

# Dún Laoghaire - Rathdown Tourism Strategy & Marketing Plan 2017-2022





# Executive Summary

The ***Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Tourism Strategy & Marketing Plan 2017–2022*** sets out the case for tourism in the county and strengthens the proposition that exists. It does so in the context of ***‘Dublin – A Breath of Fresh Air’***, the tourism marketing plan for the wider Dublin Region.

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown’s tourist amenities and attractions are many. It benefits from the physical environment and the natural beauty of the Dublin Mountains, as well as Dublin Bay and Killiney Bay. It has a rich history and culture that has evolved from its maritime heritage, its connections with the spoken word and its position in the Dublin Region.

To define the objectives and actions for the county, a vision for Dún Laoghaire Rathdown as a tourism destination has been proposed:

*“A highly attractive and accessible tourism destination, steeped in culture and maritime heritage, combining a breath-taking coast, inviting villages and towns, and Dublin Mountains adventures, delivering memorable and distinct experiences for visitors.”*

To achieve this vision, five objectives and related actions, centring on the journey, awareness, experiences, collaboration and marketing,

have been conceived that seek to improve arrival and wayfinding information, create new experiences and link destinations and enhance the marketing of the county.

Three key thematic experiences have been identified, maximising the assets of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown and catering for the desires and interests of tourists visiting the county. ***‘Urban Splash!’***, ***‘Between the Lines’*** and ***‘Well Worth the Climb’*** will provide opportunities for engagement with the natural environment and rich cultural heritage. These experiences target the preferences of the key tourist market segments visiting the county, including the ‘social energisers’ and ‘culturally curious’.

In addition, as part of Tourism Strategy and Marketing Plan, 15 indicative projects have been selected; ranging from the implementation of the Dún Laoghaire Baths project to the development promotion of public transport based packages to the designation of a Tourism Co-ordinator.

The ensure success, coordination and monitoring will be vital and key data collection and evaluation must form part of this to guarantee positive progression.

**Dún  
Laoghaire  
Rathdown  
Tourism  
Strategy &  
Marketing  
Plan**

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1

### Purpose... Why this Strategy Now

**D**ún Laoghaire Rathdown has a wide range and combination of assets. It has its own particular and distinctive offer of value and great work is already underway across the county to develop this offer for the enjoyment of people locally and for visitors. The drive to reposition Dublin in the minds of prospective travellers through *'Dublin – A Breath of Fresh Air'*<sup>1</sup> has created an ideal opportunity for Dún Laoghaire Rathdown to confidently set out its stall. The county has been fully engaged in this initiative and looks forward to reaping the benefits of this strategic alliance with its tourism partners. It is generally recognised, however, that the visitor experiences on offer in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown are not widely known and that the benefits of tourism are concentrated in a few areas. The purpose in undertaking the Strategy is to ensure that Dún Laoghaire Rathdown, in continuing to grow its visitor economy, becomes more prominent in the overall promotion of the wider destination and that the benefits of improved performance are felt throughout the county.

This Strategy seeks to marshal the experience, energy and enthusiasm of all those involved in the business of tourism to shine a light on the work already underway, align it with the wider ambition for the destination, identify what still needs to be done to meet the needs of visitors and take collective responsibility for getting on with the job.

## 1.2

### Context... Where it Fits

The *Grow Dublin Taskforce*<sup>2</sup> identified a need to reposition Dublin to combat a low level of awareness of what the destination offers and communicate the variety and vibrancy of Dublin's attractions to a growing number of potential visitors in key target markets, where return on investment is likely to be greatest. Building on the recommendation of the Taskforce, *'Dublin – A Breath of Fresh Air'* seeks to reposition the city as a place where "Dublin living *thrives side by side with the natural outdoors* so you can constantly *jump between unique, different and often unexpected experiences*". This has given a significant impetus to tourism promotion and the perception of the city and region. Dún

Laoghaire Rathdown is in an excellent position to take advantage of the opportunities that the repositioning of Dublin offers. Central to this Strategy is the Council's ambition that visitors have the best possible experience of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown and that the visitor economy benefits local businesses and the community.

The Strategy is part of the Council's partnership with government and industry, about the role it plays and actions it contributes to promoting the county and helping visitors engage with all that the destination offers.

## 1.3

### Approach... How the Strategy was Developed

The Strategy was developed following a detailed analysis of the county's tourism offer, developed through comprehensive research of the county's tourism environment and involving a review of all available tourism information. This involved a wide range of sources, including: Fáilte Ireland, Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, tourism attractions' own records, other published visitor

number sources and direct conversations with tourism product providers and key stakeholders in the county. A series of 'strategic conversations' was held with key stakeholders in the county, together with an excellently attended Tourism Forum, hosted in the Assembly Room, County Hall, Dún Laoghaire, bringing together tourism sector representatives from across the county to develop ideas, explore the challenges and identify the priorities for development.

**Dún Laoghaire Rathdown is in an excellent position to take advantage of the opportunities that the repositioning of Dublin offers.**

<sup>1</sup> 'Dublin – A Breath of Fresh Air' is the tourism marketing campaign for Dublin which began in 2015. It seeks to reposition the city and county as a destination and secure its appeal to overseas visitors for the long-term future. The campaign is funded by Fáilte Ireland, the four Dublin local authorities and a collection of private-sector partners.

<sup>2</sup> The Grow Dublin Taskforce was established by Fáilte Ireland in 2012 and brought together stakeholders from industry, State agencies, local authorities and international destination experts to devise a strategy to reverse the downward trend in tourism to Dublin, and drive growth in the period to 2020.



# 2. Current Situation

## 2.1

### Context ... Where it Fits

The **Grow Dublin Tourism Alliance Progress and Action Plan**<sup>3</sup> has found that tourists are not aware of what Dublin as a whole has to offer and what makes it distinct from the rest of Ireland. Compared to other European cities, Dublin is perceived as being “dusty” and old-fashioned. In undertaking a destination audit of the county’s tourism offer, it is clear that the proposition that **“Dublin living thrives side by side with the natural outdoors so you can constantly jump between unique, different and often unexpected experiences”**<sup>4</sup> clearly resonates with Dún Laoghaire Rathdown, given its diverse offering and geography. The challenge is to ensure that visitors to Dublin find their way to Dún Laoghaire Rathdown and get to experience a variety of unique, different and unexpected experiences, and that they can easily, pleasurably and often access the natural outdoors.

<sup>3</sup>Progress and Action Plan, Grow Dublin Tourism Alliance, 2015.

<sup>4</sup>Dublin – A Breath of Fresh Air’.

This destination audit looks specifically at the visitor experience and what the county has to offer. The audit examines the county’s **place, product, programming, people and profile attributes**, what is inherently unique to the area, what sets it apart from the rest of Dublin and how it is currently performing.

## 2.2

### The Resource Base for Tourism

#### 2.2.1 Place

##### The lie of the land...

It is the underlying granite of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown that marks it out from the rest of the city. The granite outlasts the softer limestone of the city centre and marks the start of the great swathe of uplands that reach as far as the mountains of the south east of Ireland. Dún Laoghaire Rathdown, therefore, sits at a pivot point – looking north and east towards the city centre and the sea in one direction, as well as south and west across the mountains in another direction.

This geology forms the basis of the surface undulations, peaks, valleys and coastal shoreline that underpins everything great Dún Laoghaire Rathdown can offer its visitors. It is the reason why the county has such great vantage points; it is the secret to the soil that enables the ancient magnolias and rhododendrons of Fernhill to reach extraordinary heights and is the building block of the three harbours and the sea wall that protects the railway. The great geological transition between the limestone of the lowlands and the granite of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown actually occurs just north of the pond in Blackrock park – and in the form of Dún Laoghaire pier, this great granite underpinning reaches right out into the bay.

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown has for a long time, and continues to, talk about itself in terms of Mountains and Sea, but making a connection between the uplands and the sea can be less than straightforward – routes in the county, now as well as historically, tend to follow the easiest courses along valleys and between hills and these tend to run northwest/southeast. A very real boundary in the form of the Pale Ditch (still visible in places) separated the coastal areas of the county and the final outposts of the old Gaelic families – the O’Tooles and O’Byrnes – in the mountains. Ironically, some of the strongest institutions of Irish culture and language are now located within the old Pale in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown.



Figure 2.1 Views of the Mountains, from The Scalp and Dún Laoghaire Pier (Source: Fáilte Ireland)



Figure 2.2 Dalkey Island

The county initially developed as a series of rural villages outside Dublin, most prominently Dalkey, a historic settlement making use of deep water access. The construction of Dún Laoghaire Harbour and the coastal railway led to the development of suburban, commuter towns with a distinct character and appearance. The expansion of the Dublin urban area led to a continuous suburban development, predominately on the lower ground in the county, with more rural settlement restricted to mountain areas such as Glencullen or Tibbradden.

The county contains a wide range of built heritage assets. These include pre-historic monuments across the county with concentrations in Cherrywood and in the mountains. The architectural character of the historic settlements defines the county, from 18th and 19th century development associated with the railway, harbour and later residential and commercial development, historic castles such as at Dalkey and Carrickmines, traditional vernacular village and rural housing, to modern interventions such as **Lexicon**, the county's central library and

cultural centre, or the **Commissioners of Irish Lights Headquarters**.

The county has developed a series of high quality parks, which serve as recreation space for surrounding communities and as strategic open space areas, many on historic house demesne lands, such as at **Marlay Park** and **Cabinteely Park**. New ways of moving around which also allow for the linking of habitats are being considered and delivered, guided by the county's **Green Infrastructure Strategy**<sup>5</sup>, which sets out a county wide plan for improving green connections between parks, natural landscape and the sea. This Strategy provides a starting point for understanding how best to fulfil the promise to visitors that Dublin is a place where city living 'thrives side by side with the natural outdoors'.

<sup>5</sup> The Green Infrastructure (GI) strategy for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown seeks to provide a vision and a framework to identify, protect, promote and enhance the GI assets in the urban, rural and coastal environments of the county. The strategy is supported by a set of key principles and a spatial framework. It forms Appendix 14 of the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022.

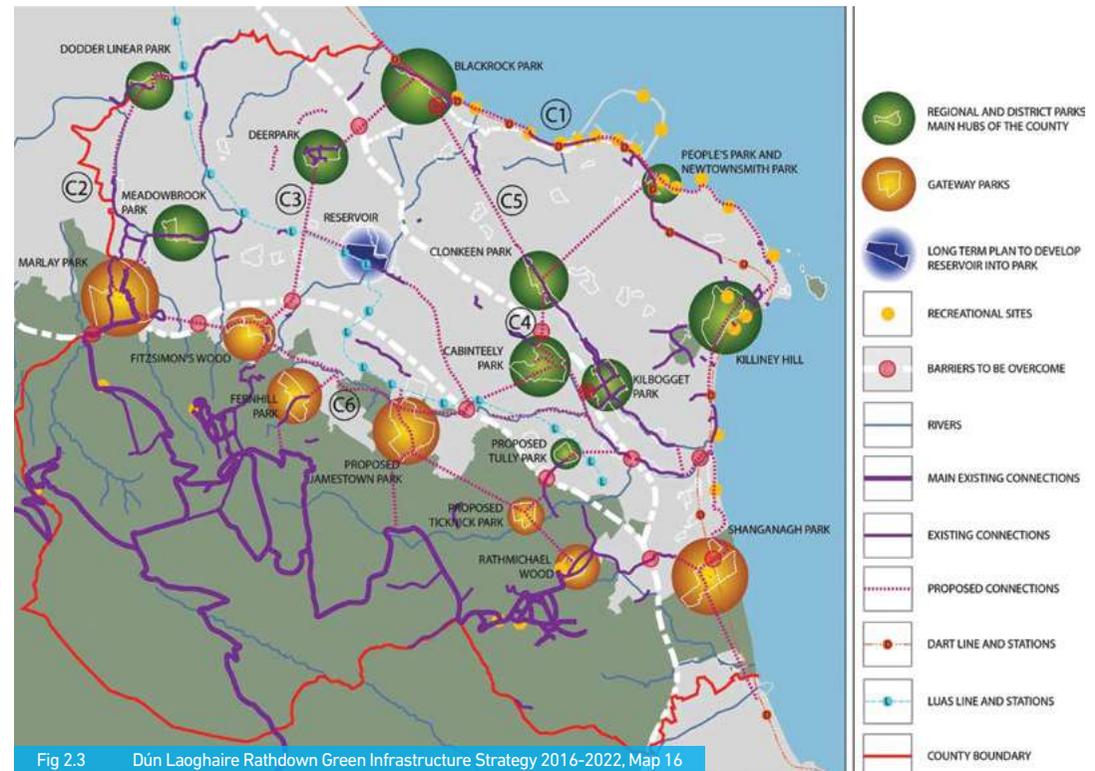


Fig 2.3 Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Green Infrastructure Strategy 2016-2022, Map 16

## The Seascape...

When examined at a landscape scale, the county is marked by two bays – Dublin Bay and Killiney Bay. **Killiney Hill** sits at the elevated fulcrum point – with panoramic views not only north across the city and bay to Howth and beyond, but also south and west to Killiney Bay, and the start of that great march of granite peaks all the way to the southern coast. The sea is full of surprises, over 600 shipwrecks in the Dublin Bay are testament to the shifting sands, and at Blackrock, the sea is turning into land before our eyes, as new saltmarsh becomes sand dune.

There are three harbours within the county – **Dún Laoghaire**, **Coliemore** and **Bullock** – each with their own distinctive character. However, the sea itself is the big story – looking at it, swimming in it, sailing on it, kayaking, wind surfing, paddling, stone throwing, rock pooling, accessing all the shipping history, meeting salty dogs and hearing the language of sea-farers. The coastal edge is an established key focus of attention and the Dart<sup>6</sup> stations are key visitor access points where the county can show that it is serious about the coastal experience and stories. The ambition for visitors to experience a city where city living ‘thrives side by side with the natural outdoors’ – leads us to cherish particularly the places where a natural coastline is easily accessible. The special nature of Dublin Bay is internationally acknowledged by the designation of much of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown within the UNESCO designated **Dublin Bay Biosphere**<sup>7</sup> with goals in relation to: biodiversity and cultural diversity, research and education and sustainable development, with a particular focus on showcasing good business practice.

## The Cultural Landscape...

There are many opportunities across the county to present portals into aspects of the cultural heritage: literary, archaeological, artistic, architectural, landscape, ecclesiastical, musical, agricultural and maritime. The county has a well-endowed cultural landscape which is accessible formally through experiences such as the **Summer of Heritage** and **Spring into Heritage** tours, the **Literary Tours** and **Living History** experience run by **Dalkey Castle and Heritage Centre**, a range of other walking tours, social history experiences such as **Biddy’s Cottage** in Dalkey, the experience at **Airfield Estate**, boat tours, specialist festivals

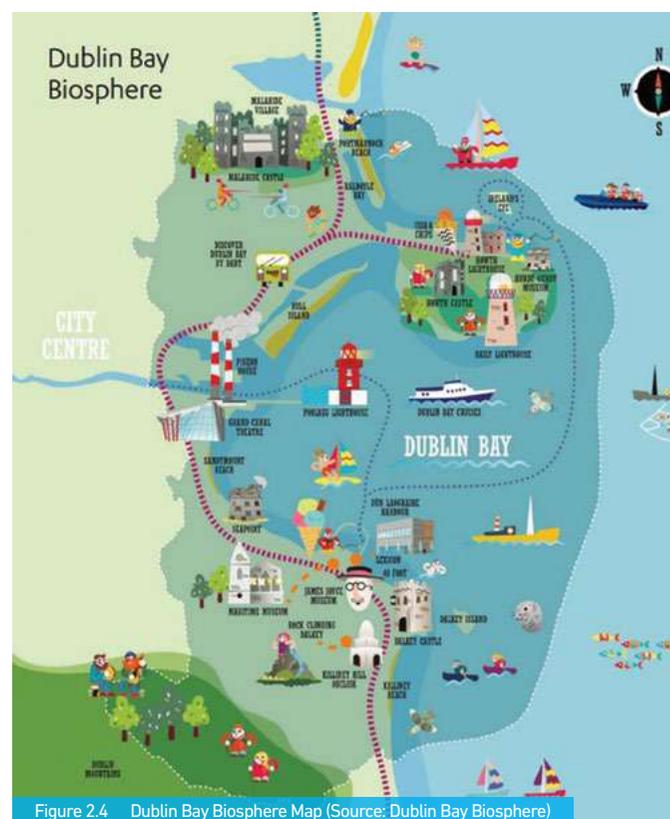


Figure 2.4 Dublin Bay Biosphere Map (Source: Dublin Bay Biosphere)

and a diverse calendar of events in libraries, theatres, parks and big houses, pubs and other venues. A large range of serious publications are available to the specialist who wants to go deeper. The presence of significant cultural and educational institutions within the county, such as **Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann** and the **Institute of Art Design and Technology** (IADT), and existing networks such as **ArtNet DLR** and **Digital Dún Laoghaire** suggest that there are opportunities for the visitor to further engage with the variety of the live cultural landscape. However, it can be somewhat difficult for visitors to find out what’s on where, and to access the current buzz of the place.

A notable aspect of this cultural landscape is the capacity for Dún Laoghaire Rathdown to reflect the global in the local – particularly in relation to literary heritage and the connections between internationally significant authors, most notably James Joyce, Samuel Beckett and Maeve Binchy, and this part of Ireland. The county is home to many internationally well-known artists, musicians, writers, actors and directors, who maintain strong links to their communities. As well as the obvious links to globally significant literature, the county is peppered with other stories that find a local place for globally significant events – such as the use of **Moran House** (now the Design Gallery) by Marconi to send the first ever radio message in a sporting event, communicating with racing yachts in the bay in 1898. The results of the regatta were then radioed to Dublin – marking the first use of radio in journalism.

The literature of this place and more specifically about this place, is an invisible, but enduringly resonant, aspect of the cultural heritage. It draws together the birds and the bay, the buildings, the people and the places, and can provide the visitor with an experience that is truly distinct and moving. The challenge for this Strategy is to ensure that this precious aspect of the cultural heritage is brought forward in innovative and authentic ways.

<sup>6</sup> Dublin Area Rapid Transit is the electrified rapid transit railway network serving the coastline and city centre of Dublin, stretching from Bray and Greystones in the south to Howth and Malahide in the northern suburbs, via Dublin city centre.

<sup>7</sup> The UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves covers internationally designated protected areas that are meant to demonstrate a balanced relationship between people and nature. The Biosphere designation has applied to cover Dublin Bay since 2015, reflecting its significant environmental, economic, cultural and tourism importance, and extends to over 300 sq. km.

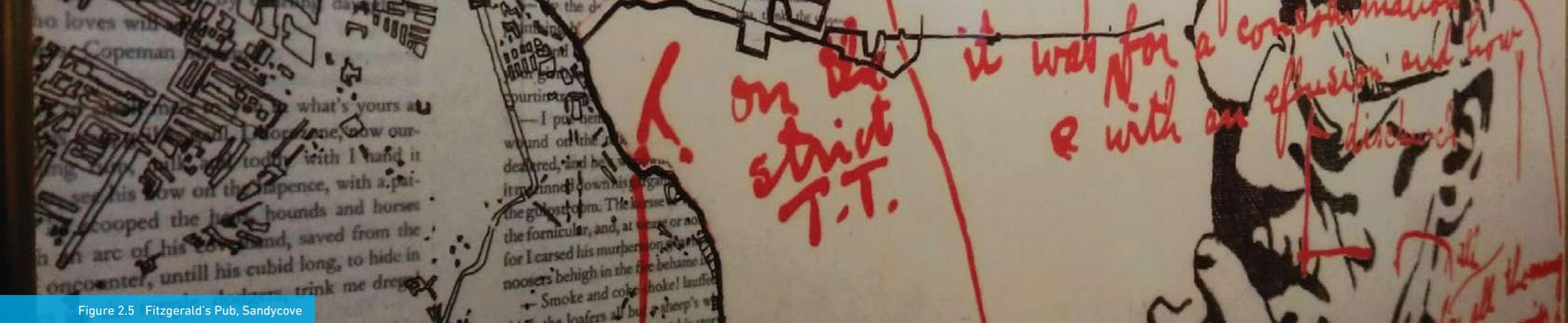


Figure 2.5 Fitzgerald's Pub, Sandycove

The key current opportunities for visitors to access the built, literary, musical, ecclesiastical and artistic heritage and the current, cultural buzz of the place – the products available or potentially available to visitors – are detailed in the Product and Programming Attributes sections below.

### Connectivity...

This Strategy's primary guiding principle is to make the most of the connectivity of the county to the Dublin Region and in particular to Dublin city centre. It is recognised that overseas visitors to the Dublin Region will continue to value the internationally recognised attractions and experiences that are on offer in Dublin city centre. The concentration of accommodation, services and facilities in the city centre also highlights that a majority of tourists to the region will approach Dún Laoghaire Rathdown from the city.

The county is well placed for international access, connecting to Dublin Airport and Dublin Port and the national road network via the M50 and N11 and via two Aircoach bus routes.



Figure 2.6 Dart travelling up the coastline

The presence of two high-quality, rail-based, frequent public transport options to the county from the city centre further increases the attractiveness of the county as a destination for Dublin tourists, the majority of whom will not have access to a car. The Strategy, therefore, places an emphasis on access to, and connectivity through, the county using the two primary rail corridors as the primary framework. Strategic bus routes have also been identified as well as the existing and potential greenways and way-marked walks.

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown is also connected to both the city centre and Howth by way of a boat service, **Dublin Bay Cruises**, as well as by private boat access.

Further afield, Dún Laoghaire Rathdown is twinned with Brest, France and Ynys Mon (Anglesey), Wales. Increased liaison is continuing with a view to further strengthening economic and cultural links. The Council signed a friendship agreement with Izumo, Japan in June 2008.

### 2.2.2 Product

In many respects, Dún Laoghaire Rathdown's range of products is defined by its landscape. Its coastlines and mountains provide an attractive environment in which tourists can access nature and enjoy themselves.

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown benefits from an active **coastal and maritime culture** owing to its extensive coastline and there are a variety of attractions and amenities which are appealing to both domestic and overseas tourists, particularly to those who seek recreation for the mind and body. Whether taking part in a sailing regatta or festival,



Figure 2.7 View from Two Rock Mountain (Source: Fáilte Ireland)

braving the **Forty Foot** or gently walking along **Dún Laoghaire Pier** or **Killiney Beach**, there are options for all visitors.

Sailing is an important part of the coastal and maritime culture and there are many established sailing and yacht clubs based in the county. Dún Laoghaire Harbour hosts several high-profile sailing events throughout the calendar year which attract thousands of visitors to the area. In addition to sailing, there are a host of other activities available to visitors with many successful commercial operators in coastal towns allowing visitors to engage in other water-based activities such as powerboating, kayaking, wind surfing, paddle boarding, kite surfing and scuba diving.

Visitors can also enjoy more leisurely activities, such as sightseeing, coastal walks and swimming. The scenic and historically significant **Dalkey Island** is a popular destination among visitors and for those who have an interest in walking and swimming, **Dún Laoghaire Pier**, **the Forty Foot** and the pristine beaches of **Sandycove**, **Killiney (Blue Flag)**, and **Seapoint Beach (Blue Flag)** offer

a high level of amenity and attract significant numbers of visitors each year.

Dún Laoghaire Harbour provides berthing facilities for cruise tourism. At the time of writing, there are 8 cruise boats scheduled for arrival in 2017, with capacity for over 1,800 passengers.

The county's **mountains** are a particularly beneficial asset bestowing Dún Laoghaire Rathdown with distinctive character and affording fine views that take in the entire Dublin Bay and city. A number of **forest parks** are connected by walks and tracks, including **Ticknock**, **Kilmashogue**, **Tibradden** and **Barnaslingan**. Two key walking routes have been developed, the **Wicklow Way**, a long-distance walking route across the Wicklow Mountains that begins at Marlay Park, and the **Dublin Mountains Way**, that connects east to west from Shankill to Tallaght, connecting each of the forest parks via Glencullen village. The uplands are also home to a range of active recreational facilities, including **Ticknock Mountain Bike Trail**, **Zipit** at Tibradden, **skiing** at Kilternan, climbing at **Dalkey Quarry**, and the **Scouting** centre at Tibradden.



Figure 2.8 Bathing at Seapoint (Source: Fáilte Ireland)

**Leopardstown Racecourse** is a significant attraction in the county, hosting regular meetings and entertainment. Attendances exceed 140,000 each year.

The county is home to many significant **cultural attractions**. These include historic properties such as the **National Maritime Museum**, the **James Joyce Tower and Museum**, **Airfield Estate** and **Dalkey Castle and Heritage Centre**, each of which attract significant visitor numbers. **dlr Lexicon**, the **Pavilion Theatre** and **dlr Mill Theatre** are the primary cultural centres in the county.

The county is home to the largest **shopping** centre in the country, at **Dundrum Town Centre**. The town centre attracts over 18 million visitors per annum, although this is heavily dominated by the local retail and entertainment visits and a wider regional Dublin catchment.

The county has 25 Fáilte Ireland registered accommodation options, from the five-star Radisson Blu, through three- and four-star hotels, to self-catering and holiday hostels. However, the county has a smaller proportion of accommodation provision than other parts of Dublin.

**The language of the people of this place is not ephemeral – it resonates in the buildings and rocks and waves and is there for visitors to read between the lines of the landscape.**



Figure 2.9 Killiney Hill (Source: Fáilte Ireland)

## 2.2.2 People

Notable people have come from and to this place. Many started here and left, others started somewhere else and were drawn to the county because of its attributes. Writers in particular have left their mark – the Joycean heritage is significant, but as the new writers' wall in Dalkey Castle and Heritage Centre demonstrates, the literary legacy of the place is bigger than one writer. Writers as diverse as Maeve Binchy, Neil Jordan, Hugh Leonard, George Bernard Shaw, JM Synge, Samuel Beckett, WB Yeats, Joseph O'Connor and Paul Howard have associations with the place and have written of its character and its people. The language theme also runs through the distinctive maritime lexicon of the **sea and sea-farers**, as maritime words such as grockle (tourist) and hobbler (a type of boat) would not seem out of place in **Finnegan's Wake**. The lexicon of archers, who had such

an important role in protecting the castles of Dalkey, is currently shared via the living history experience there. There is a vitality to the culture of reading too; Dún Laoghaire Rathdown can boast the largest mass reading of *Finnegan's Wake* and libraries host other regular reader events.

The language of the people of this place is not ephemeral – it resonates in the buildings and rocks and waves and is there for visitors to read between the lines of the landscape.

The range of historic houses and designed landscapes across the county displays the

social relationships of past times – the big houses of the gentry and the terraced houses of artisans, working men's clubs, private gardens and people's parks. The rich and famous have been drawn to certain parts of the county by the views, the landscape and the balance of distance and proximity to the city. This is a great place to live – those who could choose to live anywhere, choose to live here – and, therefore, a great place to visit. The popularity of the public spaces – the piers, the parks, the beaches – is rooted in the enduring appeal to both local people and visitors for the Victorian seaside experience – ice-cream and sea bathing, bracing walks



Figure 2.10 Writers' Wall at Dalkey Castle and Heritage Centre

and fish'n'chips. Further upland, the rural character of communities comes to the fore – and the visitor can quickly access small settlements with close ties to the surrounding landscape. The rural villages offer a contrast to the urban and suburban identity of the coastal area.

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown has one of the highest proportions of older people in Ireland and is in a position to offer a range of experiences to older visitors. The county's relative affluence is also a distinguishing feature, allowing the county to support a wider choice and variety of niche and higher value services, including dining, food, crafts and art. The county also has a reputation for being progressive, liberal and free-thinking – a common trait of places that face the sea.

The rural villages offer a contrast to the urban and suburban identity of the coastal area.



Figure 2.11 Some people of note of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown

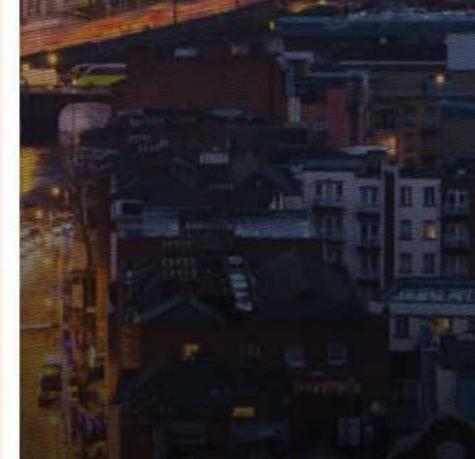


Figure 2.12 Screenshot from visitdublin.com's home page

## 2.2.4 Programming

The calendar of events in the county includes events of national stature as well as smaller specialised or local events showcasing local activity. The *DLR Mountains to Sea Festival*, *Dalkey Book Festival* and *Library Voices* are the largest cultural events in the county, and complement the *Spring into Heritage* and the *Summer of Heritage* events programme run by the Heritage Office of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council.

Other large scale events held in the county include racing at Leopardstown, including the *Leopardstown Racing Festival*, concerts in Marlay Park including *Longitude* and the *Beatyard* festival in Dún Laoghaire.

Sporting events have contributed significant visitor numbers to the county. Sailing provides large attendances from the range of events held each year, including the biennial *Volvo Dublin Regatta* which returns to the county in 2017. *The Curtis Cup* in golf was held at Dún Laoghaire Golf Club in 2016. Belfield is the home of Irish hockey and has held many international competitions, including the *International Hockey Federation Champions*

*Challenge* in 2011. Belfield will host pool stage fixtures for the *Women's Rugby World Cup* in August 2017.

## 2.2.5 Profile

The new *Visit Dublin*<sup>8</sup> website provides visitors with a good overview of the wider Dublin destination, including Dún Laoghaire Rathdown. Graphic presentation is contemporary and clear and the county is presented spatially in terms of "coastal villages"; "things to do in Dún Laoghaire", "Dalkey on Display", in terms of things to do in the mountains; "Head for the Hills"; "Dublin Mountain Walks", and in terms of themed destination experiences such as "Dip into Dublin Bay", "Seize Dublin by the Reins", etc.

The Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council tourism website<sup>9</sup> is also well designed, accessible and contains key information on activities, attractions and locations within Dún Laoghaire Rathdown of interest to the visitor.

However, there is a need for finer grained information and orientation for visitors who have decided to travel from the city centre to Dún

Laoghaire Rathdown. This information is currently presented across a range of publications available online or in print from the *Tourist Information Centre* and in some locations across the county. The Dart stations do not generally contain visitor facing information, with the exception of some mapping at Dalkey and Killiney stations and way-finding monolith signs at various locations around Dún Laoghaire.

## 2.3

### The Performance of Irish Tourism

#### 2.3.1 Volume

The recent return to growth in Ireland's tourism sector has been aided by several key factors including a return to overall economic growth in the country, growth in key overseas tourism markets, as well as trends in exchange rate movements and inflation that have enhanced price competitiveness<sup>10</sup>. Significant growth in the number of overseas visitors to the country

has been recorded since 2012 with Dublin being the most popular tourist destination in Ireland in 2015.



Figure 2.13 Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Themed information (Source: visitdublin.com)

At a regional level, Dublin attracted almost 5 million visitors in 2015, an increase of over 40% in visitor numbers recorded in 2010<sup>11</sup>. Fáilte Ireland does not provide a breakdown of tourist numbers to the Dublin Region at a local authority level, so to obtain an understanding of its existing performance, it is important to

<sup>8</sup> visitdublin.com

<sup>9</sup> dlrtourism.ie

<sup>10</sup> Tourism Facts 2015, Fáilte Ireland

<sup>11</sup> ibid

look at the key attractions within the county and their current performance in terms of visitor numbers. A key objective of this Strategy will be to facilitate (where possible) and promote the monitoring of the key attractions in terms of their performance following the implementation of the Strategy.



Dún Laoghaire Rathdown's natural and cultural landscape (**place**) is one of the county's main draws and assets. Quantifying the volume of visitors to these various natural and cultural attractions will form a key goal of this Strategy as there is limited information available on the existing performance of these assets. In particular, visitor numbers to the beaches are not available. Secondly, the visitor numbers will also include, sometimes substantial levels of local use, particularly in free recreational assets such as Dún Laoghaire Pier or the county's parks. In terms of the county's **product** assets, there are a variety of attractions which have considerable pulling power. Again, data collection has had to be estimated in many cases. The particular case of **Dundrum Town Centre** is a significant attractor of people to the county, recording 18 million visitors per annum. However, the visitor numbers include substantial levels of local and regional shopping and entertainment which is not tourism focussed. Detailed information on the breakdown of local, regional, national and international visitors is not collated or published.

The table below identifies the total visitor numbers at key locations in the county, noting that not all of these visitors will be a tourist.

**Dún Laoghaire Rathdown's natural and cultural landscape (place) is one of the county's main draws and assets.**

| Location                        | Type                 | Number of Visitors | Year     |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Dundrum Town Centre             | Retail               | 18,000,000         | 2016     |
| Dún Laoghaire Pier              | Recreation           | 1,000,000*         | 2016     |
| Cabinteely Park                 | Recreation           | 900,000*           | 2016     |
| Marlay Park                     | Recreation           | 650,000*           | 2016     |
| DLR Lexlcon                     | Culture and Heritage | 457,980            | 2016     |
| Killiney Hill                   | Recreation           | 315,000*           | 2016     |
| Ticknock Forest Park            | Recreation           | 164,000            | 2015     |
| Concerts at Marlay              | Event / Festival     | 160,000            | 2016     |
| Leopardstown Racecourse         | Sport                | 145,000            | 2016     |
| Airfield Estate                 | Attraction           | 116,175            | 2015     |
| Pavilion Theatre                | Culture and Heritage | 70,000             | 2016     |
| James Joyce Tower               | Culture and Heritage | 40,000             | 2015     |
| Kilmashogue Forest Park         | Recreation           | 40,000             | 2015     |
| Dalkey Castle & Heritage Centre | Culture and Heritage | 30,231             | 2015     |
| Johnnie Fox's Pub               | Entertainment        | 30,000*            | Estimate |
| Marine Use – Dún Laoghaire      | Marine Recreation    | 30,000*            | 2016*    |

Table 2.1 Visitor Numbers to Key Locations (Source from attraction where available, entries marked \* estimated by FAC)



Figure 2.14 Johnnie Fox's Pub (Source: Fáilte Ireland)

Adjusting from visitor numbers to tourist numbers presents many difficulties. Notably, the use of assets in the county by the local community does not reflect a tourist function, albeit that local use is using the same assets and it benefits from the availability of attractive places and supporting services such as cafes and restaurants.

Data on 'tourist' numbers varies, is not widely available and represents one significant gap in the information available to analyse performance. Where information is available or can be estimated, the extent of tourist use varies significantly by agency and attraction. For example, data provided in relation to forest parks identifies that up to 60% of the use of *Ticknock Mountain Bike Trail* relates to tourism use and that 5% is from overseas business. The *Mountains to Sea dlr Book Festival*, identified 12% of attendees as visitors to the county and 2% as overseas visitors. Research carried out by the Dublin Chamber of Commerce

in 2003 in relation to concerts, identified that 50% of attendees are from outside the Dublin Region, with 21% of attendees from outside the country. Horse Racing Ireland, in examining attendees to racing events at Leopardstown, found that 15% of visitors are from outside Dublin, including 9% from abroad.

While a strict 'tourist' use may not apply directly to the majority of users of *Dundrum Town Centre*, there is an element of users who visit the centre as part of a 'day away', which is in the nature of tourism use. However, given the lack of data available and its primary function as a retail and service centre to a wide catchment, it has not been considered in the following estimate of tourist visitors.

The variability in these estimates highlights the potential lack of consistency in estimating the number and contribution to the economy of visitors to the area to the main attractions. Noting these caveats and

the lack of any data on some attractions, such as visitors to beaches and villages, Table 2.2 below highlights where the primary tourist activity is focussed in the county.

Again, it is noted that the tourist and visitor information provides an informative but incomplete picture of the overall tourist environment, which would benefit from a better understanding of the pattern of tourist use of other assets, such as spending time in villages, where they would not be captured in visitor estimates to particular attractions or events. The table shows how recreational use dominates the mix of tourist activity in the county, from walking Dún Laoghaire Pier to more strenuous and intensive activities such as active water-based uses, or walking in the mountains. This is combined with cultural and heritage assets and entertainment and sporting attractions, spatially balanced across the county, with the primary concentrations of tourist visit to Dún Laoghaire, the mountains

and in the parks and recreational assets. Dalkey, Killiney and Dundrum also support significant tourist activity.



Figure 2.15 Bandstand on Dún Laoghaire Pier

| Location                        | Type                 | Number of Visitors |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Dún Laoghaire Pier              | Recreation           | 120,000            |
| Ticknock                        | Recreation           | 99,000             |
| Airfield Estate                 | Attraction           | 80,000             |
| Concerts at Marlay              | Event / Festival     | 80,000             |
| DLR Lexlcon                     | Culture and Heritage | 55,000             |
| James Joyce Tower and Museum    | Culture and Heritage | 36,000             |
| Cabinteely Park                 | Recreation           | 36,000             |
| Kilmashogue (DM)                | Recreation           | 34,000             |
| Johnnie Fox's Pub               | Entertainment        | 30,000             |
| Dalkey Castle & Heritage Centre | Culture and Heritage | 27,000             |
| Marlay Park                     | Recreation           | 26,000             |
| Marine Use – Dún Laoghaire      | Marine Recreation    | 26,000             |
| Leopardstown Racecourse         | Sport                | 22,000             |
| Barnaslingan                    | Recreation           | 21,000             |
| Killiney Hill                   | Recreation           | 13,000             |

Table 2.2 Estimated tourist numbers (Source: FAC)



Figure 2.16 View of Dalkey Island from Dillon's Park (Source: Fáilte Ireland)

## Cruise Tourism<sup>12</sup>

Given that the majority of cruises to Ireland originate in Britain, the country of residence of over a third of passengers is British. North Americans account for 37% of passengers to Ireland with the majority of these on a 'fly-cruise' originating in Britain. German passengers also account for a significant proportion of passengers to Ireland at 12%, with the remainder of passengers arriving from elsewhere in Europe or the rest of world. While 55% of passengers are aged 60+, cruise ships have also started to attract a younger age profile and this is reflected in the fact that almost one in five passengers arriving on cruise ships to Ireland are under 44 years of age. Of passengers who disembark at Irish ports, four out of five have already decided what they want to do before they reach the port. The key source of information which influences a passenger's decision to disembark is a cruise liner's cruise brochure. Guide books and recommendations from family and friends also significantly encourage passengers to disembark. Passengers place greatest emphasis on the proximity of the

town / city / tourist sites to the port and good weather conditions in encouraging them to disembark.

On average, passengers spend €71 daily during their time disembarked from cruise ships in Ireland. Expenditure by crew is also significant considering those that disembark spend an average of €48 daily. This compares to an average per diem expenditure of €72 for holidaymakers who have arrived by air or ferry to Ireland. While the two expenditure figures appear quite similar, the per diem expenditure for holidaymakers includes spend on accommodation. Passengers who have been identified as the bigger daily spenders include those aged 18-44 (€99) and those travelling in family parties (€118). Passengers on shorter cruises (€97) and who are at the middle stage of their cruise itinerary (€89) also tend to spend more.

<sup>12</sup> Findings in this section relate to 'Cruise Tourism to Ireland Research Report', Fáilte Ireland, 2012

### 2.3.2 Value

Based on the attractions, events and festivals in the county, and using the estimates of visitor and tourist numbers set out above, an estimate of the contribution to the local economy was developed, based on direct spending in visiting the attractions and events. This contribution is in the order of €65m per annum.

The direct contribution of the accommodation sector has been included. This is based on average room rates for each classification of hotel, applying average occupancy rates (available for the Dublin Region) for the number of rooms available in the county and factoring in associated spend on food and other services (based on Fáilte Ireland national averages). This corresponds to a contribution of €105m per annum.



**€300 million**  
The value of tourism to Dún Laoghaire Rathdown's local economy per annum

Allowing for secondary and induced effects, this puts the value of tourism to the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown economy in the order of €300m.

Comparing across the region, the overall contribution of tourism to Fingal's economy is approximately €500m<sup>13</sup>, while South Dublin County Council estimates that €26m is generated

from tourist expenditure and that the industry also supports 2,500 jobs in the county<sup>14</sup>.

The potential of the tourism sector to contribute to wider economic benefit in the county and wider region is significant. The **Grow Dublin Taskforce**<sup>15</sup> identifies a number of key impacts of tourism to the economy:

- Every €1m of tourist expenditure helps to support 34 tourism jobs;
- Every 63 international tourists help support one tourism job; and
- 1,000 additional tourists support 15 jobs in the tourism industry.

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown, as part of a wider city region, is also likely to have significant flows of tourism expenditure both into and out of the county, as accommodation, eating and drinking, entertainment and other services will not always coalesce with the tourism destinations.

### 2.3.3 Satisfaction

**Fáilte Ireland's Holidaymaker Study 2013: Dublin** revealed that Dublin proves to be an attractive destination for holidaymakers, with many willing to recommend it as a place to visit. The survey illustrated that there were places to visit and activities to enjoy for all three segments of the market. It also found that **'history/culture', 'visit family/friends'** and **'beautiful scenery'** were the top three reasons for choosing Dublin as their destination.



**58% of holidaymakers used public transport to get around**

In relation to the aspects of Dublin that they were interested in, 78% of holidaymakers noted **'visiting Dublin's coastal villages/suburbs'**, 72% stated **'exploring the countryside close to Dublin'** and 47% noted **'spending time in the mountains'**. Notably, Dún Laoghaire Rathdown allows tourists to enjoy each of these three activities.

The things that holidaymakers did while in Dublin varied, although going on a **'boat trip'** was the most popular activity. The top 8 are listed below. All of these popular activities are available in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown, providing opportunities throughout the county for local communities to benefit and for holidaymakers to experience and enjoy all that is has to offer.



**Boat trips: the most popular activity for holidaymakers**

| Activity of Holidaymakers                 | Proportion of Holidaymakers |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Boat trip                                 | 7%                          |
| Hiking / hillwalking                      | 6%                          |
| Cycling                                   | 6%                          |
| Golf                                      | 5%                          |
| Attending a sporting event                | 5%                          |
| Fishing                                   | 1%                          |
| Water based activity (excluding swimming) | 1%                          |
| Equestrian pursuits                       | 1%                          |

Table 2.3 Activities of Holidaymakers  
(Source: Fáilte Ireland 2014)

As shown below, museums and galleries were the most popular places to visit, followed by historic properties and interpretative centres.

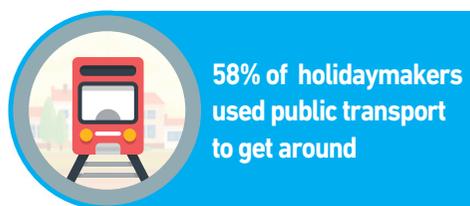
<sup>13</sup> Fingal Tourism Strategy 2015-2018, Fingal County Council, 2015

<sup>14</sup> South Dublin Tourism Strategy, South Dublin County Council, 2015

<sup>15</sup> Information in this section is derived from 'Holidaymaker Study 2013: Dublin', Fáilte Ireland, 2014

| Where Did Holidaymakers Visit?          | Proportion of Holidaymakers |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Museum/Gallery                          | 56%                         |
| Historic house/Castle                   | 42%                         |
| Interpretative centre                   | 63%                         |
| Garden                                  | 30%                         |
| National park                           | 17%                         |
| Traditional music/danceperformance      | 13%                         |
| Farmer's market                         | 7%                          |
| Non-traditional cultural event/festival | 7%                          |

Table 2.4 Where Holidaymakers Visit (Source: Fáilte Ireland 2014)



Mobility and accessibility is of particular importance in the Dublin Region. 58% of Dublin's holidaymakers used public transport to get around, 13% used private coach tours and 7% hired a car. Holidaymakers felt that transport to and from the

area and within the area was 'good/very good', scoring 4.32 and 4.15 out of 5 respectively<sup>16</sup>. The experience of holidaymakers was very positive with the 'friendliness of the local people', 'natural environment (landscape)' and 'availability of things to see and do' averaging scores of 4.37, 4.36 and 4.25<sup>17</sup>. Accordingly, 37% of holidaymakers to Dublin said that they would recommend Dublin for a holiday<sup>18</sup>, with those who would 'highly recommend' it, listing the following reasons for doing so:

| Reason                         | Percentage of Holidaymakers |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| People, nice and friendly      | 76%                         |
| Beautiful scenery, countryside | 61%                         |
| Lots of attractions            | 53%                         |
| History, culture               | 52%                         |
| Traditional Irish culture      | 45%                         |

Table 2.3 Reason to Recommend Dublin (Source: Fáilte Ireland 2014)

The positive experience of holidaymakers to Dublin is clearly evident by the fact that 47% of holidaymakers hoped to return in the future, while 52% said that they would definitely come back within a few years.

## 2.4

### The Nature of the Sector

The '*Grow Dublin Tourism Alliance*' was established under Fáilte Ireland to develop a cohesive brand identity for the Dublin Region. Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council has supported the Alliance work on international tourism promotion.

At a local level, *Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council's Corporate Plan 2015-2019* and the *Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021* (LECP) identify goals related to promoting and developing tourism within the county as part of the wider region. The LECP includes as one of the key actions, the setting up of a county Tourism Working Group. There are also actions related to supporting and facilitating tourism development for the county in the context of '*Destination Dublin*', including creating and promoting tourism trails centred on food heritage, marine, ecology, mountain experiences and various literary and cultural attractions. The Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee's (SPC) remit includes 'Tourism Strategy' as well as monitoring the implementation of the LECP.

Currently, the Economic, Community and Cultural Development Department supports Tourism Promotion work including managing the Council's '*DLR Place Ambassadors*', providing business supports to tourism providers along with relevant training and networking events, and liaising

with Fáilte Ireland's Dublin Co-ordinators and other Dublin local authorities. The council funds the management and operation of the *Tourist Information Centre*, which handles up to 1,000 walk-in queries per month and also manages the [www.dlrltourism.ie](http://www.dlrltourism.ie) website. The website is a key platform for promoting tourism.

The council also funds a range of other initiatives, such as pedestrian coastal way-finding signage, networking activities for tourism providers and on-going localised marketing and promotion. The *Arts Office*, *Heritage Office* and *Sports Partnership* work closely with local groups to coordinate activity.

The *Dublin Mountains Partnership* comprises the local authorities of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown, South Dublin and Wicklow, together with Coillte and a range of voluntary groups. Dún Laoghaire Chamber has a tourism subcommittee bringing members together to network and develop coordinated actions. A number of the key visitor attractions in the county work closely with Fáilte Ireland on training and networking.

<sup>16</sup> Average scores based on a scale of 1=very poor to 5=very good.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*

<sup>18</sup> Those who would highly recommend Dublin less those who would not recommend Dublin



Figure 3.1 Kayaking by Dalkey Island

# 3. Challenges and Opportunities

## 3.1

### Strengths, Issues, Opportunities, Threats

*The evidence set out above, along with the outcomes of the Tourism sector workshop held on February 1st and widespread one-to-one 'strategic conversations', gives a good understanding of the current position, existing challenges and future opportunities for developing tourism in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown – these are summarised below:*

#### Strengths

- **Good connectivity** – road, rail, airport, sea, Wicklow Way and Dublin Mountain Way, forest trails, County Cycle Strategy, including off-road routes (e.g. the Metals);
- **Natural assets and attributes in an urban setting** – Range, variety, location and combination: beaches, rocky shoreline, fresh sea air, hills, mountains, rivers, salt marsh, woodland, bog, sea, two islands, close-up wildlife at sea and on land, an urban farm, rural farms;
- **An accessible waterfront** – three harbours, including: Dún Laoghaire, Coliemore and Bullock, as well as coastal parks and promenades;
- **Compact urban villages and towns** – wide ranging of retail and food offer;
- **Green credentials** – the county has a growing reputation for a clean and green environment (e.g. UNESCO Biosphere designation for Dublin Bay, blue flag beaches);
- **Green infrastructure** – continually evolving network of green spaces and green connections:
  - High quality, well-used parks – new ones coming on stream at base of mountains, Co Co Markets programme; Two significant way-marked trails (Dublin Mountains Way and Wicklow Way), a strong partnership in place for management of mountains and new greenways in planning;
- Good and growing **reputation for cultural heritage** – numerous visitor centres, tours and great events in heritage buildings:
  - Connections with globally recognised literary figures three literary festivals and other regular literary events;
  - Musical heritage and famous names;
  - Contemporary art and practising artists;
- **Architectural heritage** from various periods:
  - New developments – iconic waterside library building with art gallery, new Dún Laoghaire baths gallery, café and swimming jetty;
- Good track record in hosting variously scaled **events and specialised festivals**; music, maritime, film, racing, sports, sailing;
- **Active water sports scene** – sailing, rowing, kayaking, paddle boarding, wild swimming, diving, power boating, sea angling;
- Growing variety of **activities** in Mountains – Zipit, Ski centre, etc.; and
- Dublin's only **racecourse**.

## Key Issues

### Market awareness of the offer available:

- Positioning of the destination not apparent;

### Awareness of and access to the product – where to go, what to do, what’s on:

- Opportunities to participate in activities not clear;
- Awareness of enabling infrastructure (e.g. looped off road cycle routes (current and emerging));
- Accessibility of parts of the harbour/-Gut and maritime heritage features;

### Information, wayfinding and orientation – strategic entry points, key departure points and in-destination arrival points:

- Wayfinding (e.g. around Dalkey and Killiney Hill);
- Gaps in continuity of pedestrian infrastructure e.g. between Seapoint and Sandycove;
- Experiential connections between coastal edge and main food/shopping strip;

### Dominant NW/SE road infrastructure – central part of county and a sense of a “place to pass through”;

### Supporting facilities and services –

- Accommodation stock – capacity issues during festivals / events; deficit of camping/hostel accommodation in mountains;
- Limited range of the food offer/ visitor services at some key coastal areas (e.g. Seapoint, Killiney and in

mountain villages/rural areas);

- Public transport links – Infrequency of Dublin Bus mountain services;

### Evening economy – availability of night time offer in Dún Laoghaire town; and

### Lack of detailed information and data on tourism performance and consumer insights in the county (e.g. visitor numbers at many attractions and events; performance of the sector, visitor satisfaction levels).

### Proximity to Dublin city centre;

### Public transport links that are modern, frequent, rail based;

### A compact combination of an accessible coast and attractive uplands interspersed with towns and villages;

### Brand alignment – the destination can truly live the “Dublin – Breath of Fresh Air” brand:

- Pivotal location between Dublin Region and Wicklow/Ireland’s Ancient East;

### Market-product match – scope to tap into and deliver on prioritised markets for the wider destination in particular leisure tourism segments, business visitors and the cruise holiday market:

- Visitor motivation – evidence of desire for visitors to Dublin to access coastal villages, countryside close to the city and experience the open water on boat trips;

## Key Opportunities

### Green infrastructure and off-road cycling infrastructure links between key concentrations of assets:

- The East coast trail – specifically the section linking Seapoint and Sandycove (or meanwhile low cost interventions along proposed route);
- Plans for Dublin Mountains Way extension to Shankill Dart station and new walking loops from Dublin Mountains Way to Glencullen and Kiltarnan (Summer 2017);
- The new Dodder Greenway and links into the county;

### Places of learning – IADT (and National Film School), UCD, Blackrock Further Education, Irish National Sailing and Powerboat School – student population, collaborations, research activity and creative output, international students;

### Interpretive possibilities – a rich seam of maritime, literary and cultural heritage for content creation, interpretive storytelling, thematic experience development:

- The archaeological landscapes of Cherrywood and the Dublin Mountains;
- Opportunity sites e.g. Commissioners of Irish Lights HQ – tours, interpretation, direct access to maritime “infrastructure”;

### Strong social and community structure and commercial sector :

- Key hubs – the role of places, which are already a draw for visitors, in dispersing visitors – e.g. Dundrum Town Centre; Scope to neighbouring facilities to channel/orientate visitors to the destination (e.g. New Hellfire Club Mountains orientation centre, Enniskerry); and

### Supporting visitor services – opportunities for the development of accommodation, food, views of the water, seating, etc. along existing and new sections of the network of walking and cycling routes and in towns and villages.

## Threats

### Pressure on visitor management – increasing numbers of visitors arriving by car to coastal/mountain areas – congestion at peak times and weekends:

- Little scope for expansion of mountain car parks due to gradient/land ownership;

### Limited regional spread – concentration of visitors without dispersal – performance across the county is uneven, with some areas and attractions performing significantly better than others;

### Increasingly competitive environment – pressure on pay-in visitor attractions when similar free attractions are also available;

- **Capacity constraints** including; accommodation, visitor congestion in key areas, higher visitor numbers and impact on mountain trails management, staff resources, and visitor services in general:
  - Sustainability of the available resource (e.g. high reliance on volunteer input to Dublin Mountains Partnership);
  - Government policy change in relation to employment schemes (high staffing of visitor attractions);
- **Environmental impact** - developments or pollution that can negatively affect green, clean, “fresh air/clean water” image;  
**Ambiguous identity** – “Dún Laoghaire Rathdown” not a widely-known identity, doesn’t appear to resonate; and
- **Engagement challenge** – failure to appreciate, document, champion and communicate the contribution of tourism to the local economy in terms of economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits and the role of tourism infrastructure in delivering on the broader health, recreation, education and quality of life agenda.



Figure 3.2 Dart travelling along the coastline

## 3.2

### Key Conclusions and Priorities for the Development of Tourism

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown is rich in the assets that will appeal to the visitor markets currently being targeted internationally. Its prime asset is the **extent, variety and proximity** to the city centre of a range of natural habitats and designed landscapes, and all the activities in these natural spaces that are potentially available to the visitor. **The global recognition** of the big literary stars of the county provide a way to shine a light on the wider literary heritage and the current vital cultural scene. These two key factors, along with the **growing reputation** for innovative delivery of urban green infrastructure, greenways and recognition of both the marine and land areas as a UNESCO Biosphere gives Dún Laoghaire Rathdown much to offer the visitor.

In terms of the **priorities** for the development of tourism the challenge is to;

- Harness this potential and make all of these aspects of the offer promotable so that the destination can position itself in the minds of the prospective traveller as a compelling and distinctive proposition;
- Make the offer accessible – in ways which enable easy decision-making about where to go, how to get around and what to do;

- Curate a series of signature experiences which showcase the distinctive characteristics of the destination to best effect and provide opportunities for visitors to 'consume the product' – participate in activities – in, on and beside the water and in the mountains, immersing themselves in the culture of the destination at dedicated venues and more generally in the towns and villages and participate in events and festivals which bring the distinctive experiences on offer to life; and
- Provide an integrated offer, where parts of the city close to nature provide spontaneous activities, a range of food options, a distinctive retail offer and a chance to really get into the stories of the place.

Some parts of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown are doing this well already, but these places can experience congestion. The solution to this is to ensure that visitors have access to all the options within a walkable distance, a pleasurable cycle trip or a short hop on the Dart or Luas from their arrival point. This will ensure the county not only attracts, but also disperses and spreads the benefits of the visitor economy in a way that works for the visitor and for the people of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown.

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown is a spatial concept that visitors will struggle with and, therefore, it will be more beneficial to focus on distinct (and distinctive) places which can make sense

as standalone destinations for the visitor. This Strategy takes as a key foundation that the Dart and Luas will form the key visitor access routes – but new projects coming on stream such as the Hellfire club orientation centre (in the adjacent South Dublin County Council area), the Dodder and other greenways provide new opportunities for visitors to access great assets of the county.

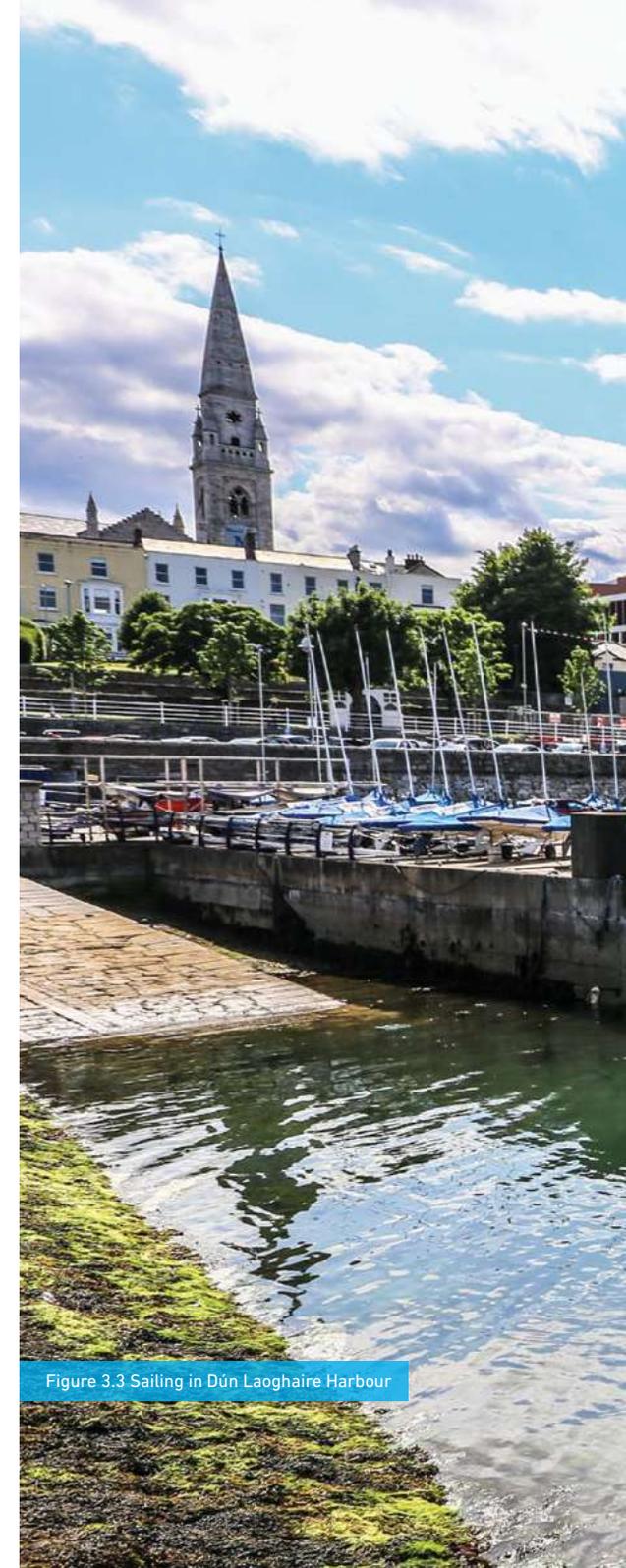


Figure 3.3 Sailing in Dún Laoghaire Harbour





Figure 4.1 Dublin Mountains from the sea

# 4. Vision and Strategic Objectives

## 4.1

### Introduction

The vision for tourism for Dún Laoghaire Rathdown has to have at its core, a distinctive proposition that will motivate visitors to come to the destination, make it easy and enjoyable for them to get here and to get around and encounter a choice of readily accessible, unexpected experiences all within easy reach. The purpose in doing this is clear. If the destination offers compelling reasons for people to visit and delivers unsurpassed experiences that will motivate them to return, they will share their positive experiences with their friends, family and online and become enthusiastic promoters of the place.

## 4.2

### Vision and Strategic objectives

#### 4.2.1 The Vision for Dún Laoghaire Rathdown as a tourism destination:

**A highly attractive and accessible tourism destination, steeped in culture and maritime heritage, combining a breath-taking coast, inviting villages and towns, and Dublin Mountains adventures, delivering memorable and distinct experiences for visitors.**

#### 4.2.2 Key Objectives – In Summary

The Strategy is underpinned by five strategic objectives each supported by a range of proposals.

- Objective 1.** Enhance journey, sense of arrival and information at key arrival points to raise awareness of what is on offer to encourage visitors to stay, explore and return.
- Objective 2.** Connect and raise awareness of the network of key visitor experiences from the coast, the mountains, the towns and villages and connect the network of visitor destinations where possible.
- Objective 3.** Develop a suite of signature experiences – activities, products and programmes – to showcase the unique characteristics of the destination, meet the needs of its target markets and substantiate the overall brand proposition.
- Objective 4.** Collaborate with key stakeholders to develop an integrated tourism offer and effectively address key challenges to support the on-going growth and development of the tourism industry.
- Objective 5.** Implement a new Marketing Strategy for the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown proposition, leveraging the Destination Dublin brand to enhance awareness of the visitor experiences and attract more tourists to the county.

### 4.2.3 Key Objectives – In Detail

The following sections present the supporting rationale and the main proposals to enable each objective to be realised.



**Objective 1**

Enhance journey, sense of arrival and information at key arrival points to raise awareness of what is on offer to encourage visitorsto stay, explore and return.

Fáilte Ireland, with the four Dublin local authorities and the National Transport Authority are currently working together to identify ways to improve access for visitors around Dublin. Dún Laoghaire Rathdown is already in a position to provide visitor journeys that are about more than getting from 'A to B'. The place can offer journeys that are experiences in themselves – modern, clean and green movement options with great views that bring visitors closer to nature.

By integrating public transport networks, existing and planned greenways, green infrastructure and trails, and most importantly communicating clearly with visitors, journeys to and within Dún Laoghaire Rathdown will be seamless and pleasurable.

First impressions are lasting impressions, and by pinpointing visitor arrival points, the county can respond to their needs in these crucial locations. Better way-finding and walkability around key public transport

step-off points will knit the journey and the nearby activities, attractions and visitor services into a seamless, enjoyable experience. Visitors will find information and orientation just where it's needed, with great things to do and see nearby, great food and easy links between great places along the coast, and into the mountains.

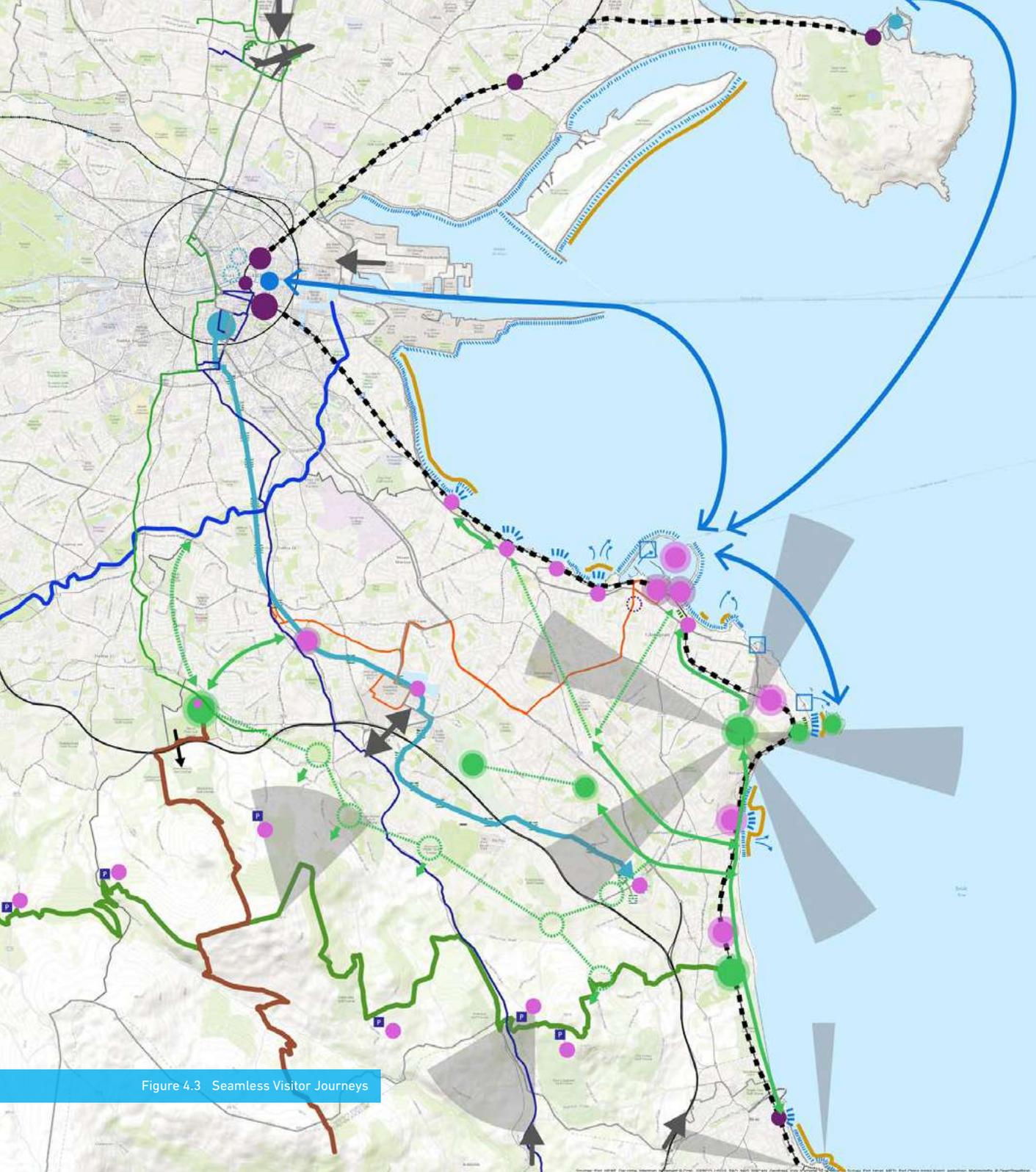
The consultation process identified projects coming on stream that when joined up with existing networks will provide exciting connectivity options across the county. New trails such as those linking the **Dublin Mountains Way** with Glencullen and Kilternan in Summer 2017 suggest opportunities for walker focussed enterprise within the villages. The new greenways planned for the Cherrywood, Shankill and Ballinteer areas open up the archaeological heritage of the area and new ways into the Dublin Mountains, and will provide wider options for off-road cycling and walking in the county. The Strategy has focussed on understanding and mapping:

**First impressions are lasting impressions, and by pinpointing visitor arrival points, the county can respond to their needs in these crucial locations.**

- **Strategic Arrival Points** – their first arrival point in the wider destination;
- **Departure Points** – places where the visitor might start their journey to Dún Laoghaire Rathdown;
- **In-Destination Arrival Points** – the visitor's first step into and first impression of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown; and
- **Key Connections** – the easiest and most pleasurable ways of travelling to and around the county.



Figure 4.2 Pleasurable Visitor Journeys (Source: Fáilte Ireland)



## Legend

### Strategic Arrival Points



### Key Departure Points

- Dart
- LUAS
- By Sea



### In-destination Arrival Point

- Priority Arrival Points
- Secondary Arrival Points



### Key Connections

- Dart
- LUAS
- Dodder Greenway
- The Dublin Way
- Wicklow Way
- Key Parks and Future Green Infrastructure Links
- Greenways/Off Road Cycle Routes



### Access Points

- Harbour
- Public Access Points
- Accessible Beach
- Water Access



### Bus Routes

- 16
- 44
- 75
- Aircoach



### Visual Connections



Figure 4.3 Seamless Visitor Journeys



Figure 4.4 Killiney Hill (Source: Fáilte Ireland)



**Strategic Arrival Points** – The strategic arrival points are; Dublin Airport and Aircoach routes, Dublin Port, and – primarily in relation to the domestic visitor market – the road network, particularly the M50 junctions. These places are the first opportunity to communicate with the visitor. It is acknowledged that the two Aircoach routes offer a direct, easy, hourly link into the county from the airport, but most visitors will be starting their journey to Dún Laoghaire Rathdown from within the city centre.

Some visitors will travel by car or coach, but this Strategy focusses on sustainable transport options for a number of reasons:

- Most tourists to Dublin will not use a car – of UK visitors, only 13% bring a car, while for Mainland European visitors this proportion is 30%, for US visitors, 37% hire a car;
- Dún Laoghaire Rathdown is lucky to have both the Dart and Luas, as well as regular bus services, linking key areas of appeal;
- Parts of the coastal and mountain areas already experience traffic congestion at peak times; and
- The use of public transport re-affirms this part of Dublin as modern, green and easy to get around.

**Departure Points** – Bearing this in mind, when visitors to Dublin have decided to come to Dún Laoghaire Rathdown, a number of Departure Points are likely. These are places where visitors to the county can be informed of how to get here and how to get around. The likely departure points include:

| BY DART  | BY LUAS   | BY SEA  | ON FOOT  |
|--|---|---|--|
| Pearse Dart station  | St. Stephens Green  | Sir John Rogerson's Quay (Dublin Bay Cruises) | Dublin Mountains Orientation Centre, Hellfire Club |
| Tara Street Dart Station   | O'Connell St (under construction)   |   |  |
| Connolly Dart Station  | Parnell Sq. (thematic links with new cultural centre, Writers' Centre, James Joyce Centre) (under construction), proposed Ulysses Centre at St. Stephen's Green |   |  |
| Raheny Dart Station (links to Bull Island future Visitor Centre)   |   |   |  |
| Howth Dart station   |   |   |  |
| As well as physical connections, thematic connections with the city centre are also important to visitors, such as those based on places related to James Joyce's Ulysses. |   |   |  |

Table 4.1 Departure Points to access Dún Laoghaire Rathdown

**In-Destination Arrival Points** – At some point in the journey, the visitor will experience a sense of arrival – the in-destination arrival points. These arrival points and their surrounds will require:

- Orientation, signing, wayfinding and interpretive storytelling – the welcome, the re-assurance that comes with clear directions, the absence of confusing and dangerous crossings, hints about other ways to explore the place;
- The opportunities to engage in activities – the things that visitors can do spontaneously, immerse themselves literally and metaphorically;
- The food experience – ensuring that places are geared up to provide for the needs of the different audiences – good food to take your time over, good food on the go, simple pleasures – the best ice-cream in Dublin;
- The retail offer – meeting the needs of visitors – to browse, to purchase the kit needed, to buy the book, to pick up lovely things which are only of this place; and
- The celebratory experience – as often as possible, an invitation extended to visitors to launch right into a festival, an event that showcases what the place has to offer, what it is known for, what it wants to be known for.

| Priority arrival points  |
|--|
| Dún Laoghaire Dart station                                       |
| Dalkey Dart station  |
| Shankill Dart Station  |
| Killiney Dart station  |
| Balally/Dundrum Luas stops                                       |
| Dún Laoghaire Marina   |
| Dún Laoghaire Harbour (Dublin Bay Cruises)                       |
| Secondary arrival points   |
| Boosterstown Dart station  |
| Blackrock Dart station   |
| Seapoint Dart station  |
| Salthill and Monkstown Dart station                              |
| Sandycove and Glasthule Dart station                             |
| Marlay Park (and start point for the Wicklow Way)                |
| Dublin Mountains public car parks/ trailheads                    |
| Sandyford Luas stop (and racecourse shuttle bus)                 |
| Cherrywood Luas stop (pending future park and trail development) |

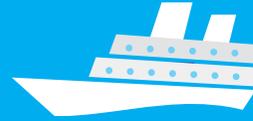
Table 4.2 In-Destination Arrival Points to Dún Laoghaire Rathdown

**Key connections** – Knitting all this together are the key connections – how we want visitors to navigate their way around, at a pace by which the landscape and stories of the place are best experienced. Thinking about journeys in this way the most important connections are provided by:

- Dart, Luas and strategically relevant bus routes such as the 75 (between Dún Laoghaire and Dundrum), the 16 (to Marlay Park) and the 44 to the heart of the mountains (noting that this route would benefit from a more frequent service), as well as the 46A and 145;
- Off-road walk/cycle connections including the Metals and existing/planned routes as set out in the County Development Plan and County Cycle Strategy;
- The Dublin Mountains Way, Wicklow Way and the Dodder Greenway;
- Forest trails/rights of way on the mountains and their connections with current and future parks; and
- Key parks and future green infrastructure links.

**Visual connections** are important as an orientating factor – the full views of Dublin Bay and Killiney Bay, the elevated views over the city, the views across the mountains into Wicklow. By mapping the key views within this part of Dublin, places can be identified where our visitors can see how Dublin makes sense, how it sits in its bay, how it is sheltered by its mountains. Visitors can see where they are, where they've been (capture that selfie) and feel like it has been "well worth the climb".

**By mapping the key views within this part of Dublin, places can be identified where our visitors can see how Dublin makes sense, how it sits in its bay, how it is sheltered by its mountains.**



## Objective 2

Connect and raise awareness of the network of key visitor experiences from the coast, the mountains, the towns and villages and connect the network of visitor destinations where possible.

The analysis of how visitors can most easily move around the county, along with an understanding of the spatial distribution of places and activities which appeal to the target markets, suggests a number of **Key Areas of Focus** across the county. These are the places that are:

- Easily accessed, and
- Have the potential to offer a cohesive set of experiences to the visitor.

By using easy visitor journeys as a starting point, a meaningful spread of benefits can be achieved. This approach connects towns and villages as places in themselves and uses them as points of orientation to the wider offer. It brings the network of parks, greenways and green infrastructure into play and offers the visitor a choice of easy pathways, cycleways and railways across the county and shines a light on new ways to get into the mountains.

The Key **Areas of Focus** arising from this approach are:

- **The sea, the sea... Dún Laoghaire (from Seapoint to Sandycove)** – on, in and by the water, the Piers, iconic ice-cream and fresh fish, local food markets, art at the sea, Dublin’s bijou beach and classic wild swim, shallow sheltered bay swimming and rock-pooling at Seapoint, good shopping (designer/artisan), tracing famous words, living Ulysses’ opening chapter, Lexlcon – a new cathedral to books, playgrounds, linked urban villages, seeing how the seas work – sea-faring history and how the seas were and are managed now (Captain Bligh, Irish commissioners of lights, live weather info on pier, lighthouses, harbours (and the story of Dublin granite)...), a long history of enjoying the water – here, there’s any water activity you can think of (swimming, kayaking, diving, sailing, powerboating, paddle boarding, competitions and events...) – easily accessed in Blue Flag waters, easy and historic walking/cycling links to Dalkey, Killiney Hill and the uplands...
- **A perfect coastal village... Dalkey and Killiney Hill** – the tip of the Bay, easy climbs – astonishing views, Dublin’s first harbour, castles protecting the incoming

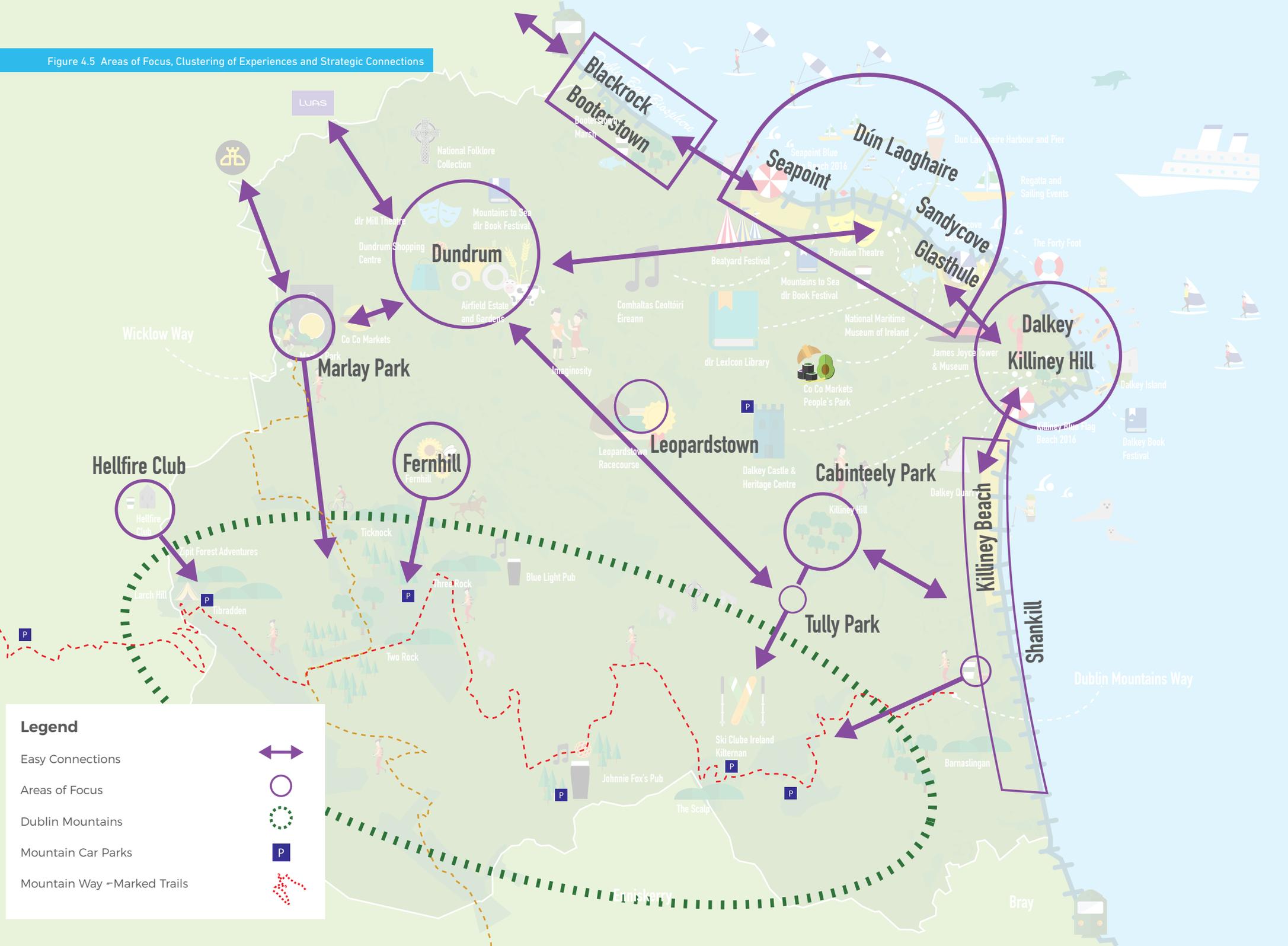
goods from mountain raiders, pretty village streets – fishermen’s cottages and rockstar mansions, great eating and drinking (world food restaurants, Victorian pubs, cafes, picnic food pick-up for eating at the sea/on the hill), trips to Dalkey Island, walks up and around Killiney Hill and woodland, living history at the Castle, iconic views across Dublin Bay and Dublin Mountains, secret coastal pocket parks...

- **The faraway nearby... The Dublin Mountains** – walk from the city through parks to the mountains, swim in the morning and ski in the afternoon, pass through the ages along the archaeology trail, hill-walking with great pit stops along the way, traditional music, a pint and panoramic views, clear orientation and way-finding, intriguing places to stay... Hurl yourself down on a bike, go bouldering, zipline through the trees, or just trot along... Continue onwards to Wicklow and Ireland’s Ancient East...
- **The bay for those in the know... Killiney Beach/Shankill (and entry point to the mountains)** – Endless shingle beach and wide shimmering sea, seismic stories, sea angling, wooded hill slopes, you never know who you’ll meet, the sweep to Bray, views to the Sugarloaf, the church of the seven

daughters, start point for the mountains trek...

- **Where the ground shifts under your feet... Blackrock/Boooterstown** – where the first railway in Ireland ran over the sea, some of the last remaining salt marshes in Dublin bay, flying visitors from Greenland, Victorian seashore park, boutique shopping and fab coffee, a secret Michelin star, the newest bit of Dublin emerging from the salty bay water, where the ground beneath your feet shifts – limestone to granite, water to land...
- **A town of two parts... – Dundrum and Airfield Estate** – an historic house with a tale of two ladies where the food is fresh from the working farm, Ireland’s largest covered shopping centre – milking cows and Harvey Nics within a hare’s breath... Also the Yeats sisters, Joyce’s bells...
- **Joining the dots** – Using the key parks (existing and planned), green spaces and the future green infrastructure network to join the main areas, strengthening existing and making new links into the mountains, which along with the Luas, Dart and strategic bus network provide the visitor with a range of options to suit their energy levels.

Figure 4.5 Areas of Focus, Clustering of Experiences and Strategic Connections



**Legend**

Easy Connections



Areas of Focus



Dublin Mountains



Mountain Car Parks



Mountain Way - Marked Trails



Mountain Way - Marked Trails



**A market focussed approach** - This Strategy considers visitors in their widest context – domestic and overseas business and leisure visitors, overnighters and the day-trippers. In addition, it considers residents in their capacity as users of the area’s cultural and visitor assets.

These audiences can be separated into three main market groupings:

- Overseas and domestic leisure visitors including;
  - day and staying visitors;
  - group travel;
  - business visitors returning with family and friends;
  - residents in pursuit of recreation;
  - visiting friends and relatives (VFR);
- Overseas and domestic business visitors;
  - conference and business event delegates;
  - trade show exhibitors;
  - working visitors - event delegates or those on short- term work trips; and
- Overseas cruise visitors.

**Segment driven** – Within these groups, the Strategy directs its focus where it will have the greatest impact – at those markets which have been identified as having significant value and/ or growth potential for the destination. City

tourism and a trend towards taking short breaks in particular, is growing in popularity amongst visitors from Dublin’s traditional, volume-producing markets, such as Great Britain, France, Germany and, to a lesser extent, the USA. The main focus going forward is to grow visitor numbers and value from mainland Europe and North America, as well as to consolidate and accelerate growth from Great Britain. In terms of the particular segments which have performed well and will continue to be regarded as the best prospects for the Dublin Region, the following have been prioritised by Fáilte Ireland:

- Leisure Tourism
  - Social Energisers
  - Culturally Curious
- Business Tourism
- Events Tourism
- Cruise Tourism

The **leisure tourism** segments identified as offering the greatest potential for the Dublin Region (Social Energisers, aged 19 to 30; and Culturally Curious, aged 44+) have been selected because they offer a good potential return on marketing investment. They represent a significant number of outbound travellers in key geographical markets which have consistently delivered the most leisure visitors to Dublin. They have an interest in the types of experiences that Dún Laoghaire Rathdown can offer and are relatively resilient travellers who can not only afford to travel, but are also more likely than most to consider travelling outside the main season

thereby spreading the benefits they bring and helping businesses maintain their financial sustainability.

**Business tourism** is a fast-growing lucrative market segment which has continued to perform well even in difficult times. Ireland is regarded as being well positioned relative to value, individuality and a mid-range capacity for conferences and events. The type of events that Ireland predominately attracts includes conferences, corporate meetings, trade fairs and incentive trips. Dublin dominates as a location. In terms of the association market segment for example, Ireland attracts 2.5% of this international segment with Dublin attracting 71% of this business. Recent survey results have revised the value of each Business Tourism delegate upwards to €1,643 in 2016 (up from €1,500 in 2015 and €1,400 in 2014), which is two- to three-times the value of a leisure tourist. On average, each delegate extends their stay to nearly three days on top of their business commitment, affording them the opportunity to mix business and pleasure. Apart from the university and those hotels within Dún Laoghaire Rathdown which currently accommodate the needs of the business visitor market in terms of before/after servicing, conferences, corporate meetings, trade fairs etc., the propensity of delegates to prolong their stay presents an ideal opportunity for the wider destination, given its proximity to Dublin city, to exploit this aspect of business tourism to greater effect.

In terms of **events tourism** a significant programme of high profile events takes place

in the Dublin Region each year or on a one-off basis, which attracts visitors to Dublin – such as sporting events, concerts and festivals. Other, lower profile and niche events also play their part in attracting overseas visitors on a regular basis. Tourism policy looks to support existing significant events and, where appropriate, to build on them. This is to promote the staging of new events, which reflect Dublin’s new proposition, and encourage the Social Energiser and Culturally Curious sectors and bid for internationally mobile events which might reinforce Dublin’s brand values. The establishment of an ‘Events Dublin’ seeks to establish Dublin as the location of a number of major events that are in keeping with the Dublin proposition. Dún Laoghaire Rathdown has developed a series of events and festivals making use of its asset base, such as concerts in Marlay Park and literature related festivals. It has also succeeded in attracting international sailing and marine recreational activity to Dún Laoghaire.

**Cruise tourism** has experienced year-on-year growth since 1990. This segment of the tourism market provides destinations with potential to attract high spending visitors to their shores. Cruise ship expenditure not only contributes to the immediate port area but also to the hinterland economies of the ports. Historically, the majority of Ireland’s principal cruise traffic was North American passengers on US-based vessels. In recent years, there has been a marked increase in the number of European, and in particular, British operators including Ireland in their itineraries. The market

segments attracted to cruise liners differs and different vessels within a fleet appeal to different cohorts. A new feature offered by cruise liners is cruises which appeal to the more adventurous passengers. Operators also provide 'sampler cruises' of 3 or 4 nights which allow novices to experience cruise holidays. These changes are driven by both consumer interest and operators delivering interesting and varied packages. Cruise companies require the ports to provide a pleasant, clean landing area for guests. Dedicated cruise berths are operators' preference as they are in line with the luxury experience that they wish to create. Given the increase in cruise ship sizes, ports which offer access to all ship sizes appeal to operators. Access to towns and places of interest is also key to operators when deciding on a destination, as is a warm welcome for passengers at the port. Excursions are an important part of the revenue for operators and a part of the guest appeal and experience. All key tourist sites tend to be regularly offered within the mix of tours operators provide to their guests. Repeat guests tend to look for something different, as do younger guests. Cruise operators also seek creative and new excursions to ensure repeat guests will disembark from the ship. While ground handlers strive to provide operators with new and innovative excursions for their guests, they tend to return to the tried and trusted tours to minimise risk.

Dún Laoghaire Harbour has established a cruise ship profile with 8 arrivals presently scheduled for 2017. The current pattern of visitor activity has yet to deliver substantial

tourism benefits to the county, with many of those who disembark preferring to visit Dublin city centre, Glendalough or other attractions.

### Matching market need to destination proposition

It is widely recognised that Dún Laoghaire Rathdown has huge potential to deliver on the brand promise of 'Dublin – A Breath of Fresh Air'. There is huge scope to create opportunities for visitors to enjoy, learn about and participate in a range of experiences that best showcase the destination's distinctive offer and value. It presents the prospect of a range of land- and water-based activities combined with a rich cultural heritage of historic associations, contemporary expressions in literature, music and art, visitor attractions and a range of festivals and events. It increasingly offers, in its towns and villages, opportunities to experience distinctive and interesting places to eat, browse and shop. The offer, however, needs to be visible, accessible and 'consumable', so that visitors can easily and spontaneously engage in those aspects which hold most appeal for them. In line with the branding of the wider destination, the Strategy takes its cue from the prospect of encountering "unique, different and often unexpected experiences where city living thrives side by side with the natural outdoors." Three key thematic experience areas have been identified:



#### Urban Splash!



#### Between the Lines



#### Well Worth the Climb

There is huge scope to create opportunities for visitors to enjoy, learn about and participate in a range of experiences that best showcase the destination's distinctive offer and value.

## An integrated approach



### Urban Splash!

This concept seeks to build on the maritime possibilities presented by the destination by providing opportunities to spontaneously engage in activities on, in and beside the water. It will respond to the need for fun, lively, active adventures, easy to get to, with great food and views. What is important is that it caters not just for those who want to get their feet wet, but also those who want to remain on dry land, but still enjoy and immerse themselves in the spectacle. Not only is the activity and spectacle important, but opportunities to learn are also a key aspect of this concept; whether it is learning a new water sports skill, discovering how the marine environment is being looked after or being moved by the stories of the area's rich maritime heritage. Opportunities to enjoy good food nearby will be critically important with menus geared to satisfying a range of appetites. Another key aspect of this type of experience will be the opportunity for visitors to participate in the celebration of the maritime and in the events and festivals which will showcase this to best effect.



### Between the Lines

This concept speaks to the cultural heritage aspects of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown's offer of value – both its historic significance as well as its contemporary relevance. Of particular note is the literary landscape of the destination and its association with globally recognised figures. 'Between the Lines' also alludes to the musical heritage of the area, as well as the lines of communication revealed in the many expressions of artistic endeavour, language and performance. This thematic experience area will provide an opportunity to get below the surface of this landscape and allow visitors to explore the less well known aspects of the story makers, story tellers and story keepers. Here, again, the opportunities to browse, gaze and maybe catch a glimpse of a famous author as part of a dedicated event or festival will combine to provide a truly integrated offer.



### Well Worth the Climb

This concept seeks to build on the opportunities that the landscape offers to reach new heights, get a clearer perspective, marvel at the panoramic view, enjoy the spectacle below and encounter the hidden aspects of the mountains and valleys. It also offers the prospect of different ways of moving through this landscape with the opportunity to encounter villages and smaller towns which can provide orientation to the mountains as well as good food to fortify visitors for the challenge ahead as well as reward their efforts on the return journey.



Figure 4.7 Dún Laoghaire Harbour



#### Objective 4

Collaborate with key stakeholders to develop an integrated tourism offer and effectively address key challenges to support the on-going growth and development of the tourism industry

The Strategy seeks to deliver benefits for all groups with an interest in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown as a visitor destination. Achievement of the Strategy recommendations will require collaboration at a range of different levels – at a strategic level between Council and its partner organisations and at a local level among stakeholders, industry sectors and different parts of the destination. Continuing, furthering and establishing new collaborative relationships will be essential to effectively address some of the long-term challenges. To achieve success, the Strategy must be a partnership.

A key consideration for the Strategy, when faced with such an abundance of possibilities, will be to focus on those interventions which will showcase the brand promise to best effect. The Strategy needs to give priority to those experiences which are more or less 'market ready' such that immediate benefits can be realised. This also means that some interventions will necessarily be longer term as it will take more time to fashion experiences that will meet the particular and quite demanding expectations of, for example,

the cruise market. It will be important not only to identify the opportunities to cluster experiences thereby securing multiple benefits but also to adopt an integrated approach to the supporting aspects of the offer such as the availability of well-presented, good food and a retail experience that is geared to different audiences. Finally, the Strategy needs to be cognisant of the need to manage the impacts of tourism and the demands that can be placed on the community and the environment at peak times.



#### Objective 5

Implement a new marketing strategy for the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown proposition leveraging the Destination Dublin brand to enhance awareness of the visitor experiences and attract more tourists to the county.

Destination marketing is a vital element in the successful functioning and healthy growth of the visitor economy. Its effective application and management can lead to increased business activity which in turn promotes higher levels of social and economic development.

The three most important considerations for the Marketing Strategy for Dún Laoghaire Rathdown are:

**Content:** Content curation is already transforming the way in which people

answer the all-important question of where to go. While innovation is coming more from technology based start-ups rather than destinations themselves, it is predicted that in the near future, more and more destination management organisations as well as convention and visitor bureaus will be using content curation to better promote their destinations to all kinds of travellers.

**Relevance:** It is necessary to consider if the content and the stories are relevant for the destination's target groups. In today's world, where information is so readily available, it is important to bring only relevant information to the attention of the destination's audiences. For practical information people know what to search for and where to find it. But when it is important to attract their attention and tell them about new experiences, it is imperative to get on their radar.

**Partnership working:** Creating and curating content is best done with a network of partners, stakeholders and intermediary companies. Such strategic alliances are critically important not only for ensuring that messages remain true to the destination and are on brand, but that there is scope to nurture creative synergies, promote collaborative working and realise mutually beneficial impacts.



Figure 5.1 Dalkey Castle

# 5. Key Projects and Supporting Actions

## 5.1

### Introduction

Having outlined the vision, each of the strategic objectives and their associated key actions, the delivery matrix detailed in this chapter presents a further level of detail in the form of indicative proposals – a range of location specific suggestions – that in combination seek to deliver on the ambition of the Strategy.

## 5.2

### Delivery Matrix

The proposals set out in Tables 5.1 to 5.6 below seek to address each of the strategic objectives identified in response to the challenges and opportunities which the development of tourism in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown presents. These proposals offer the best prospect of meeting the needs of the county's target markets – principally international and domestic leisure visitors, business visitors and, over time, the cruise market. Within these groups, the strategy directs its focus, in the first instance, where it will have greatest impact – at those segments identified by Fáilte Ireland as having significant value and/or growth potential for the wider destination, principally 'social energisers' and the 'culturally curious'. The proposals seek to substantiate the destination brand whilst also addressing the challenge of spreading the benefits of tourism, through the creation of a suite of signature experiences supported by a range of visitor facilities and services, as detailed in the 'supporting actions'



Figure 5.2 Development of the Strategy

Tables 5.1 to 5.6 below seek to address each of the strategic objectives identified in response to the challenges and opportunities which the development of tourism in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown presents.

| Objective 1. Enhance the journey, sense of arrival and information at key arrival points to raise awareness of what is on offer to encourage visitors to stay, explore and return.                               |   |                    |  |            |   |
|--|---|--------------------|--|------------|---|
| OUTCOME  | KEY PROJECT   | SUPPORTING ACTIONS |  | TIME SCALE | CHAMPION  |
| <p>Growing awareness that Dún Laoghaire Rathdown is an easily accessible part of Dublin.</p> <p>Visitors know that they have arrived, feel welcome and are confident about where to go and how to get there.</p> | <p><b>GREAT FIRST IMPRESSIONS</b><br/>– a project that will focus on all of the points of arrival to ensure that there is a great welcome, that information is available, signage works, curiosity is aroused and people feel confident about setting out to explore.</p> | 1.1                | <p><b>Audit current visitor arrival experience at locations shown on Figure 4.2 and identify gaps in visitor arrival experience:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dart stations: Booterstown, Blackrock, Seapoint, Salthill and Monkstown, Dún Laoghaire, Sandycove and Glasthule, Dalkey, Killiney, Shankill;</li> <li>Luas stops: Ballaly, Sandyford, Cherrywood; and</li> <li>Bus stops; 16 at Marlay Park, 75 at Dundrum/Dún Laoghaire.</li> </ul>   | S          | DLR with support from Fáilte Ireland/Local Authority/NTA working group on transport and access, local business.   |
|  |   | 1.2                | <p><b>Provide visitors with clear, welcoming, place-specific, regularly maintained and updated visitor information/orientation at all identified arrival points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide 'heads up' mapping and orientation for the immediate surrounding area and broader context as indicated on Figure 4.2, indicating journey times and including focal points, vantage points, places of interest;</li> <li>Utilise existing viewing points at Dart bridge crossings to interpret vista;</li> <li>Identify ways of theming key Dart/Luas stops to align with the proposition. Incorporate interpretation into the 'dressing' of the arrival points e.g. Biosphere interpretation, and avian literary references at Booterstown; and</li> <li>Prepare information pack for station staff on nearby attractions, activities, etc.</li> </ul> | S          | DLR with support from Fáilte Ireland/Local Authority/NTA working group on transport and access, local business.   |
|  |   | 1.3                | <p><b>Conduct a walkability survey at immediate surrounds of each arrival point – ensure connections with surrounding area are pleasant:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address physical or psychological barriers to visitors readily accessing features or services within surrounding area (e.g. dereliction, "hidden route"); and</li> <li>Locate new features (e.g. food cart, planting sign, new business) to draw visitors along key routes.</li> </ul>   | M          | DLR with support from Fáilte Ireland/Local Authority / NTA working group on transport and access, local business. |

Table 5.1 Strategy – Objective 1 Key Projects and Supporting Actions

| Objective 2. Connect and raise awareness of the network of key visitor experiences from the coast, the mountains, the towns and villages and connect the network of visitor destinations where possible.     |  |                    |  |            |   |
|--|--|--------------------|--|------------|---|
| OUTCOME  | KEY PROJECT  | SUPPORTING ACTIONS |  | TIME SCALE | CHAMPION  |
| <p>Growing awareness online and in-destination of the range of experiences on offer and the best way to access them.</p> <p>Visitors know where to go, find it easy to get there and easy to get around.</p> | <p><b>GREAT ITINERARIES</b><br/>– a project which will focus on each of the cluster areas to make sure that the connections within them and between them work. This project will address wayfinding, the quality of the routes themselves, the interpretation along these routes, the pause points, the vantage points, etc. to make the experience of exploring the destination easier, more enjoyable and rewarding.</p> | 2.1                | <p><b>Develop and promote public transport – Luas- and Dart-based packages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop easy loops combining public transport and greenways/trails linking key areas of appeal (e.g. Dart to Killiney’s views, Dart and Splash, Luas to Airfield);</li> <li>• Communicate itineraries with visitors at key city centre departure points (physical (e.g. Pearse St station) and thematic (e.g. James Joyce Centre, North Great George’s St.)); and</li> <li>• Promote loops and connections throughout the destination – bring local visitor facing businesses on local “fam trips” to familiarise with distance times, proximity of services, etc.</li> </ul>   | S          | DLR with support from Fáilte Ireland/Local Authority/NTA working group on transport and access, local business. |
|  |  | 2.2                | <p><b>Map key coastal/off-road/greenway/cycle links and address orientation gaps, linking with themed experiences/products:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify the best visitor routes through each cluster area, focussing on continuously appealing routes which link key experiences/products;</li> <li>• Identify short term improvements to the route of the proposed East Coast Trail within Dún Laoghaire cluster using tactical urbanism and lighter/faster/cheaper techniques;</li> <li>• Explore potential for enhanced walking/cycling links between Marlay Park and Dundum, Dalkey and Killiney Hill, Shankill and Dublin Mountains Way, and link to Dodder Greenway;</li> <li>• Promote Wicklow Way Marlay Park start point;</li> <li>• Ensure wider and strategic online distribution of current DLR cycle strategy mapping focussing on off-road and greenway routes;</li> <li>• Review current wayfinding structures to identify gaps and misuse of signage, and develop a way-finding strategy to join the dots and provide a way-finding network within clusters; and</li> <li>• nclude visitor focussed information and orientation in roll out of new parks at base of Dublin Mountains.</li> </ul> | S          | DLR with support from Fáilte Ireland/Local Authority/NTA working group on transport and access, local business. |
|  |  | 2.3                | <p><b>Develop an interpretive framework and use this to refine way-finding and interpretive content (key objective of the current DLR Heritage Plan):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the key themes, sub-themes, storylines and locations that best articulate the proposition;</li> <li>• Ensure on the ground coherence and consistency and to amplify the brand messages; and</li> <li>• Develop attractive web based thematic itineraries supported by interpretative journeys on the ground.</li> </ul>  | S          | DLR with support from Fáilte Ireland/ NTA working group on transport and access, local business.                |

Table 5.2 Strategy - Objective 2 Key Projects and Supporting Actions

| Objective 3. Develop a suite of signature experiences – activities, products and programmes - to showcase the unique characteristics of the destination, meet the needs of its target markets and substantiate the overall brand proposition. |   |                    |   |            |  |
|---|---|--------------------|---|------------|--|
| OUTCOME   | KEY PROJECT   | SUPPORTING ACTIONS |   | TIME SCALE | CHAMPION   |
| Growing awareness of and opportunities to access the maritime environment for enjoyment, for activity, for learning.  | <b>Urban Splash! – THE BLUE LINE project</b><br>a project that will further develop a stunning coastal connection focussing on Seapoint to Sandycove, linking all of the options to experience the Urban Splash! proposition. This will include opportunities to get onto and into the water, enjoy the atmosphere, get up close to the maritime heritage, act as a venue during festival time and pave the way for forthcoming sea front projects. | 3.1                | <b>Within the context of the signature experience – Urban Splash! – create opportunities for visitors to participate and enjoy activities in, on and beside the water:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve ‘walk-in’ access to water activities at key locations with improved information;</li> <li>• Explore potential to develop packages of water activities focussed to audiences, including potential for a new Water Sports Centre – which is not necessarily a building, but can encompass the Dún Laoghaire cluster; and</li> <li>• Provide visitor map to show where Urban Splash! experiences are readily available.</li> </ul>   | S          | Urban Splash! working group – marina, sailing clubs, water activity providers, Dún Laoghaire Harbour, chandlers, Biosphere Co-ordinator, local business. |
|   |   | 3.2                | <b>Within the context of Urban Splash!, promote a programme of events, festivals and supporting facilities which showcase the distinctiveness of this particular experience:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximise potential and promotion of international events – in particular sailing competitions, regattas, races – to provide a spectacle for visitors and align the visitor offer;</li> <li>• Build on festivals calendar focussing on Urban Splash! themes;</li> <li>• “One street in” ... Promote the stretch from Monkstown to Glasthule as part of the Urban Splash! food/leisure experience with a range of shops, restaurants, pubs, cafes serving the coastal strip – generate solutions to psychological/physical disconnections between the coastal strip and the streets behind; and</li> <li>• Explore potential of interpretive maritime heritage project including Maritime Museum Commissioners of Irish Lights Headquarters and sailing clubs.</li> </ul> | S          | Urban Splash! working group – marina, sailing clubs, water activity providers, Dún Laoghaire Harbour, chandlers, Biosphere Co-ordinator, local business. |
|   |   | 3.3                | <b>Within the context of Urban Splash! promote opportunities to learn about the marine environment:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore potential to develop more water-based tours of Biosphere – with minimal impact on sensitive habitats (e.g. seal watching from kayaks, boat tours);</li> <li>• Explore potential for inclusion of bird hides/viewing wall at Booterstown Dart station and along Rock Road at Booterstown Marsh;</li> <li>• Consider potential for Dublin Bay Biosphere centre at Seapoint Martello Tower (to complement Bull Island one in progress);</li> <li>• Develop guided and self-guided coastal walks/carefully managed island access/wildlife viewing points to promote marine ecology;</li> <li>• Consider ‘Winter of Heritage’ events to focus on over-wintering bird migrations; and</li> <li>• Interpret connections between upland streams and rivers and Biosphere status along new greenway from Shankill to Cherrywood.</li> </ul>       | M          | Urban Splash! working group – marina, sailing clubs, water activity providers, Dún Laoghaire Harbour, chandlers, Biosphere Co-ordinator, local business. |

Table 5.3 Strategy - Objective 3 Key Projects and Supporting Actions

| OUTCOME   | KEY PROJECT   | SUPPORTING ACTIONS   | TIME SCALE | CHAMPION  |
|---|---|--|------------|---|
| Growing awareness of and opportunities to access the literary landscape for enjoyment, for celebration, for learning. | <b>BETWEEN THE LINES...</b><br>this project mines the deep seams of cultural heritage, builds on the great work already underway and brings to glorious life the cultural heritage aspects of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown's offer of value – both its historic significance as well as its contemporary relevance. | <p><b>3.4</b></p> <p><b>Create a Signature Experience – Between the Lines – that brings to life the language imbued in the landscape, the texts of the place, a focus on the writing and not just the writers – all based on opportunities to delve deeper into the literary heritage of the area:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In line with the key Heritage Plan objective – commission an interpretation plan, with a focus on literary heritage;</li> <li>• Co-ordinate interpretive planning of literary heritage across county – along existing and emerging visitor journey routes and within key cluster areas; this could include, for example – performance and display in traditional venues and unusual places and buildings, encountering text within the public realm and on public transport, pop-up and permanent book shops or incorporation of bookselling into other businesses, pop-up Gaeltachts;</li> <li>• Promote thematic literary/language connections between Lexlcon, Maritime Museum, James Joyce Tower and Museum, Dalkey Castle and Heritage Centre;</li> <li>• Promote 'language of the sea' theme – focus on piers, Commissioners of Irish Lights Headquarters, Maritime Museum; and</li> <li>• Explore Flann O'Brien interpretive options at Blackrock, and potential for Literary interpretation at Sorrento and Dillon's Park.</li> </ul>  | S          | Between the Lines working group – DLR Arts/Libraries, Heritage Office, Dalkey Castle and Heritage Centre, James Joyce Centre. |
|   |   | <p><b>3.5</b></p> <p><b>Within the context of BETWEEN THE LINES – develop projects and programming that bring this experience to life along with supporting services which showcase its distinctiveness:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore potential to build on and develop the Mountains to Sea festival with increased outdoor festival activities, street entertainment and public realm presence;</li> <li>• Expand Bloomsday activity and introduce contemporary events;</li> <li>• Promote Lexlcon programme of events to visitors;</li> <li>• Explore potential to expand current writers trail run by Dalkey Heritage Centre;</li> <li>• Identify pilot projects to showcase creativity and learning (e.g. exhibitions of scale within public spaces in collaboration with IADT);</li> <li>• Promote synergies between retail offer, the food experience and bespoke events and readings, signings, performance/venues and attractions and museums;</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for cultural experiences in unusual places (empty buildings, shopping centres, train stations, Commissioners of Irish Lights HQ, Irish Film School, etc.);</li> <li>• Introduce outdoor book stalls and pop-up bookshops;</li> <li>• Promote existing book shops, focussing on smaller independent shops, specialist historic book shops and second hand bookshops (including charity shops); and</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for collaborative programming and visitor journey management with Dublin Writer's Centre, the James Joyce Centre on North Great George's St and the new Ulysses Centre on St Stephen's Green.</li> </ul> | S          | Between the Lines working group – DLR Arts/Libraries, Heritage Office, Dalkey Castle and Heritage Centre, James Joyce Centre. |
|   |   | <p><b>3.6</b></p> <p><b>Within the context of Between the Lines – support contemporary creative endeavours within Dún Laoghaire Rathdown:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on programme of commissioning, patronage, bursaries and 'writers/artist/musicians in residence' programmes;</li> <li>• Explore feasibility of writer's retreat in Dublin Mountains;</li> <li>• Expand provision of further artists and writer's studios, building on Dún Laoghaire Baths project; and</li> <li>• Explore proposals for the development of an Irish diaspora centre in Dún Laoghaire, to include an Irish national genealogy centre to facilitate visitors to trace their roots.</li> </ul>  | M          | Between the Lines working group – DLR Arts/Libraries, Heritage Office, Dalkey Castle and Heritage Centre, James Joyce Centre. |

| OUTCOME  | KEY PROJECT  | SUPPORTING ACTIONS  | TIME SCALE | CHAMPION  |
|--|--|---|------------|---|
| <p>Growing awareness of and opportunities to access the upland landscape and rural villages for activities, for enjoyment, for learning.</p> | <p><b>WELL WORTH THE CLIMB - THE GREEN LINE PROJECTS</b><br/>a project which will focus attention on the opportunity to create completely off-road routes, leading to the best views, linking different experiences and taking in the towns and villages en route.</p> | <p><b>3.7</b></p> <p><b>Within the context of the signature experience - WELL WORTH THE CLIMB - create opportunities to access high-energy routes through the uplands, enjoy great views and good food to fortify and reward the effort:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support ongoing Dublin Mountains Partnership work in identifying off road routes for parts of Dublin Mountains Way currently on public roads;</li> <li>• Audit mountain way-finding and update in light of new access points to mountain walking trails via rights of way and new parks;</li> <li>• Identification for interpretation of natural environment along routes and at key viewpoints – provision of site specific, well designed site furniture, and landscape interpretation of “what’s in view”;</li> <li>• Incorporate thematic interpretation across mountain routes;</li> <li>• Develop themed, looped walking trails (archaeology, wildlife, mountain living, etc.);</li> <li>• Profile new walking links between Glencullen/Kiltarnan and Dublin Mountains Way;</li> <li>• Explore potential to develop/promote Shankill as gateway to Dublin Mountains Way, combined with looped public transport/trail link with Marlay Park; and</li> <li>• Carry out analysis of key viewpoints in mountains – provide viewing points with vista interpretation, and local information or links/seating where appropriate.</li> </ul> | <p>S</p>   | <p>Well Worth the Climb working group – DLR Parks Dept., Cycling officer, Dublin Mountains Partnership, LEADER, activity providers.</p> |
|  |  | <p><b>3.8</b></p> <p><b>Within the context of – Well Worth the Climb – identify opportunities to explore potential for supporting services which will showcase the distinctiveness of this particular experience:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand current profile of activity providers on Visit Dublin and dlrtourism websites;</li> <li>• Explore potential for establishment of visitor service enterprises (e.g. cafes, retail, gear hire) at mountain villages/along route of Dublin Mountains Way;</li> <li>• Explore potential for events;</li> <li>• Explore potential to develop multi-activity curated experiences: ski and swim, zip and dig, boulder and run;</li> <li>• Explore potential for ‘drop and collect’ services for walkers in Dublin Mountains/uplift service for mountain bikers; and</li> <li>• Explore potential for low cost and alternative accommodation options; hostels, camping, tree houses and ancillary mountain bike rental scheme.</li> </ul>   | <p>S</p>   | <p>Well Worth the Climb working group – DLR Parks Dept., Cycling officer, Dublin Mountains Partnership, LEADER, activity providers.</p> |

| Objective 4. Collaborate with key stakeholders to develop an integrated tourism offer and effectively address key challenges to support the on-going growth and development of the tourism industry. |   |                    |   |            |                           |
|--|---|--------------------|---|------------|---------------------------|
| OUTCOME  | KEY PROJECT   | SUPPORTING ACTIONS |   | TIME SCALE | CHAMPION                  |
| A coordinated tourism sector working well together and ensuring excellent experiences for visitors.  | <b>VISIT DLR</b><br>A dedicated support structure for a co-ordinated tourism economy. | 4.1                | <p><b>Develop a Visit DLR Forum and Tourism Co-ordinator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The creation of a fit for purpose forum with a collective, coherent and clear voice that will champion the needs of the destination; address the resourcing of the sector and work collaboratively to remove barriers to industry growth; and</li> <li>Provide a dedicated resource – a Tourism Co-ordinator – to work in conjunction with the forum and the agencies to deliver on the strategy and co-ordinate the Urban Splash!, Between the Lines and Well Worth the Climb working groups.</li> </ul>  | S          | DLR Tourism Co-ordinator. |
|  |   | 4.2                | <p><b>Identify and promote business development opportunities in line with the proposition and the re-positioning of the destination:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the scope for small enterprises and clusters to take advantage of particular market segments relative to activity provision, food and drink, entertainment and accommodation provision; and</li> <li>Encourage the development of a more diverse range of unique products and authentic experiences for visitors incorporating local services, local produce and cultural encounters. This can help companies differentiate themselves from local competitors or other geographic locations that share similar physical characteristics.</li> </ul> | S          | DLR Tourism Co-ordinator. |
|  |   | 4.3                | <p><b>Address capacity issues in terms of accommodation needs and other supporting facilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the scope for Dún Laoghaire Rathdown to deliver on the identified accommodation needs of Dublin; and</li> <li>Assess the feasibility of broadening the range of accommodation within the destination.</li> </ul>  | M          | DLR Tourism Co-ordinator. |
|  |   | 4.4                | <p><b>Develop a coherent &amp; cohesive visitor support services network:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide information and visitor support services – in terms of hospitality, guiding, first person interpretation – to increase visitor curiosity and encourage them to explore the destination;</li> <li>Deliver visitor information through a network of fixed, mobile and digital services;</li> <li>Ensure visitor information is readily available through face-to-face services that cater to the interests of key market segments; and</li> <li>Ensure visitor services staff are equipped to meet the changing needs and interests of DLR's visitor priority markets.</li> </ul>                                  | S          | DLR Tourism Co-ordinator. |

Table 5.4 Strategy - Objective 4 Key Projects and Supporting Actions

| OUTCOME   | KEY PROJECT   | SUPPORTING ACTIONS |   | TIME SCALE | CHAMPION                  |
|---|---|--------------------|---|------------|---------------------------|
| A coordinated tourism sector working well together and ensuring excellent experiences for visitors. | <b>VISIT DLR –</b><br>A dedicated support structure for a co-ordinated tourism economy. | 4.5                | <p><b>Harness the power of emerging technology to deliver timely and accurate travel, product and experience information and exploit opportunities for the clustering/cross-selling of experiences:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make it easy for intending travellers to source information about the destination – building on dlrtourism.ie and Visitdublin.com websites and other online/social media resources;</li> <li>• Facilitate visitors' access to digital and online visitor information channels including the dlrtourism.ie and visitdublin.com websites;</li> <li>• Launch new mobile sites and applications and web enabled 'selfie moment' locations within each of the Areas of Focus; and</li> <li>• Further disseminate digital information through other channels and enhance breadth of information by aggregating third party information.</li> </ul> | S          | DLR Tourism Co-ordinator. |
|   |   | 4.6                | <p><b>Manage the impact of tourism on the community and the environment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that investment in DLR's sustainable transport, accommodation and related infrastructure aligns with the destination's best prospects and is future proofed to cater for growing visitor numbers and equipped to manage the impacts (e.g. congestion effects of increased visitation); and</li> <li>• Regularly review the visitor support services network: locations, roles, operating hours, engagement with industry, technology and workforce.</li> </ul>   | S          | DLR Tourism Co-ordinator. |
|   |   | 4.7                | <p><b>Develop a robust data collection, market intelligence and impact assessment system:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a user friendly, common framework for capturing data to present a fuller picture of visitor activity across the destination which is managed by the Tourism Co-ordinator; and</li> <li>• Source, channel and communicate both quantitative and qualitative intelligence that will support the business decisions of the destination's stakeholders, inform and monitor the implementation of the strategy recommendations and raise the profile of the performance of DLR within the context of the wider destination.</li> </ul>  | M          | DLR Tourism Co-ordinator. |

| Objective 5. Implement a new marketing strategy for the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown proposition leveraging the Destination Dublin brand to enhance awareness of the visitor experiences and attract more tourists to the county |   |                    |   |            |  |
|--|---|--------------------|---|------------|--|
| OUTCOME  | KEY PROJECT   | SUPPORTING ACTIONS |   | TIME SCALE | CHAMPION   |
| Seamless, effective marketing of Duún Laoghaire Rathdown within the Destination Dublin brand.  | <b>CONTENT CURATION –</b><br>A project that will focus on content sourcing, curation and communication to provide the images, storylines, etc. to substantiate the brand, feed into marketing campaigns and begin the process of re-imagining and re-positioning the destination. | 5.1                | <b>Build upon Dublin – A Breath of Fresh Air as a travel motivator:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using the interpretive plan as a basis; develop, deliver, curate and communicate content (storylines, itineraries, spontaneous encounters, memorable moments etc.);</li> <li>Invest in digital assets which support the brand and create synergies between the in-destination specialists (e.g. IADT) to link the content creators with the brand communicators;</li> <li>Bring the brand to life through social media which amplifies the voice of visitors, residents and industry as advocates for the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown tourism experience;</li> <li>Work with strategic tourism partners and industry representatives to target those markets and segments that best align with the county’s strengths, and represent strong potential for increased visitor numbers and value to the local economy; and</li> <li>Encourage intending visitors to plan an extended stay.</li> </ul>  | S          | Urban Splash! working group – marina, sailing clubs, water activity providers, Dún Laoghaire Harbour, chandlers, Biosphere Co-ordinator, local business. |
|  |   | 5.2                | <b>Inspire and motivate visitors by showcasing high potential tourism products &amp; experiences where DLR has competitive strength:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In collaboration with strategic partners, deploy a combination of media relations, social media, travel trade and consumer direct marketing, with mix and emphasis varying by market; and</li> <li>Use cost effective tools such as online channels to enable consumers to easily access the full spectrum of tourism experiences throughout DLR.</li> </ul>  | S          | Urban Splash! working group – marina, sailing clubs, water activity providers, Dún Laoghaire Harbour, chandlers, Biosphere Co-ordinator, local business. |
|  |   | 5.3                | <b>Shift marketing efforts to focus on high potential products and markets:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a new action plan for making the most of the discretionary spend associated with the business tourism opportunity (meetings, events, trade fairs, conventions, etc.), in partnership with local businesses and key venues in the city;</li> <li>Develop a new action plan for making the most of the discretionary spend associated with the cruise tourism opportunity (exclusive excursions, events, golfing, specialty shopping, fine dining etc.), in partnership with local businesses, key venues and carriers;</li> <li>Ensure tourism ‘experiences’ (e.g. walking tours, water sports activities) that feature local businesses are readily available at the stage when people are booking their travel arrangements online. Collaborate with strategic partners to contribute to and create marketing campaigns to motivate visits from priority markets;</li> <li>Promote tourism in DLR’s rural areas through online programmes which enable small businesses to more easily reach potential visitors;</li> <li>Promote DLR’s international credentials and special initiatives to priority markets and segments;</li> <li>Help boost international recognition of DLR’s education, research and development institutes and business and investment opportunities;</li> <li>Support marketing by DLR to nearby markets (residents, adjacent communities, weekend markets, strategic markets, etc.), demonstrating a commitment to promoting experiences to the widest possible audience, regardless of physical, social or economic barriers and in recognition of the need to meet the requirements of special groups; and</li> <li>Draw on opportunities presented by existing twinning and international friendship arrangements to promote Dún Laoghaire Rathdown to key markets in these locations.</li> </ul> | M          | Urban Splash! working group – marina, sailing clubs, water activity providers, Dún Laoghaire Harbour, chandlers, Biosphere Co-ordinator, local business. |

Table 5.4 Strategy - Objective 4 Key Projects and Supporting Actions

## 5.3 Strategy at a Glance

### Vision

“A highly attractive and accessible tourism destination, steeped in culture and maritime heritage, combining a breath-taking coast, inviting villages and towns, and Dublin Mountains adventures, delivering memorable and distinct experiences for visitors.”

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

**Objective 1:** Enhance journey, sense of arrival and information at key arrival points to raise awareness of what is on offer to encourage visitors to stay, explore and return.

**Objective 2:** Connect and raise awareness of the network of key visitor experiences from the coast, the mountains, the towns and villages and connect the network of visitor destinations where possible.

**Objective 3:** Develop a suite of signature experiences – activities, products and programmes - to showcase the unique characteristics of the destination, meet the needs of its target markets and substantiate the overall brand proposition

**Objective 4:** Collaborate with key stakeholders to develop an integrated tourism offer and effectively address key challenges to support the on-going growth and development of the tourism industry

**Objective 5:** Implement a new marketing strategy for the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown proposition leveraging the Destination Dublin brand to enhance awareness of the visitor experiences and attract more tourists to the county.

### KEY PROJECTS

#### GREAT FIRST IMPRESSIONS

#### GREAT ITINERARIES

#### SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES

#### VISIT DLR

#### CONTENT CURATION

### SUPPORTING ACTIONS

- Welcome
- Information
- Signage
- Way-finding

- Public transport packages
- Loops and routes
- Interpretation

- Activities
- Events
- Learning
- URBAN SPLASH  
-THE BLUE LINE
- BETWEEN THE LINES
- WELL WORTH THE CLIMB  
-THE GREEN LINE
- Interpretation
- Creative encounters
- Great food

- Tourism forum
- Tourism Co-Ordinator
- Single voice

- Profiling
- Positioning
- Promoting

Figure 5.3 Strategy at a Glance

## 5.4

### 15 Indicative Projects That Will Make a Difference

The Strategy has set out a comprehensive approach to developing visitor experiences in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown. There is a clear focus on enhancing, linking, protecting and promoting the wide range of assets already in place in the county, rather than on standalone large-scale interventions. A range of indicative projects emerge from this approach, which will make a difference when carried out in parallel with the strategic and organisational supporting actions detailed above. A selection of 15 indicative projects are set out here. The ongoing work of a new Visit DLR Forum and the new Tourism Co-ordinator will bring shape to more projects over the course of the strategy lifetime.

|   | Project Description  | Strategy implementation  | Champion  |
|---|--|--|---|
| 1 | Designate a Tourism Co-ordinator to develop a <b>Visit DLR Forum</b> and co-ordinate the implementation of the strategy objectives.  | <b>Objective: 4</b><br><b>Key Project:</b> Visit DLR<br><b>Action:</b> 4.1   | The Co-ordinator and Tourism Forum will act as champion for Actions 3.1-3.8, 4.1-4.5, 5.1-5.3 |
| 2 | In collaboration with the FI/NTA working group, implement <b>way-finding and interpretive projects</b> focussed initially on the identified key Dart station arrival points: Booterstown, Blackrock, Seapoint, Salthill and Monkstown, Dún Laoghaire, Sandycove and Glasthule, Dalkey, Killiney, Shankill. | <b>Objective: 1</b><br><b>Key Project:</b> Great First Impressions<br><b>Action:</b> 1.1, 1.2, 1.3                 | DLR and Fáilte Ireland access working group   |
| 3 | Develop and promote <b>public transport based packages</b> – linking key areas, experiences and stories (Dart and splash, Luas to the farm etc.).  | <b>Objective: 2</b><br><b>Key Project:</b> Great Itineraries<br><b>Action:</b> 2.1                                 | DLR, Fáilte Ireland access working group, local business                                      |
| 4 | Integrate Dundrum to Marlay park and Shankill to Cherrywood greenways into integrated <b>county-wide public transport and off-road visitor itineraries</b> . Include interpretive elements along the route.  | <b>Objective: 2</b><br><b>Key Project:</b> Great Itineraries and Between the Lines<br><b>Action:</b> 2.2, 2.3, 3.7 | DLR and Fáilte Ireland access working group   |
| 5 | Co-ordinate a continuous ' <b>blue line</b> ' of <b>water based experiences (active and passive)</b> from Seapoint to Sandycove, with food stalls and tactical urban interventions along the coast. Promote the continuous and varied character of food and retail 'one street in'.                        | <b>Objective: 3</b><br><b>Key Project:</b> Urban Splash! – the Blue Line<br><b>Action:</b> 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.2, 4.3 | Urban Splash! working group   |
| 6 | A "fill the gap" project to provide <b>integrated experiences within the identified coastal clusters</b> (e.g. a way-finding project for Dalkey, food stalls / beach huts for Killiney).   | <b>Objective: 3</b><br><b>Key Project:</b> Urban Splash! – the Blue Line<br><b>Action:</b> 3.2, 4.2                | Urban Splash! working group   |

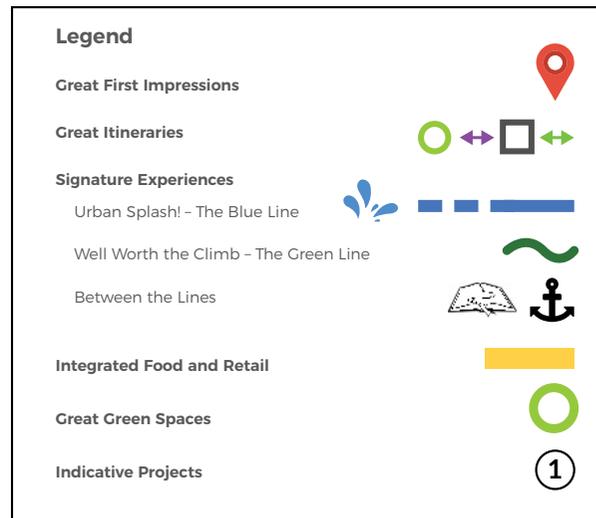
|    |  |   |   |
|----|--|---|---|
| 7  | Implementation of the <b>Dún Laoghaire Baths project</b> with a contemporary art and literature experience, programmed events (including evening events) and improved water and shore access and connectivity  | <b>Objective:</b> 3<br><b>Key Project:</b> Urban Splash!/Between the Lines<br><b>Action:</b> 3.1, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6 | Urban Splash! working group and Between the Lines working group |
| 8  | Provide a Dublin Mountains Way trailhead at Shankill Dart station and support <b>visitor orientated enterprise development</b> in mountain villages and along the Wicklow and Dublin mountain way routes   | <b>Objective:</b> 3<br><b>Key Project:</b> Well Worth the Climb<br><b>Action:</b> 2.1, 2.2, 4.2, 4.5            | Well Worth the Climb working group                              |
| 9  | A <b>collaborative project</b> including the National Maritime Museum, Commissioners of Irish Lights HQ, Dún Laoghaire Harbour Co. and sailing clubs to <b>showcase maritime heritage</b> across the Dún Laoghaire area  | <b>Objective:</b> 3<br><b>Key Project:</b> Urban Splash! – the Blue Line<br><b>Action:</b> 3.2                  | Urban Splash! working group                                     |
| 10 | Locate a <b>Biosphere visitor experience/learning centre</b> (in collaboration with proposals for Bull Island) along the DLR coastline, potential locations include the Martello tower at Seapoint, Booterstown Marsh. Improve Biosphere interpretation on piers and along coastline. Expand visitor opportunities for getting on the water in line with Biosphere objectives.                 | <b>Objective:</b> 3<br><b>Key Project:</b> Urban Splash! – the Blue Line<br><b>Action:</b> 3.3, 4.2             | Urban Splash! working group                                     |
| 11 | Commission an audience focused <b>interpretation plan with a specific focus on literary heritage</b> to collate and organize the literary significance of the county in terms of visitor experience  | <b>Objective:</b> 3<br><b>Key Project:</b> Between the Lines<br><b>Action:</b> 3.4                              | Between the Lines working group                                 |
| 12 | Carry out an audience focused <b>county wide Interpretive Plan</b> to steer the Tourism Co-ordinator’s curation of marketing content (the creation of an interpretive plan is also a key objective of the current DLR Heritage Plan)   | <b>Objective:</b> 5<br><b>Key Project:</b> Content Curation<br><b>Action:</b> 2.3, 5.1                          | Tourism Co-ordinator  |
| 13 | By establishing a <b>‘Between the Lines’</b> working group, develop and support the <b>co-ordinated programming, interpretive planning and physical connections between the ‘vital venues’</b> - Lexlcon, James Joyce Tower and Museum, Maritime Museum, Dalkey Castle and Heritage Centre, Pavilion and Mill theatres, Cabinteely and Marley parks - in terms of cohesive visitor experiences | <b>Objective:</b> 3<br><b>Key Project:</b> Between the Lines<br><b>Action:</b> 3.4, 3.5, 5.2                    | Between the Lines working group                                 |
| 14 | Explore opportunities for <b>cultural experiences in unusual places</b> (empty buildings, shopping centres, train stations, Commissioners of Irish Lights HQ, IADT/Irish Film School etc.) – aligning these events with festivals  | <b>Objective:</b> 3<br><b>Key Project:</b> Between the Lines<br><b>Action:</b> 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.2, 4.4, 5.1     | Between the lines working group                                 |
| 15 | Carry out <b>analysis of key upland viewpoints</b> – and where appropriate in terms of landscape character, provide viewing points with bespoke seating and vista interpretation, including digital options and local information  | <b>Objective:</b> 3<br><b>Key Project:</b> Well Worth the Climb<br><b>Action:</b> 2.2, 3.7, 4.4                 | Well Worth the Climb working group                              |



Figure 5.4 Fish'n'Chips on Dún Laoghaire Pier



Figure 5.5 Indicative Projects



**Indicative Projects**

- 1 A Visit DLR Forum and tourism co-ordinator
- 2 Way-finding and interpretive projects
- 3 Public transport based packages
- 4 County-wide public transport and off-road visitor itineraries
- 5 A “blue line” of water based experiences
- 6 Integrated food and activity experiences within the identified coastal clusters
- 7 Dún Laoghaire Baths project
- 8 Visitor orientated enterprise development
- 9 Showcasing of maritime heritage
- 10 Biosphere visitor experience/learning centre
- 11 Interpretation plan with a specific focus on literary heritage
- 12 County wide interpretation framework
- 13 Co-ordinated programming, interpretive planning and physical connections between the “vital venues”
- 14 Cultural experiences in unusual places
- 15 Analysis and enhancement of key upland viewpoints



Figure 6.1 Dalkey Island from Coliemore Harbor

# 6. Monitoring and Evaluation

## 6.1

### Introduction

A relevant measurement framework, establishing key performance indicators (KPIs), is essential to monitor the effectiveness of the tourism performance of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown. While national agencies including Fáilte Ireland and the Central Statistics Office gather data on tourism volume and behaviour, this information is generally not available at a sub-regional level and is often not sufficiently up-to-date to respond to ongoing market changes. The integration of monitoring and measurement as a key part of any action plan is good practice as it helps to refine future activities to either capitalise on positive outcomes or to prevent unnecessary wastage.

The measurement mechanisms recommended as part of this Strategy will include both quantitative and qualitative elements to capture the success of the county in meeting the expectations of visitors and identifying how many visitors arrive, how long they stay and how much of a contribution to the economy that they make. The aim is to ensure that those involved in tourism in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown have the data and understanding they need to guide

future plans and investment decisions. The Strategy seeks to establish additional forms of monitoring and measurement that will provide consumer feedback on their experiences within the county as well as measuring the outcome of all activities undertaken as part of this Plan.

## 6.2

### Monitoring Areas and Indicators

The establishment of a comprehensive information foundation in relation to tourism generating projects forms part of the actions set out above. A key outcome of the information gathering process is to be able to assess the performance of the county in attracting additional tourist numbers, additional tourist spend and improved tourist satisfaction. It will also be important to examine the motivations of those who are attracted to the county and how these align with the underlying proposition for the region. This will include measures such as the following:

- Increased awareness of the county and its attractions;
- Increased visitor satisfaction in the county;
- Maximised revenue and length of stay in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown;
- Increased accommodation revenue;
- Increased number of accommodation providers;
- Increased visitor numbers to the county to attractions and events;
- Longer tourist season within the county;
- Increase in number of Fáilte Ireland registered attractions and services;
- Increased employment levels in the tourism sector and in complementary sectors; and
- Relative performance in the Dublin Region and nationally.

Central to this is the coordination with Fáilte Ireland in developing information gathering at local authority level within the Dublin Region. In addition, there is a need to promote data gathering and dissemination by tourism providers within the county, to maximise awareness of the extent of tourist activity in the county and to improve information gathering in relation to the extent and trends in visits. This should include information in relation to

visitor numbers, where visitors are from, information of length of stay and average spend, why they came, what attractions and activities carried out, and crucially the level of satisfaction with the experience offered in the county. Further information on other places visited, and how they heard about the county would further assist in targeting promotional activity.

Monitoring of the organisation of tourism will allow the benefits of networks, coordination between partners and the development of common goals to be examined. This will include measures such as examining the number of partnership projects developed or the extent of linkages between themed assets in other parts of the region (e.g. *Bloomsday* or the *Dublin Mountains Partnership*).

Monitoring the quality and success of communication will assist in targeting future promotion or the value in approaches. This will include identifying trends in web traffic, notably on visitdublin.com, dlrtourism.ie and viewing trends in other web-based business, such as Airbnb, TripAdvisor, and from local providers. Monitoring the regional promotion

and marketing of Dublin will be important to ensure that the timing and message align with events, opportunities and activity in the county to best effect. Monitoring communication will also address the dissemination of information to local accommodation providers, attractions, and tourism related businesses.

Tourism accommodation trends are currently only available at a regional level. Disaggregated information for Dún Laoghaire Rathdown would assist in showing more clearly any gaps in provision to meet the demand and potential for the county. This will include examination of the sector seasonally and against the other counties in the region.

Measuring the value for money of investment in tourism offers is essential. The baseline report for this Tourism Strategy has built up a database on available information to estimate how tourism is currently performing. However, additional information on tourist origin, type of tourism (e.g. business, cruise etc.), and average spend will allow a more accurate picture to develop and assist in identifying the impact of investment in the sector.

The gathering of ongoing attraction and event-specific information on visitor numbers and the tourism profile of the county, as outlined above, is a short-term action of this Strategy and is necessary to allow its success to be measured. In the medium-term, working with

the DLR Tourism Co-ordinator, Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and Fáilte Ireland, this will combine with wider information on visitor spending and patterns of use to derive economic impact and levels of satisfaction.

## 6.3 Evaluation

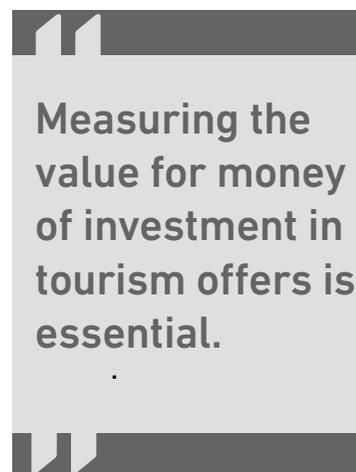
The impact of the Tourism Strategy will be monitored and evaluated. This will be done by examining it in terms of impact on sustainable tourism development. This examines performance in terms of the impact on Visitor, Industry, Community and Environment.

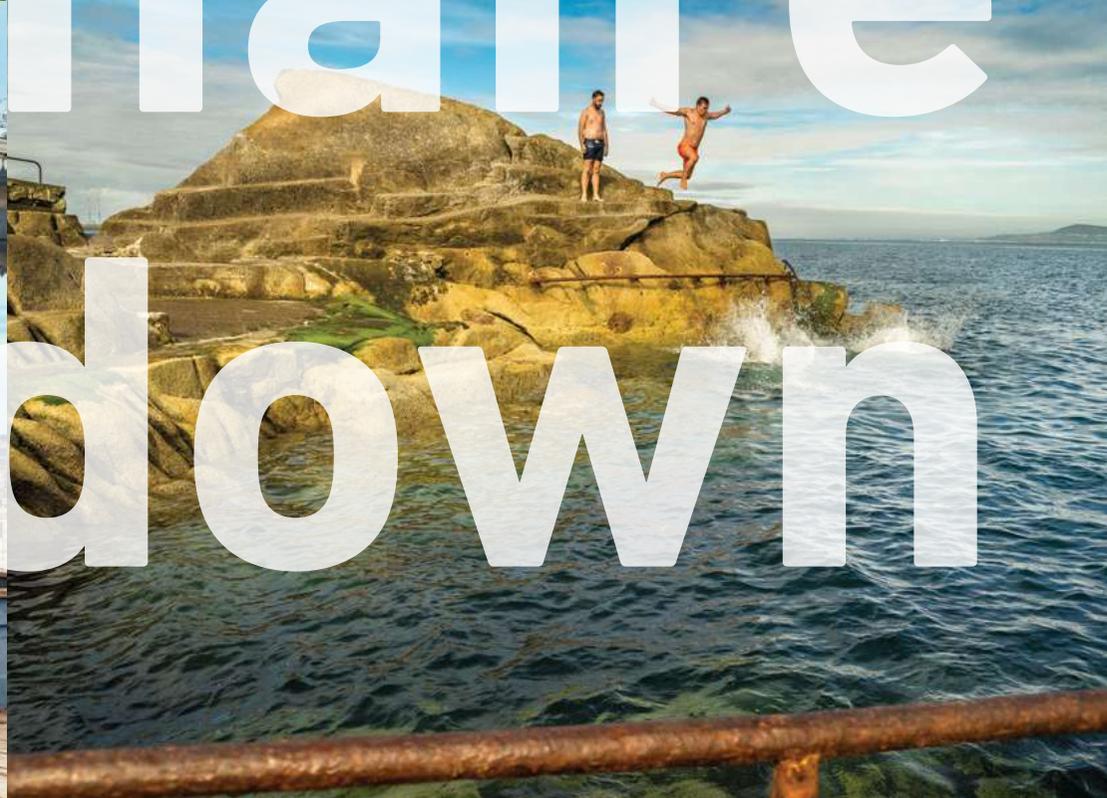
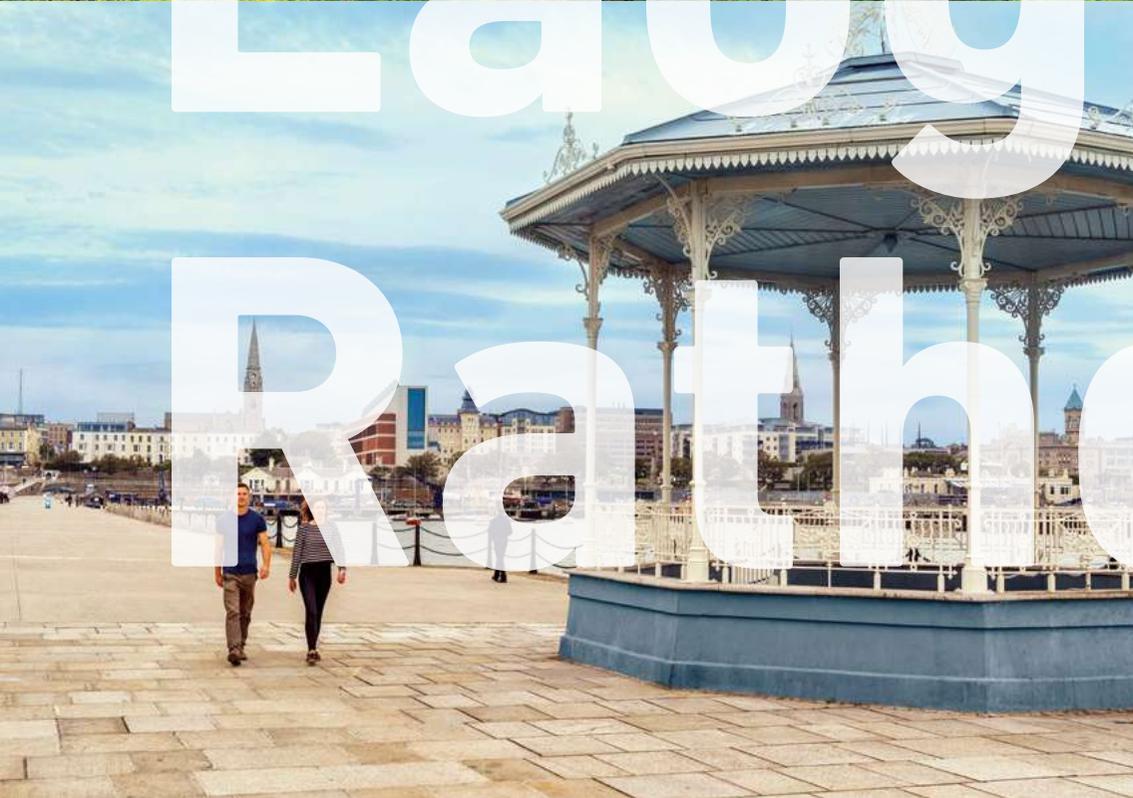
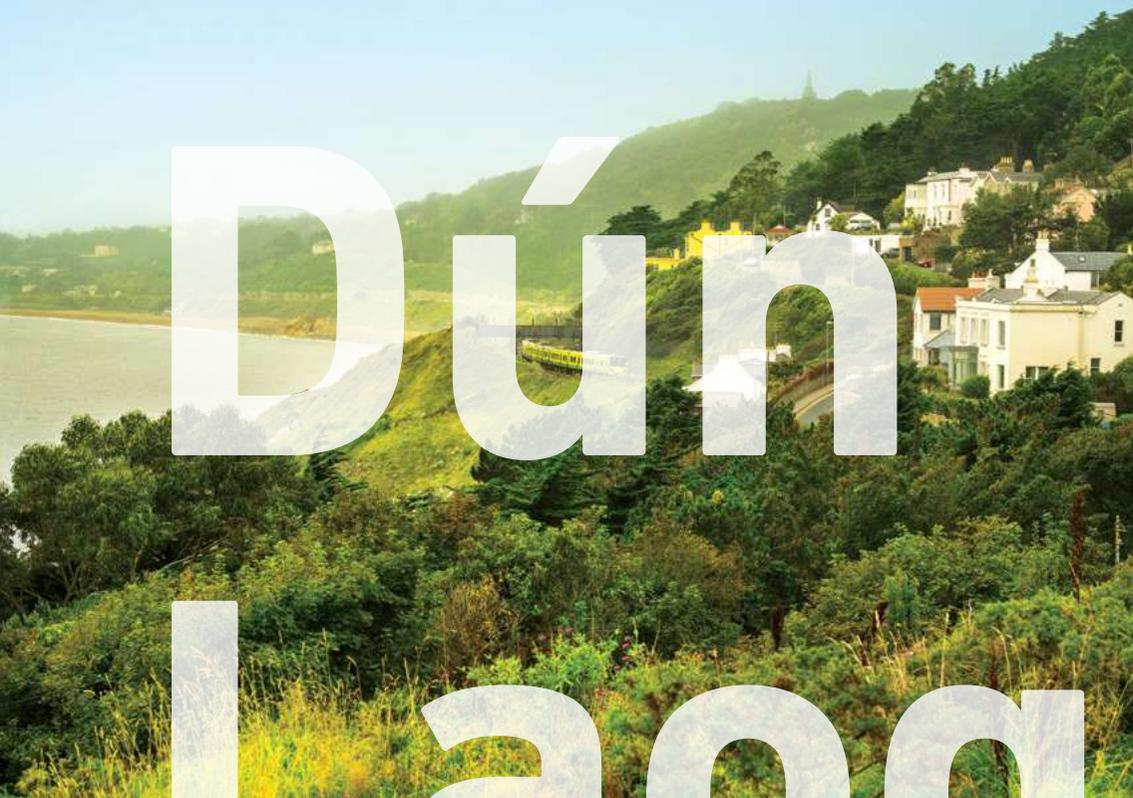
Areas of importance will comprise the following areas:

- Economic – contribution to local economic performance, including spend in the county, increased employment in relevant sectors, such as accommodation and food, increases in new business formation etc.
- Social – increased awareness of value of local environment and engagement by local communities
- Cultural – the integration with cultural activity and its promotion to a wider audience
- Image and identity – does the Strategy mark Dún Laoghaire Rathdown as a place

apart and does this identity support the wider promotion of the county, e.g. for business attraction and promotion.

- Environmental – does tourism development lead to improved or degraded environmental performance, such as quality of protected areas or increased traffic.
- Organisational – does the Strategy enhance organisational goals, improve partnerships and networks within the county and across the Dublin Region.





# Notes



# Notes





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