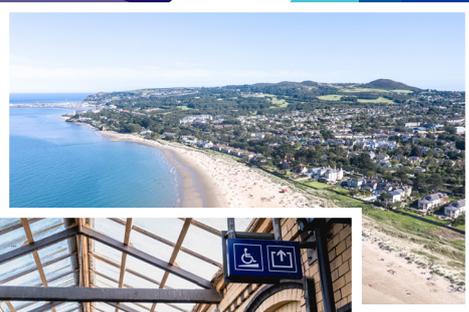


Comhairle Contae  
Fhine Gall  
Fingal County  
Council



# FINGAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2023-2029

STRATEGIC ISSUES PAPER



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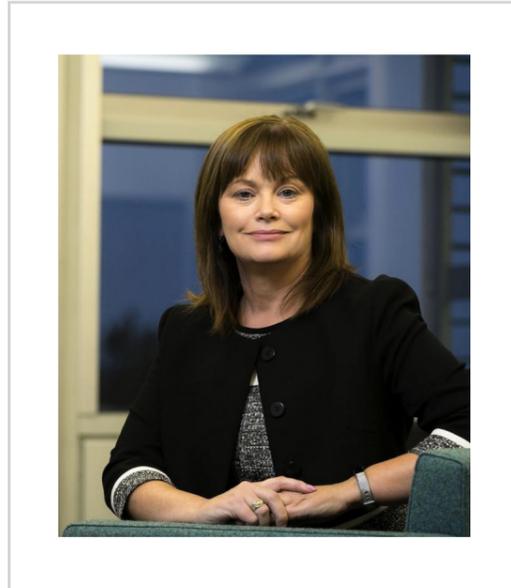
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## **WELCOME FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND MAYOR**

Fingal County Council is reviewing the current Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023 and preparing a new Fingal Development Plan for the period 2023-2029. The review and preparation of a new County Development Plan is one of the most important functions of the Council. The Fingal Development Plan 2023 - 2029 will set the longer-term vision for the county's future. The Development Plan review has come at a challenging and unprecedented time arising from the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, climate change and Brexit. However, these challenges also present opportunities to build on our mission to make Fingal 'the place to live, work, visit and do business'.

This first phase of consultation will play a very important role in the preparation and drafting of the Development Plan. This document presents an overview of the Strategic Issues facing the county and sets out by theme, some of the key issues that may need to be addressed by the new Plan. At this early stage, we are looking for your input on these broad 'big picture' issues. Specific proposals relating to the zoning of lands should not be made at this stage as they cannot be considered.



 We invite you the citizens, the communities and organisations you represent, businesses and stakeholders, to become involved and to give your views on the future development of County Fingal. 

Your participation in the plan-making process will ensure that the next Development Plan responds to your aspirations for the county while also addressing any concerns that you may have. Help us to plan for the future of Fingal as 'the place to live, work, visit and do business'.

**AnnMarie Farrelly,**  
Chief Executive,  
Fingal County Council,  
March 2021

I am delighted to launch the start of the Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029 process on the 12th March 2021. The process of reviewing and adopting a development plan is one of the most important functions of the elected members, acting as the blue print for the development of Fingal from a physical, economic, social and environmental viewpoint.

The Development Plan must consider the social, economic and environmental aspects of our future development. It has particular importance in responding to climate change which both Fingal County Council and Dáil Éireann have recognised constitutes a Climate Emergency. We face the twin challenges of decarbonising our economy and society, and adapting to the climate change which will result from emissions to date. To do so we need to ensure our Development Plan will put us on the right path. There are three public consultation phases over the two year process of making a Development Plan. This first stage, the pre-draft, will set out the strategic direction for the plan. It will form the framework into which objectives and policies at the later stages will sit. It is of great importance that you make your views known as early as possible so that you can feed into the plan making process.



 How we use our land, where we put housing, employment, and community facilities, is of relevance to us all. It will impact on how we respond to climate change, how we protect and restore Nature, how we move around, where we live and work, our health and the quality of our lives as individuals, families and communities. Policies and objectives within the plan will form the basis for decisions on planning applications and many other aspects of the Council's work. 

You are invited to make your views known. Various options are available to do this, online and by post, the details of which are set out in this paper. We very much look forward to hearing from you.

**Cllr. David Healy,**  
Mayor of County Fingal,  
March 2021

# THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

## What is a Development Plan?

A County Development Plan is a public document used to guide development and sets out the vision for how the county should develop and evolve. It must be prepared every six years in order to respond to the county's changing needs. The Fingal Development Plan is required to set out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the county.

It comprises a series of chapters that cover the broad aims of Fingal County Council and includes cross cutting themes, as well as policies and objectives regarding future development. The Plan also includes a series of zoning maps which form the basis for deciding the appropriate location for different types of development across the county and which underpin the decision-making process for planning applications.

The new Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029 will set out the land use framework to guide the appropriate development of Fingal supported by the delivery of critical social and physical infrastructure. It will focus on the places we live, work, visit and do business and on how these places are integrated and connected through public transport, walking and cycling in order to deliver sustainable development.

## What are the statutory requirements for the Fingal Development Plan?

The Fingal Development Plan must consist of a written document called the “Written Statement” and a Plan or Plans indicating the development objectives for the area. The new Development Plan will specifically set out how land in Fingal is to be used and will outline objectives and policies to guide proposed development and to allow planning applications to be assessed. The Plan must also include the identification of land supply to accommodate development growth, with the proposed growth and settlement strategy for the county summarised within a section of the Plan called the ‘Core Strategy’. The Core Strategy includes a concept map showing where growth is to be directed and provides guidance on the location and delivery targets for new housing and employment, and the key infrastructure needed to accommodate this growth, i.e. water, health, transport and community facilities.

In addition to compliance with National, Regional and Ministerial Guidelines, the Development Plan must include a number of mandatory requirements as set out under Section 10 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

### Such Objectives include;

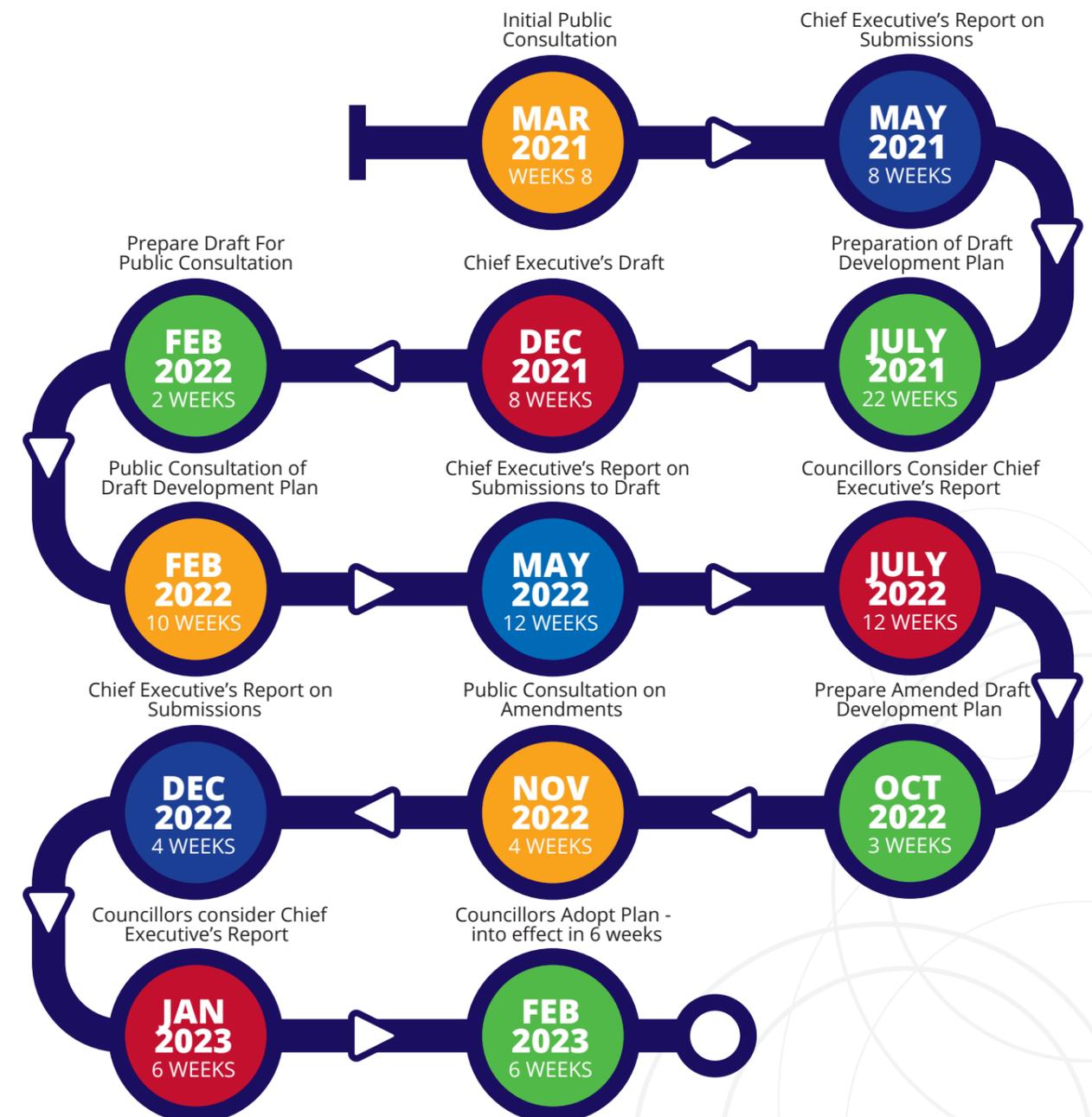
- ➔ The zoning of land for particular uses.
- ➔ Infrastructure facilitation and provision and transport strategies.
- ➔ Core strategy and housing strategy.
- ➔ Sustainable settlement and regeneration areas, development and renewal.
- ➔ Social, Community, Cultural Considerations.
- ➔ Conservation and protection of the environment.
- ➔ Preservation of landscape character and recreational amenities.

- ➔ Protection of structures and preservation of character of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs).
- ➔ Address climate change adaptation and reduce energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions.

In making the Plan, the Elected Members of Fingal County Council must only consider the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, statutory obligations and policies and objectives of the Government.

## How long will it take to prepare the new Fingal Development Plan?

The review of the current Fingal Development Plan 2017 – 2023 begins on 12th March 2021 and the process to prepare a new Development Plan for the period 2023-2029 will take almost two years, finishing in late March 2023. An indicative timeline for the preparation of the new Fingal Development Plan is shown below.





## HOW TO MAKE YOUR SUBMISSION

You can make your submission online or by post. All submissions must be received before 11.59pm on Wednesday 12th May 2021. We cannot accept late submissions. Everyone is welcome to make a submission (including youth groups, children and those representing children) at each public consultation stage of the Fingal Development Plan.



To make a submission online, please go to:  
<https://consult.fingal.ie/en/browse>



You can also post your written submission to:

**Development Plan Team,  
Planning and Strategic  
Infrastructure Department,  
Fingal County Council, County Hall,  
Main St., Swords, Co. Dublin, K67X8Y2.**



## HOW TO WRITE A HELPFUL SUBMISSION

Please write short submissions focused on one or more of the seven key themes. If your submission is long, write a summary of your key points at the start of your submission. Your submission does not have to be on all the issues, just the ones that are of interest to you. Include your name and address.



## WHO WILL SEE YOUR SUBMISSION?

Anyone who wants to. We will put all submissions we get, including those received by post, on the Fingal County Council consultation portal (<https://consult.fingal.ie/en/browse>) within 10 days of receipt. We will include the name of the individual or organisation who made the submission and will remove other identifying details like your address. We will do this to comply with General Data Protection Regulation.

## ZONING

We do not consider site-specific issues such as the zoning of land for any purpose at this stage of the Development Plan process. We will do this at the Draft Plan stage of consultation.



## WEBINARS

As part of the consultation process we will be hosting a series of public information webinars on some of the key themes. Details of how to log on to these webinars will be posted on our website and social media channels and recordings of each webinar will be available at [www.fingal.ie/developmentplan](http://www.fingal.ie/developmentplan).



## STAY INFORMED

You can keep updated on the progress of the Development Plan through:



Development Plan website:  
[www.fingal.ie/developmentplan](http://www.fingal.ie/developmentplan)



Newspaper advertisements



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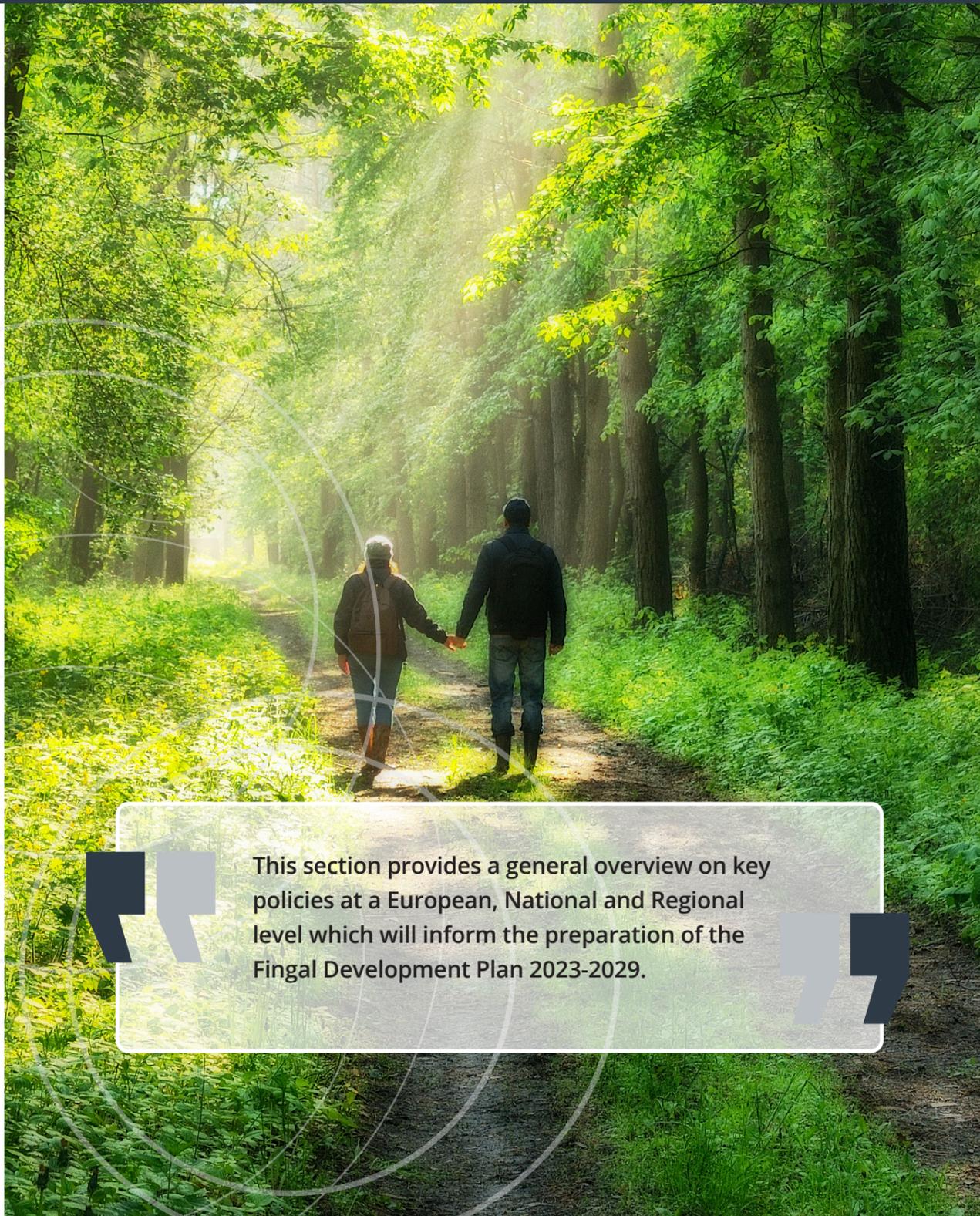
Fingal County Council



Fingal County Council



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This section provides a general overview on key policies at a European, National and Regional level which will inform the preparation of the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029.

## STRATEGIC POLICY CONTEXT

### Introduction

Since the adoption of the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023, a number of new policy documents have been issued for land use planning and development in Ireland. This section provides a general overview on key policies at a European, National and Regional level which will inform the preparation of the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029.

In terms of the national hierarchy of spatial plans, the overarching plan is the National Planning Framework (NPF) with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) then setting out the regional framework and mechanism for implementation and delivery of the NPF.

The RSES also includes the Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) which sets out the growth strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). Individual County Development Plans set out an overall strategy at local level and these Plans must be consistent with both the NPF and the RSES.

Fingal is identified in the RSES within the Dublin Region and partly within the MASP area, the area outside the MASP boundary is known as the Core Region.

The Development Plan sits within a hierarchy of plans and is required to have a Core Strategy which will show that the objectives within our Development Plan are consistent with the objectives set out in National and Regional Strategies.



## Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan 2018 - 2027

Project Ireland 2040 is the Government's overarching policy initiative for the country, and it is made up of the National Planning Framework (NPF) to 2040, and the National Development Plan (NDP), 2018 - 2027.

### National Development Plan 2018 - 2027

The National Development Plan 2018 - 2027 (NDP) sets out the investment priorities that will underpin the implementation of the National Planning Framework, through a total investment of approximately €116 billion. This level of capital spending will ensure ongoing employment maintenance and creation with appropriate regional development. It will also provide clarity to the construction sector, allowing the industry to provide the capacity and capability required to deliver Government's long-term investment plans.

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform recently invited submissions to a review of the National Development Plan, in light of the recent Covid-19 pandemic and an evolving policy context. This review of the NDP provides an opportunity to ensure alignment between the NDP and the priorities identified in the Programme for Government including climate action, housing policy and transport policy.

### Ireland 2040 Our Plan- The National Planning Framework

The NPF is the Government's high-level strategic vision for shaping future growth and development in the entire country over a 20 year period. The vision, as set out in the NPF, is to be delivered by way of a regionally focused strategy for managing growth and linking this growth to the NDP, to provide a counterbalance to the established concentration of growth in the Greater Dublin Area.



The NPF sets out a targeted pattern of growth for the Eastern and Midlands Region and Dublin City and these growth figures inform the delivery of national policy expressed in the NPF and the delivery of the RSES. The NPF identifies ten National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) for the future growth and sustainable development of Ireland to 2040 which will be a central consideration in shaping the new Fingal Development Plan.

The NPF has a very clear focus on achieving compact growth and, more specifically, brownfield infill development which translates into encouraging more people, jobs and activity generally within existing built up areas rather than into new greenfield areas (National Policy Objective (NPO) 3b). This growth strategy will allow better use of underutilised serviced land and buildings, including infill and brownfield land, with more high-quality and high-density mixed-use development accompanied by enhanced amenities, education, health and social services; all supported by sustainable mobility.

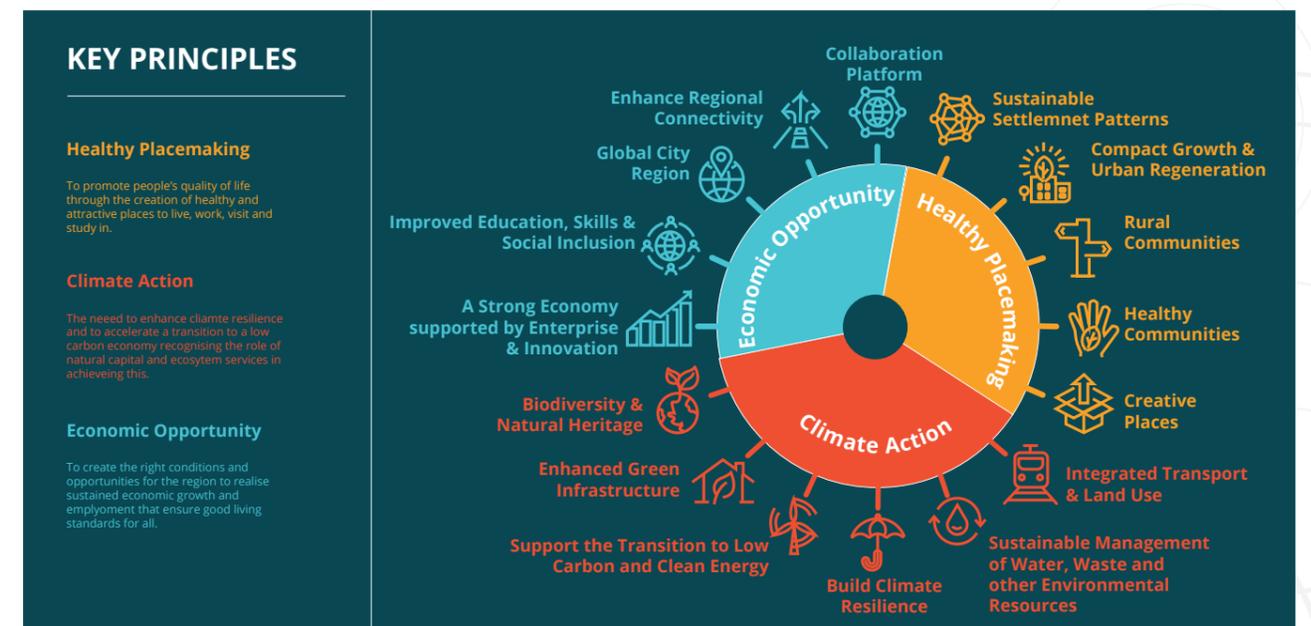
The NPF acknowledges that rural areas make a major contribution to Ireland's identity and to overall national development in economic, social, cultural and environmental terms. The NPF places a major focus on rural areas in relation to strengthening Ireland's rural fabric and supporting existing communities, planning for the future growth and development of rural areas, supporting job creation, addressing connectivity gaps and better co-ordination of existing investment programmes dealing with social inclusion, rural development and town and village renewal.

### Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019 - 2031

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly area sets out a strategic plan and investment framework to shape development and manage planning in the Region. The RSES translates the NPF objectives and the growth and settlement strategy at the regional level, ensuring coordination between the NPF and each County Development Plan.

The RSES identifies the region's challenges as the need to sustain economic growth whilst transitioning to a low carbon society and the requirement to align population growth with the location of homes and jobs whilst creating healthy attractive places and an enhanced quality of life. The RSES is underpinned by three cross cutting principles; healthy placemaking, climate action and economic opportunity, which will be incorporated into all facets of our new Development Plan.

The growth strategy for the Region supports the continued sustainable growth of Dublin and its transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sensitive region in accordance with the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP), which forms part of the RSES.



The MASP directs future growth to identified strategic residential and employment corridors based on their current and future development capacity, their ability to deliver outcomes such as compact development, place making, accessibility to public transport, potential for economic development and a reduced carbon footprint.

The RSES recognises the strategic location of Swords, in proximity to Dublin City, Dublin Airport, the national road network and planned MetroLink and it is specifically identified as one of three 'Key Towns' in the MASP area. These Key Metropolitan Towns have the capacity and future potential to accommodate above average growth in the Region with the requisite investment in employment creation, services, amenities and sustainable transport. Specific Regional Policy Objectives (RPO's) are outlined for Swords.

Also relevant to Fingal is the 'MetroLink - LUAS Corridor' linking Swords and Dublin Airport to Dublin City and the 'Dublin - Belfast Economic Corridor' which is identified as another strategic connection. This Corridor is the largest economic agglomeration on the island of Ireland, with the cities and towns along the Dublin - Belfast Corridor home to a population of around 2 million people.

## National Climate Action Plan 2019 - 2024

The National Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2019-24 acknowledges the key role that land use and spatial planning can play in ensuring that population growth is managed in a sustainable way, thus reducing our carbon footprint and all aspects of Government policy are underpinned by a commitment to Climate Action. The CAP identifies a set of actions to address the impacts of climate change on Ireland's environment, society, economic and natural resources.

Both the NPF and the RSES establish the importance of addressing climate action and the need to promote sustainable and compact growth and to progress climate change mitigation and adaptation through land use planning. The NPF includes National Strategic Outcome No. 8 to 'Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society' and at a regional level, the RSES outlines climate action as one of the three key principles underpinning the Strategy in line with national policy.

Good planning policies, which promote a compact urban form, linking of transportation and land use planning, and the protection and enhancement of biodiversity create climate resilient communities and neighbourhoods. The policies and objectives that result in proper planning and sustainable development are

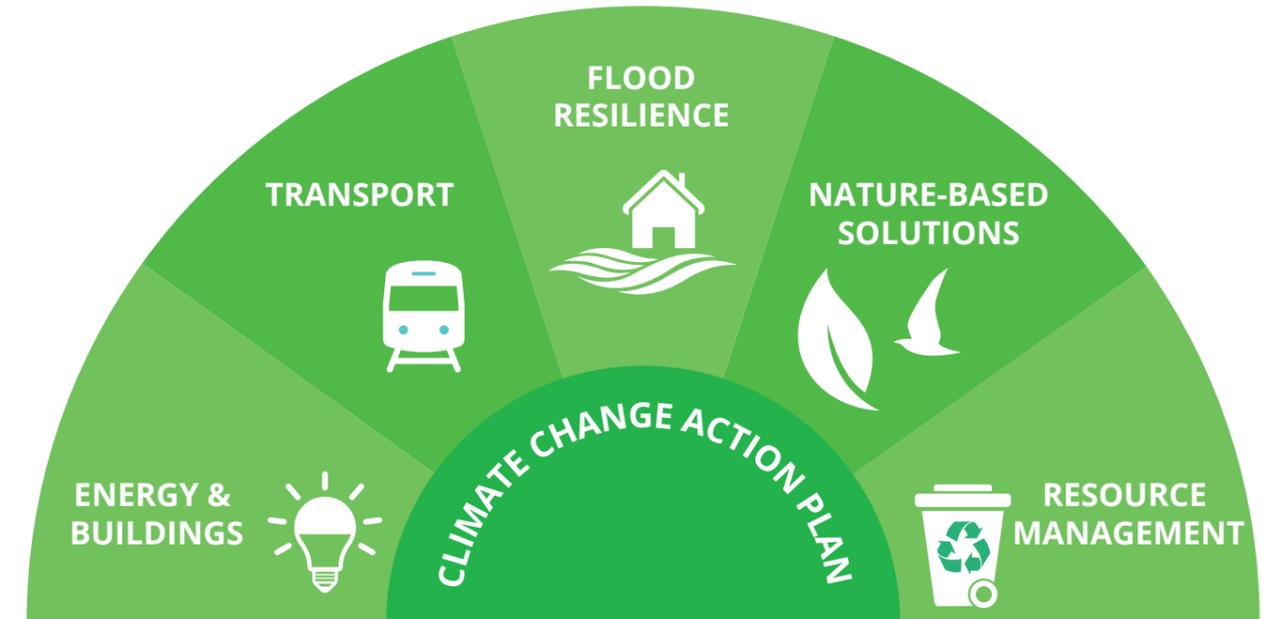
### Targets of Fingal County Council Climate Change Action Plan 2019-2024:

<p><b>33%</b> improvement in the Council's <b>energy efficiency</b> by 2020</p> 	<p>Make Dublin a <b>climate-resilient region</b> by reducing the impacts of future climate change-related events</p> 
<p><b>40%</b> reduction in the Council's <b>greenhouse gas emissions</b> by 2030</p> 	<p>Actively engage and <b>inform our citizens</b> on climate change</p> 

consistent with those that result in a climate resilient society and this is recognised and supported in Fingal's recently adopted Climate Change Action Plan 2019-2024.

Climate action will continue to be a cross-cutting theme which is integrated into all parts of the new Fingal Development Plan.

### Action Areas of Fingal County Council Climate Change Action Plan 2019-2024:



## Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016 - 2035

The National Transport Authority's (NTA) Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) provides a framework for a sustainable transport network up to 2035. Key projects include:

- The Bus Connects project with a targeted timeline of 2021 - 2023.
- The extended Luas Tram line to Finglas anticipated to be delivered by 2028.
- Metro train line from Dublin City to the Airport and Swords with a targeted delivery date of 2027.
- DART+ Programme 2018 - 2027.

Over the course of the next Development Plan, it is expected that many of these key infrastructural projects will either be delivered or be at an advanced stage of design/planning, which will greatly enhance accessibility in Fingal and the wider Dublin area.

The NTA has commenced a review process of the 2016 - 2035 Transport Strategy. This review will assess the implementation of the current plan and look to produce an updated strategy which will set out the framework for investment in transport infrastructure and services, up to 2042. This NTA Transport Strategy revision will be consistent with the spatial planning policies and objectives set out in the RSES and objectives will be consistent with the NPF and the NDP as set out in Project Ireland 2040. The Strategy will also be based on national policies on sustainability as set out in climate action and low carbon legislation, and in climate action plans. A Draft Strategy review is intended to be published in summer 2021.

## Construction 2020 and Rebuilding Ireland

The publication of 'Construction 2020: A Strategy for a Renewed Construction Sector', (2014) and its partner 'Planning Policy Statement', (2015) represented a shift in the direction of planning and development policy toward a more 'evidence-based' and 'plan-led' approach to housing delivery facilitated through more 'active land management' practices.

The publication of 'Rebuilding Ireland: An Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness' in 2016 sought to deliver on the Government's commitment to increase the provision of new homes and identified infrastructure-related blockages as the main impediment to the development of key sites for housing. To address this issue, the Government introduced a €200 million National Local Infrastructural Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF) which aimed to provide public offsite infrastructure to accelerate the delivery of key LIHAF serviced sites. Fingal County Council was awarded LIHAF funding of €26.5 million, for strategic infrastructure across three sites at Donabate, Oldtown-Mooretown and Baldoyle-Stapolin.

Rebuilding Ireland also focused on regeneration and the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015, introduced the Vacant Site Levy as a tool to encourage the development of vacant and underutilised sites in urban areas for the purpose of housing and regeneration. Fingal County Council is firmly committed to continuing to investigate additional potential sites for inclusion on the Vacant Sites Register on an ongoing basis.

## National Marine Planning Framework

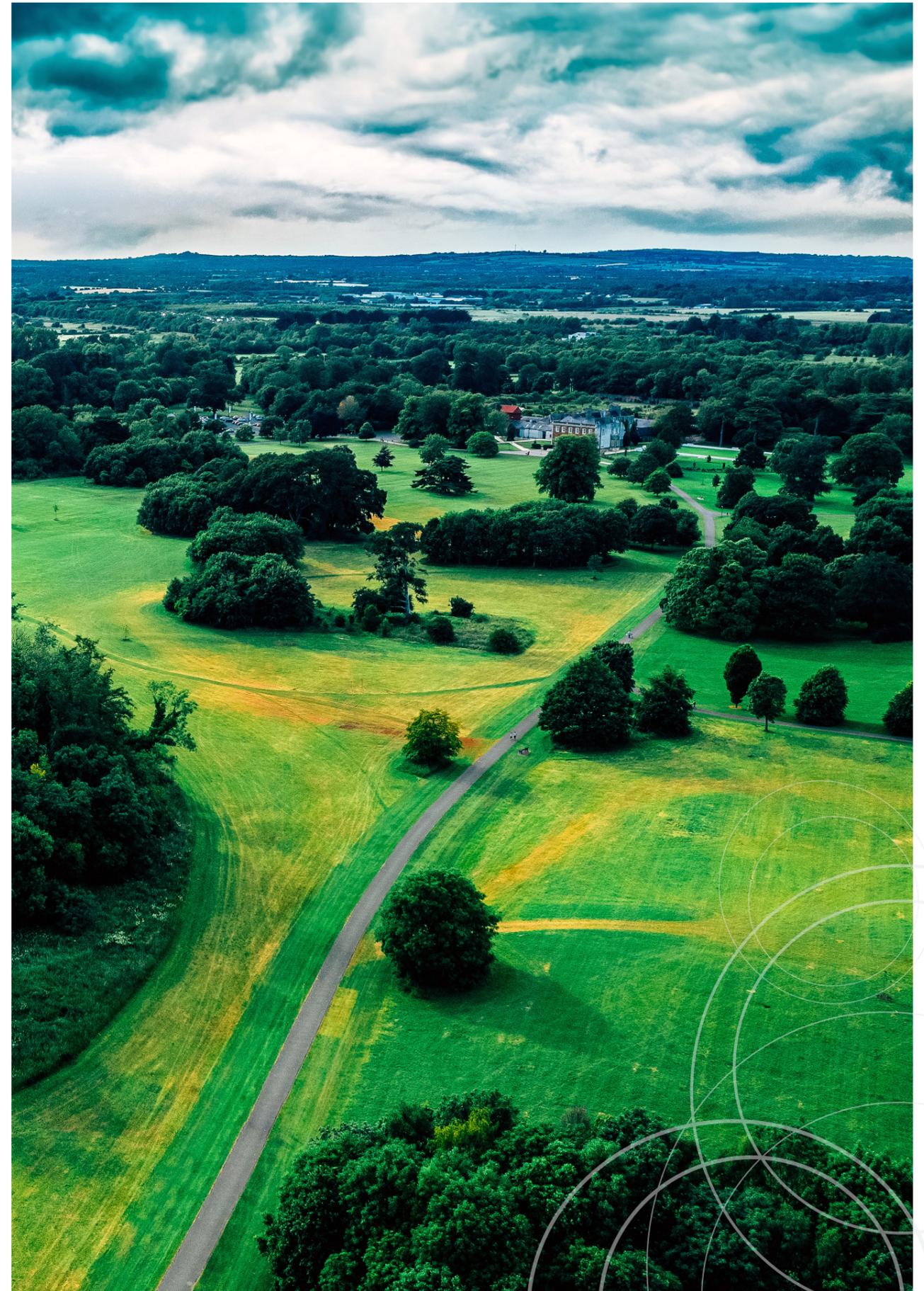
In accordance with EU Directive 2014/89, work is currently underway on a National Marine Spatial Plan. Marine planning will contribute to the effective management of marine activities and more sustainable use of our marine resources. It will enable the Government to set a clear direction for managing our seas, to clarify objectives and priorities, and to direct decision makers, users and stakeholders towards more strategic and efficient use of marine resources. As Fingal is a coastal county the final plan / framework will be of importance to us.

## Statutory Planning Guidelines (Section 28)

The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage can issue Guidelines (under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000), which Planning Authorities are required to have regard to in carrying out their functions, including in the preparation of their Development Plans.

There are several guidelines which have been issued in accordance with Section 28 and these cover a wide range of issues including building height, residential density and design, development management, childcare facilities and environmental assessment and will have implications for specific policies in the Plan.

New Section 28 Guidelines on Development Plan preparation and Housing Needs Demand Assessment (HNDA) are expected shortly from Government and may be published during this Pre-Draft consultation phase.



# FINGAL COUNTY – SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

## Introduction

Fingal County is 465 sq.m. in area, hosts a variety of landscapes, enjoys significant economic advantages and is the fastest growing county in Ireland. Fingal is well served by air, rail and national roads and the county has one of the youngest and most diverse populations in the State. Employment in the county increased by 15% between 2011 and 2016. Key economic sectors include tourism, retail & hospitality, information technology & communications, agriculture, public administration and commerce & trade.

Fingal has major economic assets, including Dublin Airport, proximity to Dublin City & the Dublin Port Tunnel, road and rail infrastructure and a prime location on the Dublin-Belfast Economic corridor. Fingal has experienced significant population and economic development since the adoption of the current Development Plan. There has been significant investment in green infrastructure throughout the county and Fingal County Council continues to work with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) regarding the delivery of MetroLink.

The country now faces major economic challenges. At the start of 2020 unemployment was just 4.8% nationally having recovered strongly following the financial recession. As of September 2020, the adjusted unemployment rate was 14.7%. Passenger throughput at Dublin Airport contracted from 6.7 million in Q1 2020 to just 156,000 in Q2.

A key strategy for 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 regenerating inefficiently performing business and industrial parks, land, and buildings. The next Development Plan will aim to create sustainable compact communities with improved housing choice, access to social and economic opportunities, enhanced services and amenities for a resident population of some 1.65m people in the Metropolitan area by 2031.

The following section outlines some key information regarding the socio economic and demographic profile of Fingal.

## Population Increase & Distribution

Fingal was the third most populous Local Authority in Ireland (after Dublin City and Cork County) with a total of 296,020 people in 2016. Between 2006 and 2016 the population in Fingal increased by 23.3% or by just over 56,000 people. There was an increase of 7.4% (22,029 persons) between 2011 and 2016. This was considerably higher than the national average growth rate of 3.8% for the same period. The population of Fingal is projected to increase to between 327,000 and 333,000 up to 2026.

The distribution of population varied across Fingal with the highest population per Electoral Division concentrated along the outskirts of Dublin City (particularly in the western areas of Blanchardstown and Castleknock) and along the eastern coastal corridor (population is relatively evenly distributed from Howth up to Balbriggan). Naturally, there were urban clusters of higher population such as Blanchardstown, Balbriggan and Swords whilst the north west of Fingal was the least populated area and indicative of the rural transition from North County Dublin towards Louth and Meath. Within Fingal, 92.7% of the population lives within the Aggregate Town Area <sup>1</sup> (ATA) as defined by CSO whilst 7.3% reside in the Aggregate Rural Area (ARA).

## Housing delivery



Figures as of Q4 2020 Taskforce (Sites with 10 Units or more)

## Housing programme

Fingal County Council continues to deliver social housing units and to provide housing solutions in accordance with the Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan through a range of delivery mechanisms including construction, Part V, acquisitions, leasing and Housing Assistance Payment Scheme (HAP). Fingal County Council has an ambitious construction programme underway with 29 sites across the county with 318 homes delivered in 2020, a further 89 on site, 173 at tendering stage and 72 at planning stage. There were 1,189 offers of housing support in the county in 2020. Since its inception in Fingal County Council in 2017, the HAP team have set up over 2,300 tenancies. Since 1st January 2020, a total of 559 households have exited homelessness through the various means of housing support. Homeless HAP accounts for 390 of these tenancies. There have been 30 Part V dwellings delivered to date this year with a further 70 dwellings nearing completion. Detailed design and the pre-planning process have commenced in relation to 504 discounted purchase, discounted rental and social properties at Church Fields, Dublin 15.

## Socio Economic Trends

**Population structure and Age profiles:** Fingal County Council is the youngest Local Authority in the State (at 33.8 years) which is 3.7 years lower than the State, 2.2 years lower than the region and 2.5 years lower than Dublin average. Across Fingal, the average male is 33.1 years old, which was slightly younger than the average female at 34.4 years. There were 87,140 persons under 19 years of age with 24,899 children of pre-school age (0-4 years old). A further 39,349 children (13.3% of the population), were of primary school age (5-12 years old) and a further 22,892 (7.7% of the population) were of secondary school age (13-18 years old). 63,488 (21.45%) persons are aged between 45-64 years of age.

**Age Dependency Ratio:** The age dependency ratio is the proportion of population in the young (0-14 years) and old (65 years and above) cohorts to the working population cohort (15-64 years). In the case of Fingal, the working cohort of Fingal equates to 66.3% of the population. Within Fingal, approximately 196,372 people are regarded as being of working age, of which this 162,865 (or 55.0% of the total population) are within the prime working age cohorts (25-64 years of age). In contrast, 33.7% of its population is dependent. This comprises 72,613 young persons (i.e. aged 0-14 years) and 27,035 older persons (i.e. aged 65 years and above).

<sup>1</sup> The aggregate town area is defined as those persons living in population clusters of 1,500 or more inhabitants. The aggregate rural area contains the population residing in all areas outside clusters of 1,500 or more inhabitants.  
[https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/census/documents/vol3\\_appendix.pdf](https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/census/documents/vol3_appendix.pdf)

Dependency ratios are used to indicate the balance between the working population and those that are dependent on them. Fingal's dependency (33.7%) is lower than the national average (34.5%) and comparable to the region (33.2%). 31.5% of the population across Dublin was dependent, however the latter was influenced by Dublin City which had a relatively low dependency rate of 28.1%. Fingal demonstrated the second lowest dependency rate of the four Local Authorities within Dublin. .

**Density:** Fingal has an average density of 646 persons per sq.km. Within Fingal, Blanchardstown and Swords have the highest density levels. Blanchardstown also has one of the highest density levels within the eastern and midland region at 4,826 persons per sq.km.

**Labour Force:** The highest labour force participation rate in the Eastern and Midland Region is in Fingal. The total labour force in Fingal in 2016 was 149,386 or 66.9%. Fingal has an employment rate of almost 90% of the labour force compared to 87% nationally. According to Census 2016, the total Labour Force at Work in Fingal was 133,971 and this accounts for 89.7% of the total labour force in the Dublin Strategic Planning Area (SPA). This increased by 14,695 or 11% over the period from 2011-2016. According to Census 2016 Place of Work, School or College - Census of Anonymised Records (POWSCAR), there was a total of 94,751 jobs with destinations recorded as being within the county.

**Commuting:** The 2016 Census found that 47,707 (36.1%) of Fingal residents worked within Fingal. This increased by circa 4,000 since 2011. In 2016 in Fingal 34% (45,179) of the working population commuted to Dublin City for work. This results in a large proportion of the population commuting to work outside of the county. The number leaving the county to work elsewhere (mainly Dublin City) had increased by circa 2,300 since 2011. While the numbers living and working in the county increased over the census periods, those commuting elsewhere to work also increased.

There remains a large dependence on the car as a means of getting to work, school or college within the county. 76,249 persons were recorded as using the car to travel to the above locations. This includes 73,929 using the car to get to their place of work. Bus/minibus/coach was the second most used mode of transport for getting to work. While those walking to work in Fingal amounted to 7,087 persons, 23,536 people walked to school or college in the area.

**Unemployment:** The Labour Force Unemployment Rate in Fingal in 2016 was 10.3%. As of September 2020, the national adjusted unemployment rate was 14.7% due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The recorded unemployment rate in Fingal is also likely to have increased due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

All of the above (and below) factors need to be considered when preparing the next Development Plan.

## Facts about Fingal



The county is characterised by a very young population. There are **87,140 persons under 19 years of age**



The average household size in Fingal County Council is **3.03 persons per household** which is the highest of the local authorities in Dublin.



**2016 - Top 3 occupational groups:**

**6,515** Sales & retail assistants  
**4,696** Other administrative occupations  
**3,792** Nurses & midwives



**2019 - Top 3 non-Irish nationalities:**

**11,419 - Polish**  
**5,521 - Romanian**  
**4,449 - UK**



**2019 - Top 3 marital status:**

**54% - Single**  
**39% - Married**  
**3% - Widowed**



**2019 - Top 3 types of commuting:**

**13% - Bus, Coach or Mini bus**  
**15% - On foot**  
**52% - Motor car**

**Home ownership**



**55,347 - Owner occupied**  
**27,016 - Rented**  
**4,244 - Other**



## THEME 1: PEOPLE AND PLACE



### Introduction:

A central question for the new Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029 is how the county will grow and develop into the future? This includes Fingal's large urban centres, its county towns, rural and urban villages and its countryside. The new Development Plan will seek to enhance the quality of life for all residents and provide a framework for directing future investment to appropriate locations. This will ensure that well-serviced and well-connected places are created. It is important that a balance between compact sustainable growth at appropriate densities and the provision of high-quality new housing served by enhanced public spaces and community infrastructure is achieved. The new Plan will build on the success of the past and on the Core Strategy of the current Development Plan. The intent will be to enhance quality of life for all by expanding Fingal's green infrastructural networks, providing resilience by enhanced sustainable transport connections and by focusing investment into the creation of successful public realms and community infrastructure, all of which will ensure the county remains a high-quality location in which to live, work and do business.

### Background and Context:

#### Population and Socio-Economic Profile

As outlined earlier in this paper, the 2016 census indicates that Fingal has a population of 296,020 people. This is an increase of c. 22,000 since the 2011 census, or an increase of almost 8% over this 5-year period. The current population represents an increase of 23% since the 2006 census figures. Population growth over the inter-censal period 2011-2016 demonstrates that the distribution of population varied across Fingal with the highest population per Electoral Division concentrated along the outskirts of Dublin City, particularly in the western areas of Blanchardstown and Castleknock, and along the eastern coastal corridor. Urban clusters of higher population occur in areas such as Blanchardstown, Balbriggan and Swords whilst the north-west of Fingal is the least populated area and indicative of its rural location.

The population profile of Fingal provides a clear indication of housing requirements within the county as well as the anticipated demand for key social infrastructure such as schools, childcare, community amenities and facilities for the elderly.

#### What is the Core Strategy:

The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 introduced the requirement for an evidence based 'Core Strategy' to be included in all County Development Plans. The key purpose of the Core Strategy is to ensure that an appropriate amount of land is reserved in the right locations to meet housing and population targets. This is done through the articulation of a medium to long term quantitative strategy for the spatial development of the area which must be consistent with national and regional policy objectives set out in the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly.

In essence, the Core Strategy must ensure that an appropriate quantum of zoned land is available and provided at the right locations within the county to ensure that new homes can be built with supporting services and facilities provided to serve them. In effect, the Core Strategy forms the basis for all development within the county extending from higher order plans such as the Development Plan through to Local Area Plans and Urban Framework Plans.

# Settlement Strategy

## Dublin City and Suburbs

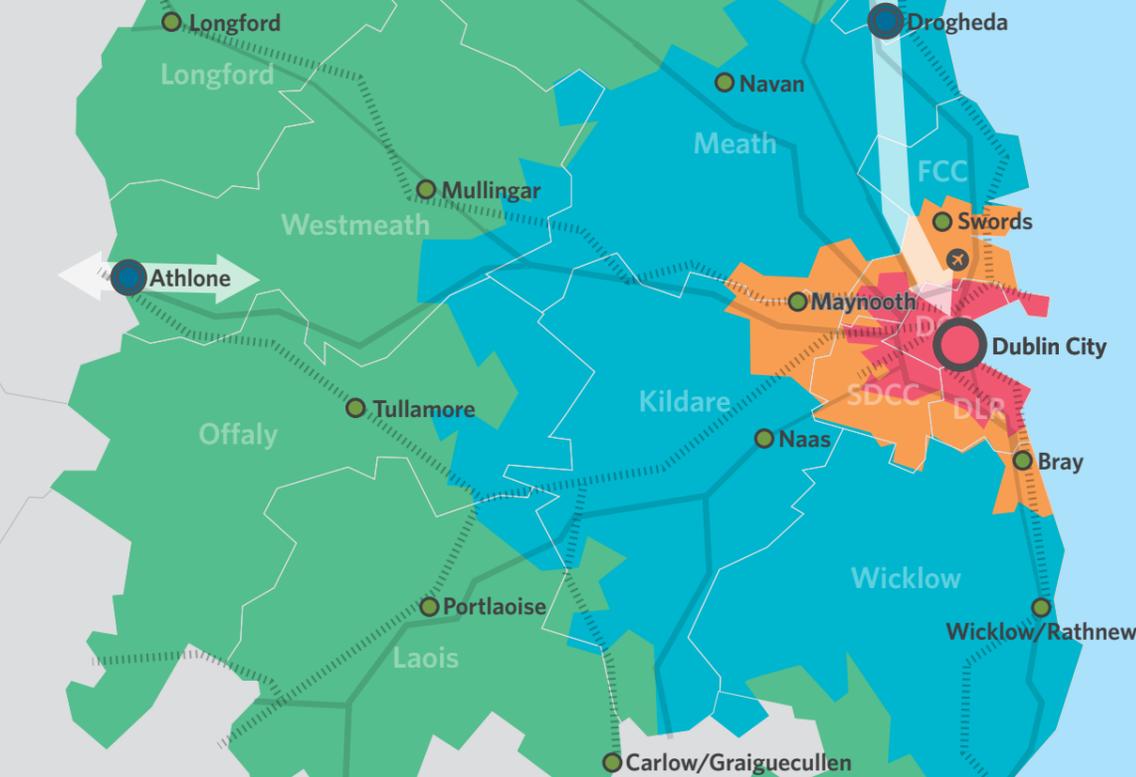
Support the consolidation and re-intensification of infill/brownfield sites to provide high density and people intensive uses within the existing built up area and ensure that the development of future development areas is co-ordinated with the delivery of key water and public transport infrastructure.

## Regional Growth Centres

Support significant population and economic growth to drive effective regional development, with a vision for Athlone to act as a lead town for the Midlands growing to around 30,000 by 2031. The vision for Drogheda and Dundalk is for both to reach a target population in the region of 50,000 by 2031.

## Key Towns

Provide for the sustainable, compact, sequential growth and urban regeneration in the town core of identified Key Towns by consolidating the built footprint through a focus on regeneration and development of identified Key Town centre infill / brownfield sites.



## Self-Sustaining Growth Towns

Settlements with strong service and employment functions may have the capacity to support a level of commensurate population and employment growth to become more self-sustaining, in line with their capacity of public transport, services and infrastructure, to be determined by local authorities.

## Self-Sustaining Towns

Some settlements, particularly those that have undergone rapid residential expansion will require targeted investment in local employment and services to grow at a more sustainable level appropriate to their position in the hierarchy, to be determined by local authorities.

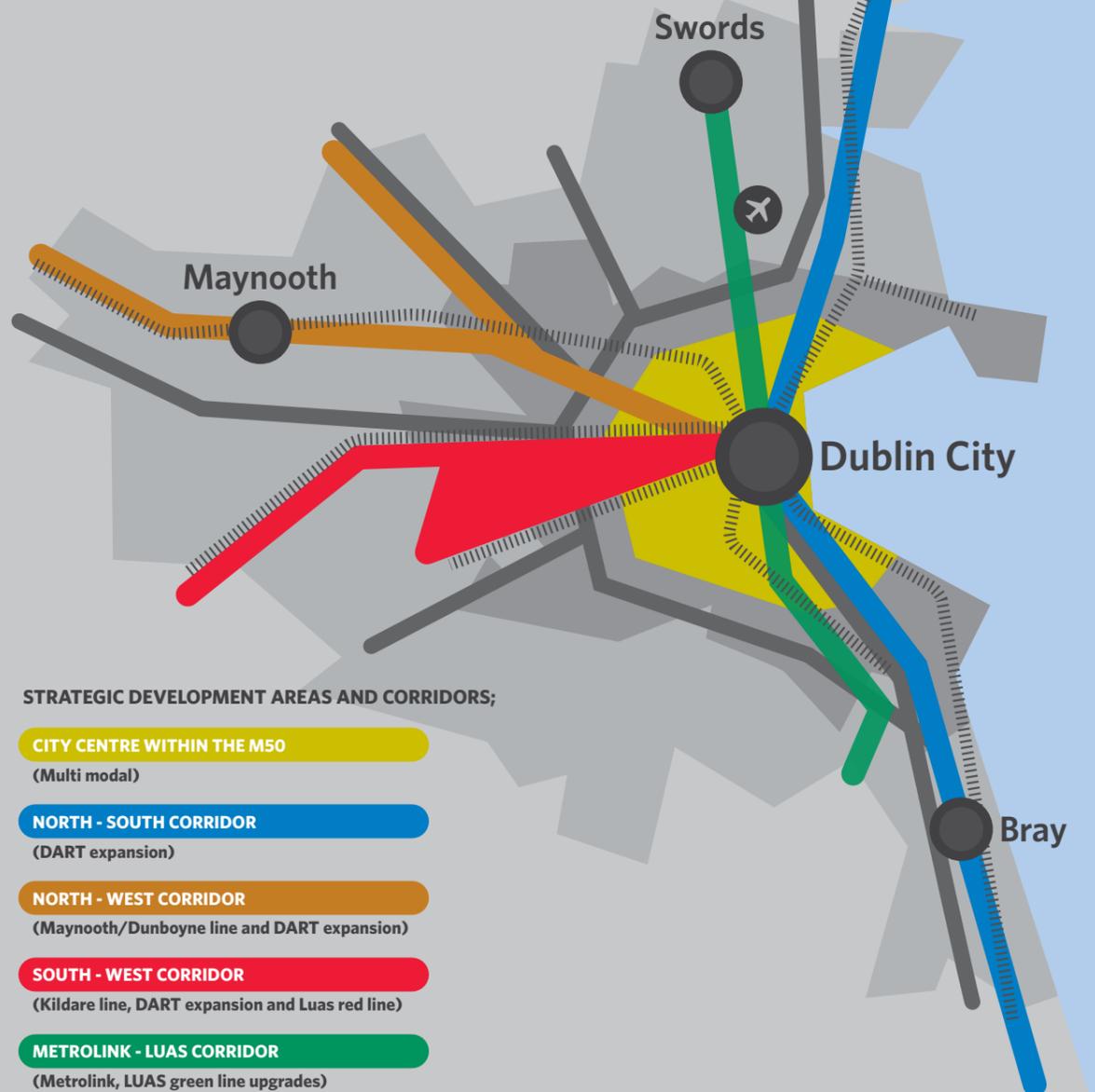
## Rural Places

Support the sustainable growth of rural areas by promoting the revitalisation of rural towns and villages, including ready to go regeneration projects coupled with investment where required in local employment and services and targeted rural housing policies, to be determined by local authorities.

- Dublin City & Suburbs
- Metropolitan Area
- Dublin-Belfast Corridor
- Regional Growth Centres
- Core Region
- Key road
- Key Towns
- Gateway Region
- Rail

Under the Core Strategy of the current Plan, a Settlement Hierarchy for the county has been established. The Fingal Settlement Hierarchy embraces the strategic approach advocated by the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy to support the continued growth of Dublin as our economic engine. The Hierarchy seeks to deliver sustainable growth of the Metropolitan Area through the Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan and to develop a number of key complementary growth settlements of sufficient scale to be drivers of regional growth.

# Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan



Furthermore, the regeneration of our cities, towns and villages by making better use of under-used land and buildings within the existing built-up urban footprint will drive the delivery of quality housing and employment choices.

At its core, the Plan envisages that the future development and growth of Fingal will take place in accordance with an overarching hierarchy of settlement centres. Each identified settlement centre will accommodate an agreed quantum of future development appropriate to its respective position in the hierarchy.

The Housing and Planning Divisions of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) jointly engaged the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) to undertake independent research into structural housing demand in Ireland to 2040. The findings of the ESRI work were published as a research paper on Structural Housing Demand at County Level on 14th December 2020. This research provides a robust, up-to-date and independently developed housing demand projection, which will help inform policy and investment with regard to housing during the new Development Plan period. The ESRI work is particularly important, as it provides an integrated model of housing demand that takes into account demographic, economic and housing market factors, including inter-county migration and will assist in informing the development of the new Core Strategy.

## Housing Delivery

Since the adoption of the current Development Plan in early 2017, activity in the housing sector in Fingal has been growing in a positive manner and at the end of 2020, there are 74 active sites with 2,339 homes under construction. In 2020 1,640 homes were completed and occupied, notwithstanding the Covid-19 shutdown during the year. The bulk of this construction activity is taking place in the ‘Dublin City and Suburbs’, and ‘Metropolitan’ area and is in locations with a framework for growth.

Fingal has employed a number of policy responses to facilitate housing development, namely the adoption of Local Area Plans and Masterplans across the county. Hansfield Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) in Dublin 15 continues to work as a successful policy tool with over 1,100 homes occupied to date on the SDZ lands since the inception of the scheme. The LAPs and Masterplans provide a framework for development of larger zoned sites. These set out the county's priorities for growth and provide development frameworks and phasing arrangements to ensure the delivery of the required social and physical infrastructure in an appropriate manner. In addition, the preparation of these Plans has involved significant local consultation and the engagement of Elected Members and give a degree of certainty to those involved in the development of their areas.

This policy response has shown to be successful to date with the main areas of construction activity, i.e. Hansfield, Blanchardstown, Swords, Baldoyle, Portmarnock, Donabate and Santry being areas which benefit from existing development frameworks such as SDZ, Local Area Plans and Masterplans. These areas also correspond to locations where Strategic Housing Development (SHD) activity is taking place. This clearly shows how the development of Fingal is in line with the National and Regional policy regarding consolidation of development within Dublin City and Suburbs, and within the development boundary of existing towns and urban areas and along public transport corridors.

Over the last 5 years, an average of 2,205 homes have been under construction in Fingal each year in locations such as Blanchardstown, Swords, Santry/Northwood, Finglas, Portmarnock, Malahide, Baldoyle, Donabate and Balbriggan. Housing delivery within the Metropolitan Area and to some extent, towns in the Core Area indicate that Fingal is well positioned to facilitate appropriate housing in the right locations.

Housing Task Force returns to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage show a steady supply of housing since the adoption of the current Development Plan. The number of units completed and occupied since 2016 and the number of units under construction are shown on the next page:

Year	Units completed and occupied	Under construction
2016	1026	1767
2017	1378	2200
2018	1830	2527
2019	1805	2192
2020	1640	2339

## Key Issues Going Forward

### What does this mean for the future growth of Fingal?

As the population of the county continues to grow as evidenced by the Central Statistics Office records, it is essential that an adequate supply and a range of housing types, sizes and tenures are available to meet the needs of a growing population. In line with national and regional policy, the new Development Plan must identify appropriate locations to accommodate compact growth and to consolidate development, particularly in locations close to high capacity public transport nodes and in existing settlements where vacant or brown field sites offer potential for re-development. Such consolidation must be achieved in tandem with a renewed focus on designing high quality neighbourhoods served by well-designed outdoor spaces and multi-use areas.

Since the publication of the 2017-2023 Fingal Development Plan, national and regional planning policy as well as Ministerial Guidance such as ‘Urban Development and Building Heights - Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ published in December 2018 have placed increased emphasis on the need to ensure the sustainable use of land and in particular, the achievement of compact growth and appropriate densities. This focus is underpinned by the National Planning Framework which promotes the compact development approach with increased focus on re-using previously developed, ‘brownfield’ land, the use of in-fill sites which may not have been built on before and either reusing or redeveloping existing sites and buildings.

The National Planning Framework argues that an increase in the proportion of more compact forms of growth in the development of settlements of all sizes, from large cities to small villages, has the potential to make a transformational difference. It can bring new life and footfall, contribute to the viability of services, shops and public transport, increase housing supply and enable more people to be closer to employment and recreational opportunities, as well as to walk or cycle more and use the car less. Along with transport demand, higher densities and shorter travel distances will also reduce energy demand and use.

The concept of Urban Resilience is one which has gained significant momentum in recent times and is a measurable benefit of compact urban development. UN Habitat – For a Better Urban Future defines urban resilience as the ‘*measurable ability of any urban system with its inhabitants to maintain continuity through all shocks and stresses while positively adapting and transforming towards sustainability*’.

Compact settlement strategies promote higher residential density with mixed land uses based on efficient mobility and has an urban layout and form which encourages walking and cycling, maximises energy consumption and reduces negative environmental impacts. The benefits of well-planned compact settlements also include shorter commute times, cleaner air, and reduced fossil fuel consumption. This has important implications for tackling climate change and taking proactive steps in securing more sustainable power and energy sources. Building resilience into our urban and rural settlements will be a key requirement of the new Plan.

## Rural Fingal

Rural Fingal, comprising high quality agricultural lands, vibrant towns and villages, together with a host of natural amenities is a key resource of the county. It is home to a diverse range of uses including agriculture, food production, horticulture, agri-food businesses, equine industries and agri-tourism enterprises. These uses are supported by numerous towns and villages, providing important local services and contributing to the vibrancy and sense of place with strong local communities and generational ties. How Fingal's rural areas, its settlements and amenities grow and develop into the future will be an important consideration of the next Development Plan. In order to safeguard this important resource, we need to strike a balance between strengthening rural communities and protecting against over-development.

The growth of rural towns and villages must be carried out in a sustainable manner, sensitive to existing building stock and heritage, ensuring a strong sense of place is maintained. Housing in the countryside should be accommodated only where genuine rural housing requirements are established, with urban generated development directed to established settlements.

## Recreation and Community Facilities

In tandem with the achievement of compact growth is the delivery of high quality public open spaces. The new Development Plan will build on and further enhance Fingal's network of high-quality recreational spaces which range from regionally important public demesnes to smaller pocket and local neighbourhood parks. In recent times and with the arrival of Covid-19 restrictions, the importance of our outdoor parks for exercise and for the enjoyment of nature has increased exponentially. The availability of good quality, highly accessible public spaces in close proximity to our homes is a vital local resource and an important element in the establishment of successful neighbourhoods and in fostering a sense of place. There have been significant achievements in Fingal in terms of recreational amenities with notable examples including the delivery of The Green Malahide redevelopment, the Baldoyle to Portmarnock Greenway, Reconstruction of the looped paths on Howth Head, Skateparks and Playgrounds in Balbriggan, Lusk and Skerries as well as the restoration of the Shackleton Gardens in Clonsilla.

Going forward, there is a need to identify where a deficit of amenities and recreational facilities exist and how such communities may be better served. Opportunities also exist to re-imagine and redevelop underutilised areas of existing green infrastructure and public open space in the context of increasing public demand for and appreciation of high-quality outdoor amenities.

Equally, the provision of community services and facilitation of a range of social infrastructure in the correct locations will be important in realising the sustainable growth of our settlements and in limiting the need for unnecessary travel. This includes the identification of appropriate sites for schools, libraries, community facilities, as well as the inclusion of appropriate objectives within the Development Plan to secure the delivery of childcare facilities and other supports for children and families.

## Sustainable Placemaking

With significant population growth forecast, the Fingal Development Plan must consider how best to plan for new and expanding communities in its rural and urban settlements. It will be important in seeking to ensure the compact growth of our county, that a balance is achieved between the densification of the built environment and the achievement of high-quality and resilient public realm and open spaces, well-designed neighbourhoods and good urban design while ensuring that Fingal's important heritage and rural areas are preserved and safeguarded. Successful placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to planning, designing and the operation of areas of public open space and where successful, can create a strong identity as well as promote, health, happiness and well-being. It will be important in the Development Plan review that we as a community identify how we would like our new public spaces to develop, the features they should contain and the functions they should perform.



## Impact Of Covid-19

The world has been transformed by the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic which has brought about one of the worst public health crisis in recent times. The UN Habitat World Cities Report 2020 shows that the intrinsic value of sustainable urbanisation can and should be harnessed for the wellbeing of all. The value of urbanisation from an economic, social and environmental perspective, is evidenced and affirms that well-planned, designed and managed urban areas create value that can be used to build resilient urban centres and improve the quality of life of all residents. Key to this is convenient access to high quality public open spaces and provision of well-planned and managed green infrastructure.

As our own local communities move out of enforced lockdowns and restrictions, our experiences of working, enjoyment of nature, socialising and the importance of local neighbourhoods and environments has taken on a renewed focus. Digitalisation and the importance of social media platforms has grown significantly over this period with more people working and communicating from home. New opportunities are presented in terms of re-thinking centralised office space, an acceptance of working from home, diminished commuting times, requirements for shared community hubs to facilitate remote working, and the increased importance of the role of the neighbourhood and availability of local services.

Sustainable transport has also come to the fore, particularly the significant growth in the numbers of people engaging in cycling for health, leisure and as a viable transport option. This is increasingly apparent in the use of our existing and newly opened greenways and cycle infrastructure and highlights the importance of ensuring increased connectivity in our cycling networks.

## Choice of Housing Mix and Tenure and Affordability

The Housing Strategy is an evidence-based allocation of zoned land to meet projected housing needs for future growth in order to deliver housing in the appropriate locations. This includes consideration of a mix of housing sizes, types and the requirement of socio-economic groupings. Meeting the housing needs of the county as it grows is essential in ensuring sustainable communities are developed and expanded and that all sectors of society are catered for. This will include the needs of the elderly, Traveller accommodation, affordable housing options and those with mobility concerns. Under the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy each Local Authority must undertake Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA). The results of the HNDA, which will be performed on a regional basis, will inform the policies and objectives of the new Development Plan in such areas as housing location, tenure, mix of housing and typologies (apartments, sheltered housing, housing for the elderly etc). This in turn will help to inform the provision of sufficient land supply to meet housing demand going forward.

The Plan will also need to consider how approved housing bodies and other sectoral agencies can be supported in the provision of a greater diversity of housing type and tenure including social and affordable housing and examine models of low-cost rental and affordable home ownership.

Fingal County Council has recently appointed a developer to deliver the first affordable housing scheme in the county in 11 years at Dun Emer, Lusk. Ó Cualann Cohousing Alliance will oversee the construction of 51 homes, of which 39 will be affordable and 12 will be social housing.

The affordable homes will be available to eligible first-time purchases at prices that will be around 25% below their market value. This is the first step towards the realisation of an affordable housing scheme in Fingal. Fingal County Council understands the importance of this project in terms of overall housing delivery and we will continue to work on plans to develop more affordable housing in Church Fields in Dublin 15, Cappagh in Dublin 11, Ballymastone in Donabate, and Hacketstown in Skerries.



## Achievements of the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023

At a strategic level, Fingal County Council continues to integrate land use and transportation to achieve sustainable development through the progression of a number of Local Area Plans, Urban Framework Plans and Masterplans in line with national and regional policy objectives. Higher density development is taking place within planned frameworks along transport corridors and these areas continue to consolidate. Current land use policy has also been developed in anticipation of planned strategic public transport investments that will directly benefit Fingal such as MetroLink, BusConnects, LUAS and DART expansion.

In the period since the adoption of the 2017-2023 Fingal Development Plan, there has been a significant increase in the delivery of new housing within the county as outlined.

There has been significant investment in social infrastructure including in the provision and expansion of services such as healthcare, education, community facilities, libraries, recreational facilities, public parks, heritage restoration projects and playgrounds.

Significant progress is being made in terms of the planning and development of walking and cycling infrastructure within Fingal based on the NTA's cycle network for the county. This includes the delivery of the Baldoyle to Portmarnock greenway which will link to the 6km Broadmeadow Greenway connecting the key recreational destinations of Malahide and Newbridge Demesne Regional Parks. This scheme was permitted by An Bord Pleanála in May 2020 and will form part of the Fingal Coastal Way.

### In addition:

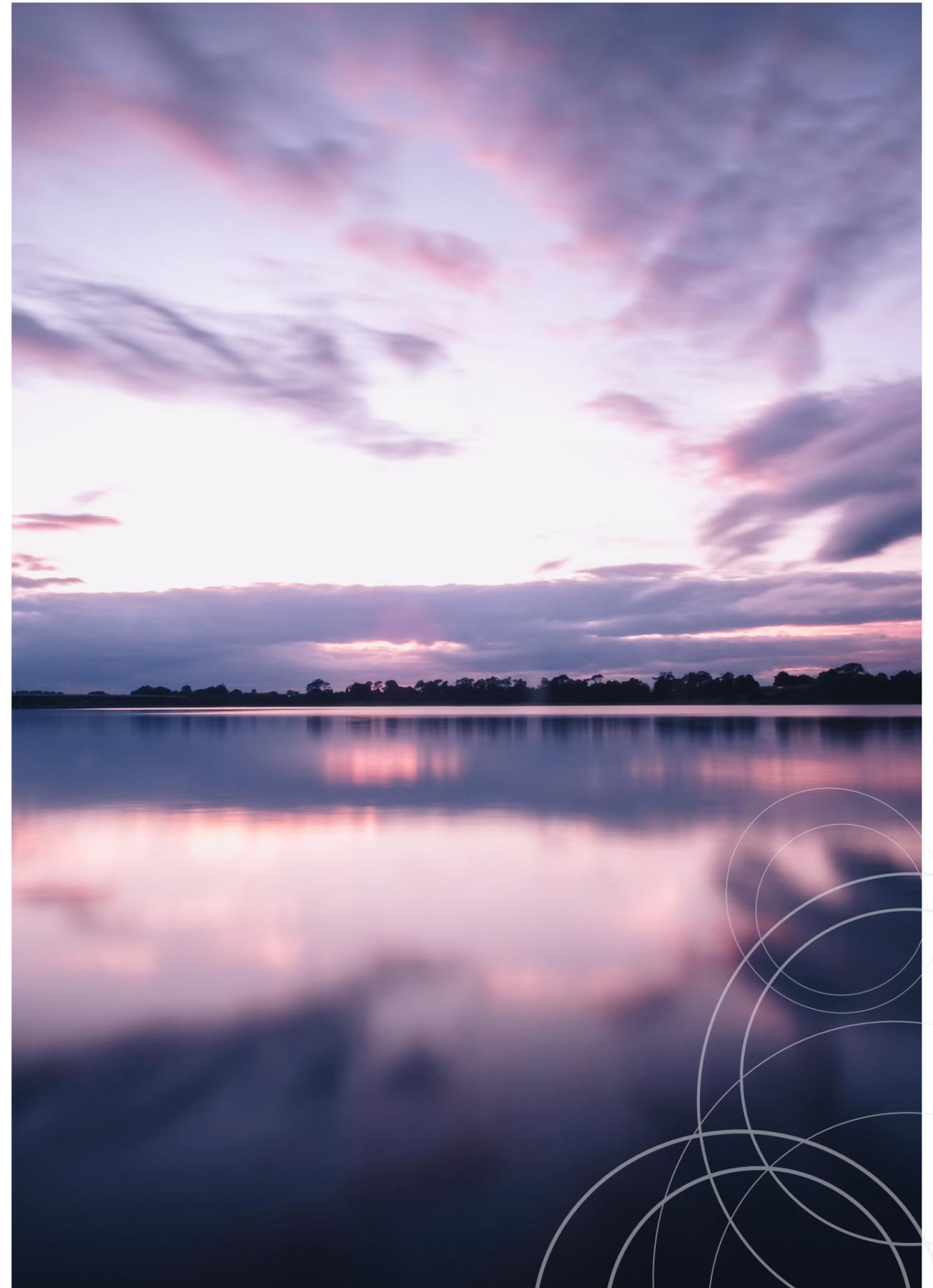
- A number of Local Area Plans and Masterplans have been adopted including strategically important plans such as the Dublin Airport LAP 2020 and the Swords Masterplans (Barrysparks and Crowcastle, Fosterstown and Estuary West). Local Area Plans have also been adopted for Rivermeade (2018) Barnhill (2019) Kinsaley (2019) and Kellystown (2021) which will facilitate residential development together with appropriate levels of community and supporting facilities in these key existing and emerging settlements. Urban Framework Plans have also been prepared for Rush while partnership initiatives such as Our Balbriggan 2019-2025 have been launched.
- Fingal County Council has completed and commenced a number of housing schemes and community developments including at Rathbeale Road, Rowlestown, Castlelands and Church Road. New community facilities include Luttrellstown Community Centre, restoration of the Casino in Malahide as well as Phase II Swords Castle.
- New Park facilities including the first phase of the Rogerstown Park, Rush as well as the commencement of major restoration works at Shackleton Gardens, Clonsilla and the delivery of new playgrounds at Skerries Town Park, Lusk Village, Glebe Park Balrothery and Balbriggan and Skerries skateparks.





## KEY QUESTIONS

- How should the new Fingal Development Plan promote compact growth within its settlements in line with the national and regional guidance?
- Where should new housing be provided to accommodate demand without contributing to urban sprawl and ensuring consolidated sustainable growth?
- How should the Fingal Development Plan promote resilience (i.e. an ability to respond to change including climate change) in our urban and rural centres?
- How can we achieve vibrant towns and villages, while facilitating genuine rural housing?
- What types of homes are required to meet future demand? How should the new Plan ensure housing choice for all residents?
- How should the Development Plan ensure the provision of social and community infrastructure (e.g. Schools, creches, community & sports centres etc.) in new residential areas?
- How should the Development Plan ensure that roads and streets in housing areas contribute to making them a good place to live?
- Which public open spaces do you love and why? What types of new public spaces should be provided?
- What improvements to the provision of parks and open spaces should be included in the Development Plan?
- What improvements to the provision of sports and play facilities should be included in the Development Plan?
- What outdoor facilities for adults (including older citizens) should be planned for in the Development Plan?
- How has your experience of Covid 19 altered your view of your public spaces and facilities? Do you have any ideas on how they should develop into the future?
- How should the new Development Plan ensure that the outdoor spaces provided improve the Health & Wellbeing and a sense of Community for the citizens of Fingal?
- How should the new Fingal Development Plan support new ways of working? Is there a requirement to provide work hubs within the community?
- Should there be increased emphasis on universal design and improved accessibility?





## THEME 2: CLIMATE ACTION



## Introduction

Our climate is changing rapidly and the effects on the country and on our lives is becoming more evident. Such effects of climate change include a rise to the average air and ocean temperature which results in extreme weather events, rising sea levels, occurrences of drought and increased rainfall. The response to the effects is wide ranging and have economic, environmental and social costs associated with them. The business as usual model cannot continue and there is a need to reconsider the approach to the way we live our daily lives in terms of reducing the impacts of climate change, human activities are increasingly influencing the climate and the earth's temperature.

The next Development Plan has an important role to play in helping Ireland realise its potential to be a low carbon society and mitigating the impacts of climate change. In terms of climate change and land use planning the Development Plan plays an important role, by guiding the sustainable growth of the county, encouraging more compact mixed-use development and greater use of sustainable transport options such as cycling, walking and public transport, restricting development in areas that are at risk of flooding or coastal erosion and protecting the natural landscape and biodiversity.

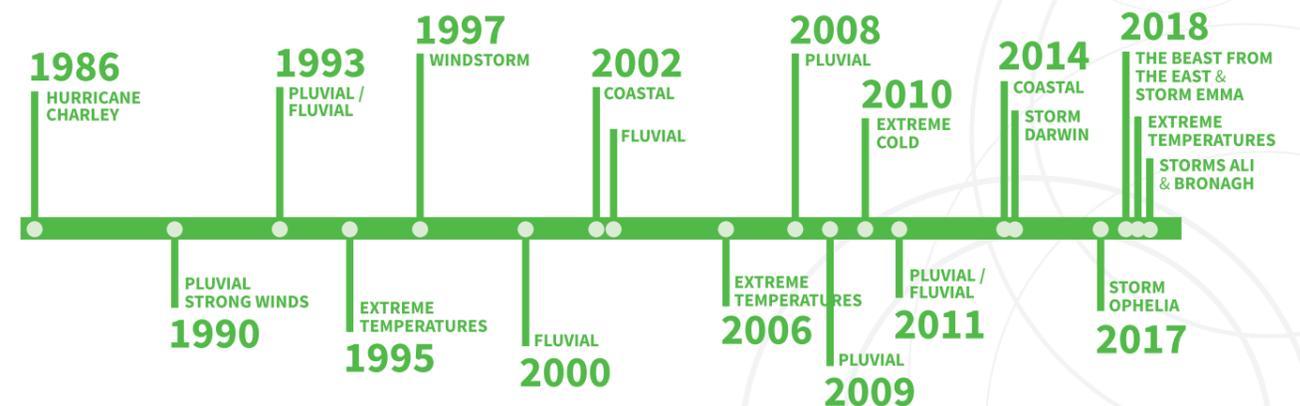
## Background and Context

Irish policy began to address reductions in national greenhouse gas emissions from 2005 onwards. The rate of emissions reduction was modest up to 2008, with efforts to decarbonise hampered by strong economic activity. From 2008 there were reductions in emissions. However, this was a consequence of the economic recession and the resulting reduced employment, consumption, and travel as against policy design. The improved economic outcomes and outlook in recent years has seen emissions gradually grow once more, demonstrating that Ireland has failed to break the link between emissions and growing prosperity.

In recent years, a range of policies and actions have been developed at global, European, national, regional and local levels. The National Climate Action Plan published in 2019 acknowledges the key role that land use and spatial planning can play in ensuring that population growth is managed in a sustainable way, thus reducing our carbon footprint.

Both the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) establish the importance of addressing climate action. The National Planning Framework includes National Strategic Outcome No. 8 to 'Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society' and at a regional level, the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly's Regional Spatial Economic Strategy outlines climate action as one of the three key principles underpinning the Strategy in line with national policy. Climate Action is a key theme that runs through both documents, and in particular the need to promote sustainable and compact growth.

## Timeline of Major Climatic Events in Fingal



Fingal's urban and rural geographic and demographic characteristics make it vulnerable to certain risks. As a rural environment, Fingal is home to agriculture, horticulture, equine industries, centres of food production and agri-food businesses. A changing climate can result in an increase in climatic events and will put Fingal's rural environment at risk. Risks associated with climate change in urban environments are exacerbated, which means we need to assess the impacts of not only extreme weather and climatic events, but also climatic trends, such as urban flooding, sea level rise and increasing temperatures. These events and trends should not be considered as independent, as they influence each other. The slow, gradual increase in temperatures and sea level rise will contribute to the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and flooding.

## Achievements

The current Development Plan is underpinned by the principles of sustainable development, climate change adaptation, social inclusion and high-quality design. The Plan contains adaptation and mitigation measures and actions to address Climate Change and Fingal County Council recognises the need for the development of a robust strategy to increase climate resilience. The importance of factoring climate change adaptation measures into the Development Plan is recognised in the current Plan and it has regard to the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework, Building Resilience to Climate Change (2012), which requires the integration of adaptation and mitigation measures.

As part of the response to climate change, Climate Action Regional Offices have been established and Fingal sits within the Dublin Metropolitan Region. The Dublin Metropolitan Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) is one of four regional climate change offices that have been set up in response to Action 8 of the 2018 National Adaptation Framework (NAF).

One of the roles of the Dublin CARO is to assist the local authorities within the region in preparing their own Climate Change Action Plan. Fingal County Council adopted the Fingal County Council Climate Change Action Plan 2019-2024 in 2019 which further demonstrates Fingal County Council's commitment to transitioning to a low carbon society and economy. This Climate Change Action Plan features a range of actions across five key areas - Energy and Buildings, Transport, Flood Resilience, Nature-Based Solutions and Resource Management - that collectively address the four targets of this plan:

- A 33% improvement in the Council's energy efficiency by 2020
- A 40% reduction in the Council's greenhouse gas emissions by 2030
- To make Dublin a climate resilient region, by reducing the impacts of future climate change-related events
- To actively engage and inform citizens on climate change

In order for Fingal County Council to achieve these targets, this Climate Change Action Plan sets out the greenhouse gas emission levels in the county and the current and future climate change impacts, through the development of mitigation and adaptation baselines. It also examines the future impacts that climate change may have on the region and then sets out a first iteration of actions that will be used to reduce the source and effects of these impacts.

Fingal County Council has prioritised the promotion of Active Travel as part of our ongoing commitment to Climate Action with the creation of the Environment, Climate Action and Active Travel Department, which will have responsibility for mobility planning and the delivery of the National Transport Authority's cycle network within the county.

We are developing a network of high-quality greenways as part of our wider sustainable transport infrastructure programme. These greenways will improve quality of life for our residents as they will increase

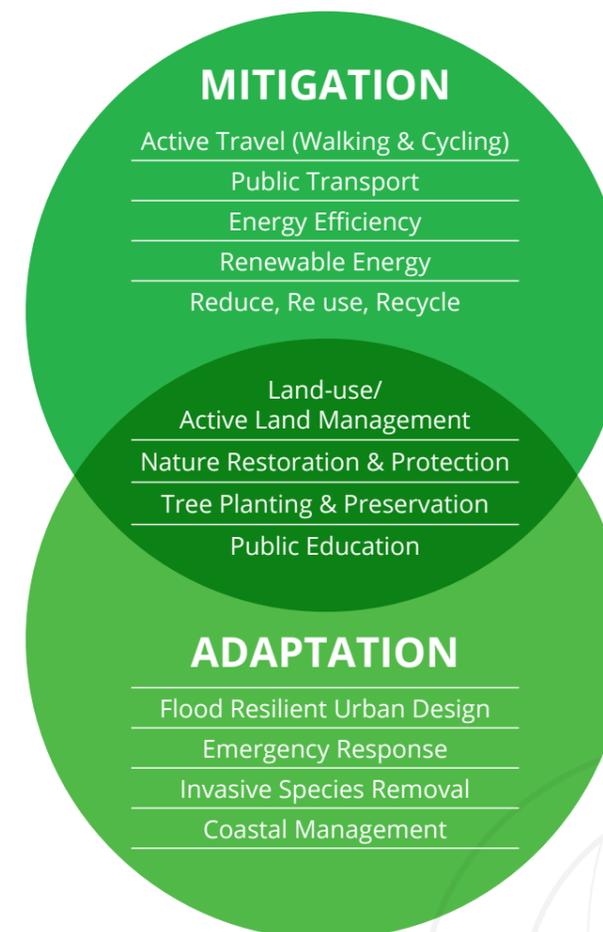
the numbers of people who will chose to cycle and walk thereby reducing private car use and lowering carbon emissions, improving air quality levels and reducing congestion.

## Key Issues for Next Development Plan

The factors that contribute to climate change as well as its effects are wide ranging and relate to a significant number of other issues that will be informed by the next Development Plan. Climate Action must be a central theme and an ever-present factor/principle throughout the next Development Plan. The provision of well serviced neighbourhoods will ensure permeability and an attractive walking and cycling environment which will reduce reliance on cars and 'help' climate change.

The Fingal County Council Climate Change Action Plan 2019-2024 concentrates on two approaches required to tackle climate change. The first, mitigation, consists of actions that will reduce current and future greenhouse gas emissions; examples of these include reductions in energy use and switching to renewable energy sources. The second approach, adaptation, consists of actions that will reduce the impacts that are already happening now from our changing climate and those that are projected to happen in the future. These include flood protection, reduced impact of rising sea levels, increased resilience of infrastructure, and emergency response planning.

### Climate Action – Adaption & Mitigation



The Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029 will need to adopt this approach when responding to climate change through climate mitigation and climate adaptation. The next Development Plan will play an important role through the implementation of its policies and objectives to help address mitigation and adaptation requirements and move towards a low-carbon, resilient county.

The Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029 will build on the five key areas which feature in the Climate Action Plan - Energy and Buildings, Transport, Flood Resilience, Nature-Based Solutions and Resource Management - and focus on evidence based and spatially appropriate policies. The Plan must influence a reduction in carbon emissions and the negative impacts of climate change by promoting compact urban growth and sustainable transport as well as measures to minimise coastal erosion and flooding, enhance green infrastructure and biodiversity, minimise energy use, promote energy conservation and use of renewable energy sources. The Plan must provide for effective management of our resources to ensure that our carbon footprint is reduced.

### Action Areas of Fingal County Council Climate Change Action Plan 2019-2024:



Fingal has been and continues to be impacted by coastal erosion. The National Coastal Change Management Strategy Steering Group was set up and had its first meeting in September 2020. The group, tasked with considering the development of an integrated, whole of Government coastal change strategy. These recommendations, when published, will play an important part in any Coastal Change Management Policy of the Development Plan.



## KEY QUESTIONS

- How should we manage our coastal areas as the population of Fingal continues to grow?
- How can the Development Plan address the challenges associated with climate change in order to facilitate Fingal's transition to a low carbon society?
- Are there specific climate action policies and objectives that you would like to see included in the next Development Plan?
- When it comes to land use, what are the key actions we can take to reduce the impacts of climate change?
- What development standards should be introduced to assist in the promotion and delivery of climate action through development management?
- What policies or objectives should be introduced to help reduce county wide emissions?





## THEME 3: CONNECTIVITY AND MOVEMENT



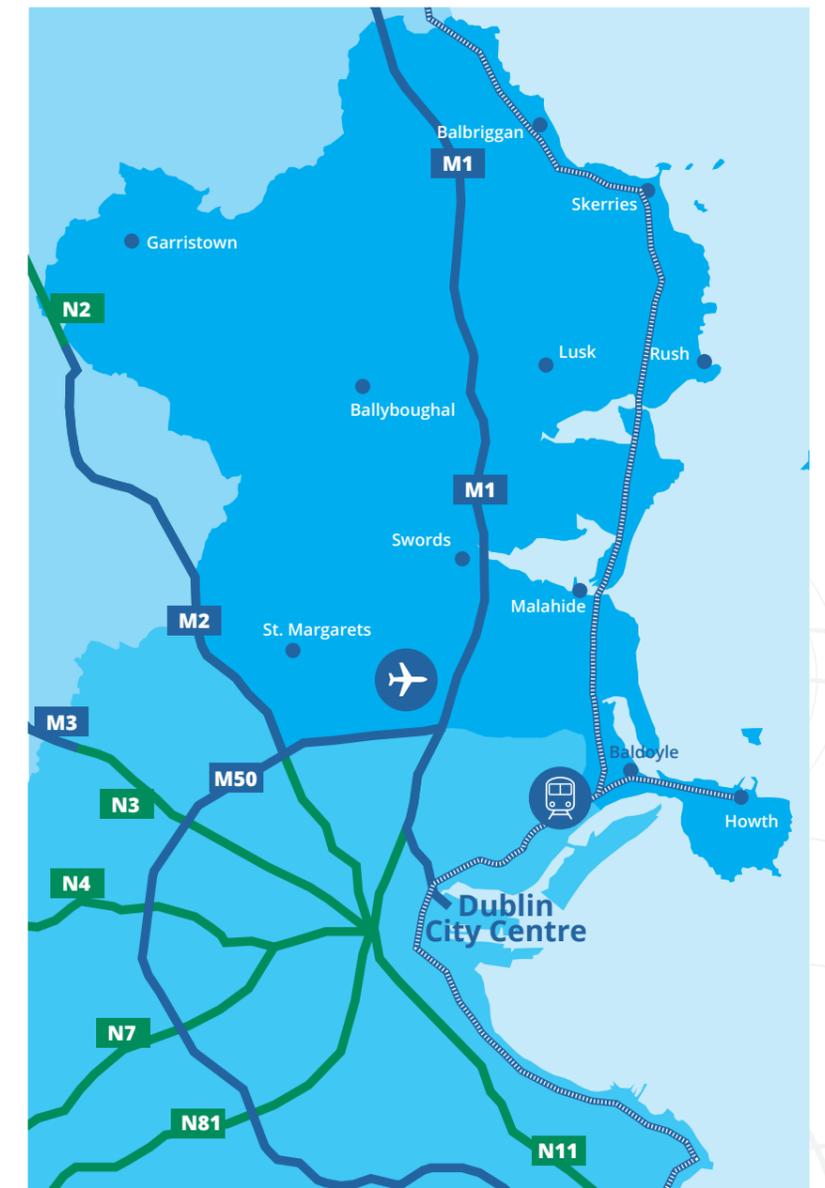
## Introduction

The ease at which people move around impacts positively on our quality of life and boosts the attractiveness of Fingal as a place to live, work and visit. Similarly, the ease at which goods can be moved from place to place is vital to an efficient and vibrant economy. Providing well-served, well-connected towns, villages and communities is a key aim of Fingal County Council. The policies and objectives of the Development Plan are instrumental in delivering a sustainable county where compact growth facilitates the integration of land use and efficient transport systems. It also has a key role in attracting investment, reducing carbon emissions and making Fingal more resilient in the face of climate change.

The next Development Plan will aim to promote ease of movement throughout Fingal by integrating and enhancing existing areas as well as those settlements identified for growth, by promoting high quality connectivity through the delivery of footpaths, segregated cycling facilities, public transport systems, and high quality roads.

Fingal County Council recognises that public transport and the offering of alternatives to the private car are crucial in supporting Fingal's ambitious sustainable transport and active travel objectives. Priority infrastructure investments for Fingal include transformational projects such as MetroLink, BusConnects and the implementation of the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan, the DART+ programme and the expansion of the LUAS network. These initiatives will bring about new and enhanced rapid rail links and a transformed bus network for the county. Combined with the establishment of high-quality walking and cycling infrastructure network, these interventions will provide Fingal's residents, visitors and businesses with flexible and sustainable travel choices.

The priority focus for the next Development Plan will be to reduce the negative impacts of car use in tandem with appropriate land use policies which will promote and facilitate effective travel options. This will include the identification of appropriate policies and objectives to ensure the efficiency and functionality of the road network, while also seeking to curb congestion.

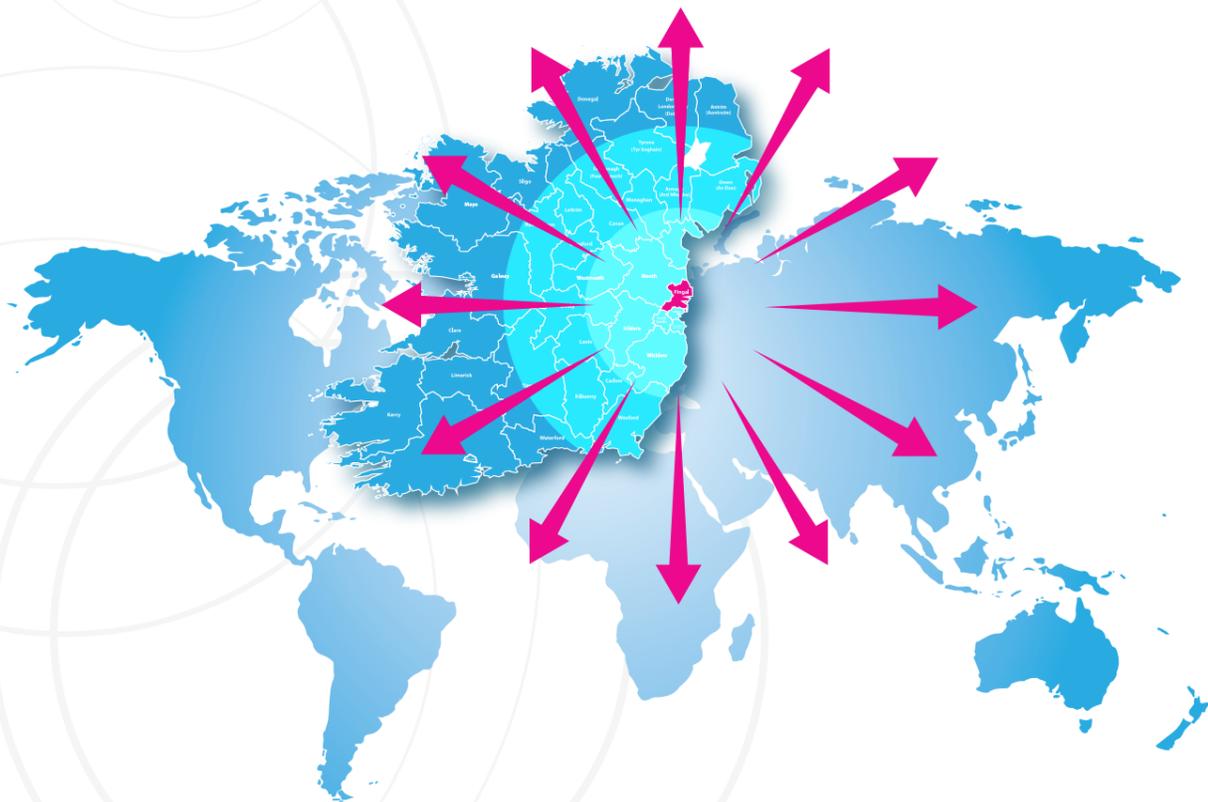


This in turn will enable the delivery of economic, environmental and quality of life objectives without the negative impacts of an inefficient transport network, such as, air and noise pollution, congestion costs, carbon emissions and consequential health effects undermining its long-term success.

Transport accounts for approximately 20% of CO2 emissions at national level and is the greatest consumer of energy and the highest contributor to noise and air pollution. Reducing emissions from transport is one of the major challenges facing society. Fingal County Council acknowledges the importance of transitioning to sustainable mobility solutions to mitigate against the negative impacts of transport and climate change. The Development Plan will seek to integrate land use and transportation policies, consolidating development and encouraging a shift from private car use to walking, cycling and public transport, thereby reducing emissions. Fingal County Council will continue to proactively engage with relevant transport providers to advance the delivery of key public transport infrastructure projects which will assist this modal shift.

Fingal benefits from strong transport connections through Dublin Airport, the Dublin Port Tunnel and its strategic road and rail corridors. The current network comprises key international and national routes including elements of the Trans European Network (TEN-T) including the M1 and M50 motorways which have the strategic function of catering for inter-urban and inter-regional traffic. Both the M1 and the Dublin – Belfast rail line provide critical transport connections within the Dublin – Belfast Economic Corridor. The strategic importance of benefits accruing from international connectivity through Dublin Airport, a core TEN-T Airport is also vital to the continued prosperity of Fingal.

#### Fingal's location at international, national and regional level



## Background and Context

Progress in terms of shifting to sustainable mobility can be measured in several ways including monitoring travel behaviours, clear land-use policy guidance and at a more localised level, through the planning and implementation of alternative mobility initiatives. A priority for the next Development Plan will be the promotion of more effective and sustainable travel options, including an overall vision to repurpose the existing road network to provide increased road space for pedestrians and cyclists. This approach, underpinned by the consolidation and strengthening of our towns and villages, will in turn promote efficiencies in our public transport network, reduce reliance on the private car and help to reduce CO2 emissions and transport derived energy consumption.

## Travel Trends

Nationally, the travel behaviours of those commuting to work, school or college continue to exhibit an over reliance on the private car. Analysis from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) from Census 2016 in relation to transport and travel shows nationally 58% of commuters travelling to work, school or college by private car. Notable changes in commuting patterns nationally between 2011 and 2016 related to the rise in the number of people who cycled to work which increased by 0.5% whilst those using public transport (i.e. bus, minibus, coach, DART or LUAS) remained constant at 12.9%. The average commute time also increased from 26.2 minutes to 27.4 minutes.

Within Fingal, slightly lower reliance on private cars was evident (51.8% of all commuters in 2016) whilst cycling and public transport modal share increased by 0.6% in both cases from 2011 to 2.8% and 20.5% respectively in 2016. Census 2016 shows that by far the greatest number of trips to work in Fingal are made by car, at 59.4% of all modes of transport. Bus and rail to work equates to 20.4 % while cycling to work equates to 2.5% with 5.4% getting to work on foot and a total of 12.3% for other alternative modes.

The above would appear to indicate a latent demand for more public transport and active travel infrastructure, thereby allowing people to make more sustainable transport choices in their daily travel patterns if active travel alternatives were more readily available.

## Achievements since the Previous Development Plan:

Since the adoption of the current Development Plan in 2017, Fingal County Council has actively sought to advance more sustainable and environmentally focused growth and mobility within the county. Long-standing policy objectives of the Development Plan aim to reduce car-dependency, align land-use and transport infrastructure, promote sustainable and active travel modes and tackle climate change through a reduction in emissions from transport. At the strategic level, Fingal County Council continues to integrate land use and transportation to achieve sustainable development through the progression of a number of Local Area Plans, Urban Framework Plans and Masterplans in line with national and regional policy objectives, including those of the National Transport Authority's (NTA) Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035. Current land use policy has also developed in anticipation of planned strategic public transport investments which will directly benefit Fingal such as MetroLink, BusConnects, LUAS expansion and the DART+ programme.

Fingal County Council continues to protect the capacity and efficiency of its strategic air, road and rail corridors in collaboration with relevant stakeholders. For example, the Dublin Airport Local Area Plan adopted in January 2020 will accommodate the future sustainable growth and development of the airport lands while also facilitating the efficient and effective operation of airport facilities.

A number of initiatives are progressing across the county with the aim of improving public realms and promoting sustainable travel options. For example, a key component of the 'Sustainable Swords' project

currently under preparation is the exploration of sustainable transport interventions required in anticipation of MetroLink. In addition, major transportation schemes have been developed within Donabate, Swords and Baldoyle/Stapolin. Urban roads and streets within new and developing areas are being designed and constructed to facilitate increased levels of walking and cycling. Over the past six months substantial temporary measures have been put in place to expand the public realm and allocate more space for pedestrians and cyclists in response to Covid-19. E.g. Malahide.



It will be important that the new Development Plan continues to implement policies and promote investment to ensure an appropriate transport hierarchy- ensuring high quality pedestrian and cycle facilities and high-capacity public transport options while also ensuring appropriate vehicular accessibility. Fingal County Council's three-year Capital Programme 2021-2023 allocates significant investment to transportation projects within the county which will facilitate cyclists, pedestrians and bus movement and improve traffic flows generally.

Fingal County Council has also been successful in securing funding and establishing new partnership arrangements with relevant stakeholders such as the NTA, TII and Irish Rail to deliver new and enhanced infrastructure to support active travel. The recent establishment by Fingal County Council of the Environment, Climate Action and Active Travel Department demonstrates its commitment to advancing a network of walking and cycling routes central to enhancing the quality of residents and visitors alike. Fingal County Council's Capital Programme for 2021-2023 also allocates significant funding of €146.69m to the development of greenway infrastructure. This will allow work to continue on delivering key walking and cycling projects within the county. Recent examples include the delivery of a 1.8km greenway linking Baldoyle to Portmarnock in July 2020. This greenway will in time, link into the 6km Broadmeadow greenway connecting Malahide and Newbridge Demesne Regional Parks.

Following the successful grant of permission in May 2020, preparations for construction are advancing with works targeted to commence in 2021. The Sutton to Malahide Greenway scheme which will also link with the above infrastructure is at emerging preferred route stage. The Fingal Coastal Way, a 32 km greenway linking existing towns along the coastal corridor from Donabate as far north as Balbriggan, with the potential to link with planned strategic greenways in neighbouring counties, and the Royal Canal Greenway, will complete the strategic level greenway network in the county.



Fingal County Council became the first Local Authority in Ireland to launch the School Street's Initiative in November 2019 in Malahide. This initiative seeks to tackle key issues such as traffic congestion at school drop-off and collection times and to encourage more sustainable active travel patterns. This results in long-term benefits including health and well-being and reduced pollution and congestion close to schools. Also, in relation to schools, Fingal County Council facilitates the Green Schools Travel Forum with students exploring sustainable travel solutions for schools as part of An Taisce's Green School Travel Programme. Such measures encourage schools and communities to examine alternative sustainable travel options as an alternative to private car use.



Supporting mobility initiatives have also been introduced across the county including bike sharing schemes, the use of car clubs as well as electric car charging points. There has also been a shift towards electric vehicles for Local Authority fleets.

Fingal County Council also supports the National Transport Authority's Local Link bus service within rural Fingal which seeks to address social exclusion and integrate bus services where possible with existing routes.

Fingal was the first Local Authority in Ireland to launch a 'Mobility Hub' to support accessible and sustainable travel in Blanchardstown in 2020 which encourages varied and sustainable types of transport in areas close to existing public transport links with high concentrations of employment, housing, shopping, amenities and recreation.



## Key Issues for Next Development Plan:

Being well-connected locally, nationally and internationally makes Fingal an attractive place for people to live, visit and for businesses to invest, leading to multiple benefits for the county and wider region. The key issues facing Fingal in the context of shifting to more effective sustainable development in the next plan period include the following:

### Integration of Land Use Planning and Transportation:

It is vital that there is increased integration between land-use planning and transport. This approach can provide a better quality of life within Fingal, ensure the economic and efficient movement of people and goods and reduce harmful impacts on the environment. Pursuing a policy of compact growth as advocated by national and regional planning guidance ensures that more people benefit from investment in enhanced public transport measures- be that high-capacity bus and rail infrastructure or highly-connected pedestrian and cycle networks.

## Addressing climate change:

The reduction of emissions from transport presents one of the most significant challenges facing the county. Transport accounts for approximately 20% of CO2 emissions at national level and is the greatest consumer of energy and the highest contributor to noise and air pollution. Reducing emissions from transport is one of the major challenges facing society. Transition to a low carbon economy and addressing climate change will be a cornerstone of the new Plan.

## Facilitating the Future Growth of Fingal that is less transport intensive:

As Fingal continues to grow in line with regional policy targets so will the need to travel and more connections will be required to access jobs, education, services and amenities within the county. To allow Fingal to become more progressive and environmentally focused, there is a need to ensure that this progress is not accompanied by growth in the use of the private car, thus worsening congestion and impacting economic growth, quality of life and carbon emissions. The Development Plan must identify the necessary policy framework to facilitate increased travel demand through a sustainable approach.

## Priority for active and sustainable transport and a high level of public transport connectivity:

Pedestrian and cycle movement is now firmly recognised and supported by Fingal County Council as a critically important and attractive component of the county's integrated transport network and considerable progress is being made in terms of extending cycling and walking infrastructure.

In addition, maximising the potential of rail and bus corridors is important as we achieve greater integration between land use planning and public transport in line with national and regional policy objectives. This will include the promotion of compact growth, sustainable densities and mixed-use developments in areas where opportunities exist for sustainable transport provision.



### Enhancement of the public realm through traffic management and good design:

The gradual transfer of kerb-side space and other areas currently dominated by cars for use by pedestrians and cyclists will facilitate public realm enhancements making settlements accessible, attractive and safe for all ages and abilities. While encouraging the compact growth of existing settlements it will be important that in order to benefit from such consolidation, any barriers to active travel and the use of sustainable transport modes are identified. For example, the under provision of conveniently located and secure parking facilities may militate against the use of the bicycle for short trips.

In addition, a balance must be achieved between car usage, car storage and ensuring that our new residential developments are served by appropriate levels of parking, while not jeopardising the delivery of high-quality public realms. Proactive implementation of the Government's Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2019 (DMURS) will also assist in delivering successful public realms and sustainable and active transport modes, improving the overall quality of local neighbourhoods.

While striving to ensure a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport, our transportation networks must also accommodate those trips, which, in many instances can only be facilitated by road. This includes the movement of HGV's from our national ports, trips generated to and from our distribution centres and more locally, the delivery of goods to our towns and villages. While such movements are a vital and necessary function of our transportation networks, measures to reduce or ideally eliminate high levels of congestion must be identified. This is a particular concern for our towns and villages where inappropriate use of HGVs for deliveries cause a myriad of issues. A proactive approach might include the use of smaller vans for supplying shops/supermarkets.

### Protection of Strategic Transport Corridors:

The continued protection and enhancement of Fingal's strategic air, road and rail corridors in accordance with national and regional policy objectives is vital for the future prosperity of the county, particularly in a post-Brexit environment. The rail and bus networks within Fingal play a key role in supporting future economic growth by providing efficient and reliable access to key urban centres within the county and regionally .

Fingal is set to benefit from major rail and bus projects such as MetroLink, BusConnects and DART+ under the National Development Plan 2018-2027 which will serve key destinations and provide a high level of network integration and interchange. These projects, which are identified as key growth enablers in the National Planning Framework, will significantly increase capacity and allow more services to operate across the region, facilitating Fingal's vision for compact growth and sustainable mobility.

As the primary gateway airport for the country, Dublin Airport presents a significant opportunity to capitalise further on existing connections in attracting international inward investment and tourism. The National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the region support the optimisation of our international and regional connectivity through investment and increased capacity in Dublin Airport.

The full potential of Dublin Airport will only be realised if surface access is protected and is commensurate with the quality of transformed airport facilities and services. In particular, improved transport connectivity by high frequency public transport enabling both passengers and employees to travel seamlessly to the Airport without the use of the private car is key to ensuring that congestion does not undermine the Airport's core function and long-term growth potential.

### Sustaining Rural Communities:

Fingal County Council recognises the importance of sustaining rural communities. Initiatives such as the NTA's Local Link seeks to address social exclusion and integrate bus services where possible with existing routes. Addressing social exclusion by maximising accessibility in rural areas through support for rural transport will be a key consideration of the next Development Plan. At a more strategic level, the challenge is to ensure a sustainable pattern of development that integrates land use with transport and reduces the need to travel from more isolated areas to key centres of employment and services.

### What Happens next?

Strategic transportation projects being actively progressed by Fingal County Council's Planning & Strategic Infrastructure Department together with a dedicated focus on the promotion of behavioural change and active travel by Fingal's newly established Environment, Climate Action and Active Travel Department will bring about a transformational change for the county, providing modern, efficient, integrated and environmentally focused travel options. As we look to the next Development Plan, it is important that continued investment is made in public transport and there is continued enhancement of active travel measures. There are a number of key questions to consider:



## KEY QUESTIONS

- ➔ What are the key connectivity and movement issues affecting workers, residents and visitors within Fingal?
- ➔ How can we make it easier to get around Fingal?
- ➔ How can we ensure improved co-ordination between land-use and transportation infrastructure to achieve more sustainable development?
- ➔ How do we increase walking, cycling and public transport use and reduce car dependency?
- ➔ How can the safety of cyclists and pedestrians be improved? What measures could be put in place to make this happen?
- ➔ How can rural transport and accessibility be improved?
- ➔ What are the top priorities in meeting the mobility needs of all citizens in a fair and inclusive way?
- ➔ Should we be making greater use of shared community cars and bicycle schemes? What other mobility measures could be put in place to reduce car use?
- ➔ In your view, what are the key priorities to enhance Fingal's strategic connectivity offered by its air, road and rail corridors?
- ➔ How can we reduce harmful emissions from transport?

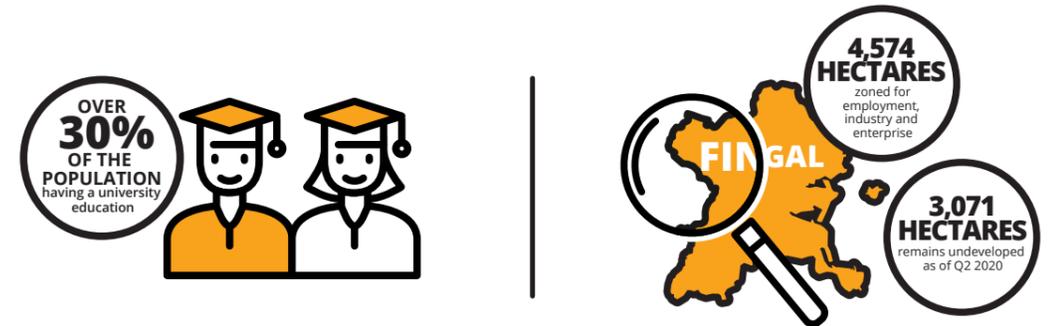


# THEME 4: EMPLOYMENT, ECONOMY & DUBLIN AIRPORT



## Introduction

Fingal's strategic location within the 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 has major economic assets, including Dublin Airport, proximity to Dublin City and the Dublin Port Tunnel, including direct access to the national and regional road and rail transport networks in Ireland and excellent links to Europe by air and sea. Fingal has one of the youngest, highly educated and most diverse populations in the state. Employment in the county increased by 15% between 2011 and 2016. There are 4,574 hectares of land zoned for employment, industry and enterprise uses throughout the county. The labour force participation rate in Fingal is the highest in the region at 66.9% compared to the state average of 61.4%. In 2016, 89.7% (133,971) of the labour force resident in Fingal were employed. In addition, 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.



## Background and Context

Business demography in Fingal is characterised by a small number of very large employers and a high volume of SMEs. The top 25 employers in the county only represent 0.3% of all businesses in Fingal but represent 17.9% of all employees. 98% of businesses in Fingal are classed as small and medium enterprises (SMEs) which employ 109,000 people in the county. Fingal is home to a diverse range of employers, varying in scale from major multi-national companies, Irish small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and Fingal based start-ups with small numbers of employees. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and indigenous industry play important roles in the county's economy. 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. There was a total of 8,311 businesses registered in Fingal in 2018. This was an increase of 29% (2,435 businesses) since 2011.



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 Donnellys. Fingal performs strongly in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector, with leading companies such as IBM, PayPal and Symantec represented in the Blanchardstown area. The Pharmaceutical/ Healthcare sector is well established in Fingal by companies such as Bristol Myers-Squibb, Mallinckrodt, Mylan and MSD. The Aviation sector is a major employer in Fingal and includes Aer Lingus, Dublin Airport Authority, Cityjet, Servisair and Ryanair. The Dublin Enterprise Zone (DEZ), located in Dublin 15, adds €14.4 billion to national economic output and supports 34,600 jobs in the economy. The DEZ has developed at a national scale over the last 20 years, supported by significant public and private investment. The area currently contains 20 Business Parks with approximately 1,100 business premises. Over 19,500 jobs are supported in a mix of FDI and indigenous companies.



The Retail Sector plays a significant role in the economy of Fingal as a source of employment with regionally significant shopping centres in Blanchardstown and Swords, retail warehousing and retailers with a national-draw such as Ikea and Decathlon. Swords, Fingal's County town, is identified as a Level 2 'Major Town Centre' in the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area and has a well-developed retail offering which includes the Pavilions Shopping Centre and Airside Retail Park. Blanchardstown, which is designated as a Level 2 'Major Town Centre' in the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area, is one of the largest and most important retail centres in the State. In smaller towns and villages, it is the Council's policy to enhance their retail functions in proportion with the role they play in meeting the needs of the local population and smaller catchment population.

Tourism is an important indigenous sector in Fingal, in terms of generating revenue and employment. Visitors to Fingal normally generate a €500 million spend, which sustains a total of 20,000 jobs (one in four jobs in Fingal) across all sectors (transport, retail, entertainment and other services) (Fingal Tourism Strategy 2015-2018). Fingal has a rich portfolio of natural and cultural assets and capitalises on its city-edge location leveraging its proximity to Dublin City and excellent transport links, in particular Dublin Airport. Rural tourism, which includes fishing, forestry, trekking, equine and farm-based activities, provides opportunities for the diversification of the rural economy. Fingal has 88 km of coastline stretching from Sutton to Balbriggan. Greenway development is a strategic priority for Fingal County Council. The county is home to a number of historic houses, demesnes and gardens, including Malahide Castle and Demesne, Newbridge House and Demesne and Ardgillan Castle and Demesne. As well as heritage attractions such as Swords Castle, Bremore Castle, Luttrellstown Castle, Skerries Mills, the Seamus Ennis Centre, Dunsink Observatory, there are numerous monuments such as the Martello Towers along the coast and Round Towers and other buildings and sites of archaeological significance throughout the county. Fingal has a strong reputation as a producer of good quality food as well as an excellent offering in a range of restaurants and local artisan food products.



## Dublin Airport

Dublin Airport's strategic location provides access to national and international markets making Fingal an attractive location for business to locate. Dublin Airport is nationally significant due to its employment base, passenger throughput and air freight services and it remains the primary economic hub in Fingal. With 233 thousand flights arriving and departing from 177 destinations via 46 airlines, Dublin Airport welcomed a total of 32.9 million passengers during 2019, making it the airport's busiest year on record. Dublin Airport is a major employment cluster and a strategic business location nationally as well as being the single most significant economic entity in Fingal and the wider Dublin City region. Dublin Airport is of vital importance to the Irish economy and acts as the principal international gateway for trade, inward investment and tourism.

Dublin Airport plays a significant role in terms of employment generation, efficient functioning of the wider regional economy and the ability of Ireland as a whole to travel and trade with the rest of the world. Dublin Airport is a key economic engine for Ireland bringing additional jobs and tourism spending throughout the island. The latest estimates of employment and Gross Value Added (GVA) associated with the airport denotes it as a major employment cluster and a strategic business location nationally. Dublin Airport supports 129,700 jobs and contributes €9.8 billion annually to the national economy. 21,500 of these jobs result from direct employment supported by ongoing operations at Dublin Airport, with the total GVA generated directly by the airport estimated to be over €1.8 billion.

The airport is a primary contributor to Ireland having one of the highest connectivity levels on the continent relative to the size of its population and economy. In terms of connectivity, Dublin Airport has been the second fastest growing airport among major European airports over the last five years (InterVISTAS – Dublin Airport Economic Impact Study 2019).

This connectivity is critical to the economic development of Ireland, including trade, tourism, FDI and business location decisions. More than any other business or economic driver, Dublin Airport and its ongoing growth generates significant benefit for the County of Fingal, allowing for a diverse local economy to flourish. Since March 2020 and the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic there has been a devastating impact on air travel around the world and Dublin Airport is no exception. Passenger throughput at Dublin Airport contracted from 6.7 million in Q1 2020 to just 156,000 in Q2 as international travel restrictions severely disrupted numbers travelling (Dublin Economic Monitor, September 2020).

## Achievements since the Previous Development Plan:

There are a number of employment generating land use zonings in the Development Plan that can facilitate business, enterprise and job creation over the Plan period. These zonings, ranging from general employment to high technology, heavy industry, metro economic corridor, warehousing and distribution, food park and rural business, allow for enterprise and employment growth opportunities across the various economic sectors.

There have been a number of major job announcements in Fingal since the adoption of the Development Plan 2017 - 2023, e.g. MSD new biotech facility in Swords will create 350 jobs in 2021. In July 2018, a €503,000 cash injection was announced by the Fingal Local Enterprise Office (LEO) through a number of its grant schemes aimed at supporting 47 small and start-up businesses.

Fingal County Council has paid out €7.53m to 1,542 businesses in the Fingal area 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 reemploying workers following COVID-19 closures.

Funding has been granted under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund for two significant projects – Sustainable Swords and Our Balbriggan Rejuvenation Plan.

Fingal County Council launched the Fingal Skills Strategy in 2019, the first of its kind to be developed by any Local Authority in Ireland and it identifies gaps between the skills of Fingal's workforce and the skills that employers need. Fingal sees the strategy as a roadmap for future skills development and a model of best practice. Fingal is the fastest-growing Local Authority area in the country, and so the creation of sustainable jobs is a key focus.

The Fingal In It Together Charter 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 such as the Parklet Partners Initiative and a Shopfront Improvement Grant Scheme.

Town & Village Renewal Schemes in eligible towns and villages in the county included funding improvement projects such as village and green open space enhancements.

Community Enhancement Programme, Place-making and Events funding provided for improvements to community buildings, town open spaces and local events throughout the county.

The planning for MetroLink is ongoing between Fingal County Council and TII and it is set to commence passenger services in 2027, which will carry up to 50 million passengers per annum, and run between Swords and Charlemont, connecting key destinations including Dublin Airport and the City Centre.

Clustering has been a key policy concept in the Fingal Development Plan and has resulted in a number of successful clusters throughout the county, namely; the ICT sector in Blanchardstown, the Pharmaceutical/ Healthcare sectors in both the Swords area and in the 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.

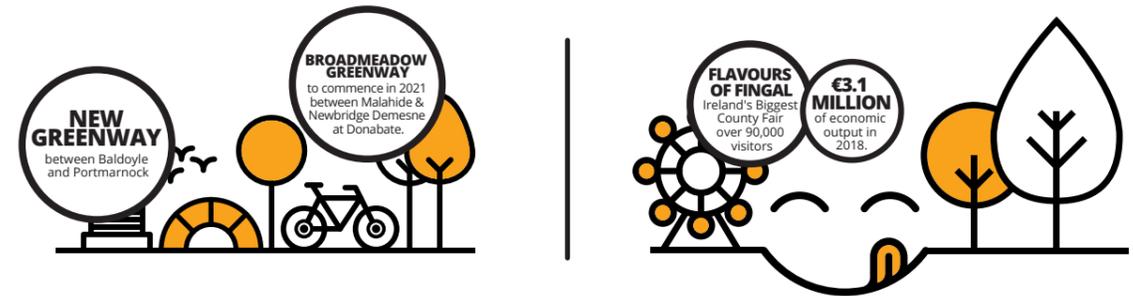


The Masterplan lands at Barrysparks & Crowscastle (2019) will accommodate a mixed-use commercial and residential development that will grow into a key economic cluster both for Swords and the Greater Dublin Area. The strategic employment land bank at this location will play a key role, accommodating up to c. 180,00 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 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.

Fingal County Council has provided 3 Enterprise Centres, including coworking 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.

The Council is actively working on the Sutton to Malahide Greenway, the Royal Canal Greenway, the Rush to Lusk Cycleway, the Skerries to Balbriggan Cycleway, the Donabate to Skerries cycleway and the Broadmeadow Way. The Baldoyle to Portmarnock section of the Fingal Coastal Way opened in early 2020. Planning permission has been received for the Broadmeadow Way and it is to commence in 2021.



The Dublin Airport Local Area Plan was adopted 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 implementation of the Fingal Statement of Tourism Strategy 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.

## Key Issues for Next Development Plan:

Fingal's next Development Plan will be guided by the growth enablers and policies outlined in the RSES and will strive towards achieving growth that is sustainable, competitive, inclusive and resilient. The MASP identifies Strategic Residential and Employment Development Corridors within Fingal such as the Dublin Enterprise Zone, Swords and Dublin Airport/South Fingal, Lissenhall, Dunsink, Baldoyle-Stapolin and Donabate, which will create sustainable compact communities with improved housing choice, access to social and economic opportunities, enhanced services and amenities for a resident population of some 1.65m people in the metropolitan area by 2031.

Developing new clustering opportunities and rejuvenation of existing business and industrial parks, land, and buildings - to sustainably meet future demand will also be a priority of the Development Plan. Swords and Blanchardstown's importance are reinforced in the RSES and they will continue to function as the primary centres for economic development in Fingal. The Development Plan will aim to transform our enterprise base for longer term resilience and sustainability. The rural economy will continue to be supported by the objectives and policies in the Development Plan, in conjunction with the LECP and LEO. Fingal County Council will continue to support investment, both FDI and indigenous, and work with agencies such as LEO, IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland to ensure the provision of high-quality jobs at the right locations. This in turn will require the provision of housing, education facilities, public transport and high-quality amenities to reduce commuting and ensure a high quality of life for the inhabitants of Fingal.

The Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor is a key element in the delivery of the RSES. This corridor provides opportunities for further Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and that by increasing its critical mass and population, jobs growth will take place in a sustainable growth pattern focused on clusters and smart specialisation. Considerable work has already taken place in Fingal to promote this corridor, in particular the industrial lands at Stephenstown, Balbriggan located along this corridor, and the next Development Plan will ensure that measures are provided to strengthen this area in line with the expectations of the RSES. Dublin Airport's connectivity will continue to be critical to the economic development of Ireland, including trade, tourism, FDI and business location decisions and Fingal County Council will continue to support economic development at this strategic location.

Fingal County Council will explore opportunities for further development on Fintech, CorpTech, personalised and regenerative medicine, internet of things, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, technology consulting, sharing economy, international education services, investment management and administration, marine energy and the circular economy. The Development Plan review will also place emphasis on building on our existing strengths in the county and seeking out new opportunities in line with the strategic actions outlined in Enterprise 2025 Renewed.

Retail and the recovery of the retail sector will be of paramount importance in the next Development Plan. Regeneration and placemaking to create a sense of identity, community with an active focus will be key factors when preparing the Development Plan in order to ensure that we create healthy and attractive places to live and work and to ensure that lands are used to their full potential. Protecting the landscape and the natural and built heritage of the county will be paramount and balancing that with tourism expansion and promotion in our rural and urban areas will be central to this. A key consideration pervading the future economic development of the county will be sustainability and Ireland's commitments under the European Green Deal and Fingal's Climate Change Action Plan.



## KEY QUESTIONS

- How can the Development Plan promote Fingal as a uniquely attractive place where people can live, work, do business and recreate?
- How can the Development Plan support existing businesses and further economic growth throughout the county?
- How can the Development Plan ensure that the potential of our youth is developed and retained within Fingal?
- Are there key sectors of the economy that you think could/should be located in Fingal?
- How can the Development Plan support regeneration of our towns and villages?
- How can the Development Plan support the new work practices that have changed considerably since Covid-19?
- How can the Development Plan support the recovery of the retail sector?
- How can the Development Plan optimize the potential of the tourism sector in Fingal?





## THEME 5: CULTURAL HERITAGE



### Introduction

Fingal has a very special identity, one founded on community and tradition interconnected with our rich heritage of coast and countryside, towns and villages. It encompasses our intangible heritage of traditions, song and language transmitted from generation to generation. Sustainable management of our cultural heritage will not only protect our archaeological sites, historic houses, landscapes, coastline and traditions but will support tourism, and leisure and promote well-being. The Council recognises the importance of identifying and protecting the archaeological and architectural resource of the county and this is reflected in its strategic aims and in its plans, policies and programmes.

### Background and Context

Our archaeological heritage has a powerful contribution to make to the quality of life of today's citizens in terms of social inclusion, environmental protection and sustainable development. It is not just about finding out 'what happened then' but how what happened informs now. The archaeological heritage of Fingal is a non-renewable resource, in that once an archaeological feature or site is excavated or removed it is gone forever from the landscape. There are currently 1151 known sites on the Sites and Monuments Record that encompass the story of the people of Fingal from churches and castles to Martello Towers and windmills; mounds, sub-surfaces sites, graveyards and burials, mill races and shipwrecks. There is an increased awareness that heritage has to connect with local communities and involve people in its care and management. The potential rewards from such approaches include a greater understanding of the local environment, inclusive social networks, active communities engaged with their local area, and new economic opportunities which harness the local archaeological heritage resource.

The historic, innovative or rare buildings and other man-made structures contribute to the attractive or special character of our towns, villages and countryside. Fingal's architectural heritage is a unique and irreplaceable resource that needs to be cared for and respected as Fingal develops and grows into the future. Architectural heritage is primarily protected under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), in particular Part IV. There are two principal mechanisms within this legislation for the protection of these assets: The Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). Protected Structures are defined as structures, or parts of structures that are of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view. Places, areas, groups of structures or townscapes of special interest can be protected by being designated as Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). Fingal County Council currently has 785 structures listed on its Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and has 32 Architectural Conservation Areas.

### Achievements since the Previous Development Plan:

The implementation of the policy and objectives relating to archaeological heritage in the current Development Plan 2017-2023 have included the development and implementation for a successful Community Archaeology programme comprising excavations at Swords Castle; Bremore Castle Big Dig Drumanagh Promontory Fort and Naul Community dig ; the Fingal Fieldnames project; exhibitions; a series of seminars and public information events and the publication of *Partnership & Participation: Community Archaeology in Ireland* (2020). It has also allowed for the preparation of the *Drumanagh Conservation and Management Plan 2018-2023* and the implementation of the *Community Archaeology Strategy 2019-2023*. Input of archaeological expertise into plans, programmes and the development management process of the Planning Department has also ensured the integration of the archaeological resource into place-making, walking and cycling schemes, infrastructure and housing developments.

In the period since the last review, the Record of Protected Structures has been re-examined and amended to form Appendix 2 of the Development Plan; the development management process has been used to deliver a large number of the architectural heritage objectives that relate to Protected Structures, ACAs, the historic building stock and vernacular heritage. To support owners to maintain their architectural heritage Fingal County Council has established a 'Stitch in Time Grant' and administers the Historic Structures Fund for large scale projects. It is intended that some of the remaining projects will be carried out in early 2021 in order to inform policy and objectives within the new Development Plan.

The use of the Irish language as part of everyday life is encouraged. Approximately 36% of the population of Fingal could speak Irish in 2016 (cso.ie). Fingal County Council is implementing the Irish Language Scheme 2018-2021.

## Key Issues for Next Development Plan:

### Impact of Climate Change

Changing climatic processes will have detrimental and differing effects on Fingal's archaeological resource, historic building stock and maritime heritage. Sites and monuments located along Fingal's coast and rivers will be particularly vulnerable. There will be potential impacts from storm damage, coastal erosion, soil movement, and increased variations between heat and cold which will affect the remains of our built heritage. There will also be indirect impacts arising from our responses to climate change, more intensive farming will impact on sub-surface archaeological sites or protection measures that may inadvertently have a detrimental impact on the heritage resource. With increased weathering and severe climate events, the repair cycle on the built heritage of our towns is likely to become shorter. The development plan process provides an opportunity to ensure that measures such as energy retrofitting of historic buildings does not damage the historic fabric/materials.

### Balancing development pressures with the protection of Fingal's heritage resource for future generations

Archaeology is more linked with 'real life' than any other part of cultural heritage. Land development, urban planning, transport infrastructure, environment protection, and agriculture all have a direct and detrimental impact on the archaeological heritage. Town and village centres are historic places with their own distinct identities. Sustaining these is a complex process that in many cases involves the conservation and re-use of existing buildings, the care of public spaces, the provision of community facilities, and the communication and interpretation of what makes the place interesting and unique. The ongoing challenge is to facilitate development while protecting our heritage resource.

### Engagement with Fingal's heritage resource

The values that society places on heritage is dynamic, changing as we learn more about the past. The opening up of Fingal's heritage to include other perspectives or new narratives can also identify heritage that has not been fully appreciated previously. The importance of well-being has been increasingly recognised. Studies have found that engagement with heritage can contribute to social cohesion, positive interactions and self-esteem. Intangible heritage plays an important role in Fingal's identity and allowing new communities to connect. Cultural Heritage also has a high value in underpinning the tourism industry. It is important to ensure widespread engagement with the heritage resource.



## KEY QUESTIONS

- How can we best protect against the detrimental effects of climate change on the heritage resource?
- How can we balance the need for new development with the protection and enhancement of Fingal's heritage resource?
- What policies and/or incentives do you think can encourage heritage-led regeneration with the retention and reuse of traditional and historic buildings?
- Can we better protect and promote our archaeological resource for the benefit of local communities and to attract tourism? How can technology help with highlighting the heritage resource to the tourist audience?
- How can we widen heritage engagement -physical, practical and virtual- with disparate audiences and new communities?
- Are there ways of ensuring Fingal's intangible heritage of traditions, folklore, language and song will be shared with future generations?
- Are there any individual buildings or groups of buildings, Industrial Heritage Sites and features that should be added to the Record of Protected Structures or designated as Architectural Conservation Areas?





## THEME 6: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE & NATURAL HERITAGE



### Introduction

Green Infrastructure (GI) can be understood as a planned network of interconnected natural areas such as parks, rivers and open spaces that help to conserve natural ecosystem functions. Green Infrastructure planning results in environmental, economic and social benefits by providing nature-based solutions to development objectives. This approach results in resilient urban landscapes adapted for and reducing the negative effects of climate change. Fingal's Climate Change Action Plan 2019-2024 stresses the vital role of Green Infrastructure, climate change mitigation and adaptation, by reducing CO<sub>2</sub> in the air and absorbing water, and cooling the urban environment. Water Sensitive Design contributes to Green Infrastructure and works at varying scales including Development Plans, Local Area Plans, Large Scale residential and commercial developments. Trees contribute significantly to Urban Green Infrastructure and their protection and incorporation into new developments results in a wide range of environmental and health & wellbeing benefits. Including street trees in sustainable urban drainage (SuDS) infrastructure and the repurposing of hedgerows in line with sustainable and active travel objectives are practical examples of resilient design and the use of trees as Green Infrastructure. Through development management over several decades, Fingal County Council has established 2,000 hectares of public open space that are increasingly managed in a sustainable manner to ensure that future generations can enjoy the benefits of these amenities for recreation, health and wellbeing.

Fingal has a rich biodiversity resource with its coast, countryside, and urban centres. The value of biodiversity extends from the health benefits to be gained from contact with nature, to the economic gains for local businesses associated with food production and outdoor pursuits. Fingal's approach to biodiversity, the Ecological Network, is made up of core nature conservation areas, buffer zones and nature development areas. Fingal contains a wealth of natural heritage, but the patterns of loss of this heritage mirrors the global pattern as our local habitats are lost and species numbers have declined. The challenge is to develop the county in a way which maintains and enhances biodiversity for future generations.

### Achievements since the Previous Development Plan:

Fingal County Council has developed the Ecological Network through forward planning initiatives and development management and is also involved in practical conservation projects together with local landowners and on Council owned lands. In Portrane, Fingal County Council is leasing a private site to preserve dune grassland and various rare plant species by means of a grazing regime with Highland cows. Similarly, Fingal County Council is working with landowners on Howth to restore the heathland by means of grazing, invasive species control, wildfire management and wetland restoration. In response to objectives for new parks, open spaces and recreational facilities the Council is preparing plans for Bremore Regional Park in Balbriggan, Ward River and the Broadmeadow River Valley Parks in Swords, and Rogerstown Park located on the former Balleally Landfill near Rush. All these new Regional Parks incorporate resilient design and include significant areas dedicated to nature conservation. Community Garden Initiatives provide existing and new local groups with opportunities to manage outdoor spaces close to their homes and the Council also provides in excess of 800 public allotment places (the highest per capita in the country).

**13,000ha**

Area of Fingal's  
Ecological  
Network



**88km**

of Fingal  
coastline



**800**

Public  
allotment  
places



## Key Green Infrastructure and Natural Heritage Related Issues

### Protecting and building the ecological network

The Fingal Ecological Network covers approximately 13,000ha, with much of the network located on lands in private ownership. The delivery of the network depends to a large extent on the goodwill and interest of local landowners. Given the urgency surrounding Biodiversity loss in Fingal and Ireland, a more proactive approach will be required to liaise with these landowners. There is a need to facilitate multi-functional projects to deliver for nature conservation, climate change adaptation, flood management, water quality improvement and greenways.

### Use of lands by designated bird species outside designated sites

The use of lands outside the estuaries by qualifying interest birds species for estuarine Special Protection Areas is becoming an increasing challenge in Fingal. As more land is developed in the vicinity of the estuaries, less land and food is available for those migratory birds that roost and feed outside the estuaries such as Brent Geese, Blacktailed Godwit, Oystercatcher, Golden Plover and Redshank. The presence of migratory birds can sometimes conflict with development proposals.

### Disturbance to wildlife and greenways

As the population of our coastal towns is growing, increasing numbers of people are using the coast for recreational purposes. The beaches in Fingal are stunning natural amenities for example, that are visited by many thousands of people every year. Similarly, the coastal pathway in Howth attracts around half of million people a year. The opportunities for healthier living and developing a much wider tourism offer in Fingal need to be balanced with wildlife disturbance and damage issues caused by recreation to ensure that the designated sites and their associated species are not significantly impacted upon.

### Biodiversity Conservation in Urban Areas

Fingal is one of the fastest growing counties in Ireland and farmland habitats are converted to housing estates, industrial estates and business parks every year. The most valuable wildlife assets in the Fingal countryside are hedgerows, large mature trees and rivers and streams. To maximise the biodiversity gain in new development sites, open space and landscaped areas will need be continuous and wide enough to provide a wide range habitats such as hedgerows, scrub, meadows, river corridors, SUDS ponds and wetlands. These corridors as well as local gardens can provide people of all ages a place to explore and develop a lifelong interest in wildlife and conservation.

### Climate Change and Coastal Erosion

Fingal has been and continues to be impacted by coastal erosion. The National Coastal Change Management Strategy Steering Group was set up and had its first meeting in September 2020. The group, tasked with considering the development of an integrated, whole of Government coastal change strategy. These recommendations, when published, will play an important part in any Coastal Change Management Policy of the Development Plan.

Best practice in coastal zone management suggests non-interference with the coast and coastal processes if at all possible. This is mainly due to the often complex and unforeseen consequences on other parts of the coast that can be caused by protective measures and the costs associated with the installation and future maintenance of coastal protection structures.



## KEY QUESTIONS

- ➔ How should the Development Plan protect and enhance the Biodiversity of Fingal?
- ➔ What would you like to see in the Development Plan in relation to Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland in your area?
- ➔ How can we ensure development does not damage scenic landscapes in Fingal?
- ➔ How should we manage our coastal areas as the population of Fingal continues to grow?
- ➔ How can the Development Plan Improve Health & Wellbeing benefits of outdoor areas?





## THEME 7: INFRASTRUCTURE & UTILITIES



## Introduction

Fingal is committed to providing and delivering infrastructural services within its statutory remit, which will enhance the quality of the county's environment and also facilitate the provision of well-serviced high-quality housing and economic development. This paper looks at the background and context for Water Services, Waste Management, Energy, Air, Noise, Light and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and achievements since the adoption of the current Development Plan. The new Development Plan must put in place a framework that promotes and provides high-quality physical infrastructure to allow development to progress in a sustainable manner.

Land use planning, transportation and the provision of essential infrastructure are interdependent key components for the delivery of development, and they require an integrated approach by all stakeholders. The National Planning Framework (NPF) acknowledges this interdependency and it is now a requirement that lands be serviced with adequate infrastructure or indeed be serviceable within the lifetime of the Plan, to be deemed appropriate for inclusion in the Development Plan.

As well as encouraging sustainable environmental infrastructure to be provided in new developments through the development management process, external stakeholders such as Irish Water (IW), the ESB and Gas Networks Ireland are formal consultees and can influence the delivery of key infrastructure through the statutory planning process. The availability of quality infrastructure has long been recognised as critical to productivity and competitiveness and the location and delivery of both regional and local infrastructure is critical to ensure that Fingal's Settlement Strategy is successful and that its economy can thrive as part of a wider city region.

## Background and Context

The provision of an adequate supply of water and wastewater facilities is crucial to facilitate and sustain the growth of Fingal and the greater Dublin area. The quantum, location and distribution of planned development must have regard to the capacity of public water services and seek to make efficient use of and maximise the capacity of existing and planned water services infrastructure. Irish Water has responsibility for the provision of water/wastewater infrastructure and Fingal will continue to work with IW and the Regional Assembly to ensure that IW's Investment Plan fully aligns with Fingal's Settlement Strategy.

Water supply for the wider Dublin area is at critical levels of demand and to facilitate further growth in line with NPF population growth projections, prioritisation of water supply investment should occur. IW has identified key projects for the Region which are included in Project Ireland 2040. It is essential that we have a resilient water supply to serve the existing population and for the additional 1 million people projected by 2040.

Surface water management and flood prevention remain the responsibility of the Local Authorities and the Office of Public Works (OPW). Fingal will continue to protect and enhance the county's floodplains, wetlands and coastal areas and will support approaches to manage surface water that take account of water quantity (flooding), water quality (pollution), biodiversity (wildlife and plants) and amenity (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)).

The amount of wastewater generated in greater Dublin is projected to increase by over 50% in the period to 2050. The Ringsend Wastewater Treatment Plant is currently being upgraded and when all the proposed works are complete in 2025, it will treat wastewater for up to 2.4 million population equivalent. The Greater Dublin Drainage Project (GDDP) is acknowledged as being another critical piece of national infrastructure and will secure the long-term sustainable growth of Fingal and the Greater Dublin Area. The GDDP will assist in

Fingal delivering on its ambitious plans for the future development of the county, not just in terms of local spatial planning policy, but in also supporting consolidation of the metropolitan area, sustainable population growth, economic prosperity and continued confidence for investors in the long term.

Successful waste management strategies and policies will play an essential role in protecting public health, maintaining a high-quality environment and supporting sustainable development in Fingal and the wider eastern region. In managing our waste needs, we need to minimise waste going to landfill and maximise waste as a resource. We need to reconsider our approach and attitudes towards managing waste, with the primary focus now being to view waste as a valuable resource in conjunction with making better use of current resources as we make the transition from a linear to a circular economy.

A secure and resilient supply of energy is critical to a well-functioning region. Overreliance on non-indigenous supplies of energy is still a major issue for Fingal and the Eastern Region. In an effort to reduce our carbon footprint, it is necessary to diversify our energy production systems away from fossil fuels and towards green energy such as wind, wave, solar and biomass, together with smart energy systems and the electrification of transport fleets. In planning Ireland's future energy landscape and in transitioning to a low carbon economy, the ability to diversify and adapt to new energy technologies is essential. Energy generation and energy related activity in Fingal is likely to change significantly over the coming years as the move to a low carbon economy increases.

Development Plan policy will continue to include measures to avoid, mitigate, and minimise or promote the pro-active management of noise, where it is likely to have significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life and existing policy will be reviewed and updated to take account of the Noise Action Plans for Dublin Airport, Fingal and the Dublin region. The need to ensure the highest standards of air quality is recognised by Fingal County Council and we will continue to engage with the EPA to monitor and improve air quality. Development Plan policy will also have regard to data on artificial light and any guidance that may issue.

Fingal is committed to the continued development and improvement of the county's digital infrastructure and services. The widespread availability of a high-quality ICT network within Fingal will be critical to the development of our economy whilst also supporting social development. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) supports actions to strengthen communications links to develop a stable, innovative and secure digital communications and services infrastructure on an all-island basis. This is a fast moving and evolving infrastructure and we need to be able to respond and adapt to future communications networks and technology along with changing work practices (such as more people working from home) and emerging economic models. Smart Grids and Smart Cities can significantly improve the efficiency and quality of complex systems such as electricity, water, waste, energy and transport services, thereby reducing their costs while contributing to the "green economy".

## Achievements since the Previous Development Plan:

Since the adoption of the current Development Plan, Fingal County Council have completed a number of flood risk management measures including works at Aspen Drive-Kinsealy, Grange-Malahide, Rolestown, Skerries, Malahide Village Green, Sutton and Portmarnock. A SuDs Guidance document 'Green/ Blue Infrastructure for Development' (Dec 2020), has also been prepared which will guide applicants in the provision of SuDs for development through the planning process.

Fingal County Council has adopted the Fingal Litter Management Plan in May 2019, which sets out our objectives for preventing and managing litter in Fingal. A key component of Fingal's waste management policy is the development and delivery of a comprehensive education and awareness campaign, with our Environmental Educational Officer promoting Environmental Awareness Programmes within the county.

A number of new policy documents, funding proposals, targets and guidelines have been published since the adoption of the current Plan, to tackle issues that are contributing to Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions. The Council has also facilitated the delivery of numerous gas and electricity projects providing additional energy capacity across the county in addition to upholding quality standards in respect to environmental safety, public lighting, air quality and noise management. In June 2020, we added a number of electrical vehicles to our fleet resulting in 15% of the local authority's commercial fleet now powered by electricity.

Fingal has recently prepared the first Noise Action Plan 2019-23 for Dublin Airport and a separate Noise Action Plan for the County of Fingal. Fingal will continue to promote appropriate land use patterns in the vicinity of the airport flight paths and these Noise Action Plans provide guidance on the management of all environmental noise issues, whether strategic or local, regulated or unregulated.

In recent years, the Irish Government has prioritised the delivery and implementation of the EU Digital Agenda and Digital Single Market through development and implementation of the National Broadband Plan. Ireland ranks 6th out of 28 EU Member States (2020) in the European Commission Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI). Fingal's Digital Strategy 2020-2023 will encourage and support communities and businesses to reap the full rewards of a digitally enabled society.

The provision of free public Wi-Fi (which forms part of Fingal's Digital Strategy) is currently being rolled out in our towns and villages, strengthening our reputation as a forward thinking and digitally inclusive county.

## SMART Dublin' & Fingal Voices App



Smart Dublin is an initiative of the Dublin local authorities, which aims to promote the Dublin region as a world leader in the development of smart city technologies. The Fingal Voices app is part of a recent collaboration between Smart Dublin, Fingal County Council and Enterprise Ireland and allows citizens to ask questions, respond to surveys and engage in dialogue with Fingal County Council Departments.

## SMART Balbriggan

In June 2020, Balbriggan was chosen as Ireland's first town to be named as a Smart District in a move that will put it at the cutting edge of 'smart' projects to improve services, create jobs and build a better community.

The core focus of the Balbriggan Smart District will be to enhance community life, support economic opportunities and drive innovation through a number of smart district projects.

## Key Issues for the Next Development Plan:

### Water

Fingal will continue to liaise with Irish Water to ensure that the key projects required to facilitate growth in the county are incorporated into the strategic planning and capital investment programmes of IW. The achievement of reaching housing and population targets set by the RSES which go to make up the settlement hierarchy and associated core strategy of the Development Plan are dependent on relevant infrastructure being delivered in a timely manner.

The most important step that Fingal can take now in reducing flood risk is avoidance of development in floodplains and coastal areas subject to flooding. Design measures such as SuDS will continue to be incorporated into approval for plans and projects. Policies within the forthcoming Development Plan will ensure that new development does not lead to the pollution of ground or surface water. Conserving and enhancing water quality will also become increasingly important given the ambitious population targets and employment growth nationally and for Fingal and the wider Dublin area.

### Waste

Waste capacity (for treatment, recovery, disposal, and export), continues to be a challenge and Ireland continues to depend on the export market for the recovery of residual municipal waste. Waste management planning faces many challenges from a political, policy and operational perspective, including Brexit implications for the transboundary shipment of waste and higher costs to the collection industry, which are now being passed on to customers.

Fingal will continue to facilitate the implementation of national legislation and waste management policy having regard to the waste hierarchy, including the Eastern Midlands Region Waste Management Plan (EMRWMP) 2015-2021, which will inform the policies within the new Development Plan. The upcoming Development Plan will support a move towards achieving a 'circular economy' which is essential if the county and wider Eastern Region is to make better use of resources and become more resource efficient. The delivery of a comprehensive education and awareness campaign is another key element of Fingal's waste management policy.



### Energy

In Fingal, energy generation and energy related activity is likely to change significantly over the coming years as the move to a low carbon economy increases. Climate change, energy and renewable energy policies will be updated accordingly in the upcoming Fingal Development Plan. The Plan will support the inclusion of policies which promote more energy efficient development through the location of housing and employment along public transport corridors, where people can opt for less energy intensive public transport, rather than being dependent on the car.

Fingal will continue to work in partnership with existing service providers to facilitate required enhancement and upgrading of existing infrastructure and networks. New energy systems and transmission grids will be necessary for a more distributed, renewables-focused energy generation system, harnessing both the considerable on-shore and off-shore potential from energy sources such as wind, wave and solar energy.

Fingal will support the development of a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity and support the development of enhanced electricity networks, facilitating new transmission infrastructure projects under EirGrid's Grid Development Strategy. Ireland's direct linkages with other EU countries by both air and sea and sub-sea energy connections may become significantly more important (particularly for transport and energy infrastructure), given their advantages in terms of resilience and ease of movement across internal borders, particularly given the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

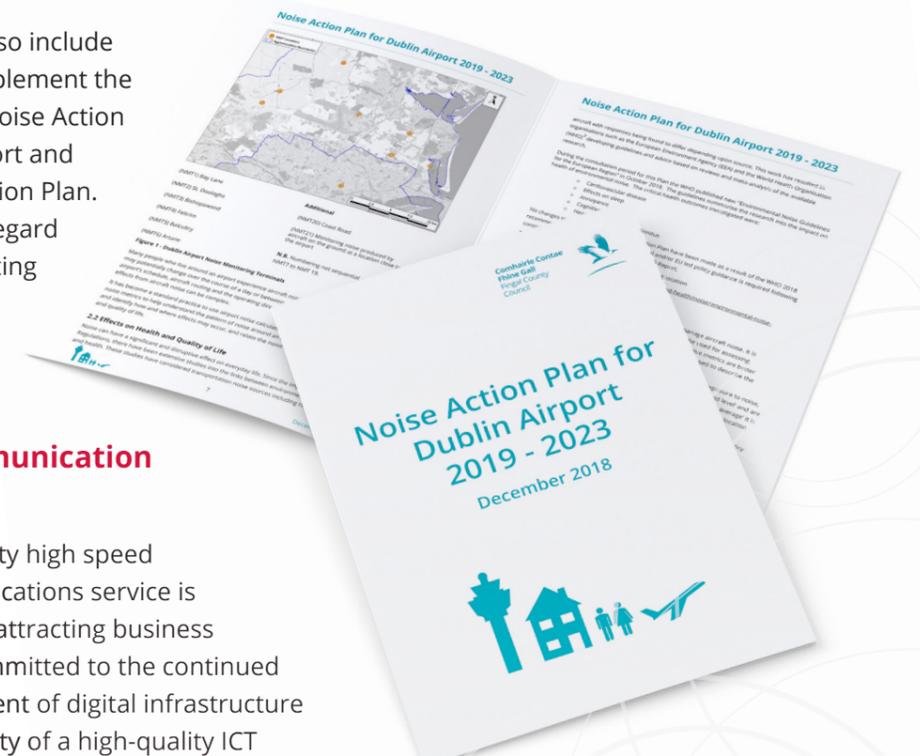
### Air, Noise and Light

The upcoming Development Plan will include policies to support the implementation of EU and National legislation on air and noise and policies will recommend the implementation of the Dublin Regional Air Quality Management Plan (or any subsequent plan) and any other relevant policy documents and legislation in order to preserve and improve air quality.

The Development Plan will also include measures to support and implement the actions included within the Noise Action Plan 2019-23 for Dublin Airport and the separate Fingal Noise Action Plan. Fingal will continue to have regard to best practice in public lighting and protect areas from light pollution and light spillage from flood lights.

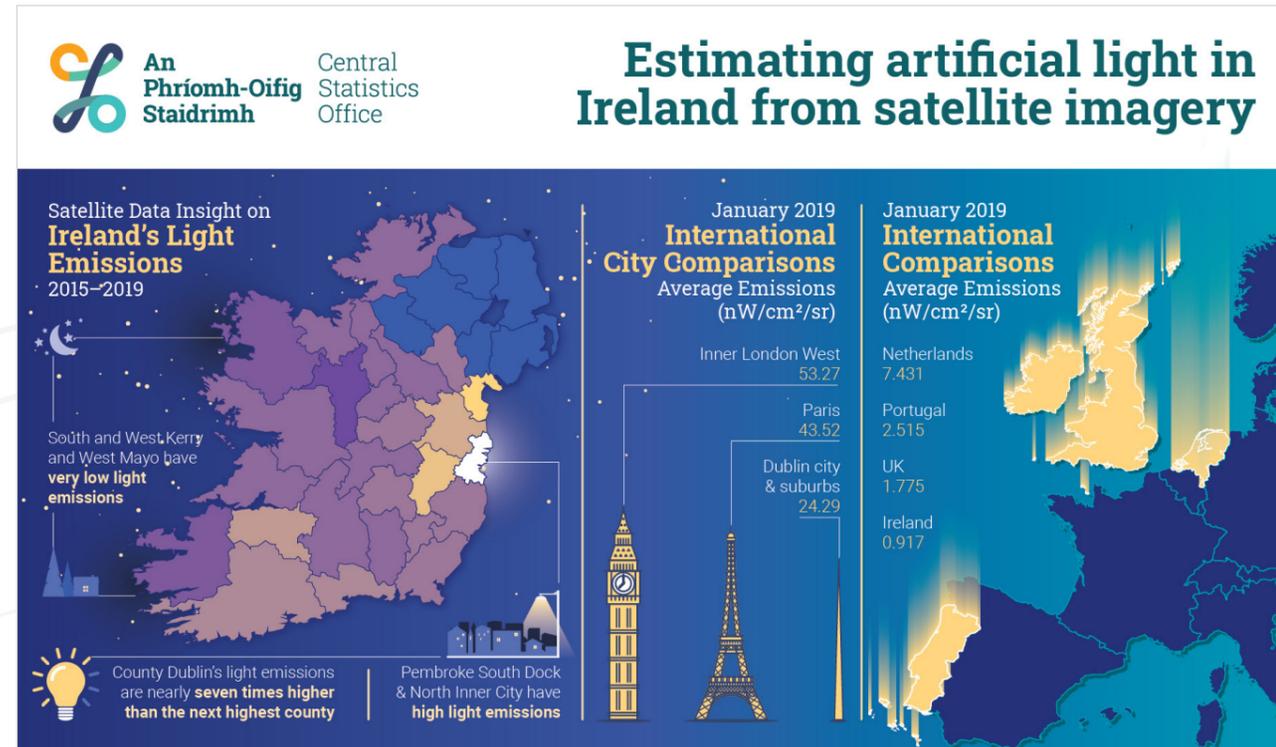
### Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The provision of a good quality high speed broadband and telecommunications service is essential for supporting and attracting business and investment. Fingal is committed to the continued development and improvement of digital infrastructure and the widespread availability of a high-quality ICT network within the county will be critical to the development of our economy while also supporting social development.



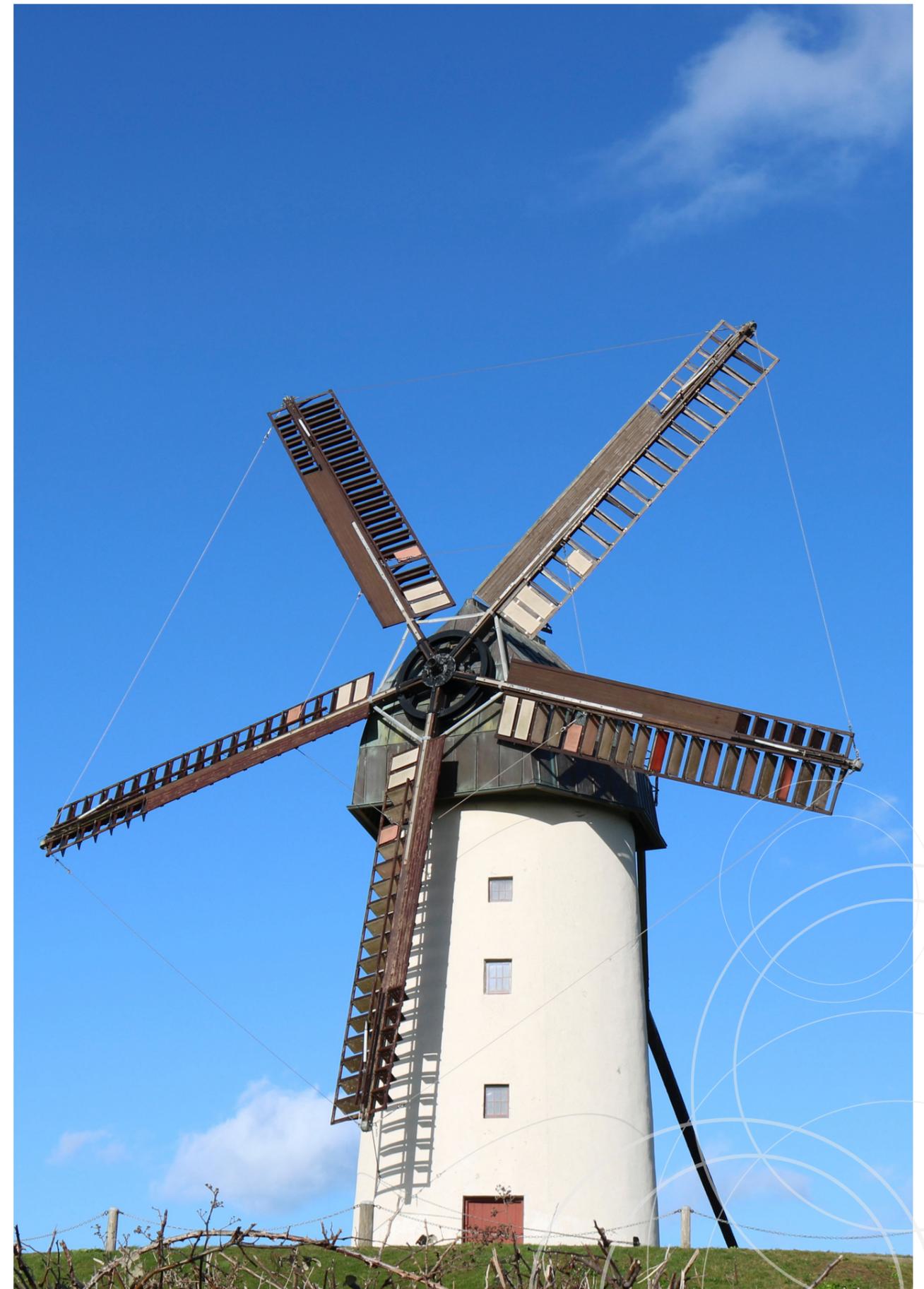
The upcoming Development Plan will include policies and objectives to promote the digital transformation of Fingal for the benefit of our society and economy, making it an even better place for people to live, work, visit and do business. Digital inclusion in Fingal will be supported by strategies that encourage wider availability of broadband infrastructure, the rollout of the National Broadband Plan and EU funding to promote digital inclusivity for all citizens.

Smart Grids and Smart Cities development will be supported, as these significantly improve the efficiency and quality of complex systems such as electricity, water, waste and transport services.



## KEY QUESTIONS

- ➔ What physical infrastructure is needed to support people living, working and visiting Fingal?
- ➔ How can the Development Plan support more innovative forms of waste treatment, waste reduction, recycling and energy re-use?
- ➔ How can the Development Plan best support and promote new energy generation technologies?
- ➔ How can the Development Plan improve digital connectivity in your area?



# ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Environmental assessments of the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029 are a crucial element of the process, assessing the potential environmental impacts of the implementation of policies and objectives.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) aims to provide a high level of protection to the environment and to promote sustainable development by contributing to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of the Development Plan. EU Directive 2001/42/EC sets out the provisions in relation to Strategic Environmental Assessment.

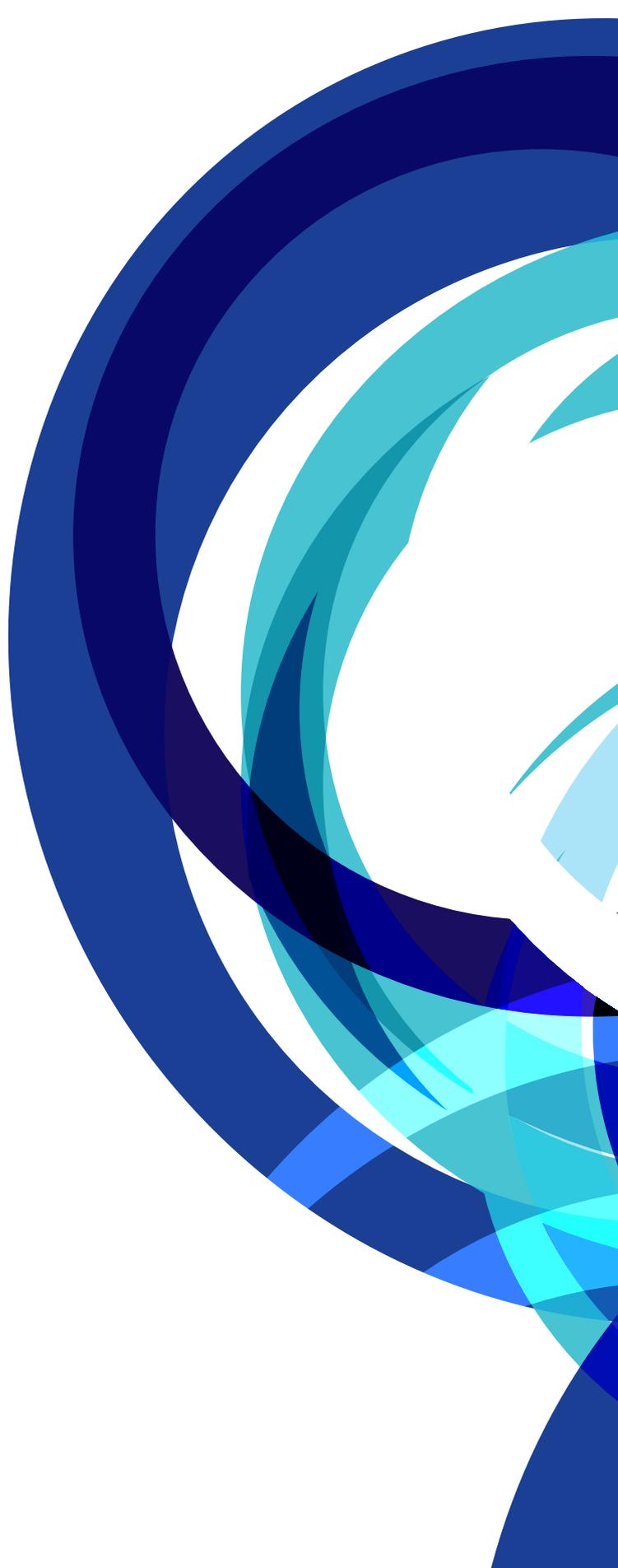
Appropriate Assessment (AA) is an assessment carried out in accordance with Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC of the implications of the plan, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, on protected conservation sites (Natura 2000 sites).

The Development Plan can only be adopted if it will not adversely affect the integrity of a Natura 2000 Site.

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will provide an assessment of all types of flood risk within the county and will assist in making informed strategic land-use planning decisions and formulate flood risk policies.

Reports in relation to all of the above assessments will be available for public inspection in conjunction with the Draft Development Plan.





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