

Future Fingal:

AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Comhairle Contae
Fhine Gall
Fingal County
Council





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MAYOR'S FOREWORD

Cllr. Adrian Henchy



“Future Fingal: An Economic Development Strategy aims to support business in Fingal to grow and thrive in a sustainable way, with a strong emphasis on working with business to implement sustainable business practices, aligning with best practice in Europe and globally and working in parallel with the Council’s Climate Change Action Plan.”

Fingal County Council is committed to the sustainable economic growth of Fingal. In this Economic Development Strategy we identify opportunities for the County which we can build on to ensure that Fingal is a great place to work and to do business in. The Strategy sets out an ambitious vision for the future and we look forward to working in partnership with business and other key stakeholders to ensure that our local economy is dynamic, sustainable and inclusive.

In implementing the Strategy we will provide opportunities for citizens to develop their talents so they are ready to meet the challenges of the future, with the skills and training needed for the jobs of tomorrow and the chance to live and work locally.

As the first Local Authority in Ireland to develop and implement a Skills Strategy we look forward to expanding this collaboration in key sectors identified in this Strategy and to building strong partnerships with businesses to solidify Fingal's reputation as a great place for business to locate in.

The Strategy aims to support business in Fingal to grow and thrive in a sustainable way, with a strong emphasis on working with business to implement sustainable business practices, aligning with best practice in Europe and globally and working in parallel with the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.

The Strategy sets out six opportunities, nineteen objectives and an action plan to help realise the Strategy's vision, “Fingal's economy will be dynamic, sustainable and inclusive, enabled by strong infrastructure, collaboration and skills.”

This vision builds on Fingal's significant existing economic advantages and infrastructural assets, which contribute to national economic performance, including Dublin Airport, proximity to Dublin City and the Port

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S FOREWORD

AnnMarie Farrelly



“Future Fingal: An Economic Development Strategy builds on the socio-economic profile prepared as part of the Fingal County Council Local Economic & Community Plan 2023 – 2028 process, and outlines actions to support the local economy over a time horizon of 15 years.”

Future Fingal: An Economic Development Strategy builds on the socio-economic profile prepared as part of the Fingal Local Economic & Community Plan 2023 – 2028 process, and outlines actions to support the local economy over a time horizon of 15 years.

The Strategy has analysed global megatrends and the approaches of other areas in Ireland and across Europe to economic development to identify best practice which has informed Fingal's Strategy. A SWOT analysis of the Fingal local economy has been conducted, with key sectors identified and prioritised to determine what approach the Council should take to support these sectors to grow and develop in a sustainable way.

Tunnel, excellent connections to national road and rail infrastructure and a strategic location on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.

The County has experienced substantial population and economic growth over the last number of years and we are home to a growing, young, diverse and highly-skilled population. This Strategy will help us sustain and grow our strong economic base and help instil resilience in the local economy in the event of economic shocks such as COVID-19, Brexit and the war in Ukraine. The Council will take a proactive and collaborative approach to the implementation of this Strategy and the delivery of a Marketing Plan for the County which will raise Fingal's profile both nationally and internationally and cement our reputation as an innovative and leading-edge Local Authority in the field of economic development.

This Strategy aims to attract inward investment, stimulate job creation and allow us to develop and retain our highly-skilled local talent. I look forward to working with stakeholders to implement the Strategy and together creating a dynamic, sustainable and inclusive economy, which is resilient in the face of economic and environment challenges and provides a high quality of life for all citizens.

Snapshot of Fingal's Economy

Key Aspects as of 2022

Population

- Total population of 330,506
- 11.6% growth from 2016
- Youngest age demographic of any county in Ireland

Economic Strengths

- Estimated Gross Value Added (GVA) of €23.6 billion
- Dominant sectors include Agri-food, ICT, Pharmaceuticals, and Aviation
- 90% of Dublin Airport's direct impact (17,900 jobs and €1.7 billion in GVA) is generated in Fingal

Labour Market Structure

- 155,063 residents employed (60.5% of working age population)
- Highest labour force participation rate in Ireland at 65.6%
- Unemployment rate of 5.1%

Skills and Education

- 26.7% educated to primary/secondary level
- 31% educated to degree level and further
- Number of people educated further than degree level had increased by over a third versus 2016

Affluence & Deprivation

- Fingal is one of the most affluent Local Authority areas in Ireland
- Of the total of 42 Electoral Divisions, 32 were classed as affluent

Housing

- Housing stock of 116,135 units (CSO 2022 Census)
- 67% of households in Fingal live in owner-occupied accommodation
- Average house price of €463,857
- 2,032 new dwelling completions between Jan – Dec 2022



Fingal Economic SWOT Analysis

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats of Greatest Relevance

Strengths

- Geographic location along Belfast-Dublin Economic Corridor
- Young, diverse and highly educated population
- Strong transport connections including the M1 and M50 motorways, rail connections, Dublin Airport and access to Dublin Port and the DART.
- Developed sectoral clusters including Agri-food, ICT, Pharmaceuticals, and Aviation
- Access to third level education including TUD, and proximity to other institutions
- The Dublin Enterprise Zone (DEZ)
- Tourism including key cultural and heritage attractions
- Relatively high overall levels of affluence
- Adequate industrial zoning in a majority of settlements and sectors

Opportunities

- Significant, forecasted population growth
- Scope to collaboratively develop sectors of existing strength and new sectoral clusters
- Collaboration to further develop Fingal's talent pipeline
- Expanded transport connectivity via road, rail and air
- Education, notably via a planned €50 million 3rd level institution in Swords
- Building investor profile and attracting further investment
- Developing and expanding the DEZ
- Exploiting opportunities on the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor
- Sustainable agriculture
- Rural and urban regeneration
- Enhancing Fingal's tourism profile and offering
- Balbriggan is Ireland's first town to be named a Smart District

Weakness

- Pockets of significant disadvantage
- Housing challenges, including availability and affordability
- Connectivity (relating to absence of MetroLink) and reliance on cars for commuting for employment (60% commute to work via car)
- Lack of defined Fingal 'identity'
- Workers commuting to areas outside Fingal (typically to Dublin City) for work
- Underutilisation of rural northwest of Fingal
- Capacity for employment generating development limited to mixed use zonings and infill sites in Baldoyle, Malahide and Portmarnock
- National challenges relating to planning for infrastructure and housing

Threats

- Availability of land, infrastructure and services to cater for a growing population
- Potential for population growth to exceed existing projections
- Ongoing housing availability and affordability issues
- Climate change, and meeting national and global carbon reduction targets
- Attraction and retention of talent
- Intensive urban growth leading to greater disadvantage in specific areas
- External global shocks

The Vision for Fingal's Future Economy

“Fingal’s economy will be dynamic, sustainable and inclusive, enabled by strong infrastructure, collaboration, and skills.”

Fingal is a driving force in the Irish economy. The county is home to a burgeoning and well educated population, key infrastructural assets, and sectors of scope and scale – each of which contribute significantly to national economic performance.

Fingal's economy has developed over many decades and is now at a juncture where considerable opportunities for further evolution are present, notably relating to:

- Forecasted expansions in the county's population;
- Sectors of existing strength, and emerging sectors, which have potential for substantial future growth;
- Seizing the opportunity from global megatrends such as Artificial Intelligence and place management, which will be influential; and
- The advance of sustainability as an imperative for societies globally.

While these factors present opportunities for Fingal, they also constitute challenges in terms of planning and providing for the future. This includes ensuring that the county has the local labour pool, infrastructure, and business supports in place to stimulate and support growth. It also extends to building Fingal's interconnectedness domestically and internationally, and raising the county's profile as an economic force.

This Economic Development Strategy pulls these strands together, and plots the course for the Fingal economy

over the next 15 years. The strategy – which is to be reviewed at two year intervals in line with Local Economic & Community Plan implementation revisions – has been devised under the stewardship of the Economic, Enterprise, Tourism and Cultural Development Department of Fingal County Council – based on a rigorous process of key stakeholder engagement and primary and secondary research which encompassed:

1. Socio-economic profiling of the county based on latest available Census data;
2. An assessment of policies and global megatrends which will influence aspects of the Fingal economy's evolution;
3. Consultations with over 30 stakeholders from across the local economy;
4. Surveys of both residents and businesses;
5. Analysis of economic development initiatives in eight other jurisdictions;
6. Engagements with Councillors and Council sub-committees; and
7. The contents of this strategy are the culmination of the consultations and research undertaken.

Fingal's vision encapsulates the opportunities and challenges which Fingal faces over the coming years. Developing and maintaining a dynamic, inclusive and future-proofed economy will require ongoing investment in skills and infrastructure (in all forms including transport), and targeted supports for areas of disadvantage.

Collaboration will be a key theme as it is inherently unrealistic that Fingal County Council can unilaterally execute on this economic development strategy. Buy-in and partnership with multiple stakeholder groups – including the private sector, central government, state bodies, representative groups, and education providers – is hence essential.

In sum, Fingal is seeking to sustainably develop its economy, thus providing opportunities for all residents and businesses to excel over the coming 15 years, while remaining cognisant of the climate and biodiversity challenges which currently exist.



Fingal's Grand Opportunities A Thematic Approach

In order to pursue Fingal's vision for its future economy, a series of 'grand opportunities' have been identified. Each grand challenge, outlined below, represents an opportunity for Fingal to further improve as a place to invest, work and operate. **Sustainability** is an overarching challenge which affects economies globally and will continue to be influential over all aspects of economic development in the decades ahead. For the Fingal economy, developing **skills** which are appropriate for present and future needs is essential, especially as new technologies impact many occupations.

Developing **vibrant places**, both in urban and rural areas, is a further grand challenge so that all residents and businesses in the county have the conditions to thrive. This extends to how Fingal can **grow & attract** enterprises of all sizes with supports and cluster development. **Infrastructure** provision will be central, especially in relation to housing, business infrastructure, public transport and energy over the forthcoming years. Finally, Fingal competes in a global economy and so developing its international presence and brand is a challenge, specifically with regards to investment and tourism.

Sustainability

Fingal's economy will be developed in accordance with a broadened Sustainable Fingal Initiative which facilitates and supports businesses and sectors in the transition to a Net Zero county, and maximises the opportunities which energy presents.

Skills

Fingal will build a deep labour force with skills which are appropriate for businesses' needs and adaptable for the county's future economy.

Vibrant Places

Fingal's economy will be supported to maximise growth opportunities across geographic areas.

Grow & Attract

Fingal will support enterprises of all sizes to grow and will develop clusters which further expand the influence of key sectors in the county.

Infrastructure

Fingal's economy will be supported by business, transport and other physical infrastructure which makes it a more attractive place to invest, operate, visit, live and work.

International

Fingal will build its international presence through networks, trade, and promoting its unique economic offering as a means to develop tourism and attract foreign direct investment.

Fingal's Grand Opportunities
Opportunity 1: Sustainability

Fingal's economy will be developed in accordance with a broadened Sustainable Fingal Initiative which facilitates and supports businesses and sectors in the transition to a Net Zero county, and maximises the opportunities which energy presents.

The environmental and biodiversity issues which currently exist present the greatest global challenge of our time. The need for immediate action is clear, and is iterated across government levels from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to Fingal's Climate Action Plan.

Stakeholders in the Fingal economy fully recognise that further action is needed now and in to the future to ensure that the Fingal economy develops sustainably. Objectives 1.1 and 1.2 summarise the high level sustainability objectives for Fingal's economy. The broadening of the Sustainable Fingal Initiative is an objective aimed at capturing in granular detail the specific actions, milestones, responsible parties, and timelines involved in moving towards a Net Zero county – in lockstep with the Fingal Climate Action Plan.

While representing only one aspect of the sustainability challenge, energy is a key area of opportunity for Fingal. Offshore wind power in the Irish Sea, and the potential impact of alternative energies, are just two examples of where the county can rise to the fore in decarbonising energy.

Objective 1.1 Sustainable Fingal	Broaden and promote the Sustainable Fingal Initiative in alignment with the Fingal Climate Action Plan, explore the circular economy, and lead on a Just Transition to Net Zero and a climate-resilient economy.
Objective 1.2 Energy	Maximise opportunities which exist to advance renewable and alternative energy options, notably via: Offshore wind energy; District heating; Solar power; and Support for R&D of alternative energies.



Fingal's Grand Opportunities
Opportunity 2: Skills

Fingal will build a deep labour force with skills which are appropriate for businesses' needs and adaptable for the county's future economy, in alignment with the Fingal Skills Strategy.

Labour and skills availability are two of the biggest challenges currently facing the Fingal economy. This applies across sectors – from construction and retail to hospitality and pharmaceuticals. While there will be undulations in the labour market over the coming years, and 'full employment' will come to an end, global megatrends and changes in businesses' needs will drive demands for new and improved skillsets across the labour pool in the county.

Per Objective 2.1, the frequent compilation of **Labour Market Intelligence** on businesses' skills needs is an important first step so as to ensure education and training initiatives are addressing areas of need.

Enabling the economically inactive to (re) enter employment is a means to both contribute towards tackling disadvantage, and broaden the labour market, and can be targeted via employability interventions as set out in Objective 2.2.

The reality that the economy will change dramatically over the coming decades through climate change and automation/AI presents a **re-skilling/up-skilling** challenge. Objective 2.3 is a further means to support this transition and broaden the talent pool.

The provision of further education options is an additional means via which the skills base in Fingal can be strengthened. Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB's (DDLETB) plans for a **College of The Future in Swords** are central to this, and are supported under Objective 2.4.

Objective 2.1 Labour Market Intelligence	Compile comprehensive and frequently updated records of Fingal businesses' skills needs.
Objective 2.2 Ensure an appropriate Labour Supply	Establish and maintain partnerships to address skills challenges and enable the economically inactive to enter employment, including re-skilling programmes, which contribute to overall community wealth building.
Objective 2.3 Skill up for the future	Facilitate the development of skills which meet the needs of current and prospective employers in Fingal.
Objective 2.4 Infrastructure	Support the development of further and higher education infrastructure in Fingal, in tandem with entities including TUD and DDLETB.

Fingal's Grand Opportunities
Opportunity 3: Vibrant Places

Fingal's economy will be supported to maximise growth opportunities across geographic areas.

Fingal's towns, villages, rural and coastal areas are all vital to the current and future economic performance of the county. Stimulating greater local economic activity is a means to support balanced growth across the county. This includes providing greater access and infrastructure, and ensuring Fingal's towns and villages remain vital components of the local economy – in spite of challenges in recent years related to footfall as online and shopping centre retail options have combined to 'hollow out' activity in conurbations such as Balbriggan and Swords.

For all geographic areas, Objective 3.1 underlines how innovative and collaborative initiatives to boost local economic activity and spending will be central to the future development of **vibrant places** in Fingal. This will include initiatives to support retail, local supply chains, the night-time economy, rural diversification, and remote working – the latter of which is seen as an area of potential as fewer residents are now required to travel outside the county for work purposes.

<p>Objective 3.1 Vibrant Places</p>	<p>Support rejuvenation across all geographic areas of Fingal through collaboration and the implementation of innovative and targeted solutions which boost economic activity.</p>
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Fingal's Grand Opportunities
Opportunity 4: Grow & Attract

Fingal will support enterprises of all sizes to grow and will develop clusters which further expand the influence of key sectors in the county.

Fingal's economy benefits massively from a broad sectoral mix of businesses; from large international-focused industries such as life sciences and aviation, to more localised sectors in retail and hospitality. It is evident that businesses of all sizes in the county require supports of some form in order to thrive, with certain sectors needing specific interventions to spur further expansion.



Business supports and engagement are common needs across the board, so that businesses have the resources to succeed, and the fora to voice concerns and build relations with key local stakeholder groups. These are the focus of Objective 4.1.

The development of more formalised cluster structures is central to Objective 4.2, and will focus on a select number of sectors which have the scale to excel both nationally and internationally.

Objective 4.3 centres on tourism which has the potential to grow over the coming years if initiatives are implemented to promote the county appropriately and make it more accessible for tourists.

Agri-food faces challenges in terms of sustainability and career development, and is hence captured under objective 4.4. Tapping in to close-proximity supply chains and setting clearer career pathways are means to further growing the sector in future.

<p>Objective 4.1 Support our businesses to thrive</p>	<p>Foster an environment in which collaboration and engagement between economic stakeholder groups is maximised, and where businesses are supported to excel.</p>
<p>Objective 4.2 Priority Sectors/ Clusters</p>	<p>Develop formalised clusters in tandem with representative groups and key employers in specific sectors in order to promote collaboration and stimulate further growth.</p>
<p>Objective 4.3 Tourism</p>	<p>Place a core emphasis on the development of tourism in Fingal where all areas of the county are promoted and accessible for visitors.</p>
<p>Objective 4.4 Agri-Food</p>	<p>Support Fingal's agri-food sector to further expand, with emphases on local supply chains and providing viable career development pathways.</p>

**The Vision for Fingal's Future Economy
Opportunity 5: Infrastructure**

Fingal's economy will be supported by business, transport and other physical infrastructure which makes it a more attractive place to invest, operate, visit, live and work.

While Fingal's infrastructure network is strong – with notable emphasis on the airport, motorway and rail network – further investment will be required to facilitate the future economy and population of the county, in alignment with the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029. Infrastructure is a key concern and priority area for businesses in Fingal, with housing raised as a major issue during the research phase of this strategy.

Fingal has tracts of **economic land** available. Undertaking assessments and devising appropriate plans to activate key sites are captured under Objective 5.1.

The enhanced provision of **enterprise units**, along with curated networks and a range of business supports including access to expertise which enable small businesses to grow is the focus of Objective 5.2, along with making greater use of the existing remote working units which are available in the county.

The Fingal Development Plan provides a framework for the provision of **housing** across the County, and Objective 5.3 centres on further promoting the needs of businesses and residents with regards to the location, scale and scope of housing development.

Connectivity mainly focusses on public and road transport under Objective 5.4. Championing MetroLink is essential in this regard. Dart+, BusConnects, road improvements in specific locations, and active travel/ greenway projects are also central – while connectivity in the form of broadband availability must be addressed in the shorter-term.

Objective 5.5 centres on **Dublin Airport** and the support of its balanced development in accordance with the applicable National Aviation Policy, County Development Plan, Local Area Plan, legislation and permissions.

Objective 5.1 Economic Land	Key economic lands in Fingal will be subject to assessment and plans will be devised to activate specific sites.
Objective 5.2 Enterprise Units	Fingal's business infrastructure will be fully leveraged so as to ensure engagement and support collaboration between key stakeholder groups, and promote remote working and innovation partnerships which better local economies.
Objective 5.3 Housing	The importance of housing supply and affordability will be reflected in all Fingal economic development initiatives, and opportunities to promote specific requirements of businesses and workers will be grasped.
Objective 5.4 Connectivity	Improvements to Fingal's transport networks will be actively pursued and promoted, with MetroLink to the fore, while broadband upgrades will be sought as a priority.
Objective 5.5 Dublin Airport	Support the balanced and sustainable development of Dublin Airport, in line with the National Aviation Policy, County Development Plan, Local Area Plan, and other applicable legislation and permissions and with due regard to the health and wellbeing of Fingal residents."

**Fingal's Grand Opportunities
Opportunity 6: International**

Fingal will build its international presence through networks, trade, and promoting its unique economic offering as a means to develop tourism and attract foreign direct investment.

Fingal is to the fore in terms of economic development in Ireland, yet could further broaden its appeal internationally. While Dublin and Ireland are recognised across the globe – to the benefit of all Local Authority areas in Dublin it must be iterated – differentiation of Fingal is a means to attract further investment and tourism in particular.

Objective 6.1 Brand/ Promotion	Fingal's unique offering and attractions will be fully leveraged so as to promote the county internationally and draw further investment and visitors.
Objective 6.2 Trade	Fingal's businesses will be supported in the evolving post-Brexit environment, and opportunities to further enhance trade – especially via the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor – will be embraced.
Objective 6.3 Networks	International fora, close engagement with state bodies, and international collaborations will be used as a means to promote Fingal across Europe and further afield.

The **brand/promotion** of Fingal is vital. The Marketing Plan which accompanies this Economic Development Strategy sets out clear steps to heightening Fingal's profile for investors and tourists, and addressing Objective 6.1.

Trade is a further objective. Brexit remains an issue for businesses in the county and continuing to provide supports for traders is essential. The Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor provides further scope for increased cross-border trading and is a means for Fingal to broaden its trade volumes and profile under objective 6.2.

International **networks** also present an opportunity for Fingal to raise its profile. European Union inter-regional working groups are one example of fora via which the 'pros' of Fingal can be promoted. This also applies to engagements with the likes of IDA Ireland to ensure that Fingal continues to develop in accordance with the needs and expectations of foreign direct investors, and is continually promoted as a destination.



Actions to Support Economic Development
Opportunity 1: Sustainability

Fingal’s economy will be developed in accordance with a broadened Sustainable Fingal Initiative which facilitates and supports businesses and sectors in the transition to a Net Zero county, and maximises the opportunities which energy presents.

Applicable timelines: Each Action outlined in this Economic Development Strategy has been assigned a timeline for implementation. These timelines are defined as:

1. **Short term:** 1-2 years (2024 & 2025)
2. **Medium term:** 3-6 years (2026 – 2029)
3. **Long term:** 7-15 years (2030 – 2038)

Note: in certain instances such as ‘Short – Medium’, Actions are to be implemented initially in the short term, before being maintained/repeated in the medium term.



Objective	Actions	Responsible Bodies*	Timeline
1.1 Sustainable Fingal	Action 1.1.1 Broaden and promote the Sustainable Fingal Initiative which emphasises sustainability in buildings, transport, energy, circular economy, and waste.	Fingal County Council, SEAI, Fingal Economic Forum, business/industry representative bodies, businesses.	Short
	Action 1.1.2 Engage with Fingal businesses to scope current climate transition status and identify future need.	Fingal County Council, SEAI, Codema, businesses, business/industry representative bodies, Fingal Chamber, Balbriggan Chamber, Fingal economic forum.	Short-Medium
	Action 1.1.3 Provide clear sign-posting of supports for businesses on the transition to a Net Zero, climate resilient county.	SEAI, Fingal Local Enterprise Office, businesses, Fingal County Council, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Codema.	Short
	Action 1.1.4: Support initiatives which inform, facilitate and enable behavioural changes towards more sustainable outcomes.	Fingal County Council, SEAI, Codema, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Fingal Local Enterprise Office, businesses, business/industry representative bodies, Fingal Chamber, Balbriggan Chamber.	Short-Medium
	Action 1.1.5: To monitor and identify economic forecasts or trends which may impact the local economy and work proactively with relevant Agencies and Stakeholders in the development of just transition planning within the Fingal economy that minimises the impact of the move towards a carbon-neutral economy on businesses and communities.	Fingal County Council, SEAI, Fingal Economic Forum, business/industry representative bodies, businesses.	Short-Medium
1.2 Energy	Action 1.2.1 Support the expansion of Fingal's renewable energy production, specifically relating to solar and offshore wind energy.	Fingal County Council, Codema, SEAI, businesses, business/industry representative bodies, Fingal Chamber, Balbriggan Chamber, sectoral representative bodies, Bremore Ireland Port.	Short-Long
	Action 1.2.2 Support initiatives to provide district heating to specific localities in Fingal.	Codema, Fingal County Council, SEAI, businesses, industry representative bodies, community & voluntary groups, education & training providers.	Short-Long
	Action 1.2.3 Facilitate and collaborate on R&D and trials of alternative energies – such as Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO) and bio-LNG – and investigate the development of supporting infrastructure.	Codema, Fingal County Council, SEAI, businesses, industry representative bodies, education & training providers.	Short-Long

Actions to Support Economic Development
Opportunity 2: Skills

Fingal will build a deep labour force with skills which are appropriate for businesses' needs and adaptable for the county's future economy, in alignment with the Fingal Skills Strategy.

Objective	Actions	Responsible Bodies*	Timeline
2.1 Labour Market Intelligence	Action 2.1.1 Through a skills forum, facilitate links between employers and education providers to ensure skills needs are understood.	Fingal County Council, businesses, business and sectoral representative bodies, education and training providers, SOLAS, Fingal Chamber Skillnet, Dublin Regional Skills Forum.	Short
	Action 2.1.2 Compile regular skills need forecasts to support pipeline planning.	Fingal County Council, businesses, business and sectoral representative bodies, third party research provider(s), Fingal economic forum.	Short-Medium
2.2 Ensure an appropriate Labour Supply	Action 2.2.1 Explore the development of 'grow your own' sector based skills academies that provide training and job opportunities in sectors of highest skills need.	Sectoral representative bodies, business representative bodies, Fingal County Council, businesses, SOLAS, Fingal Chamber Skillnet, Dublin Regional Skills Forum.	Short
	Action 2.2.2 Deliver employability programmes for economically inactive people.	Education & training providers, Fingal County Council, SICAP Provider, SOLAS, Department of Social Protection.	Short-Medium
	Action 2.2.3 Work with education and training providers to facilitate robust qualification conversion courses for new migrants.	Education & training providers, Fingal County Council, migrant representative bodies, Quality and Qualifications Ireland.	Short-Medium

Objective	Actions	Responsible Bodies*	Timeline
2.2 Ensure an appropriate Labour Supply	Action 2.2.4 Devise a 'Get Back to Fingal' campaign to encourage emigrants home.	Fingal County Council, businesses, business and sectoral representative bodies, Fingal Chamber, Balbriggan Chamber, Department of Foreign Affairs.	Short-Long
	Action 2.2.5 Facilitate careers fairs for local employers and job searchers.	Business representative bodies, education & training providers, Department of Social Protection, SICAP Provider, Fingal Chamber, Balbriggan Chamber, Fingal County Council,	Short-Long
2.3 Skill up for the Future	Action 2.3.1 Digital Upgrade: support the improvement of basic digital literacy.	Education & training providers, Fingal County Council, Fingal Chamber Skillnet, SOLAS, Irish Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition, SICAP Provider.	Short-Medium
	Action 2.3.2 Support the development and delivery of up-skilling and re-skilling support for occupations at greatest risk of automation.	SOLAS, Fingal Chamber Skillnet, education & training providers, Fingal County Council.	Short-Medium
2.4 Infrastructure	Action 2.4.1 Support the development of further education infrastructure in Fingal, including DDLETB's College of the Future in Swords.	DDLETB, education and training providers, Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Fingal County Council	Short-Long



Actions to Support Economic Development Opportunity 3: Vibrant Places

Fingal's economy will be supported to maximise growth opportunities across geographic areas.



Objective	Actions	Responsible Bodies*	Timeline
3.1 Vibrant Places	Action 3.1.1 Undertake Town Centre health checks and, through collaboration, implement innovative solutions which boost economic activity.	Fingal County Council, businesses, business and sectoral representative bodies, Tidy Towns Committees, community & voluntary groups.	Short-Medium
	Action 3.1.2 Explore the development of Business Improvement Districts.	Fingal County Council, businesses, business and sectoral representative bodies, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Fingal Chamber, Balbriggan Chamber.	Medium
	Action 3.1.3 Promote town centre vibrancy through grant schemes, animation/events and evening economy initiatives.	Fingal County Council, Department of Rural and Community Development & Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Short-Medium
	Action 3.1.4 In alignment with the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029, repurpose long-term vacant town centre sites.	Fingal County Council, businesses.	Short-Medium
	Action 3.1.5 Develop bio and circular economy initiatives in support of rural diversification and the Just Transition.	Fingal County Council, Environmental Protection Agency, Dublin Metropolitan CARO, businesses, business and sectoral representative bodies, Enterprise Ireland, education & training providers.	Short-Medium
	Action 3.1.6 Support the development of local supply chains within Fingal and to Dublin City.	Fingal businesses, business and sectoral representative bodies, Enterprise Ireland, Fingal County Council, Fingal Chamber, Balbriggan Chamber, Fingal Local Enterprise Office.	Short-Medium
	Action 3.1.7 Improve access to services through community transport and smart/digitally enabled towns/villages.	Fingal County Council, NTA, Bus Connects, Smart Dublin, Smart Balbriggan.	Short-Medium

Actions to Support Economic Development

Opportunity 4: Grow & Attract

Fingal will support enterprises of all sizes to grow and will develop clusters which further expand the influence of key sectors in the county.

Objective	Actions	Responsible Bodies*	Timeline
4.1 Support our businesses to thrive	Action 4.1.1 Establish an Economic Forum in Fingal to gain insights on business needs.	Fingal County Council, businesses, business and sectoral representative bodies, Fingal Chamber, Balbriggan Chamber, state bodies, education and training providers.	Short
	Action 4.1.2 Create a 'one front door' solution to sign-post business support.	Fingal County Council, Fingal Local Enterprise Office, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland.	Short
	Action 4.1.3 Secure funding to deliver support across the key drivers of productivity (e.g. skills, innovation, exports).	Fingal County Council, Fingal Chamber, Balbriggan Chamber, education & training providers, businesses.	Short-Medium
	Action 4.1.4 Deliver local supplier/local buyer events to promote localising supply chains.	Fingal Local Enterprise Office, Fingal County Council, businesses, Enterprise Ireland, Fingal Chamber, Balbriggan Chamber.	Short
4.2 Develop Priority Sectors/ Clusters	Action 4.2.1 Form industry specific cluster groups (e.g. in agri-food) to develop collaborative networks and sector specific growth plans.	Sectoral representative bodies, Fingal County Council, Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment, businesses, business representative bodies, IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland.	Short-Medium
	Action 4.2.2 Adopt an 'anchor employer' account management approach in Fingal County Council to ensure critical employers are nurtured.	Fingal County Council.	Short
4.3 Tourism	Action 4.3.1 Support implementation of the Fingal Tourism Strategy 2024 - 2029, and the Fingal Food & Drink Policy 2023 - 2029 (specifically where it relates to Food Tourism).	Tourism (Fáilte Ireland) and agri-food (Teagasc) representative bodies, Fingal County Council, public and private sector employers, business representative bodies.	Short-Medium

Objective	Actions	Responsible Bodies*	Timeline
4.3 Tourism	Action 4.3.2 Contribute to the creation and implementation of the Fingal Marketing Plan, and support the Tourism Marketing Plan as part of the Fingal Tourism Strategy 2024-2029.	Fingal County Council, Fáilte Ireland, IDA Ireland, Fingal Chamber, Balbriggan Chamber, businesses.	Short-Medium
	Action 4.3.3 Develop a programme of events throughout the year and explore feasibility of hosting relevant international events.	Fingal County Council, Fáilte Ireland, community & voluntary groups.	Short-Medium
	Action 4.3.4 Measure economic outputs and benefits of events/initiatives.	Fingal County Council, Fáilte Ireland, community & voluntary groups.	Medium
	Action 4.3.5 Collaborate with the tourism sector including statutory and representative bodies and industry.	Fingal County Council, Fáilte Ireland, public and private sector employers, business representative bodies, tourism representative bodies.	Short-Long
	Action 4.3.6 Establish a Fingal visitor pass for key sites.	Fingal County Council, Fáilte Ireland.	Medium
	Action 4.3.7 Develop rural tourism and recreation initiatives to maximise Fingal's natural resources in a sustainable way.	Fingal County Council, businesses, business and sectoral representative bodies, Fáilte Ireland, Department of Rural and Community Development, LEADER Implementer.	Short-Medium
	4.4 Agri-Food	Action 4.4.1 Support implementation of the Fingal Food & Drink Policy 2023 - 2029 (specifically where it relates to Economic Growth and Community Engagement).	Fingal County Council, public and private sector employers, business and sectoral representative bodies.
Action 4.4.2 Support business succession planning through expert advice, and potential grant and event support.		Fingal Local Enterprise Office, Fingal County Council, businesses, Enterprise Ireland, sector and business representative bodies.	Short-Medium
Action 4.4.3 Support rural development programmes focussed on agri-food career pathways.		LEADER Implementer, Fingal County Council, businesses, Enterprise Ireland, business and sectoral representative bodies, Department of Rural and Community Development.	Short-Medium
Action 4.4.4 Support development of farmers markets and linkages with Fingal towns and villages.		Fingal County Council, Fingal Local Enterprise Office, businesses, business and sectoral representative bodies.	Short-Medium

Actions to Support Economic Development Opportunity 5: Infrastructure

Fingal's economy will be supported by business, transport and other physical infrastructure which makes it a more attractive place to invest, operate, visit, live and work.

Objective	Actions	Responsible Bodies*	Timeline
5.1 Economic Land	Action 5.1.1 Establish a register of key economic sites in Fingal which is updated regularly.	Fingal County Council.	Short
	Action 5.1.2 In alignment with the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029, conduct an assessment of major undeveloped economic sites in Fingal.	Fingal County Council.	Short
	Action 5.1.3 In alignment with the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029, implement a vacant land activation plan for key economic sites to stimulate development.	Fingal County Council.	Short-Medium
5.2 Enterprise Units	Action 5.2.1 Engage with business park management organisations in Fingal to establish relations, address key issues for businesses, and chart available capacity.	Fingal County Council, existing Business Park management organisations (public and private).	Short
	Action 5.2.2 Develop further and enhanced start-up and scale-up spaces for enterprises in Fingal at low cost rates.	Incubation space providers (public & private), Enterprise Centres (BASE, BEAT & Drinan), Fingal County Council, Fingal Local Enterprise Office.	Short-Medium
	Action 5.2.3 Implement a scheme for major Dublin employers to use Fingal remote working spaces as dedicated satellite offices.	Fingal County Council, Dublin businesses, ConnectedHubs.ie.	Short-Medium

Objective	Actions	Responsible Bodies*	Timeline
5.3 Housing	Action 5.3.1 Ensure ongoing engagement with key developers and support initiatives to progress planning and housing provision.	Fingal County Council, residential development businesses, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.	Short-Long
	Action 5.3.2 In alignment with the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029, facilitate forward planning and provision of infrastructure and services for housing development at key sites in Fingal through prioritised progression of Local Area Plans, Masterplans and Framework Plans.	Fingal County Council.	Short-Long
5.4 Connectivity	Action 5.4.1 Engage with National Broadband Ireland to ensure high quality broadband is available for businesses in all areas of Fingal.	National Broadband Ireland, Fingal County Council, businesses, business representative bodies.	Short
	Action 5.4.2 Liaise closely with the NTA and government regarding the pressing need for MetroLink's development.	Fingal County Council, NTA, Government Departments.	Short-Long
	Action 5.4.3 In alignment with the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029, prioritise road improvements and active travel/ greenway projects in specific locations across the county, and incorporate same into the Council's Capital Programme and annual operational programme as appropriate.	Fingal County Council, Transport Infrastructure Ireland.	Medium
	Action 5.4.4 Engage with the NTA to promote the development of DART+, and to assess the scope for enhanced BusConnects routes between key areas of the county (Balbriggan, Swords, Airport, Blanchardstown, and rural areas).	Fingal County Council, NTA, Irish Rail, BusConnects.	Short-Medium
5.5 Dublin Airport	Action 5.5.1 Engage with senior Airport personnel on a regular basis for updates and collaboration on economic and sustainability projects.	Fingal County Council, DAA, education & training providers.	Short-Long

Actions to Support Economic Development
Opportunity 6: International

Fingal will build its international presence through networks, trade, and promoting its unique economic offering as a means to develop tourism and attract foreign direct investment.

Objective	Actions	Responsible Bodies*	Timeline
6.1 Brand/Promotion	Action 6.1.1 Implement the Marketing Plan which accompanies this Economic Development Strategy; promoting Fingal's unique attributes under the brand umbrellas of Ireland and Dublin.	Fingal County Council, IDA Ireland, Fingal Chamber, Balbriggan Chamber, businesses, business and sectoral representative bodies, Fingal economic forum, Fáilte Ireland.	Short-Medium
6.2 Trade	Action 6.2.1 Engage with business and sectoral representative bodies to further understand post-Brexit issues and any further trade supports which may be required.	Fingal County Council, Fingal Local Enterprise Office, businesses, Enterprise Ireland, business and sectoral representative bodies.	Short
	Action 6.2.2 Collaborate with Enterprise Ireland via Fingal Local Enterprise Office to identify means via which post-Brexit supports can (more effectively) be provided for businesses.	Fingal Local Enterprise Office, Fingal County Council, Enterprise Ireland.	Short
	Action 6.2.3 Fully embrace and participate in the partnership of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor; driving frequent engagement across Local Authorities.	Fingal County Council, DBEC Partnership Local Authorities, Universities.	Short-Medium
	Action 6.2.4 Collaborate to provide enhanced export readiness supports, as required.	Enterprise Ireland, Fingal Local Enterprise Office, Fingal County Council.	Short

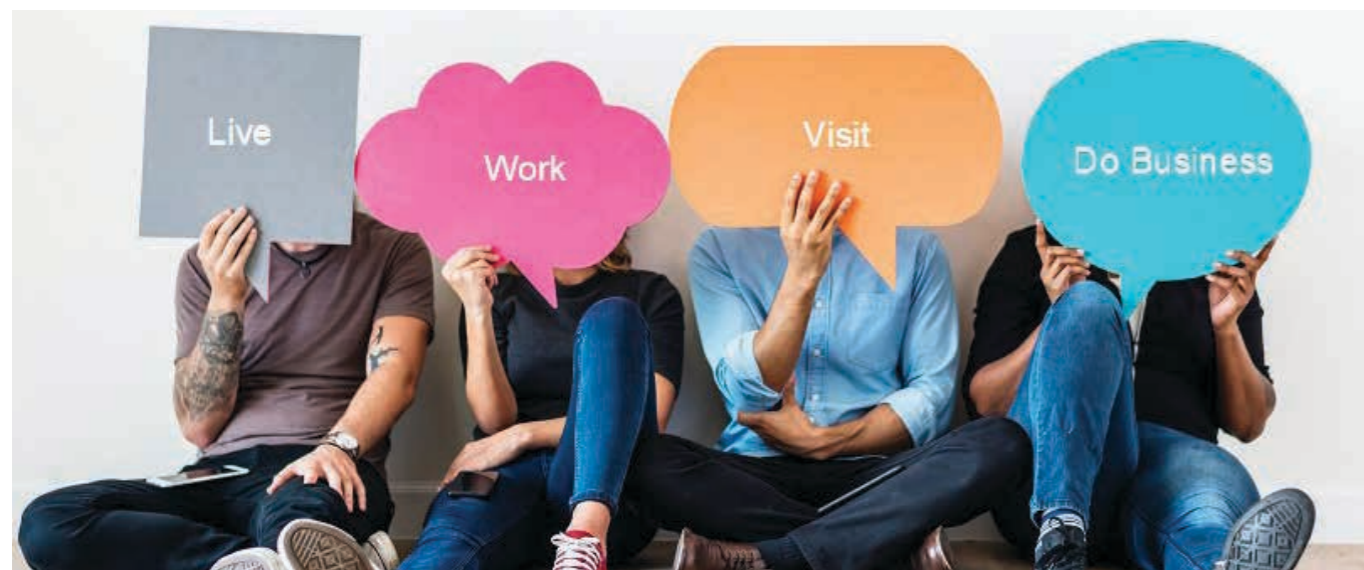
Objective	Actions	Responsible Bodies*	Timeline
6.3 Networks	Action 6.3.1 Fully leverage Fingal County Council's international connections and skillsets to promote Fingal.	Fingal County Council, Fingal Chamber, IDA, education & training providers, businesses.	Short-Long
	Action 6.3.2 Maintain strong relations with IDA Ireland, especially regarding key development sites.	Fingal County Council, IDA Ireland	Short-Long
	Action 6.3.3 Promote active involvement in EU programmes which provide opportunities for Fingal to promote itself as a prime investment and tourist destination.	Fingal County Council, EMRA, Irish Regional European Office, European Union.	Short-Long
	Action 6.3.4 Devise a plan to access EU funding to support this strategy.	Fingal County Council	Short
	Action 6.3.5 Explore the expansion of Fingal's network of European and Global connections to build trade links, tourism, and mutual learning.	Fingal County Council, Fingal Chamber, education & training providers	Medium-Long
	Action 6.3.6 Develop an international engagement plan for trade, tourism, and knowledge transfer.	Fingal County Council	Short-Medium



Research Findings Background to Approach

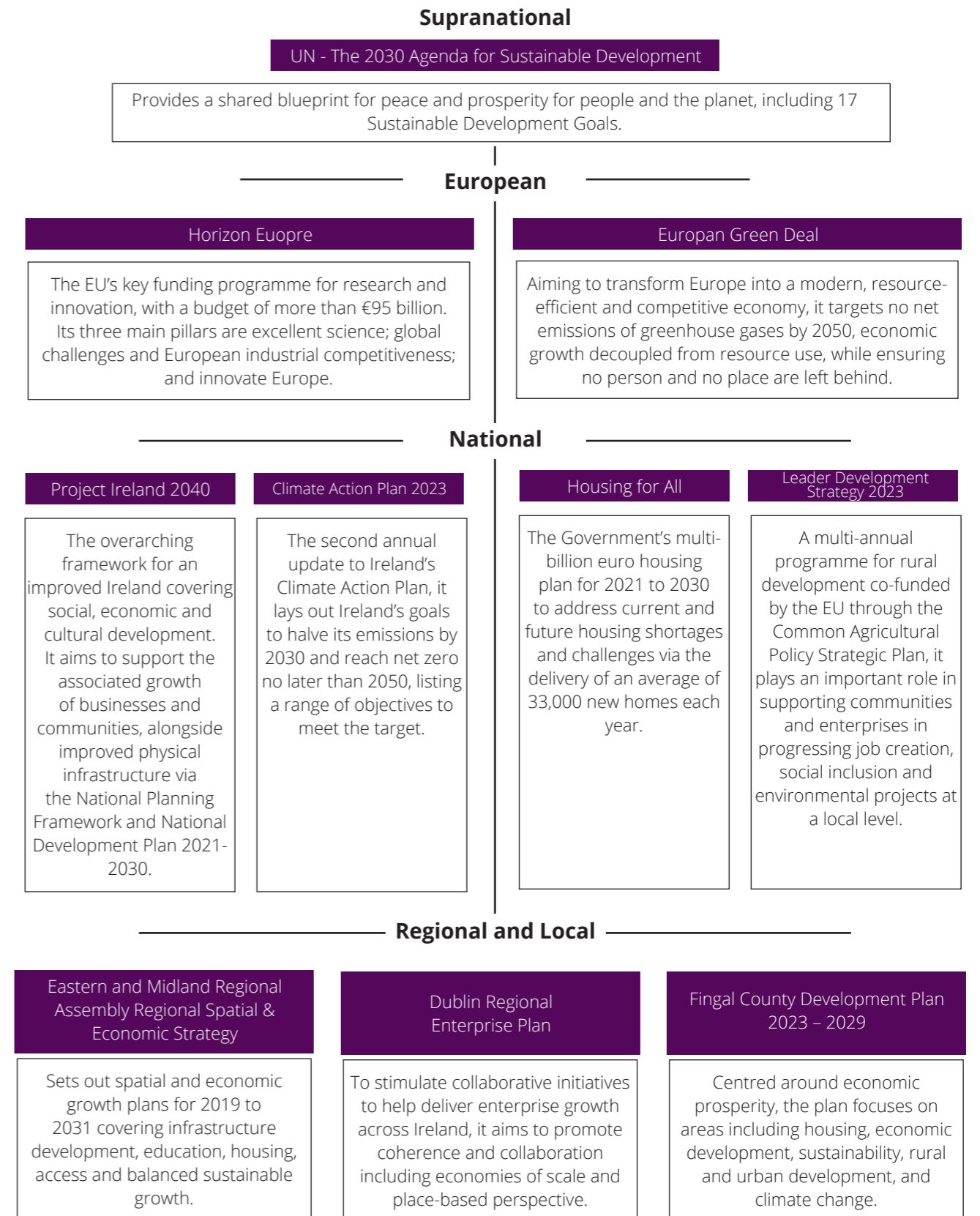
The vision, objectives, goals and actions contained in this Economic Development Strategy have been informed by a rigorous primary and secondary research process, in advance of detailed 'workshopping' of strategy components with key stakeholders. Six main stages of research were undertaken, as outlined in the infograph below. More details on the outputs from each stage are contained in the pages which follow.

- Policy Context**
Analysis of policies of relevance to Fingal's economy
- Megatrends**
Identification of key longer-term trends which will affect Fingal's development
- Socio-Economic Profile**
Detailed assessment of latest available socio-economic data for Fingal, including Census 2022
- Sector Prioritisation**
Identification of key sectors of priority for Fingal's economic future.
- Consultation**
Engagement with 30+ key stakeholders from across the Fingal economy, and survey of businesses.
- Comparator Analysis**
Research on eight domestic and international comparators to identify economic development best practices.



Key Policies

Global & domestic policies which will influence Fingal's economic development



Megatrends

Global trends of greatest direct relevance to Fingal's future economy

Changing Demographics

Fingal has experienced rapid population growth and boasts the youngest average age (36.2) in Ireland. It will be essential to develop strategies to facilitate sustainable growth and foster social cohesion.

Skills

Skills required for successful economies are ever-changing. Technology skills advancements, critical thinking/problem solving, emotional intelligence, innovation, adaptability and skills in the green economy are critical for Fingal's economic growth.

Smart Cities

Rapid urbanisation and technology advancements are stimulating smart city developments. Concerns over energy and reducing carbon will further push the need and adoption of smart city infrastructure over the coming years in Fingal.

Place Management

As one of the fastest growing counties in Ireland, creating or enhancing assets to improve Fingal's 'liveability' and attractiveness will be paramount.

Foreign Direct Investment

While 'traditional' FDI sectors will remain to the fore and are key economic drivers, Fingal can avail of potential future drivers which include cybersecurity, AI, Blockchain, Fintech, Cleantech, Agritech, disposable medical products and E-commerce.

Shifting Supply Chains

Economic, political and sustainability factors are placing emphasis on shorter regional supply chains. Fingal's location on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor, and its proximity to Dublin Airport and Port, make it a key location for supply chains.

New Economy

Technological innovation is moving quicker than ever across areas including machine learning, artificial intelligence (AI), automation, robotics, blockchain, DNA sequencing and material science.

Net Zero 50

To combat climate change and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, Fingal County Council's Climate Change Action Plan sets out how it will cut the county's emissions in half by 2030, helping Ireland to reach Net Zero by 2050.

Sector Prioritisation

Sectors of Focus for Fingal's economy

Focus and step change: These are 'critical for growth' sectors which are considered likely to have the potential to support significant economic growth. Such sectors are of key economic development opportunity for Fingal, and should be prioritised for the allocation of resources and effort.

Transport and Storage

Already one of the largest sectors in Fingal, Transport and Storage will play a key role in the future growth of the county. The sector can take advantage of the shift of supply chains from global to 'closer to home', and the impact of localism on the economy. The county will benefit from the close proximity of Dublin Airport and Port, and should also look to avail of its unique position on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor in the post-Brexit era.

ICT

The ICT sector is one Fingal should continue to invest heavily in, given the rate of technological innovation. Industry 4.0 and 5.0 are driving the manufacturing space, with ICT key to the transition. Challenges of automation, digitalisation, climate change and the importance of data suggests significant forthcoming growth in ICT. Technology is changing the skills profiles required in the workforce across all sectors including

manufacturing ecosystems. Therefore it is essential that adequate skills are in place. This further aligns with Ireland's Industry 4.0 Strategy 2020-2025.

Circular Economy

The circular economy is a sector for focus, especially in the context of Fingal's plans to become a leader in promoting circular principles and practices in the county. Given the importance of sustainability and the environment to the local economy and society, alongside energy targets, the circular economy is of utmost importance. Ensuring adequate resources, skills and education routes are in place are key for growth in this sector, with Fingal having already adopted various strategies and action plans, and participation in the Circular Cities Declaration network.

Life Sciences

Fingal currently boasts a large pharmaceutical cluster, hosting many multinational companies. Further growth can be derived from the demand for medical technologies and the growing need for research innovation around the life sciences sector. Fingal can also take advantage of its strong ecosystem of life sciences and technology, with the potential to become a leader in the Digital Health sector by drawing on existing talent and capabilities.

Sector Prioritisation

Sectors of Focus for Fingal's economy

Sustain and Grow: These are core sectors for Fingal's economic development, each with the scope to enable (potentially significant) incremental growth. These sectors should be cultivated and nurtured to support future economic expansion.

Tourism

Fingal's proximity to Dublin Airport, its cultural assets, coastal towns and heritage can sustain and grow the tourism sector in the county, with the aid of appropriate transport access and promotion. Given its strong agricultural presence, agri-food tourism has been identified as a further growth opportunity – with agriculture, food and tourism working collectively.

Agri-Food

Agriculture has been and remains a mainstay of the Fingal economy, especially in rural and northern parts of the county. The sector is a vital employer, and has scope to further expand over the coming years. Climate change will play an influential role and adaptation will be required in order to fully maximise opportunities which agri-food and food tourism present. The sector can also benefit from localism, to the benefit of local producers and the environment, in alignment with the new Fingal Food & Drink Policy 2023 – 2029.

Financial Services

Financial Services is an established sector in Fingal and plays a key role in the local economy. It is a sector which the county should look to sustain, especially given its importance as an employer. To further grow the sector, Fingal should exploit opportunities relating to Fintech by combining its existing financial services and ICT strengths. This is particularly the case given that Fintech globally is expected to become a \$1.5 trillion industry by 2030.

Sector Prioritisation

Sectors of Focus for Fingal's economy

Monitor and Intervene: These are sectors which, while important to the local economy, may not produce sustained growth over the coming years. As such, these sectors should be monitored on an on-going basis to ensure growth opportunities are taken as they arise.

Retail (Town Centre First)

The retail sector is traditionally market-led, with success being closely aligned with consumer confidence. The ramifications of Covid-19 and rising inflation have led to cut-backs in discretionary spend and reductions in consumer confidence. The regeneration of town centres will be key to the rejuvenation of the sector locally. Fingal should look to intervene in this sector where issues arise i.e. connectivity and access to labour.

Construction

Construction is traditionally a boom and bust sector, market-led, and aligned to investor and developer confidence and the availability of capital. As such, there are limited levers for Fingal policy makers to directly support this sector, but as a major enabler of other economic activity, close monitoring is required. Projects including 'Our Balbriggan', a potential College of the Future in Swords, varied housing developments, and MetroLink will all require significant construction capacity availability – and hence potential intervention on the part of Fingal County Council.



Key Topics for Fingal Economic Stakeholders

Feedback received

As part of the consultation process for this Economic Development Strategy, more than 30 stakeholders were engaged via one-to-one engagements, with 150 taking a survey on local economic development.

These stakeholders were from diverse backgrounds including:

- Local Government;
- Private sector companies;
- Education providers;
- Representative bodies; and
- State bodies.

Feedback received was wide-ranging, yet a series of common topics arose. The infograph shows 12 key topics which were raised by stakeholders. While all topics were raised in numerous instances, the following were most prevalent and pressing for those consulted:

1. Housing;
2. Infrastructure and planning;
3. Labour market and skills; and
4. Sustainability.

Not all of the above aspects can be directly tackled via this economic development strategy, but – at a minimum – objectives have been included which provide the grounds for constructive action to be taken.

Transport Infrastructure	Planning	Housing	Skills & Labour Market
Tourism	Sustainability	Networking/ Partnerships	Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor
Funding & Business Support	Place-making	FDI	Agri-Food

Comparator Analysis

Analysis on four European locations and four Irish Local Authority areas from which Fingal can take key learnings in order to enhance its economic development



**Comhairle Contae
Fhine Gall**
Fingal County
Council



**Economic, Enterprise, Tourism & Cultural Development
Department, Fingal County Council, County Hall, Swords, Co.
Dublin K67 X8Y2**

Email: Econdev@fingal.ie

www.fingal.ie