fingal has a number of significant clusters within the County and is home to some of the leading names in the technology, life sciences and pharmaceutical sectors. The largest employment sectors in Fingal for residents are commerce and trade (27.6%), professional services (22.7%) and transport and communications (14.2%). In Fingal, the proportional industry splits are relatively comparable to the national, regional and Dublin

breakdown with dominance of commerce and trade and professional services. Some notable distinctions include a slightly higher proportion working in transport and communications (potentially related to the presence of Dublin Airport and various IT companies in the area), public administration (potentially due to the presence of public bodies in Fingal and more generally in Dublin) along with a relatively higher proportion in agriculture, forestry and fishing when compared to Dublin (likely due to the extensive and historic industries in north County).

Fingal is a major employer across all sectors, supported by a strong supply of zoned land. Fingal has an established industrial base, with recognised clustering of various business. Clustering has been a key policy concept over the years in Fingal and has resulted in a number of successful clusters throughout the County, namely; the ICT sector in Blanchardstown, the pharmaceutical sector in both the Swords area and in Blanchardstown/ Mulhuddart area, the Aviation sector in proximity to Dublin Airport, and the Agri-Food sector in rural locations principally to the north of the County.

Figure 7.1: Persons at work (%) by industry (Source: CSO)



7.2.3 Excellent Employment Zoned Lands

There are currently 4,574 hectares of land zoned for employment, industry and enterprise uses throughout the County. 1,608 ha has been developed as of September 2021. The majority of employment opportunity is located within the existing key settlements with just 26.4% (23,924 jobs) of employment occurring outside of these settlements. The largest concentrations of employment within all sectors is within the Consolidation Metropolitan Area (CMA) of Fingal adjoining Dublin City with 47% of all jobs in the County.

Fingal has a wide Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA), pulling in workers from around the Country. Sub-County these workers are travelling to a number of key employment hubs. The Consolidated Metropolitan Area (CMA) (including Swords, Blanchardstown, Baldoyle etc.) contains the largest number of jobs in the County and has a significant functional economic area with large proportions of the immediately contiguous

local area commuting to work in the catchment. The CMA is a significant employer for County Meath also with notable concentrations of local workforces coming from Dunboyne and Dunshaughlin. Swords has the second highest concentration of workers commuting to the settlement for work in the County and 35% of the working population living in Swords work locally.

The Dublin Enterprise Zone (DEZ) continues to develop and attract businesses. The Dublin 15 location has many benefits for business, being situated very close to Dublin Airport, accessible via the M50, which runs right through the Dublin Enterprise Zone. The M50 Motorway also links to Dublin Port via the Dublin Tunnel on the M1. There are five separate Dublin Bus routes traversing the Zone. These transport links provide any enterprise or business located in the Dublin Enterprise Zone exceptional access to goods & services. The majority of businesses are indigenous, playing a crucial role in the development of the area. Pallas Foods constructed a 33,000 sq. m. warehousing facility on a site of 16 hectares within the Dublin Enterprise Zone. Alexion Pharma International constructed a 15,000 sq. m. development comprising offices, laboratories, and warehousing on a site in excess of 16 hectares. Alexion also announced the further development of a 20,000 sq. m. new biologics manufacturing facility at College Business Park in Blanchardstown. The DEZ has a population of 100,000 people and is a national economic asset that is home to over 800 businesses including IBM, Alexion, Mallinckrodt, PayPal, Symantec and Westpharma. Fingal County Council is dedicated to providing a pro-business environment with considerable investments having been made in the Dublin 15 region, as well as the continued commitment to investing and promoting the DEZ to attract foreign and domestic direct investment. In addition, the Council will continue to attract investment across all locations in the County including Stephenstown and the wider Balbriggan area which is experiencing an upturn at present and will benefit from substantial investment under the Council's Capital Programme and the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund. In 2019 the Council published the *"Our Balbriggan Rejuvenation Plan 2019 - 2025"* which outlines a range of socio-economic objectives to rejuvenate the town and sets out an ambitious transformation plan for Balbriggan's public realm, infrastructure and amenities as the town looks to attract more investors and visitors to boost the local economy.

7.2.4 Vibrant Retail

Retail plays a significant role in the growth and economy of Fingal and the retail sector is the single largest industry in Fingal County by count of enterprise (2020 Q4) with over 1,500 businesses active within the industry. Fingal has two major urban retailing centres, Swords and Blanchardstown which support employment and are destinations within Fingal. Retailing in Fingal continues to support the considerable investment by the public and private sectors in urban renewal, by providing shopping facilities to residents and by adding to the vitality and attractiveness of urban areas.

Retail demand is largely a function of population and available consumer expenditure. Overall population growth in Fingal County has been significant over the past 10 years. Levels of growth have not been evenly distributed across the County but has largely focused in existing urban centres. Swords, and Blanchardstown account for 30.7% of the absolute growth (10.4% and 20.3% respectively), while existing Level 3 settlements account for a further 34.6%. The remainder account for 34.7%. Spatially, population growth appears correlated to proximity to Dublin City and the M50/M1 network.

7.2.5 Growing Tourism Sector

Tourism is one of Fingal's most important economic drivers which is fully embraced by the Council. Through Dublin Airport Fingal provides the national major link between Ireland and international tourists. Fingal's Tourism sector is 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 2000 jobs. The implementation of the Tourism Statement of Strategy & Work Programme 2017 – 2022 including the marketing of Fingal as a visitor location and the engagement with local tourism groups continues across the County. Flavours of Fingal continues to grow and highlight the quality and depth of food and farming in Fingal.

7.2.6 Unique Rural Environment

Rural Fingal is comprised of a large number of diverse towns, villages and natural assets. The rural economy is driven by minor towns and villages such as Portrane, Coolquay, Kinsealy, Rivermeade, Rolestown as well as other core towns such as Balrothery, Loughshinny, Ballyboughal, Naul, Balscadden, Oldtown, Garristown, Ballymadun and other areas. There are currently a variety of small, medium and larger-scale commercial enterprises operating in rural areas throughout the County, which provide important sources of employment and contribute to the diversification of the rural economy. The Council supports existing rural employment and commercial enterprises and will promote and encourage appropriately scaled enterprises. Fingal has a very strong indigenous agri-food sector cluster, with many of the key national horticulture brands based in Fingal. This is a key employment sector for rural communities. These include enterprises such as Keelings, Country Crest, Sam Dennigan, Keoghs and Donnelly's.

7.2.7 Economic Support

In a bid to help businesses during Covid-19, Fingal County Council paid out €31.1m to 2,143 businesses in the County for the Restart Grant in 2020 which provided direct grant aid to micro and small businesses to help them with the costs associated with either staying open or reopening and re-employing workers following Covid-19 closures. A further €1.1m was paid out to support 214 businesses under the Small Business Assistance Scheme for Covid (SBASC) in 2021.



The Fingal In It Together Charter was developed to promote businesses in Fingal and stimulate the local economy including promotion and marketing of local business and measures to assist businesses in reopening as public health restrictions eased. The Council also introduced other economic stimulus measures to support businesses in the post-Covid-19 environment such as the Parklet Partners Initiative, a Shopfront Improvement Grant Scheme and the Outdoor Dining Scheme funded by Failte Ireland. In addition, a number of measures were introduced to drive local footfall such as pedestrianisation of designated streets, provision of additional public facilities, bike-share schemes and a variety of active travel initiatives.

Fingal County Council oversees 3 Enterprise Centres, which have developed co-working and remote working facilities in the post-Covid-19 environment suitable for SMEs and start-up companies and freelancers, with particular emphasis on ensuring their provision within large schemes to offer opportunities associated with clustering and networking.

7.2.8 Stakeholder Collaboration

Fingal is the fastest-growing Local Authority area in the Country, and the creation of sustainable jobs is a key focus. Fingal County Council launched the Fingal Skills Strategy in 2019, the first of its kind to be developed by any Local Authority in Ireland, which identifies gaps between the existing skills of Fingal's workforce and the skills that employers need both now and in the future. The strategy is a roadmap for future skills development and a model of best practice in the local government sector for the provision of leadership and collaboration between educational providers and a range of industrial sectors.

Fingal County Council are working in collaboration with seven other local authorities and two universities in a cross-border initiative to drive job creation and economic development along the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC). The DBEC Project is strategically important in attracting investment along the corridor and to Fingal as a premier location to do business.

7.2.9 Successful Funding Bids

Funding has been granted under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund for two significant projects – Sustainable Swords and Our Balbriggan Rejuvenation Plan. Funding has been awarded for a number of Town & Village Renewal Schemes in eligible towns and villages in the County which includes local improvement and enhancement projects in rural towns and villages across Fingal. The Department of Rural & Community Development also provides funding for projects under the Community Enhancement Programme and the Streetscape Enhancement Scheme while the Council provides specific Place-making and Events funding to local community groups throughout the County.

7.2.10 Sustainable Land Use Planning

The Masterplan lands at Barrysparks & Crowscastle (2019) will accommodate a mixed-use commercial and residential development that will grow into a key economic cluster both for Swords and the Greater Dublin Area. The strategic employment land bank at this location will play a key role, accommodating up

to c. 180,000 sq.m of commercial space and c. 14,500–15,500 additional jobs over a period of 20 years, and providing for c. 700–750 new residential units. The Estuary West Masterplan lands will provide 18,000 – 20,000 sq. m. of commercial floorspace and up to 1,500 jobs. The integrity of the Dublin – Belfast/M1 Economic Corridor and the Metro Economic Corridor continues to be protected so that it can act as a catalyst for future economic and physical development.

The Dublin Airport Local Area Plan came into effect in 2020 and this provides an updated strategy for the continued growth of Dublin Airport in line with relevant aviation, planning and environmental policy within the context of a sustainable growth framework. The *Dublin Airport Central Masterplan 2016* produced a framework for the development of office floorspace of 41,677 sq. m. (phase 1), which is near completion and within Phase 2 of 33,787 sq. m. of office floorspace, which will be the subject of a full traffic impact assessment.

The Masterplan lands at Barrysparks & Crowscastle

c. **180,000 sq.m** of commercial space
c. **14,500-15,500 additional jobs** over a period of 20 years
c. **700-750** new residential units



The Estuary West Masterplan lands

18,000 – 20,000 sq.m. of commercial floorspace
up to **1,500 jobs**



The Dublin Airport Local Area Plan

Phase 1 – **41,677 sq.m.**
Phase 2 – **33,787 sq.m.**



7.3 Opportunities

While Fingal's geographic location offers it an advantageous position on the eastern seaboard in terms of attracting population and economic development, it is essential that the County continues to develop in a sustainable manner, where orderly and compact growth form the basis of economic policies into the future. The aim is to provide and enhance settlements/areas/communities which attract people, where they can live, work, study and invest in. Fingal has a strong economic base, and the aim is to build on the success of existing economies, support and develop new enterprises (both indigenous and FDI) and provide the necessary infrastructure to entice future growth.

External impacts such as Brexit and Covid-19 have had a devastating effect on many economies in the County. However, there are several reassuring factors which will provide opportunity for recovery and expansion of sustainable economic development and employment in the County. These include the following:

- In terms of its geographic location, Fingal is in an advantageous position due to its proximity to the Dublin–Belfast Economic Corridor which provides opportunities to attract investment, create jobs and collaborate with key partners to stimulate economic development at a regional level.
- Dublin Airport's strategic location within Fingal provides access to national and international markets making Fingal an attractive location for business to locate.
- The RSES envisages that the population of the Eastern and Midland region will grow by approximately 500,000 persons by 2040, and that of Fingal County increasing by approximately 73,000 by 2031. While this growth may present some challenges in terms of housing and service provision, it will also present an opportunity to make our urban areas stronger, providing a range of quality urban spaces which attract a skilled workforce, while in turn providing infrastructure and jobs that are required to deliver high quality employment that is well-paid and sustainable.
- The NPF and RSES compact growth requirement will allow areas in Fingal to develop to their full capacity. The identification of strategic development areas for population and employment growth in the RSES provides an additional framework for growth for Fingal where economic activity can develop and prosper in conjunction with appropriate infrastructure provision.
- Infrastructure provision will be a key factor for the economic development of the County and the prospective Metrolink, BusConnects and Dart+ projects will bring significant economic benefits to Fingal. Transport and infrastructure interventions are expected to facilitate the modal shift in alignment with the policy hierarchy and national, regional and local objectives such that they encourage sustainable ways of improving Fingal's integration, connectivity and the movement of workers. Greenway developments will have knock on effects on coastal towns and tourism in general. The rollout of broadband in the County under the National Broadband Plan will ensure that the County, its people and businesses, are more connected and competitive. These infrastructural improvements combined with the increased provision of remote working and co-working hubs will all serve to increase the quality of life for residents, decentralize urban areas, decouple employment and residential areas where required, improve congestion, revitalise local economies and enhance local communities.
- Fingal has a diverse sectoral base of enterprise that acts as a draw for 57,000 workers to come from outside of the County, providing opportunities for a variety of employee types.
- Fingal has the youngest and most diverse population in the country with over 30% of the population of the County having a university education. The very highly educated resident workforce is likely to catalyse local enterprise development.
- Fingal has a lower commercial vacancy rate than the national average and it has in excess of 3,000 hectares of undeveloped employment zoned lands and a significant amount of agricultural land.
- Fingal has a very strong indigenous agri-food sector cluster, with many of the key national horticulture brands based in Fingal. This sector is still underdeveloped and the quantum of agricultural land available and favourable zonings for the sector create significant potential to grow the sector and its employment base into the future.

- Fingal had a high employment rate prior to the Covid-19 pandemic (90% in 2016) and it is envisaged that it can return to similar rates over the next number of years.
- The opportunities for coastal towns of the County and the marine sector could be developed to better leverage tourism, to reduce leakage and maximise tourism expenditure.
- Fingal County Council's three Enterprise Centres offer shared workspace and remote working options for individuals and businesses. These are particularly important facilities in current times and all three Enterprise Centres continue to expand and develop their offering, subject to demand.
- Fingal County Council has launched the Sustainable Fingal campaign to liaise with and assist businesses in developing sustainable business measures and developing the green economy and the circular economy. This provides an opportunity for businesses to adapt a sustainable business approach which can lead to overall efficiencies, cost savings and help position businesses to secure new customers and new contracts given the increased customer focus on climate action and sustainability.
- The Fingal In It Together Charter aims to unite businesses across the County in supporting each other and provides reassurance to consumers that they are shopping local and supporting Fingal businesses.
- The continued promotion by Fingal County Council of the following areas provide additional enterprise development and job prospects for highly skilled workers:
 - the Dublin 15 industrial land through marketing the Dublin Enterprise Zone to clusters in pharmaceuticals and healthcare and Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
 - the Dublin–Belfast Economic Corridor (in partnership with 7 other Local Authorities and 2 universities)
 - Smart Balbriggan, under the Smart Dublin umbrella, marketing Balbriggan for ICT, high technology and innovation clustering.
- Fingal County Council have an excellent working relationship with both the IDA and Enterprise Ireland and will continue to actively engage with these agencies to promote Fingal as the ideal place to invest and do business.
- Fingal County Council prepared the Fingal Skills Strategy in 2019 and has established an Implementation Group to progress and implement the recommendations of that Strategy in the context of a post-Covid environment. The Skills Strategy brings together education providers and industry in collaboration to work towards ensuring that there will be an adequate supply of sufficiently skilled labour available in Fingal over the coming years to maximise economic development
- The retail sector is a significant employer and economic contributor in the County, and it plays a key role in placemaking and creating attractive liveable environments. As a significant attractor it enables the provision of strong mixed-use commercial cores throughout the network of city, towns and villages in the Region and can play a key role in the regeneration of areas.

- The Council continues to work with Fáilte Ireland on the Dublin Coastal Trail and the Dublin Coastal Destination Development Plan (DPP) which will provide added opportunities for local small and medium sized businesses.
- Opportunities for remote working – The growth in remote working brings a new dynamic to locational decisions, including remote working hubs with the potential to improve quality of rural employment landscape. The Council continues to work with the Department of Rural & Community Development to support remote working and co-working facilities around the County.
- Factors such as excellent schools, outstanding natural, cultural and sporting amenities, the wide range of leisure and shopping opportunities, a scenic coastline, seaside villages and a rural hinterland make Fingal a uniquely attractive place to visit, live, work and do business in.

7.4 Strategic Aims

Since the adoption of the current Plan significant changes have occurred in the policy and regulatory environment for land use planning in Ireland. Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework (NPF) was published in 2018 and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region (RSES) in 2019. The EMRA RSES also contains the Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP), which includes parts of Fingal. There is significant alignment between the NPF and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and these Goals will also act as a foundation for the Plan. In addition, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government has published its Economic Recovery Plan, 2021 which aims to help kick start a jobs rich recovery, helping the sectors and workers most impacted.

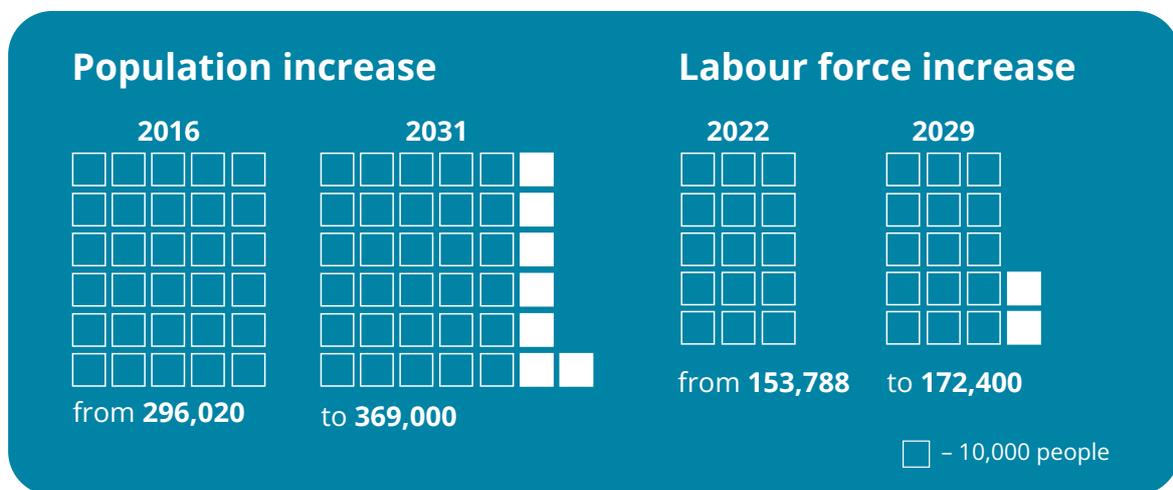
The NPF supports the future growth and success of Dublin as Ireland's leading global city of scale, by better managing Dublin's growth to ensure that more of it can be accommodated within and close to the city. The NPF aims to enable significant population and jobs growth in the Dublin metropolitan area, together with better management of the trend towards overspill into surrounding counties.

Compact growth is recommended at both national and regional level and urban regeneration and the development of infill sites are seen as a means of achieving this. The aim is to regenerate and rejuvenate cities, towns and villages of all types to accommodate new uses, to increase the residential population and employment activity, ensuring good design, in order to sustainably influence and support their surrounding area. In this regard for example, Fingal County Council has been proactive in securing funding under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund for projects associated with Sustainable Swords and Our Balbriggan Rejuvenation Plan.

The locations for future employment in Fingal has been informed by the requirements of the NPF and the RSES. The aim is to increase employment in strategic locations, provide for people intensive employment at other sustainable locations near high quality public transport nodes, to build on commercial and research synergies in proximity to large employers, industry clusters and smart specialisation and activating strategic sites to strengthen the local employment base in commuter towns. The MASP in the RSES has identified Key Strategic Development Areas in Fingal for employment and residential development. The objective of the MASP regarding employment lands is to follow a sequential approach, with a focus on the re-intensification

of employment lands within the M50 and at selected strategic development areas and the provision of appropriate employment densities in tandem with the provision of high-quality public transport corridors.

The NPF estimates that the population of the region will grow by 490,000–540,000 by the year 2040 and that an additional 320,000 people will be employed in the region in the same time frame. This will result in overall population of the region at 2.85 million persons and 1.34 million employed in the region. In line with this, the EMRA RSES has a projected target growth for Fingal of between 340,000–349,000. Since the publication of the RSES, EMRA has allocated Fingal a population (high) of 369,000 for 2031 as per the MASP transitional population document. This includes the MASP allocation of an additional 20,000 for Swords. This will see Fingal's population increase to 369,000 by 2031. Over the Plan period the labour force will increase from 153,788 in 2022 to 172,400 by 2029, representing an increase of 18,612 persons, or 12.4%. (Fingal Economic and Employment Land Use Study, KPMG Future Analytics, 2021).



At a local level the *Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016–2021* is designed to promote and support the local economic and community development of Fingal over the period 2016–2021 and it includes a range of actions designed to foster economic growth in the County over the medium-term. The Local Economic Office (LEO) provides a local hub for enterprise supports. There is a need for the different enterprise supports, actions and policy formulation within local authorities to align and to reflect the needs of the economy within a sustainable development framework. In addition, there is a requirement to take account of wider objectives of relevant strategies developed by agencies such as IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and Údarás Na Gaeltachta and business interests.

The economic and employment strategy of Fingal County Council must align with the policies and objectives set out in the NPF and the RSES. In addition to this, the economic strategy must account for the current economic shocks arising from Brexit, and the Covid-19 Pandemic crisis and associated economic lockdowns. The trends affecting employment lands over the life of the Plan needs a resilient economic strategy to plan for the unexpected.

Clustering has been a key economic concept in the County and will continue to be encouraged in policy going forward. NSO 5 of the NDP indicates the need to build a strong economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills. In this regard, there is a need to create places that can foster enterprise and innovation and attract investment and talent. In addition, there is a need to invest in “placemaking” to create places that are attractive to live, work, study, visit and invest in.

The economic strategy supports the strategic development and employment areas for population and employment growth in addition to more generalised consolidation and re-intensification of infill, brownfield and underutilised lands. Aligning population growth, employment creation and residential development at the right locations, while transitioning to a low carbon economy is at the forefront of national and regional economic policy and this will be the aim of this strategy. Creating “Smart Cities” while advocating the green and circular economies will be central to the approach by Fingal County Council. In line with this is the need to create attractive places to live and work. Proximity to existing employment areas, existing and proposed transport infrastructure and proximity to 3rd level institutions are factors to consider for sustainable placemaking to be achieved.

The MASP has identified 6 areas in Fingal as Strategic residential and employment development areas and corridors within the Dublin Metropolitan area. The aim of these areas is to provide compact growth and employment opportunities, enhanced by infrastructure provision.

The RSES has identified the following strategic employment areas in Fingal County:

Table 7.1: Strategic Employment areas in Fingal County

Strategic Development Areas & Corridors	Employment /mixed use
Dublin 15 lands	Further development of largescale employment in Dublin enterprise Zone and synergies with Blanchardstown IT
Swords	Airport related, commercial facilities and employment linked to development of Metrolink
Swords – Lissenhall	Development of high-tech research and development employment within a campus setting at Lissenhall East
North Fringe – Baldoyle-Stapolin	Completion of mixed-use districts with retail and service provision
Donabate	Consolidation of economic and service base in tandem with population growth
Dunsink	Subject to feasibility

- **Dublin 15 lands** – The Dublin Enterprise Zone or DEZ is an area of around 1571 hectares, located in Blanchardstown, Dublin 15 and is home to a variety of industries from R&D, HighTech Manufacturing, Industrial, General Enterprise and Employment. While half of the Dublin Enterprise Zone has been developed, there is the potential to create an additional 20,000 jobs on the 716 hectares of undeveloped, zoned and serviced land available in the Zone. The Dublin 15 location has many benefits for business, being situated very close to Dublin Airport accessible via the M50, which runs right through the Dublin Enterprise Zone. The M50 Motorway also links to Dublin Port via the Dublin Tunnel on the M1. There are five separate Dublin Bus routes traversing the Zone. These transport links provide any enterprise or business located in the Dublin Enterprise Zone Exceptional access to goods & services.
- **Swords** – The RSES identifies Swords as a Key Town in the region. Its strategic location in proximity to Dublin City, the Airport, national road network, the planned Metrolink with a young and growing population make it an attractive place to live and work. Through the regeneration of the town and the provision of key infrastructure, it is envisaged that Swords will develop as a key employment node. Airport related activities will continue to be of major importance to the town and the potential to move towards sustainable and low carbon transport modes through the provision of high-quality walking and cycling permeability offering direct routes to local destinations and public transportation hubs (MetroLink, park and ride, BusConnects) will be required for the future development of Swords.
- **Swords – Lissenhall** – this area has been identified for longer term residential and mixed-use urban district including the development of high-tech research and development employment within a campus setting. The strategic landbank offers the opportunity for the development of a well-connected mixed-use urban district on the northern side of Swords within 1 km of the MetroLink corridor. The development of the area follows the sequential development of Swords and is in keeping with the Council's long-term strategic vision for the town.
- **North Fringe – Baldoyle-Stapolin** – The DART Expansion Programme will support ongoing large-scale urban expansion of the North Fringe lands. Employment generators in these areas include mixed-use districts with retail and service provision.
- **Donabate** – there is significant residential capacity in this strategically located rapidly growing coastal village. The DART Expansion Programme will support ongoing large-scale urban expansion of Donabate and it is envisioned that there will be consolidation of the economic and service base in tandem with population growth in this area.
- **Dunsink** – This is a major greenfield landbank which has been identified as a strategic location with long term potential to develop a new district centre. A feasibility study is currently being prepared for these lands.

Economic policy aligns with national, regional and local policy and Fingal County Council will continue to engage with key stakeholders to promote economic development and attract investment to the County in order to achieve the following aims:

- To facilitate and deliver economic development at strategic employment locations and at other appropriate locations proximate to residential developments and high-quality public transport, while supporting economic clusters and rejuvenating existing economic lands
- To optimise the benefits of Fingal's strategic location as part of the Dublin Metropolitan Area and being located adjacent to existing and proposed infrastructure
- To maximise stakeholder engagement and collaboration to foster economic growth
- Grow and facilitate a highly skilled workforce
- Support a circular and green economy
- Support and facilitate the wide-ranging economic sectors throughout the County

7.5 Policies and Objectives

7.5.1 Employment and Economic Development

Fingal enjoys significant economic advantages and is the fastest growing County in Ireland. Fingal's strategic location within Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA), as part of the Dublin City Region and within the Dublin–Belfast Economic Corridor place it in a very good position from an economic perspective. Fingal is well served by air, sea and national roads and the County has one of the youngest and most diverse populations in the state.

The economic strategy supports the strategic development and employment areas for population and employment growth in addition to more generalised consolidation and re-intensification of infill, brownfield and underutilised lands. Clustering has been a key economic concept in the County and will continue to be encouraged in policy going forward. NSO 5 of the NDP indicates the need to build a strong economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills. In this regard, there is a need to create places that can foster enterprise and innovation and attract investment and talent. In addition, there is a need to invest in “placemaking” to create places that are attractive to live, work, study, visit and invest in.

There are a range of forthcoming local infrastructure interventions as well as Strategic Infrastructure Developments that will impact and influence employment and accessibility within, to and from Fingal over the coming years. These developments will accommodate increasing travel demand, alleviate existing issues and help Fingal transition towards sustainable mobility in accordance with overarching policy. Various infrastructure projects will deliver change in employment commuter patterns through the provision of a dedicated automated metro, additional railway and redesigned bus network respectively.

MetroLink is the planned high capacity, high-frequency metro railway line running for 19km both over ground and underground that is being progressed by Transport Infrastructure Ireland. It stretches from Swords in the north, toward the Airport, Glasnevin, city centre and onwards to Charlemont in the south of the city.

MetroLink will also be served by some Park and Ride destinations including one at Estuary (to the north of Swords). This network will therefore serve Dublin Airport, Irish Rail, DART, Dublin Bus and Luas services and connect key destinations including Ballymun, the Mater Hospital, the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin City University and Trinity College Dublin. MetroLink is anticipated to carry up to 50 million passengers annually. The introduction of this transportation link will greatly improve accessibility for employment hubs all across Fingal along the Metro Economic Corridor and Dublin City Centre.

The issue of skills matching is one for the long-term economic planning of the County. Future sustainability would be more easily secured if local skills and sectoral employment opportunities were more closely aligned. Engagement with higher education institutes, education and training boards, local stakeholders and industry sectoral interests will continue under the auspices of the Fingal Skills Strategy in order to address skills shortages and promote lifelong learning and continuous professional development in the County. Providing locally based affordable work facilities in the form of enterprise centres will improve employment opportunities for local communities and these will continue to be supported by the Council.

The rise of new work practices, such as remote working hubs and co-working facilities will be supported by the Council as will the need to ensure that office and other commercial development is directed to town centres to avoid sprawl and to revitalise town and village centres. Depending on the size of the enterprise, office accommodation in a wide range of formats, sizes, arrangements and locations can be required. The Development Management standards outlined in Chapter 14 seek to achieve high quality design, visual continuity and pedestrian and cycle friendly environments whilst ensuring the efficient functioning of such business locations.

Space extensive developments such as large warehousing units and data centres in most instances generate low intensity employment. While the Council recognises the growing demand for such facilities, especially data centres, it is mindful of the fact that these facilities should not be located on lands that are more suitable for employment intensive developments/facilities, which are close to public transport infrastructure and built-up areas where compact is growth encouraged.

The need to support the transition to a low carbon economy has never been more pertinent. Reducing the need to travel excessive distances for employment, a reduction in the amount of congestion and a switch to more sustainable approaches in economic activity will be supported in this plan. In addition, green and circular economic development are areas of significant interest and growth, with potential for notable enterprise and employment creation and improvement, contributing positively to climate change as a result.

Policy EEP1 – Overarching policy for Employment and Economic Development

Support the economic development of Fingal in line with the policies and objectives stipulated in the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and utilise active land measures such as implementation of existing Local Area Plans and Masterplans and provision of new Local Area Plans, Masterplans and Framework Plans across the County as part of the development approach for Strategic Development Areas and Corridors and other economic development generating lands.

Objective EEO1

Implement the existing Local Area Plans and Masterplans and prepare appropriate land use management plans within the lifetime of the Plan for strategically important General Employment, High technology, Metro Economic, Warehouse & Distribution and Food Park zoned lands in collaboration with key stakeholders, relevant agencies and sectoral representatives.

Policy EEP2 – General Employment Lands

Maximise the potential of GE lands, ensuring that they are developed for intensive employment purposes, where appropriate, and which are highly accessible, well designed, permeable and legible.

Policy EEP3 – Maximising Fingals Economic potential

Maximise the economic potential of Fingal's unique strengths and advantageous position within the Eastern and Midlands region.

Objective EEO2

Ensure that Fingal plays a pivotal role in the promotion of Dublin as the primary Gateway in the Eastern and Midlands Region through engaging and collaborating with the other Dublin Local Authorities and the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly.

Policy EEP4 – Employment Intensive Land Uses

Ensure employment intensive land use zonings are located adjacent to public transport networks and active travel links.

Objective EEO3

Require that proposals for economic development are served by quality supporting infrastructure with sufficient capacity. A sequential approach may be used for assessing economic developments to ensure their appropriate and sustainable delivery.

Policy EEP5 – Land Extensive Uses

Support the development of land extensive uses where appropriate, having regard to infrastructural, transport and environmental considerations and the need for orderly growth.

Objective EEO4

Ensure that space extensive uses are located within appropriate locations which do not compromise labour intensive opportunities on zoned lands, adjacent to public transport nodes or within existing built-up compact growth areas.

Policy EEP6 – Regeneration Of Employment Areas

Utilise the measures and powers available to Fingal to encourage and promote the regeneration of employment areas in need of renewal, for instance in underperforming or outdated commercial and/ or industrial areas.

Objective EEO5

Promote the regeneration of obsolete and/ or underutilised buildings and lands that could yield economic benefits, with appropriate uses and subject to the proper planning and development of the area.

Policy EEP7 – Location Of Employment And Residential Developments

Prioritise locating quality employment and residential developments in proximity to each other in order to reduce the need to travel and ensure that suitable local accommodation is available to meet the needs of workers in the County.

Policy EEP8 – Promoting Major Urban Centres

Support economic growth within the County through strengthening and promoting the strategic importance of major urban centres of Swords, Blanchardstown and Balbriggan and of key employment locations such as Dublin Airport and Dublin 15.

Policy EEP9 – Fingal As An Engine For Economic Growth

Promote enterprise and employment throughout the County, including along the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor, the Metro Economic Corridor, Swords, Blanchardstown and Balbriggan and work with the other Local Authorities to promote Fingal and the wider mid-eastern region as an engine for economic growth.

Objective EEO6 – Dublin –Belfast Economic Corridor

Engage and collaborate with adjoining Local Authorities and regional assemblies, as appropriate, to promote the continued economic development of the Dublin–Belfast Economic Corridor.

Objective EEO7 – Dublin Enterprise Zone

Support the continued investment in, and management and promotion of the Dublin15 Enterprise Zone in collaboration with key stakeholders, relevant agencies and sectoral representatives.

Objective EEO8 – Economic Growth of Core Area

Support economic growth within the Core Area through strengthening and promoting the importance of Balbriggan as the major urban centre and having regard to its strategic location on the Dublin–Belfast Economic Corridor and directing appropriately scaled growth opportunities into the other urban centres in the area.

Objective EEO9

Ensure that towns, villages and other locations within the Core Area follow policies of directional development to ensure that the required economies of scale are achieved in specific centres such as Balbriggan, and that other lower tier towns and villages perform to their economic strengths and competitive advantages such as Skerries and Rush for tourism and marine activities.

Objective EEO10 – Economic Growth of Metropolitan Area

Ensure that towns, villages and other locations within the Metropolitan Area pursue development policies of consolidation, and maximise their economic strengths and competitive advantages such as tourism and marine sectoral activities in Malahide and Howth, while the lands within the southern part of the County maximise their economic potential through the strong functional linkages to the M50 and the lands to the north of the County maximise their economic potential through strong links to the M1 and the wider regional and national road network.

Policy EEP10 – Quantum of Employment Lands

Ensure there are sufficient quantum's and appropriate types of lands zoned for commercial, enterprise and/ or industrial uses in urban and rural located centres in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy.

Objective EEO11 – Supporting Existing Clusters

Support existing successful clusters in Fingal, such as those in the ICT, pharmaceutical, aviation and agri-food sectors, and promote new and emerging clustering opportunities across all economic sectors within the County.

Policy EEP11 – Variety of Employment Lands

Consider the allocation of various sizes of land parcels for commercial, office, industrial uses in order to cater for a wide range of employment and enterprise formats.

Objective EEO12 – High Technology Lands

Encourage the development of corporate offices and knowledge based enterprise in the County on High Technology zoned lands and work with key stakeholders, relevant agencies and sectoral representatives to achieve such development.

Objective EEO13 – Permeability in General Employment Lands

Encourage high quality sustainable design, permeability and pedestrian and/ or cyclist friendly environments within General Employment zoned areas.

Objective EEO14 – Metro Economic Corridor Lands

Protect the integrity of the Metro Economic corridor from inappropriate forms of development and optimise development potential in a sustainable and phased manner.

Objective EEO15

Ensure high quality urban design proposals within the Metro Economic zoning, incorporating exemplary public spaces, contemporary architecture and sustainable places within a green landscape setting.

Objective EEO16 – Warehouse and Distribution Lands

Encourage large-scale distribution activities to locate within areas zoned WD.

Objective EEO17 – Office Development

Ensure that a broad range of office accommodation, in terms of size, scale, format and arrangements, is provided for to adequately respond to enterprise requirements in different economic sectors.

Objective EEO18

Ensure that proposals for office development demonstrate regard to the relevant development Standards.

Objective EEO19

Identify business parks and industrial estates that are in need of regeneration and revitalisation in line with sustainable measures and engage with all relevant stakeholders and interested parties to encourage their regeneration and revitalisation.

Objective EEO20

Encourage the provision of Local Support Facilities to serve the needs of the employees within major employment areas.

Policy EEP12 – Stakeholder Engagement

Liaise and engage with all relevant public service providers to ensure that zoned lands are serviced in a timely fashion and future-proofed to facilitate opportunities for employment and enterprise creation.

Policy EEP13 – Changing Work Practices

Promote and facilitate different work practices that have developed recently and continue to support the existing co-working facilities, remote working hubs and enterprise centres throughout the County.

Objective EEO21

Support the provision of home-based economic activity that is subordinate to the main residential use of a dwelling and that does not cause injury to the amenities of the area.

Objective EEO22

Support the *“Making Remote Work – National Remote Work Strategy”* and the provision of appropriate IT infrastructure and facilities that enable a better life-work balance enabling people to live near their place of work.

Policy EEP14 – Engagement with LCDC and LEO

Liaise and coordinate with Fingal's Local Community Development Committee and Local Enterprise Office to ensure that the appropriate objectives, measures and actions included in the Local Economic Community Plan are supported by policies and objectives in the Draft Plan.

Policy EEP15 – FDI and Indigenous Enterprises

Actively seek and facilitate continued opportunities for investment in and development of FDI and indigenous enterprises at appropriate locations in the County.

Policy EEP16 – Fingal Skills Strategy

Have regard to the recommendations of the Fingal Skills Strategy and support the delivery of the actions therein.

Objective EEO23

Support continued educational investment in the County and promote collaboration between third level institutions located within and outside of Fingal and a range of industrial sectors.

Objective EEO24

Facilitate and promote synergies between education, technology and industry.

7.5.1.1 Green Economy

A sustainable economic development approach has been identified as an area of significant growth with potential for notable enterprise and employment creation. The sustainable or “green” potential has been identified in sectors and/or activities such as research and development, innovation, energy efficiency, transportation, agriculture, food production, marine, tourism, and procurement. The proper management of resources is crucial to securing a better, more sustainable Ireland for future generations and is central to the National Climate Action Plan (CAP) as 60% of greenhouse gas emissions come from the use of materials. The emergence of the COVID-19 coronavirus has also provided further evidence of the limitations of our current economic model with its long and complex global supply chains. Fingal County Council will continue to support initiatives which provide opportunities for businesses to operate in more a more sustainable manner providing for resilience and for the mutual benefit of businesses and customers.

Policy EEP17 – Dublin Rural LEADER Programme and the Town & Village Renewal Scheme.

Continue to support the Dublin Rural LEADER Programme and the Town & Village Renewal Scheme.

Policy EEP18 – Green Economy

Support the Green Economy as a means of future proofing the County's economy and facilitate this through orderly growth.

Objective EEO25

Ensure that a sustainable approach is taken to enterprise development and employment creation across all sectors of the Fingal economy in accordance with the Green Economy national frameworks relevant to each sector.

Objective EEO26

Engage with all relevant government stakeholders, enterprise agencies and sectoral representatives in pursuing “green” approaches to economic development, and actively collaborate with key industry and educational bodies to promote Fingal based initiatives across the economic sectors.

Objective EEO27

Support and resource Green Economy initiatives, such as The Green Way project as a showcase of that such initiatives are operational in the Fingal area.

Objective EEO28

Support the growth of the “green economy” including renewable energy, retrofitting, and electric vehicles and charging infrastructure, supporting the transition towards a circular economy in compliance with national policy and legislation

Objective EEO29

Support the growth of business in the green and circular economy and the initiatives within the IDA strategy “*Driving Recovery and Sustainable Growth*”, or any superseding document.

Policy EEP19 – Evening/Night Time economy

Promote and encourage evening / night-time economy uses that contribute to the vitality of our rural towns and villages and that support the creation of a safe, balanced and socially inclusive evening/night-time economy.

Objective EEO30

Support and facilitate evening / night time economy uses that contribute to the vitality of towns and villages, ensuring the creation of a safe, balanced and socially inclusive evening / night time economy.

Objective EEO31

Support uses that would result in the diversification of the evening and night time economy in towns and villages where there is no negative impact on the amenity of adjacent residential uses through noise disturbance or cumulative impact in terms of other night-time uses in the immediate area.

7.5.1.2 Manufacturing, Pharmaceuticals & Healthcare

Manufacturing is an important industry for Fingal as many companies are established in proximity to Dublin Airport and the Dublin Enterprise Zone to leverage logistics and economies of scale in the area. Manufacturing has one of the highest job densities of any industries in Fingal, although with a high degree of variance.

Many global pharmaceutical companies have chosen Fingal as their location for investment historically and there have been a number of significant recent investments of note. Bristol Myers Squibb is a long standing pharmaceutical company operating in Fingal (previously in Swords and now in Cruiserath) who invested approximately \$1 billion to establish their manufacturing facility in Cruiserath which was the first Bristol Myers Squibb biologics drug substance facility outside of the United States and at the time, the second largest ever foreign direct Life and Sciences investment in Ireland. More recently, MSD Biotech which has been operational since 1990 is currently investing and expanding their facility adjacent to Barrysparks which is opening in 2021 and is expected to provide around 350 additional jobs in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry. Some of the other relevant pharmaceuticals operating in Fingal include Alexion and Mallinckrodt in Blanchardstown, SK Biotek, Newport and Kora Healthcare in Swords along with Astellas and Rottapharm in Mulhuddart.

Healthcare is also strong in Fingal with various health centres and social infrastructure across the County along with nationally significant healthcare infrastructure. The Central Mental Hospital which is currently located in Dundrum will be moving to a new site in Portrane, known as the National Forensic Mental Health Service (NFMHS). This is currently being commissioned and expected to commence operations in 2021. Once operational, the new facility can provide care for up to 170 patients and it is located in the vicinity of the former St Ita's Hospital. The clusters of forensic mental health care will include Intensive Care Rehabilitation Unit (ICRU), Forensic Child and Adolescent Mental Health Facility (FCAMHS), Pre-discharge, female, mental health intellectual disability, high security and medium security units. There will also be a Village Centre, which will provide health, vocational, recreational and social opportunities for patients.

Fingal needs to stimulate the opportunities in the manufacturing sector, thereby promoting the County as the location of choice for a range of manufacturing enterprises. In similarity with the other economic sectors, the aim is to provide create high quality-built environments offering a range of building sizes and formats, supported by the orderly provision of necessary infrastructure.



Policy EEP20 – Manufacturing

Promote the growth of the manufacturing sector in Fingal by responding to the varying needs and requirements of the different components within the sector and by creating high quality built environments offering a range of building sizes and formats, supported by the targeted provision of necessary infrastructure.

Objective EEO32

Ensure that a range of industrial and/ or manufacturing units, in terms of size, scale, format and arrangements, is provided for to adequately respond to enterprise requirements in different economic sectors.

Objective EEO33

Proactively respond to the needs of enterprises undertaking pharmaceutical, data centre, food production and logistics activities that require bespoke building facilities to meet their specific manufacturing requirements.

Objective EEO34

Ensure that proposals for industrial and/ or manufacturing buildings demonstrate regard to the relevant development standards.

7.5.1.3 ICT and Financial Services

20.3% (18,397) of those who work in Fingal work within professional industries such as information and communication, financial, real estate, professional, administration and support service activities. The CMA attracts 51% of persons employed in these industries with 22.1% in Swords, and a further 21.5% outside of key settlements. Financial and insurance businesses are predominantly clustered within the CMA with 122 of the 206 business (59.2%). Of the remaining settlements the greatest clusters are in Swords (18%) and Malahide (8.7%).

The ICT and financial sector specifically have the most consistently high employment density rates and may provide an opportunity for compact employment growth if provided with technical development supports. In July of 2020 Amazon announced creation of 1,000 jobs in Ireland in the next 2 years across sites in Cork and Dublin. The Dublin sites include Blanchardstown and North County Dublin and is expected to grow the sector significantly. These roles range from software and database engineers to data centre technicians and account managers.

Objective EEO35 – ICT, Financial and Banking Sector

Promote the growth of the ICT and financial and banking sector in Fingal by facilitating the conditions conducive to such development including the creation of high quality physical environments offering a range of building and office accommodation types, supported through the provision of the necessary services and public transport infrastructure.

Objective EEO36

Engage and collaborate with key stakeholders, relevant agencies, and sectoral representatives to develop the ICT and financial and banking sectors in Fingal and to ensure that the economic potential of the sectors are secured for the benefit of the local economy, and national economy.

Objective EEO37

Promote the growth of the ICT, financial and banking sector in Fingal by making the county an attractive location to live and recognise the growing importance of placemaking, strong communities, and amenities as a key driver of investment.

7.5.1.4 Marine

Fingal's local marine sector is diverse based on location and activity ranging from fishing and recreational fishing to equipment retailing, recreation, transport and distribution. Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) identified the strongly performing coastal towns such as Howth, Balbriggan, Skerries, Malahide and Donabate in 2013. These key towns contain economic assets and infrastructure such as marinas, ports, fisheries and harbours. The coastal towns of Howth, Balbriggan, Malahide, Rush and Skerries benefit the most from the growth of the marine sector. In each case, the towns can leverage its coastal nature for economic growth in associated sectors such as tourism, fishing, import and export and logistics. These towns have a natural advantage in that the marine sector is strongly interrelated with tourism, manufacturing and retail including restaurants.

While the economic strategy for the marine sector is to encourage enterprise creation and employment growth, as coastal locations are among the most sensitive in Fingal, proposals for economic development will need to be balanced against environmental considerations.

Objective EEO38 – Marine Sector

Support the existing diverse nature of the marine sector in Fingal, and identify and promote sustainable growth opportunities, while protecting European sites. This shall be achieved through engagement and partnership with the relevant agencies, sectoral representatives and local communities.

Objective EEO39

Ensure that proposals for economic development associated with the marine sector are cognisant of the sensitivities of many of Fingal's coastal locations and that relevant environmental issues are appropriately considered.

Objective EEO40

Undertake a feasibility study of the Fingal coastline to identify potential sites to accommodate marina development relevant to recreational pursuits and requirements. As part of the study the impact on the receiving marine environment, including the coastline, will be assessed and Screening for Appropriate Assessment and SEA undertaken.

7.5.2 Tourism

The tourism sector plays a key role in the Fingal's rural and urban local economies and accounts for a significant amount of employment. Furthermore, through Dublin Airport Fingal provides the national major link between Ireland and international tourists. Fingal's Tourism sector is 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.

Tourism is one of Fingal's most important economic drivers which is fully embraced by the Council. The Council is custodian and owner of many heritage sites (Malahide Castle, Malahide Casino, Newbridge House, Swords Castle, Ardgillan Castle and Skerries Mills to name a few) and has invested considerable capital to safeguard their future ensuring they can be used by the public. Other heritage properties in the Council's ownership include Shackleton Mills where a conservation plan for the building is currently underway and Bremore Castle which is being considered for future development. The Council's programme of public events (Arts, Events, Creative Ireland, Crinniú na nÓg, etc) promote and animate heritage and cultural sites throughout the County.

Fingal County Council invests considerable resources in supporting tourism in the County. In addition to the Council managing and continuing to develop a number of significant heritage properties; it works closely with Fáilte Ireland in the development of tourism infrastructure; and funds and supports Fingal Tourism Ltd, whose key roles are promotion, marketing and tourist information services. The Council also recognises the potential to make tourism a key economic function of the rural villages and will continue to promote appropriate sustainable tourism activities within the villages and encourages the development of cultural/recreational facilities and services to attract visitors and tourists where appropriate. The Council continues to expand the Greenway network throughout the County and Policy CMP8 outlines the Council's intent and commitment to same. Further details are included in Chapter 6 Connectivity & Movement, in relation to the development of the Greenway network.

7.5.2.1 Integrated Tourism Complexes

The Council will continue to encourage the development of integrated tourism/leisure/recreational complexes in demesne type landscapes in the County, where such uses are consistent with the retention of such landscapes. The conservation of these assets into the future is essential and the Council recognises the need for the appropriate sustainable reuse of these buildings.

An integrated tourism/leisure/recreational complex should include a number of the following:

- Hotel and associated facilities, conference centre, golf course, equestrian centre, trekking centre, fitness centre, indoor/outdoor water facility, fishing facility, museums, nature trails, walking routes and associated facilities.
- It may also include tourist related residential and leisure retail which is ancillary to the main tourist attraction. The tourist related residential development shall be contained within the existing buildings and retained in single company ownership and shall not be sold off individually.



A comprehensive planning application will be required for the entire complex which will include proposals, where appropriate, for:

- The preservation/conservation of natural amenities on the site,
- The preservation/conservation of the heritage structures on the site,
- The retention of the open nature of the lands,
- Significant and intensive landscaping of the site

The complexes that will be considered for such proposals include;

- Abbeyville
- Dunsoghly Castle
- Roganstown
- Tyrrelstown House
- Hampton Demesne
- Beech Park House

The global and domestic tourism markets have been devastated by the impacts of Covid-19 given the reduction in flights and restrictions imposed in both 2020 (Q2–Q4) and more recently the extended restrictions in 2021 Q1. The tourism industry is one of the worst affected. Given the inextricable link between the tourism and aviation sectors, the implications of damage to the aviation sector have had a severe impact on tourism.

Sustainable measures to ensure the recovery and promotion of the tourism sector are imperative in Fingal. The policies, objectives and measures identified in the Tourism Statement of Strategy & Work Programme 2017 – 2022 align with those outlined below. The Council continue to collaborate and work with Fáilte Ireland on the Destination Towns for Skerries, Coastal Destination Development Plan, the Dublin Coastal Trail and the Dublin Brand. In addition, the Council work with Waterways Ireland in the delivery of their programmes that cross into the Fingal area. Developing the tourism market throughout the County is imperative and this must be done in a sustainable manner that does not impact negatively on the areas natural resources and we must ensure that the capacity of the landscape to absorb tourism activities is not exceeded. The built heritage will be protected and promoted, ensuring that the historic houses, demesnes and archaeology of Fingal can be enjoyed and experienced by tourists and residents alike.

Policy EEP21 – Facilitating the Development of Tourism

Facilitate and promote the development of tourism in the County and ensure that the appropriate policies, objectives and measures identified in the *Tourism Statement of Strategy and Work Programme 2017–2022* are aligned with and supported by policies and objectives in the Draft Plan.

Objective EEO41

Engage and collaborate with key stakeholders, relevant agencies, sectoral representatives and local communities to develop the tourism sector in Fingal and to ensure that the economic potential of the tourism sector is secured for the benefit of the local economy.

Objective EEO42

Promote and facilitate tourism as one of the key economic pillars of the County's economy and a major generator of employment and to support the provision of necessary significant increase in facilities such as hotels, aparthotels, tourist hostels, cafes and restaurants, visitor attractions, including those for children.

Policy EEP22 – Tourism Infrastructure

Support development of tourism infrastructure, visitor attractions and supporting facilities at appropriate locations in the County in a manner that does not have an adverse impact on the receiving areas and the receiving environment.

Objective EEO43

Direct the provision of tourist related facilities, such as information offices and cultural centres, into town and village locations to support and strengthen the existing economic infrastructure of such centres.

Objective EEO44 – Conservation and Protection

Ensure the economic benefits associated with promoting the County's natural, cultural and built heritage are balanced with due consideration for their conservation and protection.

Objective EEO45 – Events and Concerts

Support events and concerts at suitable locations within Fingal subject to the appropriate licensing arrangements, in consultation with affected stakeholders such as community groups, local businesses and residents in the immediate area where feasible and practical, and to protect and safeguard the amenities of the area and the natural and built heritage.

Objective EEO46 - Rural-Based Tourism

Promote opportunities for enterprise and employment creation in rural-based tourism where it can be demonstrated that the resultant development will not have a negative impact on the receiving rural environment.

Objective EEO47 – Supporting Cycling and Walking Groups

Support cycling/walking groups and local communities to develop cycling and walking trails and quiet ways in towns and villages, connecting towns and villages both for the enjoyment of local people and as an attractor for visitors to the area, promoting local economic development.

Objective EEO48 – Integrated Tourism Complexes

Facilitate, where appropriate, (those complexes as listed in 7.5.2.1 Abbeyville, Dunsoghly Castle, Roganstown, Tyrrelstown House, Hampton Demesne, Beech Park House), the conversion of former demesnes and estates and their outbuildings into integrated tourist, leisure and recreational complex type developments subject to architectural conservation best practice and proper planning and sustainable development, having regard to protecting the demesne type landscape and existing natural features, and providing improved pedestrian access, where appropriate.

Objective EEO49 – Sustainable Tourism Initiatives

Support sustainable tourism initiatives which develop the tourist potential of the rural area while recognising and enhancing the quality and values of the rural area.

Objective EEO50 – Recreation in the Natural Landscape

Support recreational pursuits which promote the use of natural landscape features in a way which does not detract or cause undue damage to the features upon which any such proposed initiatives rely. Where the proposed pursuit involves land use changes either within or adjacent to European sites, proposals will be subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment.

Objective EEO51 – Safe Walking and Cycling

Promote informal recreation, particularly walking and cycling, through the development and expansion of a network of safe walking and cycling trails that provides access to rural landscapes, scenic uplands, riverine and coastal features and within towns and villages and their environs. Such routes can link with existing way marked trails, Slí na Slainte walks and parts of the Green Infrastructure Network and other local resources, such as existing or new rights of way.

Objective EEO52 – New Fencing lands open to or used by the public during the ten years preceding

The following criteria will be used when assessing planning applications for new fencing in relation to lands open to or used by the public during the ten years preceding. Such fencing is not exempted development in accordance with Art. 9(1)(A)(x) of the Planning and Development Regulations.

- Such fencing in upland or amenity areas shall conform to the best agricultural practice.
- The nature of the material to be used, the height of the fence and in the case of a wire fence, the type of wire to be used will be taken into account.
- Stiles or gates at appropriate places may be required.

Objective EEO53 – Tourism in Rural Villages

Maximise the tourism potential of the rural villages by facilitating the provision of visitor services and accommodation, the promotion of new environmentally sustainable tourism products and co-operate with the relevant bodies in the marketing and promotion of tourism in the area.

Objective EEO54 – Seamus Ennis Arts Centre

Promote the extension and development of the Seamus Ennis Arts Centre, to incorporate a purpose built theatre/performance venue and ancillary facilities.

Objective EEO55 – Bed and Breakfast or Guest House Accommodation

Support proposed extensions to existing dwellings, within areas which have zoning objectives, RU, GB, HA, RV, or RC, which provide for bed and breakfast or guest house accommodation where the size, design, surface water management and foul drainage arrangements for the proposed development does not erode the rural quality and character of the surrounding area.

Objective EEO56 – Campsites

Support the development of appropriately located and sensitively designed campsites, with required ancillary facilities, as an alternative form of accommodation for visitors to the County.

Objective EEO57

Any campsite adjacent to settlements shall, in terms of scale, layout and design, have regard to the existing character of the village and residential amenity. A detailed hard and soft landscaping plan shall be submitted for camp site applications.

7.5.3 Rural Economy

Rural Fingal is comprised of a large number of diverse towns, villages and natural assets. The rural economy is driven by minor towns and villages such as towns such as Balrothery, Loughshinny, Ballyboughal, Naul, Balscadden, Oldtown, Garristown, Ballymadun and other areas. Portrane, Coolquay, Kinsealy, Rivermeade, Rolestown as well as other areas. There are currently a variety of small, medium and larger-scale commercial enterprises operating in rural areas throughout the County. These provide important sources of employment and contribute to the diversification of the rural economy. The Council supports existing rural employment and commercial enterprises and will promote and encourage appropriately scaled enterprises. The Council acknowledges that the development of rural enterprise and employment opportunities will be vital to sustaining the rural economy. It is acknowledged in the RSES that rural areas are facing many challenges. These range from urban generated pressures to a declining and ageing population in some areas. There are also the issues such as changes to the rural economic structure and a lack of access to infrastructure and new technologies.

Rural Fingal is well placed to sustain its population and its services, to promote its communities and its tourism product, to protect its built and natural environment and to diversify in terms of local enterprise, tourism and employment. There are a number of rural economic sectors throughout the County, and these include agriculture, horticulture, agri-food, agribusiness, equine, forestry, land reclamation and aggregate extraction, farm diversification, renewable energy projects, small and medium sized enterprises, home-based economic activity and rural tourism. Fingal is renowned for its agri-food and horticulture sector and they make a significant contribution to employment in rural areas, being a pivotal source of enterprise creation and opportunities. All of these sectors will play a vital role in the rural economy in the future. The NPF and RSES support these sectors and state that rural economies and communities should be facilitated in agriculture forestry, tourism and rural enterprise, while avoiding over-spill development from urban areas and urban generated housing.



The regeneration and renewal of the rural towns and villages is a key objective of the NPF and the RSES and the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund has been established to provide investment to support rural renewal for suitable projects in towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000, and outlying areas.

The Council will continue to support and facilitate existing and new rural enterprises within the County and will engage and collaborate with key stakeholders, relevant agencies, sectoral representatives and local communities to develop these rural enterprises in Fingal. The Council aims to develop sustainable and economically efficient rural economies through initiatives to enhance sectors such as agricultural and food, forestry, fishing and aquaculture, energy and extractive industries, the bioeconomy, tourism, and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities. In doing this it is imperative that the maintenance and protection of the natural landscape and built heritage takes priority.

Policy EEP23 – Rural Economy

Support and protect existing rural economies such as valuable agricultural lands to ensure sustainable food supply, to protect the value and character of open countryside and to support the diversification of rural economies to create additional jobs and maximise opportunities in emerging sectors, such as agri-business, renewable energy, tourism and forestry.

Objective EEO58

Encourage and support local enterprise within Fingal's small towns, villages and rural business zones by facilitating the provision of space for small scale employment including office development.

Objective EEO59

Encourage the re-use of vacant and under-utilised buildings within Rural Villages as remote working hubs and/or accommodation for small and medium sized enterprises.

Policy EEP24 – Protecting The Rural Landscape And Natural Heritage

Balance protecting the landscape and natural heritage of rural Fingal with the need to harness and promote economic opportunities associated with rural life such as agricultural, horticultural, tourism and rural-related economic uses.

Objective EEO60

Encourage the development of environmentally sustainable agricultural practices, to ensure that development does not impinge on the visual amenity of the countryside and that watercourses, wildlife habitats and areas of ecological importance are protected from the threat of pollution.

Objective EEO61

Support and facilitate the development of environmentally sustainable horticultural practices.

Policy EEP25 – Markets

Support outdoor and indoor markets in towns and villages in Fingal.

Objective EEO62

Support the licensed operation of local country markets at suitable locations in Towns and Rural Villages.

7.5.3.1 Forestry**Objective EEO63 – Forestry**

Facilitate the sustainable development of forestry provided that it is in harmony with the surrounding landscape, that no significant adverse impacts are caused to natural waters, wildlife habitats, or conservation areas and that it does not have a significant adverse visual impact on the local landscape and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

Objective EEO64

Support the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine in implementing sustainable forest development in line with National policy guidance.

Objective EEO65

Support the protection and enhancement of existing native woodlands and where appropriate, the conversion of coniferous forest to native woodlands with a focus on opportunities for habitat linkage and wider eco-services.

Objective EEO66

Encourage access to forestry for walking routes, biking trails and other non-noise generating recreational activities.

7.5.3.2 Renewable energy**Objective EEO67 – Renewable and Alternative Energy**

Facilitate and encourage the development of the alternative energy sector, in line with a Local Renewable Energy Strategy, and work with the relevant agencies to support the development of alternative forms of energy where such developments do not negatively impact upon the environmental quality, and visual, residential or rural amenity of the area.

7.5.3.3 Rural enterprise

It is acknowledged that the development of rural enterprise and employment opportunities will be vital to sustaining the rural economy. In accordance with the economic strategy for the overall County, employment, servicing the rural areas, should, in general, be directed to the local employment centres of small towns and villages and rural business zones, catering for local investment and small-scale industry. Within the rural countryside, horticulture, agriculture, equine, recreational, tourism, energy production and rural resources based enterprise is promoted.

Home-based economic activity in rural areas (such as a homebased childcare facility, business, or craft workshop) will be positively considered provided the proposed business protects and promotes the physical environment, does not impact, in an excessively negative way, the existing character or nature of any area, and does not encourage significant increases in traffic.

Policy EEP26 – Rural Enterprise

Encourage and support local enterprise within Fingal's small towns, villages and rural business zones by facilitating the provision of space for small scale employment including office development.

Objective EEO68 – Vacant and Under-Utilised Buildings

Encourage the re-use of vacant and under-utilised buildings within Rural Villages as accommodation for small and medium sized enterprises.

Objective EEO69 – Home-Based Economic Activities

Permit home-based economic activities in existing dwellings, where by virtue of their nature and scale, the activities can be accommodated such that the proposed activity does not impact in an excessively negative way on:

- i. The operation of agriculture or horticulture farms in the vicinity,
- ii. The rural ecology and landscape of the area,
- iii. Any adjacent residential use,
- iv. The primary use of the dwelling as a residence.

Objective EEO70 – Broadband

Support and facilitate the expansion and rollout of high-speed broadband services within rural areas.

7.5.3.4 Quarries, Aggregate Extraction and Land Reclamation

The Council recognises the importance of extractive industries to the local and national economy as valuable sources of raw material for industry in general and the construction industry in particular and as an important source of employment. Currently, Fingal has a limited number of operating quarries and all of the extractive quarries in north Fingal have been exhausted to date.

The Council will seek to ensure that significant aggregate resources in the County are appropriately protected and, in this regard, will restrict the siting of incompatible developments that would interfere with the efficient development of such resources. The potential use of alternative sources of sustainable material such as construction and demolition waste (C&D) is encouraged and should be employed where possible to reduce the need for excessive extraction. Dust, noise, water pollution, vibration, visual impact and traffic generation are some of the factors that have to be considered for these industries. Balancing the economic benefits of extraction against potential environmental impacts is imperative.

Policy EEP27 – Aggregate Extraction

Protect and safeguard the County's natural aggregate resources from inappropriate development and support the sustainable extraction of aggregate resources at suitable locations within the County subject to appropriate environmental safeguards.

Objective EEO71

Ensure that proposals for extraction and land reclamation avoid significant adverse impacts on the environment, residential amenities and the visual amenity of the area through environmental assessment, mitigation and appropriate provision for the restoration of the landscape.

Objective EEO72

Prohibit mineral extraction and land reclamation along the coast, particularly in proximity to estuaries, except in exceptional circumstances, where it can be demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse impact on the environment, visual amenity, heritage or the conservation objectives of European Sites.

Objective EEO73

Prohibit the removal of beach material, aggregates, sand and gravel, including the removal of material from sand dune ecosystems.

Objective EEO74

Preserve and protect coastal wetlands, coastal habitats, and estuarine marsh lands in coastal areas from inappropriate development, including land reclamation. Any proposals for land reclamation in coastal areas shall be subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment and to an assessment of impacts on any such wetlands, coastal habitats, and estuarine marsh lands and its impacts on coastal processes including erosion, deposition, accretion and flooding particularly in light of climate change.

7.5.3.5 Agriculture, Agri-food and Farm diversification

Fingal is the principal County within the Dublin region for agricultural activities and has a national reputation for its horticultural sector. The agricultural profile of the County is characterised by mainly tillage and beef production operators, with a number of horticultural farms engaged in specialist fruit and vegetable production. Agriculture and Agri-food are not significant employers to the County at present, but the industry is still underdeveloped. The quantum of agricultural land available and favourable zonings for the sector create significant potential opportunity to grow the sector and its employment base into the future.

Fingal has a well-established agri-food sector with a number of successful agri-food companies. This sector is well placed to play a significant role in the economy into the foreseeable future. The agricultural sector must adapt to the challenges posed by modernisation, restructuring, market development and the increasing importance of environmental issues. It is recognised that there is a need for diversification from traditional agricultural practices. The Council will encourage farming practices and production methods that have regard to conservation, landscape protection, the protection of wildlife habitats, endangered species, flora and fauna and water quality. Sustainable agricultural practices will be encouraged to ensure that development does not impinge on the visual amenity of the countryside or on the architectural heritage of the County and that watercourses and areas of ecological importance are protected from the threat of pollution. The Council will continue to support and facilitate agriculture and new agricultural initiatives.

Fingal County Council, through the Local Enterprise Office, is delivering a wide range of financial and non-financial supports to agri-food companies in the County. The Agri-Food Strategy for Fingal builds upon this work and sets out a common framework that will foster innovation and collaboration across the sectors, increasing value added, leading to further jobs creation in the agri-food sector and maximizing the potential of the agri-food base in the County. Fingal County Council developed the strategy with the input of a steering group of local sectoral experts.

Policy EEP28 – Agriculture

Safeguard the agricultural identity of North Fingal, promoting the rural character of the County and supporting the agricultural/horticultural production sectors.

Policy EEP29 – Regenerative Farming & Community Supported Agriculture

Support and encourage Organic and Regenerative Farming and Community Supported Agriculture in the Fingal Area.

Objective EEO75

Support and facilitate the protection of agricultural lands in the County, ensuring that new development does not irreversibly harm or compromise the commercial viability of existing agricultural land.

Objective EEO76

Support and facilitate horticultural development in Fingal encouraging the establishment/expansion of new enterprises where appropriate.

Objective EEO77

Support and facilitate the growth of agribusiness in Fingal and encourage agribusiness and support services which are directly related to the local horticultural or agricultural sectors in RB zoned areas.

Objective EEO78

Direct and encourage agribusiness which relies primarily on imported food and produce into areas which have adequate road infrastructure, and which are appropriately zoned.

Objective EEO79

Support and encourage the development and expansion of the equine industry in the County, including supporting equine related activities of an appropriate size and at suitable locations.

Policy EEP30 – Agri Food Industry

Encourage and provide for industry specifically linked to food, agriculture and the development of added value opportunities in these areas.

Policy EEP31 – Fingal Agri-Food Strategy 2019–2021

Support the objectives and actions of the *Fingal Agri-food Strategy 2019–2021*.

Objective EEO80

Engage and collaborate with key stakeholders, relevant agencies, sectoral representatives and local communities to develop the agri-food sector in Fingal, to promote and showcase the agri-food sector, including supporting events such as the Flavours of Fingal, and to ensure that the economic potential of the sector is secured for the benefit of the local economy, and national economy.

Objective EEO81

Ensure the economic benefits associated with promoting the County's agri-food sector are balanced with due consideration for the conservation and protection of the rural environment.

Objective EEO82

Promote the growth of the agri-food sector in Fingal by responding to the varying needs and requirements of the different components within the sector and by creating high quality built environments offering a range of building sizes and formats, supported by the targeted provision of necessary infrastructure.

Objective EEO83 – Farm Diversification

Promote farm diversification where:

- the proposal is related directly either to the agricultural operation engaged upon on the farm or the rural nature of the area.
- The use is compatible with the existing road infrastructure in the area.
- it does not unacceptably impact on the landscape, environment and character of the area.

Objective EEO84

Promote the sensitive re-use and adaptation of existing farm buildings for farm diversification. Where a new building is necessary, it shall be sited, where practical, in or adjacent to the existing group of farm buildings and shall relate to existing buildings and the surrounding countryside in terms of design, siting, and materials.

Objective EEO85

Support and facilitate the work of Teagasc and other farming / local bodies within the County in the promotion of the rural economy, including agriculture development, rural diversification, tourism adaptation and in the development of new initiatives to support farming.

7.5.4 Retail

Retail plays a significant role in the growth and economy of Fingal and the retail sector is the single largest industry in Fingal County by count of enterprise (2020 Q4) with over 1,500 businesses active within the industry. Retail demand is largely a function of population and available consumer expenditure. Overall population growth in Fingal County has been significant over the past 10 years. Levels of growth have not been evenly distributed across the County but has largely focused in existing urban centres. Swords, and Blanchardstown account for 30.7% of the absolute growth (10.4% and 20.3% respectively), while existing Level 3 settlements account for a further 34.6%. The remainder account for 34.7%. Spatially, population growth appears correlated to proximity to Dublin City and the M50/M1 network.

As per the Settlement Strategy in the RSES, the population of Fingal is anticipated to grow 369,000 by 2031. Retail policy will account for this growth spatially within Fingal and anticipate the associated implications for retailing provision for our major urban centres, towns, and villages. Using absolute population growth³ as a proxy for demand, growth has roughly been in line with the expectations set out within the Retail Hierarchy for Fingal. A notable feature has been Balbriggan, which has seen a significant population growth of 14.7% over the ten-year period from 2006–2016.

³Approximated population growth via application of underlying electoral division data in lieu of settlement-specific due to data constraints.

EMRA will support and drive the preparation of a new retail strategy for the Region under the requirements of the *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012*, or any subsequent update, to update this hierarchy and apply floorspace requirements for the Region. Fingal County Council will prepare a Variation to the Development Plan if and when it is required by any update to the retail Guidelines.

Fingal County Council retail policy will continue to prioritise designated retail centres in the retail hierarchy and future retail development shall be based on a sequential approach, as indicated in the Retail Planning Guidelines. New retail development should be directed primarily into the major town centres and town centres in the County and be in accordance with the type and format indicated in the retail hierarchy. New retail development for small towns, village centres, local centres and small villages (Level 4 and Level 5) should similarly be in accordance with the Fingal Retail Hierarchy, with a strong emphasis on being of an appropriate scale and offer to sufficiently meet local retailing needs. New retail developments for level 2 and 3 centres should be located within the core retail areas identified for these centres.

Proposals for new retail development outside of the defined core retail areas will only be considered in exceptional circumstances where the Planning Authority is satisfied that there are no sites or potential sites available either within the core retail area or on-the-edge of the core, and that the proposed retail development is necessary to serve the needs of the area.

A key focus for retail policy in Fingal is for the regeneration of our towns and villages and recognition of the Town Centre First Strategy in the Programme for Government, Our Shared Future and its role in the regeneration of towns and villages post Covid-19. Fingal County Council has taken a proactive approach to improving the attractiveness of towns and villages in Fingal post Covid-19 with schemes to upgrade the public realm with the provision of planting, seating, bike parking, parklets, toilets and pedestrianisation of some streets to encourage footfall and the encouragement of outdoor public realm space by citizens. Fingal County Council will support measures required to create town and village centres that have mixed uses at the heart of them, that can support high quality living environments alongside commercial/retail and other service requirements. The need for appropriate regeneration policies are also important, whereby existing town centre renewal projects can increase the attractiveness of a town/village centre, with ways identified by which Fingal's urban centres can be continually improved and be appealing places to visit and spend time.

7.5.4.1 Changing nature of retail

Retail plays a vital role in contributing to economic growth, providing and sustaining employment and in creating attractive urban and rural areas where people have the services they require to increase the quality of their lives in their specific communities. Retail undoubtedly makes a critical and positive contribution to Irish society. In 2020, sections of the retail sector faced the devastating consequences of Covid-19 and the associated restrictions. The September 2020 issue of the Dublin Economic Monitor states that Covid-19 restrictions have decimated retail spending across many sectors of the Dublin economy, while accelerating the pre-existing trend towards eCommerce. In Dublin eCommerce increased by 43%. Spending on entertainment (hotels, bars and restaurants) was down 79.7% year on year whereas spending on necessities (groceries) has increased by 16.7% year on year. Spending on clothes and department store goods was down by 56.7% year on year in Q2 2020. (Dublin Economic Monitor September 2020). Trends in online shopping increased significantly during the pandemic. The pandemic resulted in challenges for retailers and impacts on town centres in terms of vacancy rates and business closures.

Given Fingal's location within the Eastern and Midland Region it is likely that new and innovative retailing formats will seek to establish in Dublin and Fingal County Council's policies will be sufficiently flexible to consider these where appropriate. Supporting the recovery of the retail sector in Fingal has included the provision of financial incentives, Town Centre Renewal Plans and Placemaking Strategies, which have been advocated in the RSES. Taking a Town Centre First approach to development is key for revitalising our towns and villages, making them vibrant places to live, work, shop and do business in. The creation of additional outdoor dining facilities is bringing increased footfall to our towns and villages and is showing an increased spend in retail. Fingal County Council is currently reviewing its Casual Trading Bye-laws with a view to expanding the number of locations available to independent vendors with a coffee/food offering at popular locations. In addition, Fingal County Council has a Countywide Shopfront Improvement Scheme to encourage local businesses to improve their street frontages and revitalize Main Streets across the County. Improving

the appearance of streetscapes and revitalising vacant spaces, including encouraging the provision a mix of retail, commercial, leisure and residential uses in our town centres will be central to the Council's policy for supporting the retail sector.



7.5.4.2 Vacancy

Vacancy rates are indicative of the local economic health of towns. Key objectives of the retail policy in the Plan is to ensure that the County's urban and rural centres perform at an appropriate level with a range of retail provision and offer reflective of their classification in the Fingal Retail Hierarchy, and that the vitality and viability of retailing in these centres is protected and enhanced as opportunities arise. In terms of commercial vacancy, the overall vacancy rate for Fingal County in Q2 2020 was 13.0%, 0.5% lower than the national average yet 1.0% higher than the Dublin average. (Source: GeoDirectory 2020 Q4)

Vacancy in the main streets, shopping centres, and local centres of the County's towns and villages can present a particular challenge, as evidenced during the economic downturn. The Council's policy in relation to vacancy in the County's centres is to use all available measures to encourage appropriate residential, social, retail and community uses in town and village centres, in line with the Town Centre First approach, in order to enhance their vitality and viability and actively promote these uses in existing under-utilised or vacant building stock. Regeneration and healthy placemaking is a priority for Fingal County Council to ensure that we create healthy and attractive places to live and work and to ensure that lands are used to their full potential.

Policy EEP32 – Retail

Support and reinforce the retail strategy within the County having regard to the RSES, or any superseding regional retail strategy, and explore the opportunity to strengthen the retail function in Fingal's towns and villages.

Objective EEO86

Require that new significant retail development be primarily directed to the higher Levels in the Fingal Retail Hierarchy and specifically to the core retail areas identified for these centres. Only in exceptional circumstances (where the Planning Authority is satisfied that there are no sites or potential sites available either within the core retail area or on-the-edge of the core, and that the proposed retail development is necessary to serve the needs of the area) will proposed retail developments that are located outside of these centres and/ or the core retail areas of these centres be positively considered.

Objective EEO87

Ensure that applications for new retail development are consistent with the retail policies of the Development Plan, in particular with the Fingal Retail Hierarchy, and are assessed in accordance with the requirements of the *Guidelines for Planning Authorities: Retail Planning*, including, where appropriate, the application of the Sequential Approach, and requirements for retail impact assessments and transport impact assessments for retail developments which due to their scale and/ or location may impact on the vitality and viability of major town, town, local and village centres, while having regard to the impact such directions/ developments may have on the existing businesses operating within the area.

7.5.5 Retail Hierarchy

The RSES sets out a 5 tier Retail Hierarchy for the region and the centres concerning Fingal are detailed in the table below. Levels 1–3 are the centres indicated in the RSES and levels 4 and 5 centres are those determined by the Development Plan.

Table 7.2: Fingal Retail Hierarchy

Level	Fingal centres	Zoning Objective	Types of services	Appropriate retail format
Level 2* *Level 1 is Dublin City Centre	Swords & Blanchardstown	Major Town Centres "MC"	These centres should offer a full range of all types of retail services from newsagents to specialist shops and boutiques; large department stores, convenience stores of all types, shopping centres and high level of mixed uses including the arts and culture to create a vibrant, living place. Level 2 Centres should be well connected and served by high quality public transport, with population catchments in excess of 60,000 people.	High Order Comparison Middle Order Comparison Lower Order Comparison Superstore Supermarket

Level 3	Balbriggan,	Major Town Centre "MC"	<p>These centres will vary in terms of scale of provision and the size of catchment based on their proximity to a Level 2 Centre. Generally where the centre has a large catchment (such as Balbriggan) and is not close to a major town centre, there should be a good range of comparison shopping (though no large department store), with a mix of uses and services, some leisure activities and a range of cafes and restaurants.</p> <p>At least one supermarket and a smaller scale department store may be required to meet local needs. Where the Level 3 Centre is close to an existing major town centre, the scale of retail and mixed use provision should be lower, with the proposed range of shops meeting more basic day to day needs, with only small scale range of comparison units trading.</p> <p>Level 3 Centres should generally cater for a population of between 10,000 and 40,000 people.</p>	<p>Middle Order Comparison Lower Order Comparison Superstore Supermarket</p>
	Malahide, Skerries, Charlestown, Rush, Lusk and Donabate	Town Centre "TC"		
Level 4	Blanchardstown Village, Mulhuddart, Clonsilla, Castleknock, Howth, Portmarnock, Baldoyle, Ongar, Sutton, Balrothery	Town Centre "TC"	<p>These centres should generally provide for one supermarket ranging in size from 1,000–2,500 sq m with a limited range of supporting shops (low order comparison), supporting services, community facilities or health clinics grouped together to create a focus for the local population. This level of centre should meet the everyday needs of the local population and surrounding catchment.</p>	<p>Lower Order Comparison (limited to a small number of shops meeting local needs) Supermarket</p>
	Applewood, Stapolin, Racecourse, Santry Demesne, Bayside, Castlemills, Carrickhill, Tyrellstown, Crowscastle Local Centre Roselawn and Rathbeale	Local Centre "LC"		
Level 5	Kinsaley Village, Kinsaley/Feltrim Brackenstown, Holywell, Rivervalley, Seabury, Castlelands, Mountview, Hartstown, Huntstown, Carpenterstown, Boraimhe, Ridgewood, Miller's Glen, Laurel Lodge, Corduff and Loughshinny, Holmpatrick Shopping Centre, Skerries Point Shopping Centre, Portrane	Local Centre "LC"	<p>These centres should meet the basic day to day needs of surrounding residents, whether as a rural foci points close to other community facilities such as the local primary schools, post office and GAA club or as a terrace of shops within a suburb. Expected are a maximum of one or two small convenience stores, newsagents, and potentially other supporting services.</p>	<p>Local shops</p>
	Balscadden, Ballymadun, Naul, Garristown, Oldtown, Ballyboghil, Rowlestown, Coolquay and Rivermeade	Rural Village "RV"		

Core retail areas

Major Town Centres

Swords and Blanchardstown are at Level 2, the top tier of the Fingal Retail Hierarchy and corresponding with the County's Settlement Hierarchy. These are urban centres of regional importance in terms of their retailing function and the extent of their retail provision in convenience, comparison and retail park and warehouse floorspace. The Council's policy in relation to these Major Town Centres is to proactively improve, strengthen, consolidate and enhance their primary retailing functions in addition to the leisure, community and civic functions they offer.

Objective EEO88 – Level 2 Centres

Develop and promote Swords and Blanchardstown as sustainable, vibrant and prosperous Major Town Centres operating at the highest retail Level within the Fingal Retail Hierarchy, and to further strengthen, improve and diversify the retailing performance of Swords and Blanchardstown within a regional context.

Objective EEO89

Facilitate improvements to the quantum and quality of retail offer and function in Swords and Blanchardstown, and ensure their sustainable development by consolidating, intensifying and enhancing their existing core retail areas, and by directing new retail opportunities into the core retail areas identified for each.

Town and/or District Centres

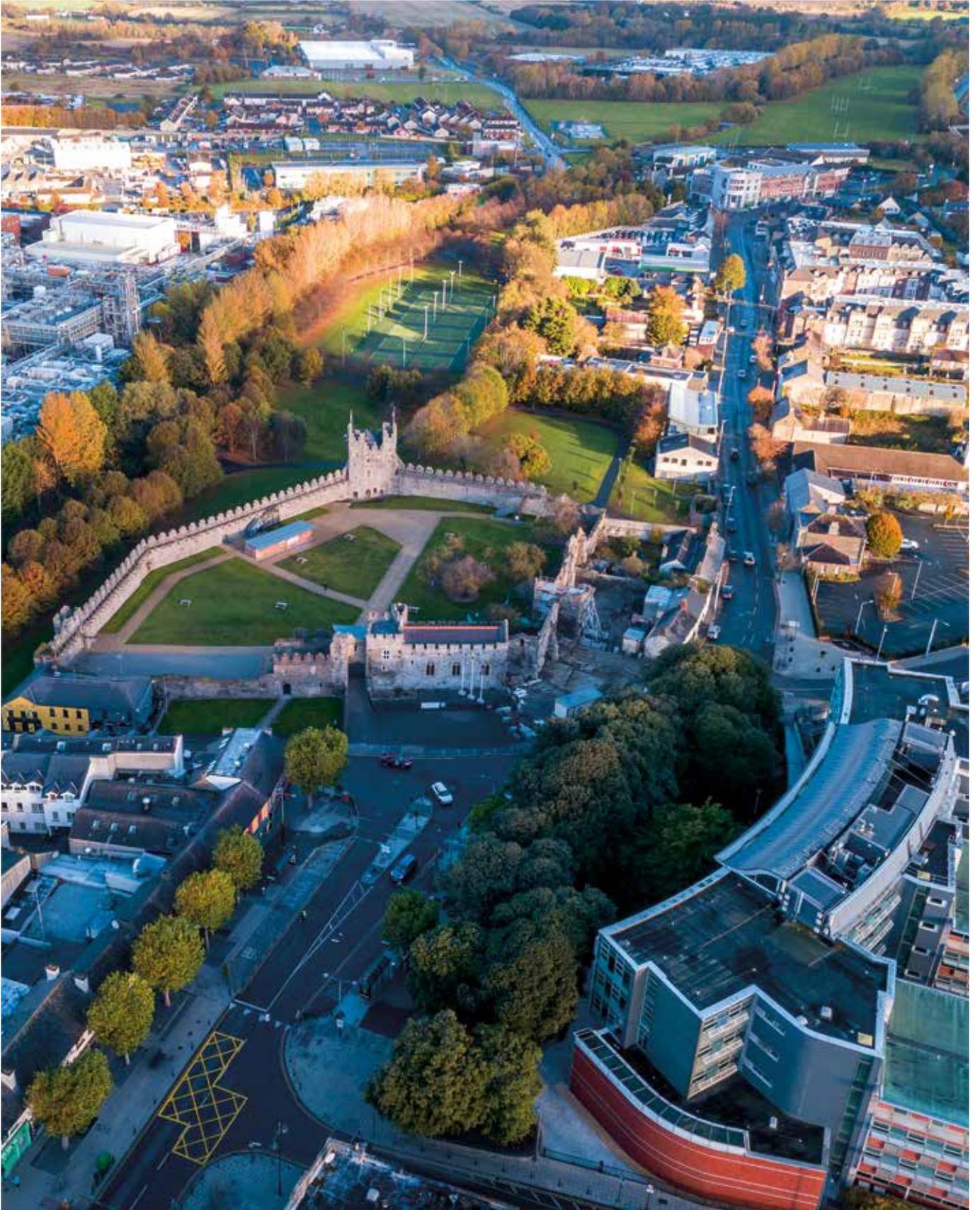
Balbriggan, Malahide, Skerries, Charlestown, Rush, Lusk and Donabate are included at Level 3 of the Fingal Retail Hierarchy. These centres are well distributed geographically throughout the County, with significant resident-populations and also serving wider catchment areas, some into rural areas. While these towns are unique with distinctive characters and historic development, they perform and have further potential to perform over the Plan period to a higher retailing level due to the strength of their resident-population and catchment-population.

Objective EEO90 – Level 3 Centres

Ensure the development of Balbriggan, Malahide, Skerries, Charlestown, Rush, Lusk and Donabate as sustainable, vibrant and prosperous Town Centres performing at a high retail level within the Fingal Retail Hierarchy to meet the retailing needs of and offer sufficient retail choice to their local populations and catchment populations.

Objective EEO91

Facilitate appropriately scaled improvements to the quantum and quality of retail offer and function in Balbriggan, Malahide, Skerries, Charlestown, Rush, Lusk and Donabate and ensure their sustainable development by consolidating, intensifying and enhancing their existing core retail areas, and by directing new retail opportunities into the core retail areas identified for each



Objective EEO92

Ensure that the Level 3 Town Centres have a retail offer that is sufficient in terms of scale, type, and range without adversely impacting on or diverting trade from the higher order retailing locations.

Neighbourhood Centres, Local Centres-Small Towns And Villages

Level 4 of the Fingal Retail Hierarchy includes a number of important small towns, urban village centres, and local centres. These are dispersed throughout the County including urban centres such as Blanchardstown Village, Mulhuddart, Clonsilla, Castleknock, and Ongar in the west of the County, Balrothery to the north, and Howth, Portmarnock, Baldoyle, and Sutton to the east. A complete list of Level 4 centres is included in the Fingal Retail Hierarchy in Table 1 above.

Objective EEO93 – Level 4 Centres

Ensure the development of Level 4 Centres as sustainable, vibrant and prosperous Small Towns, Village Centres and Local Centres performing at a level within the Fingal Retail Hierarchy to meet the retailing needs of immediate local populations and catchment populations.

Objective EEO94

Where a gap in the retail provision of a Level 4 Centre is identified and established, facilitate appropriately scaled improvements to the retail offer and function in Level 4 Centres and ensure their sustainable development by enhancing the existing Centre for each and directing new retail opportunities into the Centres.

Objective EEO95

Ensure that the Level 4 Small Towns, Village Centres and Local Centres have a retail offer that is sufficient in terms of scale, type, and range without adversely impacting on or diverting trade from the higher order retailing locations.

Corner Shops/Small Villages

Level 5 of the Fingal Retail Hierarchy includes a range of lower-performing local centres and small groupings of local shops in urban areas, and the rural villages. In similarity with Level 4 Centres, the Level 5 Centres are by their nature widely represented through the County, and include the Rural Villages of Balscadden, Ballymadun, Naul, Garristown, Oldtown, Ballyboghil, Rowlestown, Coolquay, and Rivermeade (*a complete list of Level 5 Centres is included in the Fingal Retail Hierarchy in Table 7.2 above*).

Objective EEO96 – Level 5 Centres

Ensure the development of Level 5 Centres as sustainable, vibrant and prosperous Local Shops and Small Villages performing at a level within the Fingal Retail Hierarchy to meet the retailing needs of immediate local populations and catchment populations.

Objective EEO97

Where a gap in the retail provision of a Level 5 Centre is identified and established, facilitate appropriately scaled improvements to the retail offer and function of Level 5 Centres and ensure their sustainable development by enhancing the existing Centre for each and directing new retail opportunities into the Centres.

Objective EEO98

Ensure that the Level 5 Local Shops and Small Villages have a retail offer that is sufficient in terms of scale, type, and range without adversely impacting on or diverting trade from the higher order retailing locations.

Objective EEO99

Maintain and strengthen the vitality, viability and regeneration of the County's Major Town, Town, Local and Village Centres by providing for civic, leisure, cultural and tourism attractions while ensuring that retailing remains a core function of these centres

Objective EEO100

Promote the use of vacant floor space in our major town centres, town centres, local centres and villages and support proposals for refurbishment and replacement of obsolete buildings/units within these centres.

Non-Retail Uses, Fast Food Outlets, Takeaways, Off Licences and Betting Offices

In order to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of the County's urban and rural centres, the occurrence of non-retail uses (such as amusement centres and arcades), fast food outlets, off licences and betting offices needs to be monitored. An over-supply or dominance of these types of uses within the main streets, shopping centres and local centres of Fingal's centres can have negative impacts on the amenities of these centres and their ability to perform their retailing functions in accordance with their classification in the Fingal Retail Hierarchy.

Objective EEO101 – Non-Retail Uses

Control the provision of non-retail uses, especially at ground floor level, in the main streets of towns and villages, shopping centres and local centres to ensure that injury is not caused to the amenities of these streets and centres through the loss of retail opportunities.

Objective EEO102

Prevent an over-supply or dominance of fast food outlets, takeaways, off licences, adult shops, gaming arcades and betting offices in the main streets of towns and villages, shopping centres and local centres to ensure that injury is not caused to the amenities of these streets and centres through the loss of retail opportunities.

Retail Warehousing and Retail Parks

There is considerable development of retail warehousing and high technology zoned lands with 78.5% and 48.7% of the zoned land developed as of Q2 2020. In the case of retail warehousing there are just 6 remaining hectares of zoned land capacity. In the absence of an up-to-date retail strategy, it is considered appropriate that the existing Retail Warehousing zonings remain and that a cautionary approach is taken in assessing proposals for new retail warehousing and/ or retail parks, and that a retail impact assessment should accompany any such proposal.

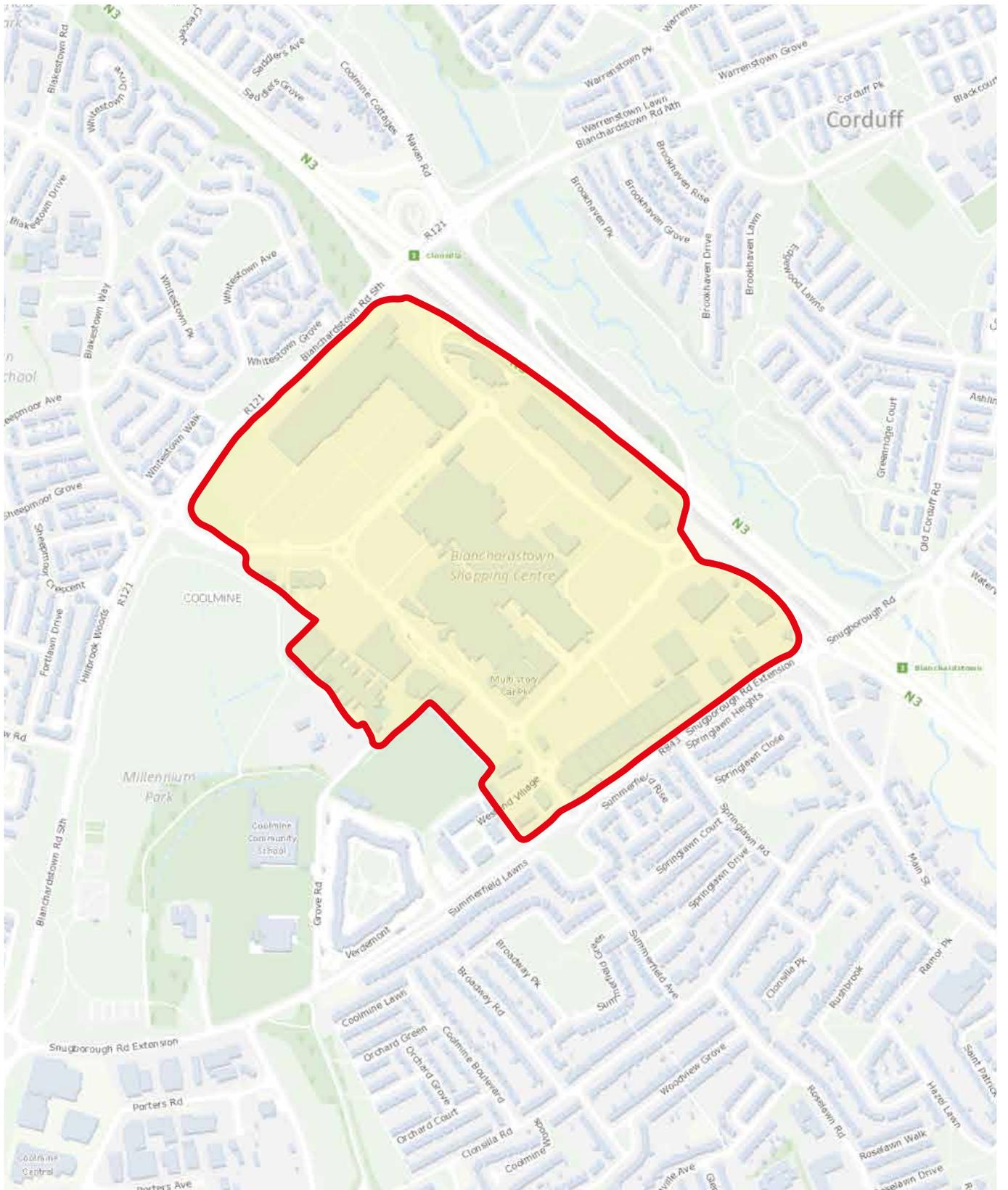
Objective EEO103 – Retail Warehousing and Retail Parks

Direct demand for new retail warehousing and/ or retail parks into the Major Town Centre “MC” zoned lands of the Level 2 higher order retailing locations and into the Retail Warehousing “RW” zoning, preferably, in the first instance, to consolidate the existing clusters of retail warehouses and/ or retail parks.

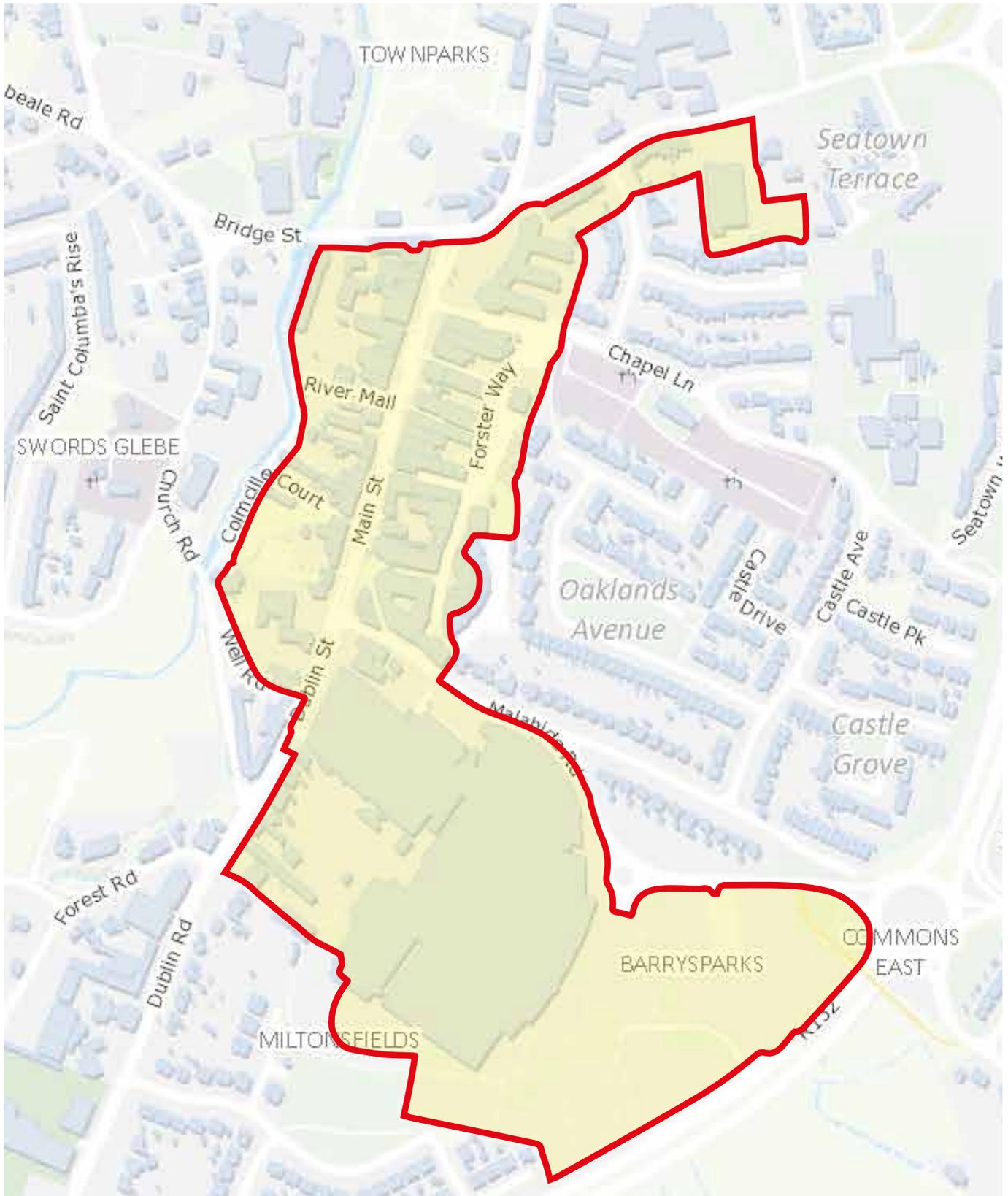
Objective EEO104

Ensure that applications for new retail warehousing and/ or retail parks are consistent with the requirements of the *Guidelines for Planning Authorities: Retail Planning*, including, where appropriate, the application of the Sequential Approach, and requirements for retail impact assessments and transport impact assessments for retail developments which due to their scale and/ or location may impact on the vitality and viability of existing retail parks.

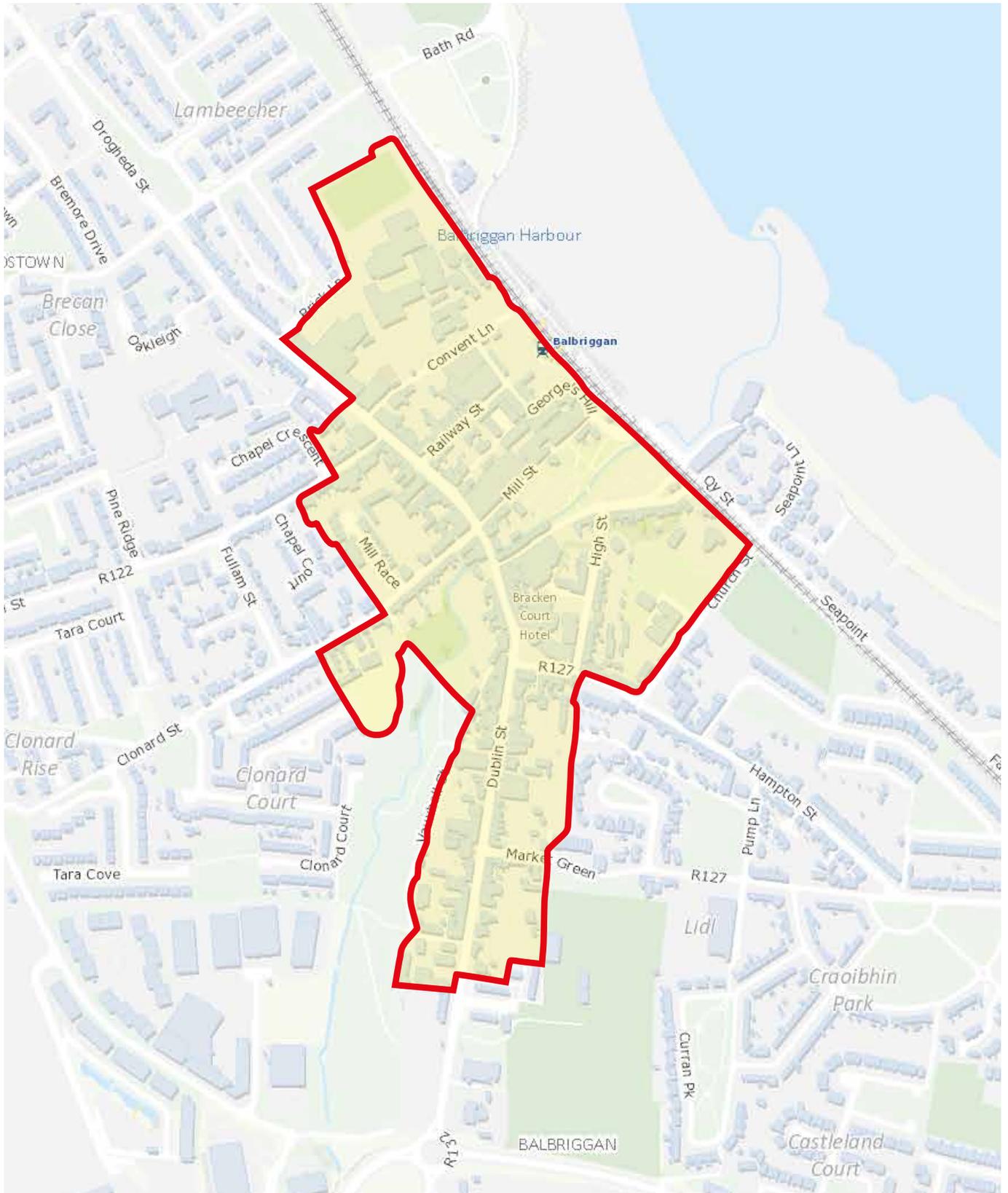
Blanchardstown Core Retail Area



Swords Core Retail Area



Balbriggan Core Retail Area



Skerries Retail Core Area



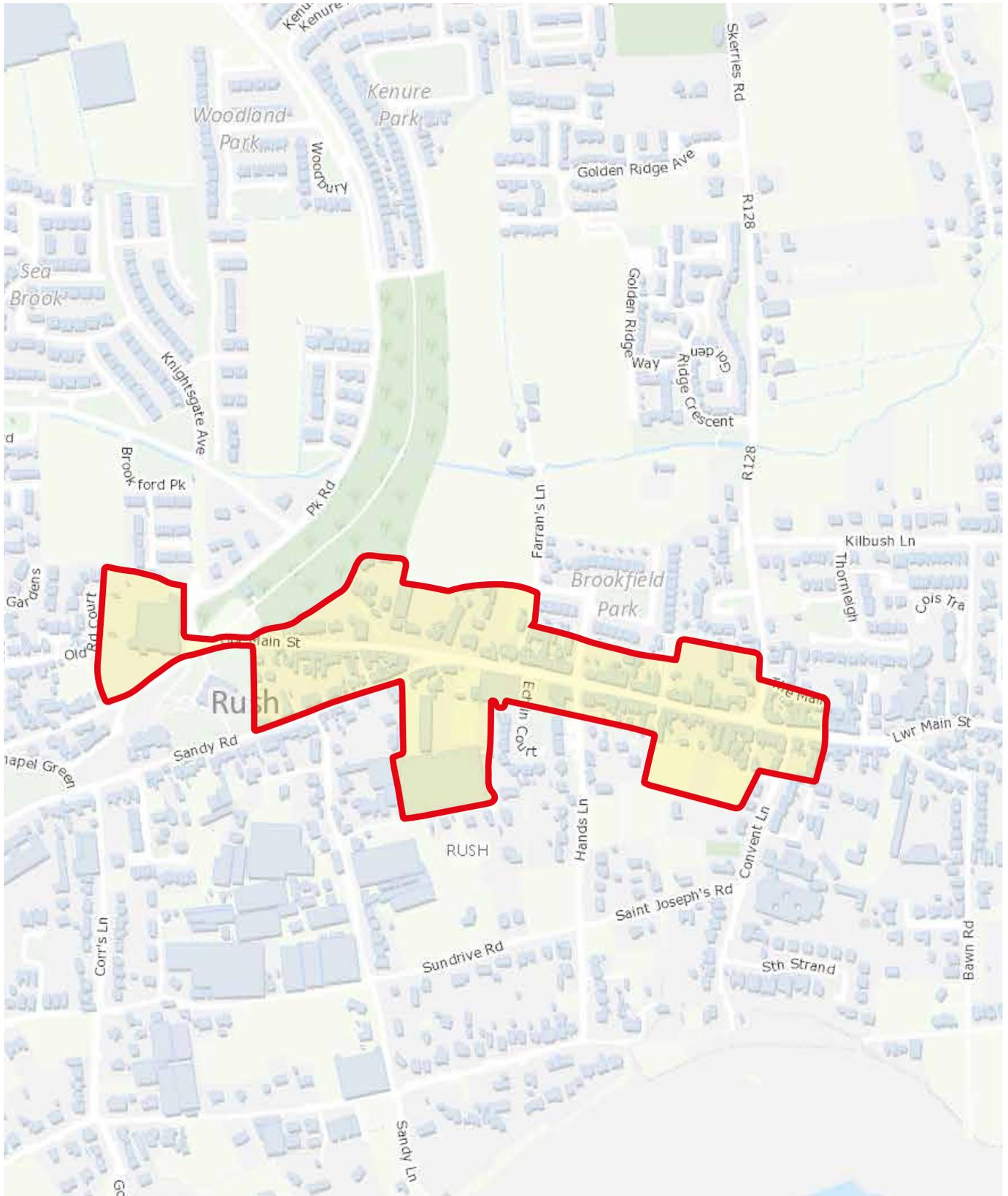
Malahide Core Retail Area



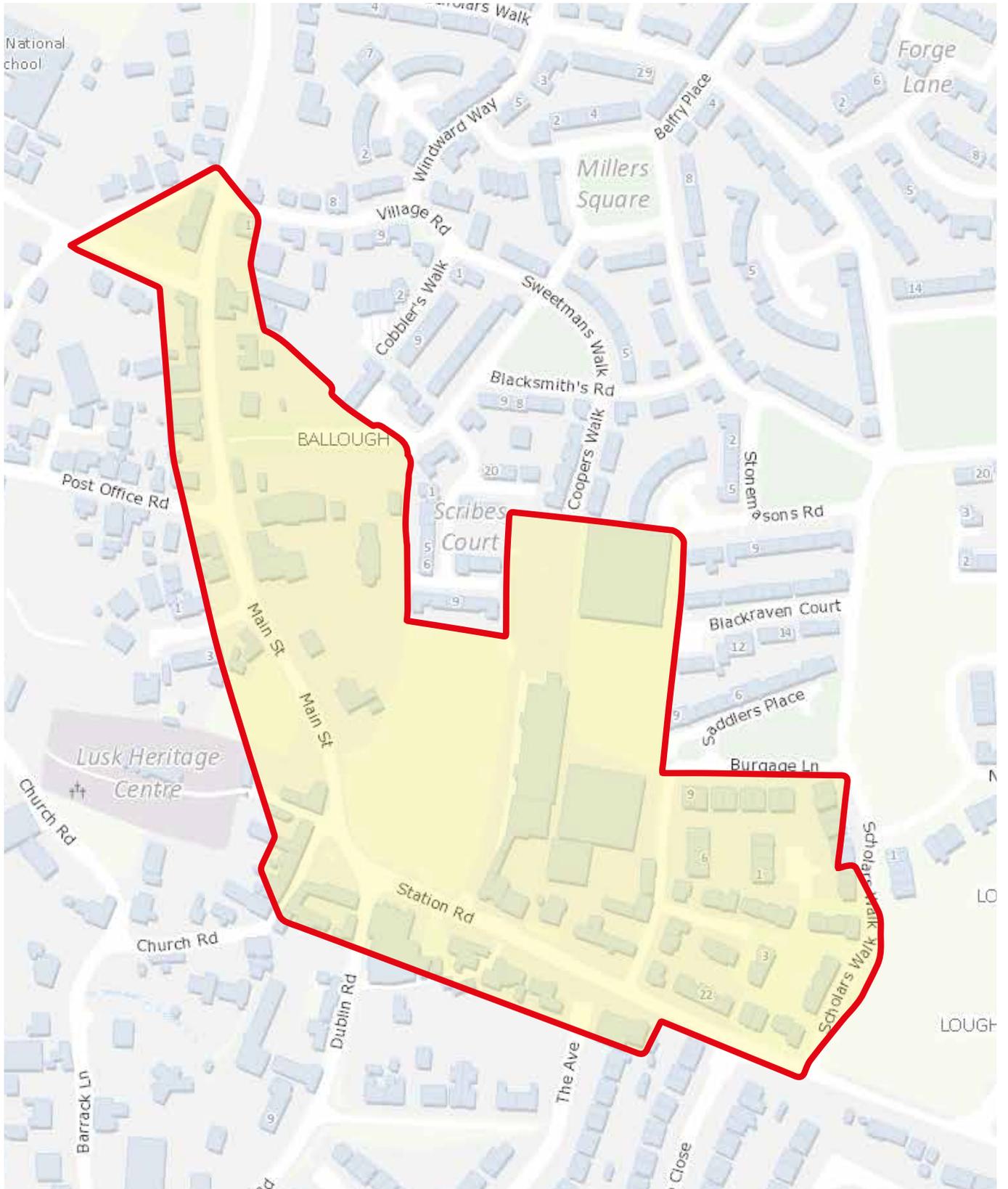
Charlestown Core Retail Area



Rush Core Retail Area



Lusk Core Retail Area



Donabate Core Retail Area

