



DIGITAL
Dún
Laoghaire

PRESENTS



DUN LAOGHAIRE TOWN

'Digital First Community' Benchmark 2023

IN COLLABORATION WITH



SMART
DÚN LAOGHAIRE
A Smart Dublin District



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin
Smart Urbanism Unit

Report prepared by Eoin Costello

Credits

This Dun Laoghaire Town 'Digital First Community' Benchmark 2023 wouldn't be possible without:

- Brian Flynn – Chairperson, Tidy Towns Dun Laoghaire
- Kallie O'Donnell – MSc Smart & Sustainable Cities, Trinity College Dublin
- Ryota Yamagata – MSc Smart & Sustainable Cities, Trinity College Dublin
- Ronan Herron – Digital Strategy Officer, DLR County Council
- Boris Tomas – Smart Dun Laoghaire
- Eoin Costello – Project Director, DigitalHQ Clg who manage the Digital Dun Laoghaire HUB, please see the appendix for more information
- Nada Pupovac – Project Manager, DigitalHQ Clg



Jennifer Carrol MacNeill T.D.
Minister of State at the
Department of Finance

Foreword

As a result of the work of Digital Dun Laoghaire our county's capital town has become the flagship for the 'Digital First Communities' model which has evolved here since 2016. This new framework for vibrant localities is directly aligned with Government policy for reimagining our towns and villages across Ireland.

In my role of Honorary Patron to Digital Dun Laoghaire/DigitalHQ clg I look forward to championing this important initiative as it expands its growing national impact.

The time is right for communities across our country to look to capitalise on the opportunities and technologies of the 21st century to create and sustain employment in the heart of their localities. The benchmark in this report can be used by volunteers and officials alike as an essential first step in that direction.



Stephen Carolan
National Hubs Network
Programme Manager

Foreword

Connected Hubs is the flagship initiative of Minister Heather Humphreys Department of Rural and Community Development. The project is being delivered by the Connected Hubs team at the Western Development Commission.

This network will connect and deepen remote working infrastructure across rural Ireland while also supporting startups and SME's. When the Connected Hubs initiative was launched our goal was to see 400 hubs sign up, we are already well on the way to this target.

We fully support initiatives, such as this benchmark created by the Digital Dun Laoghaire HUB, that can help to deliver on the Department's goals for hubs, that hubs will act as a national asset with activities and strategic initiatives radiating out from them. Benchmarks such as this can be carried out by hubs in collaboration with local stakeholders, thereby helping to grow the economic and social base of the locality they are located in.

Executive Summary

By Eoin Costello

The 21st century will see a paradigm shift brought about by the digital and green transition that will have considerable socio economic impacts on localities. Places that organise around digital and new technologies most effectively stand to gain the most by increasing their capabilities rapidly and outcompeting other regions. This change is taking place at a time when more people want meaning in their lives and are potentially more amenable to living outside cities in the pursuit of a sense of community that goes beyond the task driven agenda of daily life.

On the opportunity side, if we look at the sustainable regional development goals of 'Our Rural Future', a reimagining of rural Ireland requires that demand from businesses and workers for work that can be completed remotely will need to be met by a supply of remote-ready, vibrant communities that can market and differentiate themselves to attract and retain these remote knowledge workers and innovation-driven enterprises.

On the challenge side, Web 1.0 ushered in the era of 'consumption on demand' through cloud computing and eCommerce which changed local B2C retail forever. Now Web 3.0, the AI powered web, will usher in an era of 'intelligence on demand', which has the potential to impact a town's B2B professional businesses in a similar way.

Therefore localities need to be empowered to become equipped to rapidly adapt and survive by leveraging the benefits of 21st century ideas and technologies that can help future proof them in a way that makes the economic base of their locality sustainable. That is the ambition of this 'Digital First Communities' benchmark.

Digital First Communities

A NEW ECONOMIC MODEL FOR TOWNS

Many Irish towns have a built environment that reflects the needs of their communities in the late 19th century. As inhabitants' needs move up Maslow's hierarchy towards self-actualisation, the towns that serve them must evolve accordingly. Self actualisation is different for everyone but can include belonging, self fulfilment, work life balance, heritage etc. Localities must evolve to become platforms for local jobs of all types, B2C, B2B, remote and social.



In the 21st century localities have a once in a generation opportunity to embrace the societal changes in the transition to digital and green economy to leverage the benefits of digitalisation and smart to become what we term 'Digital First Communities'.

The purpose of the inaugural 'Digital First Communities' benchmark of Dún Laoghaire Town is to provide a model that can help promote a place-based approach to winning the battle for the hearts and minds of people in rural localities and urban towns to use the ideas and technologies of the 21st century to take control of their economic destiny for their future prosperity.

The Dun Laoghaire 'Digital First Communities' benchmark comprises three pillars, the physical environment (we partnered with Dun Laoghaire Tidy Towns for this), digital empowerment (our work at DigitalHQ informed this section) and smart solutions (thanks to Smart Dun Laoghaire and the Masters students from MSc Smart & Sustainable Cities, Trinity College Dublin). The benchmark was completed as follows:

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Under the pillar of the physical environment Dun Laoghaire Tidy Towns completed a detailed audit of each building in the central business district of the town. This work is aligned with the work of Dun Laoghaire Tidy Towns in submitting their entry for the annual Tidy Towns awards which assesses the physical environment of towns under the headings:

- Appearance of the Built Environment – Conservation and presentation of the “Streetscape and Public Places”.
- Heritage led placemaking – Strengthening identity and community aspects promoting the importance of design, heritage and ‘pride in place’ in creating a distinct sense of place.

DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT

In our model increasing economic activity in the town centre through digitalisation has three components, managing the digital footprint of the locality (in particular maximising its Digital Visibility Index), attracting and retaining knowledge workers to sustain the business mix in the town (B2C, B2B and social enterprises) and finally the use of digital signage to communicate and connect.

In the 21st century town websites based on the locality's brand have the potential to provide an integrated digital marketing platform for the area and its small business community. This platform can then act as a way to augment existing good digital practices amongst local small businesses and thereby leverage peer pressure and local examples to encourage other small businesses to leverage digital channels. Under the pillar of digital presence a 'Digital Visibility Index' assessment of the town was carried out by @Digital Dun Laoghaire.

SMART SOLUTIONS

Under the pillar of smart solutions, students from the TCD Smart Urbanism Masters completed a sample toolkit of what smart solutions might be appropriate to a town with a population of 10,000 like Dun Laoghaire. They then engaged with DLR County Council's Smart Dun Laoghaire initiative to get an update on the projects that Smart Dun Laoghaire has currently in progress in the town and those they have planned for the future.

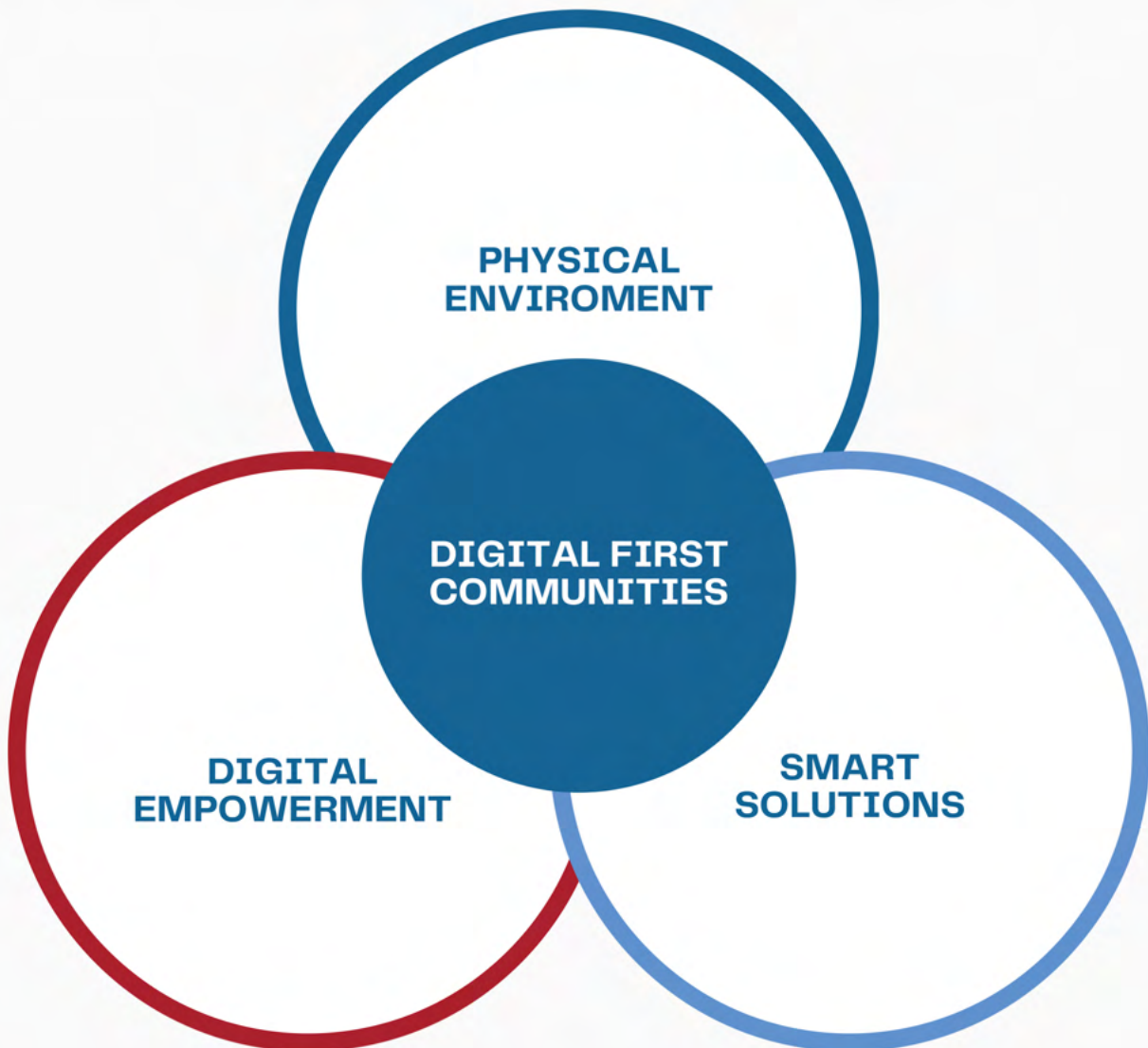
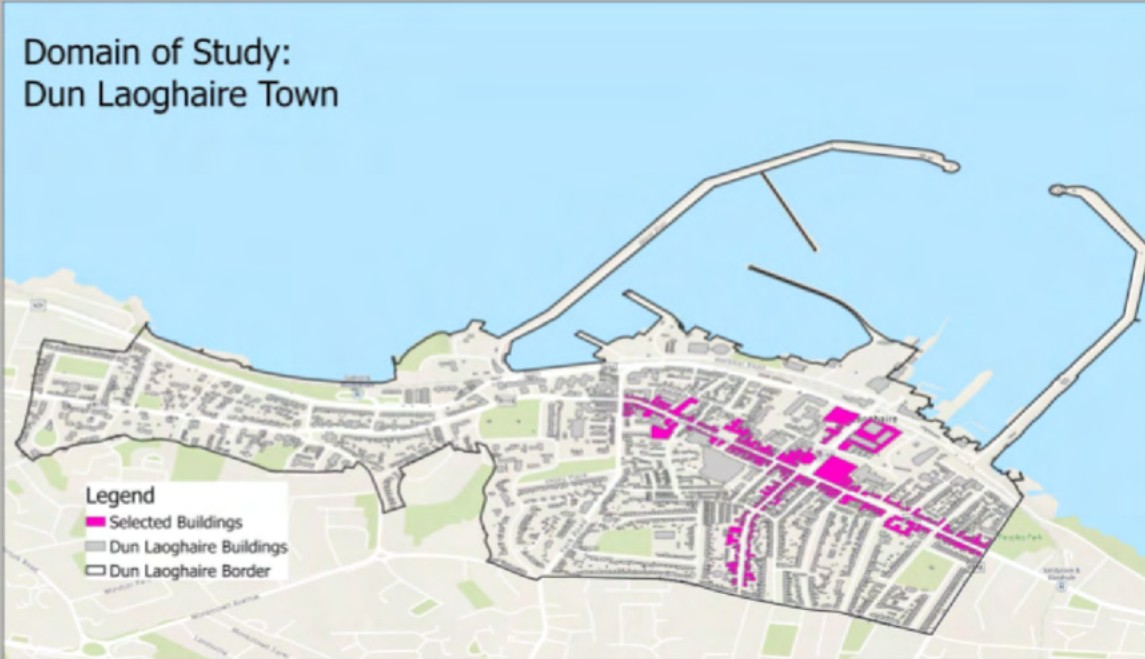


Figure 1 - The pillars of a 'Digital First Community' that are covered by this benchmark

SUMMARY OF RESULTS – PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

For the full results please see Section 1



- Lower George's Street from People's Park to the town centre
- Upper George's Street from York Road to the town centre
- Convent Road from Lower George's Street to the junction with Lynch Lane
- Patrick Street from the junction with George's Street to the junction with Tivoli Road
- Marine Road from the junction with Queen's Road to the junction with Upper George's Street
- York Road from the junction with George's Street Lower to Brock's Lane

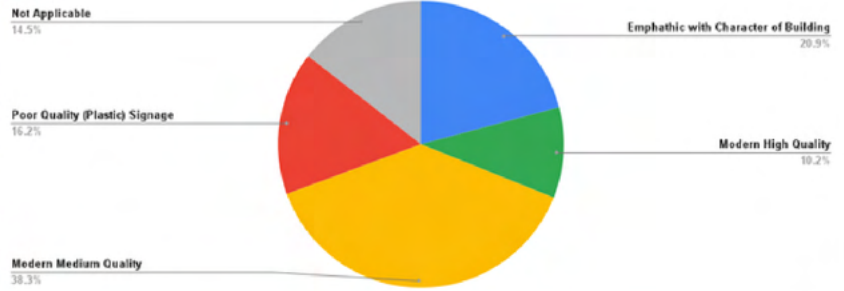


Tidy Town volunteers were asked to consider and grade based on factors such as: if the building frontage is well maintained, painted, condition of brickwork, etc.



Building Façade Status, 2022

Sources: Esri, Airbus DS, USGS, NOAA, NASA, CGIAR, N Robinson, NCEAS, NLS, OS, NMA, Geostatsystems, Rijswaterstaat, GSA, Geoland, FEMA, Intermap and the GIS user community, Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FourSquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, Dun Laoghaire Tidy Towns, 2022. © Ordnance Survey (where applicable) All rights reserved. Licence number: 2023/05, NMA, USA/ Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council

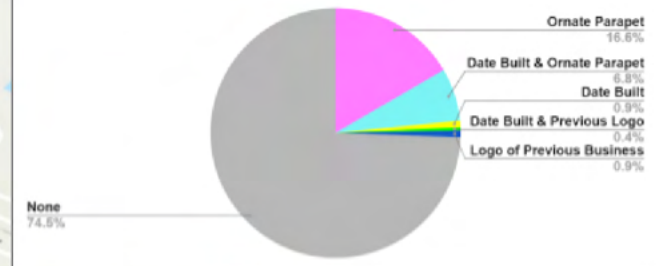


Tidy Town volunteers were asked to evaluate the condition of street level signage at each location.



Front Signage Condition, 2022

Esri, Intermap, NASA, NGA, USGS, Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FourSquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, Dun Laoghaire Tidy Towns, 2022, © Ordnance Survey Ireland. All rights reserved. Licence number 2023/OS: NMA, 056/ Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council



Tidy Town volunteers were asked to evaluate the distinctive features on the outside of the buildings.



Distinctive Features, 2022

Esri, Intermap, NASA, NGA, USGS, Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FourSquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, Dun Laoghaire Tidy Towns, 2022, © Ordnance Survey Ireland. All rights reserved. Licence number 2023/OS: NMA, 056/ Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council



Weeds Visible

38.3%



No Weeds Visible

61.7%

Weeds_2022

No Weeds Visible (145)

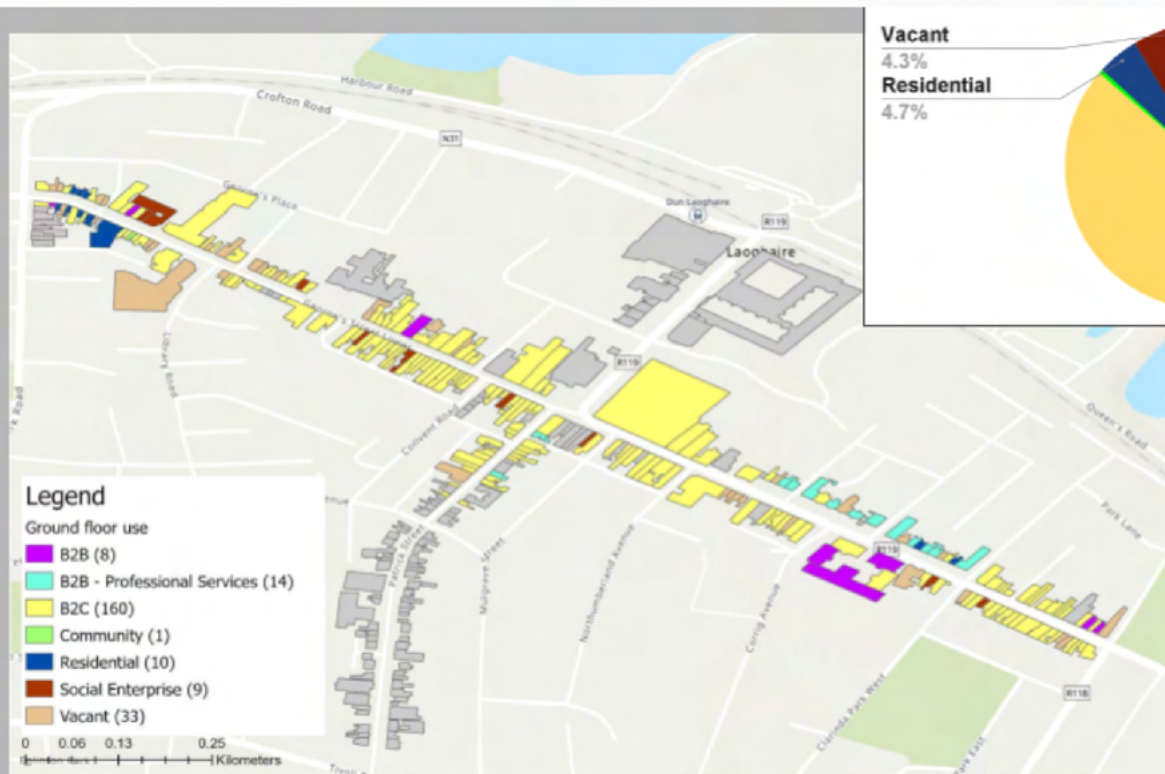
Weeds Visible (90)

Tidy Town volunteers were asked to evaluate the presence of weeds on the property.



Presence of Weeds, 2022

Sources: Esri, Airbus DS, USGS, NGA, NASA, CGAR, N Robinson, NCEAS, NLS, OS, NMA, Geostatsystems, Rijkswaterstaat, GSA, Geoland, FEMA, Intermap and the GIS user community, Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FourSquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, MET/NASA, USGS, Dun Laoghair Tidy Towns, 2022. © Ordnance Survey Ireland. All rights reserved. Licence number 2023/OS, NMA, 056/ Dun Laoghair-Rathfarnham County Council



Legend

Ground floor use

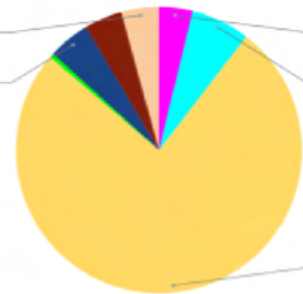
- B2B (8)
- B2B - Professional Services (14)
- B2C (160)
- Community (1)
- Residential (10)
- Social Enterprise (9)
- Vacant (33)

Vacant

4.3%

Residential

4.7%



B2B

3.8%

B2B -

6.6%

B2C

75.8%

Tidy Town volunteers were asked to give their assessment of the business type that occupied each location.



Ground Floor Use, 2022

Esri, Intermap, NASA, NGA, USGS, Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FourSquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, MET/NASA, USGS, Dun Laoghair Tidy Towns, 2022. © Ordnance Survey Ireland. All rights reserved. Licence number 2023/OS, NMA, 056/ Dun Laoghair-Rathfarnham County Council

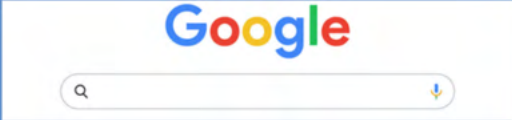
SUMMARY OF RESULTS - DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT

For the full results please see Section 2

Digital Empowerment Benchmark of Dun Laoghaire Town March 2023

Component 1 Landing page presence in Google search

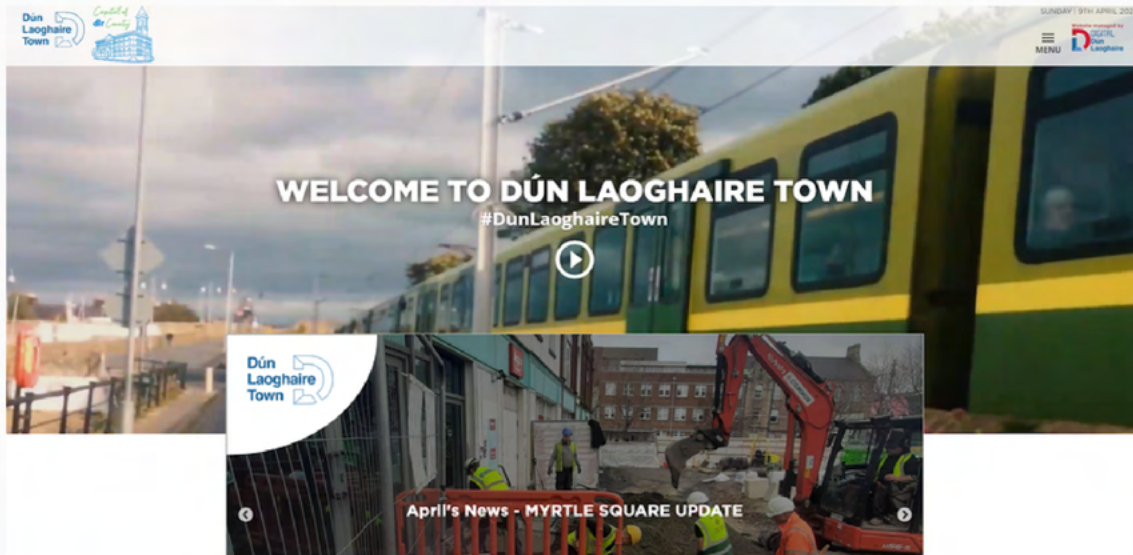
Based on an incognito mode search for 'dun laoghaire town'

	Points
<p>Narrative - Are clear themes evident, what are they?</p>	<p>2 'coastal town' 'harbour' 'Europe's Great Town of 2022'</p>
<p>Ethos - Evidence of collaboration or coordination in the landing page</p>	<p>2 - Strong evidence 'Comprehensive town website'</p>
<p>1. Image above the Google Knowledge Panel - Is the photo something specific that represents the town well?</p>	<p>2 - Image that captures the essence of the locality</p>
<p>2. Organic search results</p> <p>What are the value hierarchy elements represented in the search results?</p> <p>Score each resulting entry on the first page of Google assign them to which component of the value hierarchy they speak to.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment - Relevant entry Y/N 1/0 • Innovation Driven Enterprises/Knowledge/knowledge/knowledge/remote workers - Relevant entry Y/N 1/0 • Home Buyers - Relevant entry Y/N 1/0 • Shoppers - Relevant entry Y/N 1/0 • Visitors - Relevant entry Y/N 1/0 <p>Total = 1 + 0 + 0 + 1 + 1 = 3</p>
<p>3. Content of the Google Knowledge panel</p>	<p>0 - Knowledge Panel extracted straight from relevant wikipedia entry containing a significant amount of administrative information.</p>
<p>4. People also ask</p> <p>This section features common queries about the locality entered into Google search.</p> <p>What you don't want to see here are queries like "Is X safe/dangerous", marginal to 'Is X worth visiting' but definite yes to 'Is X a good place to live'.</p>	<p>Doesn't appear - ignore</p>
<p>Maps Tab in search - Featured Images</p>	<p>1 - Reasonable selection of reasonable quality photos of a range of aspects of the locality - Majority of photos are of the seafront and harbour</p>

Summary for component 1

- 3 measures are Green
- 2 measures are Yellow
- 1 measure is Red

Component 2 – The Locality’s Dedicated Website



VISITORS

Google Search	
Is there a website representing the locality (in particular a website that is the locality's name)	1
If there is a locality focussed website does it appear in the first page of results?	1
Is the home page Title and Description optimised for Google?	1
The locality's Website	
Is the narrative of the locality evident on the home page, can you identify 3 strengths from a 10 second assessment?	1
<p>How many of the components of the Digital First Communities value hierarchy are addressed by the home page (page content + navigation)</p> <p>Give 1 point for each item of content that addresses a component of the Digital First Community value hierarchy:</p> <p>Count each component once only, so if a page has 3 items that are relevant to Visitors/Tourists that = 1.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment - 1 • Innovation Driven Enterprises- 1 • Home Buyers - 0 • Shoppers - 1 • Visitors - 1 <p>Total = 4</p>
Ethos - Is it clear on the home page who are the people that control/manage the website and social media for the locality (i.e. Local Authority, Town Team, Chamber of Commerce, Traders Associations, Tourism Unit etc)	Clear = 1
What is the linkage strategy between the locality's website and the County Council and the region?	0

Summary for component 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 measures are Green • 0 measures are Yellow • 1 measure is Red
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Component 3 Assessment Guide for the WIKIPEDIA Entry for locality



<p>On an initial viewing how comprehensive is the entry for the locality</p>	<p>Well = 2</p>
<p>Reflect the elements of the Digital First Communities value hierarchy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment - 0 • Innovation Driven Enterprises - 0 • Home Buyers - 1 • Shoppers - 1 • Visitors - 1 <p>Total = 3</p> <p>According to Chat GPT the "History" section has a considerable amount of content, while the "Sport" section has relatively less content.</p>
<p>Maintenance of the entry - is the information in the entry accurate and up to date, are there mentions of now defunct items?</p>	<p>1 Average, is missing some current information under a number of headings</p>

<p>Summary for component 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 measure is Green • 2 measures are Yellow • 0 measure is Red
---------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Component 4 Assessment Guide for the locality's #hashtag on Twitter



What shows up for a search of the # <localityname> on Twitter	#DunLaoghaireTown is not widely used #DunLaoghaire is more common - Mentions = 1
Is there an official Twitter account for the locality?	Yes - https://twitter.com/DunLaoghaireTn
Is it clear who are the people managing it?	Yes, Digital Dun Laoghaire
Is the bio representative of the locality?	Limited to shopping, dining and drinking.
Is there any evidence of collaborative campaigns being run for the locality?	Yes, Why Dun Laoghaire and Love Dun Laoghaire campaigns = 1
Are there recent posts (within the last 30 days)	Yes = 1
What is the frequency of the posts? (how many Tweets in the past month)	Frequent = 5 in past month Infrequent = Less than 5 in the past month
Is there 'good' engagement with the Tweets on that account? The number of likes, comments and retweets compared to the number of followers. (sample the posts from the last 30 days)	Good engagement = 10+ likes and some comments per post Low engagement = Less than 10 Likes per post

SUMMARY OF RESULTS – SMART SOLUTIONS

- **Increase Civic Engagement** – The work Smart Dun Laoghaire's 'Trendhunters' initiative ([outlined here](#)) is carrying out is a good start however there is the opportunity to increase local engagement across all the stakeholders.
- **Improve the communication of Smart Dun Laoghaire's work**, the public are not sufficiently aware of the many initiatives being undertaken by Smart Dun Laoghaire and, as such, it is missing the opportunity to catalyse best practice in the town.
- **Nature Based Solutions to the Climate Challenge** – Green roofs and walls: Encourage the installation of green roofs and walls on residential, commercial, and public buildings. These features can provide insulation, reduce energy consumption, and support local biodiversity.
- **Decarbonisation of Dún Laoghaire** – Encourage renewable energy: Hold public information sessions on investing in solar, the cinema in Dun Laoghaire has applied for solar panels on its roof, use this as a case study to promote renewable energy sources to power homes, businesses, and public buildings.

Introduction

Ireland's inaugural 'Digital First Communities' benchmark of Dún Laoghaire Town is intended to assess the three pillars of a digital first community which are the physical environment, digital empowerment and the smart solutions employed by the locality. Therefore we conducted this benchmark as a collaboration between @Digital Dun Laoghaire, Dun Laoghaire Tidy Towns, DLR CoCo Smart Dun Laoghaire and Masters students from Trinity College Dublin's Smart Urbanism unit.

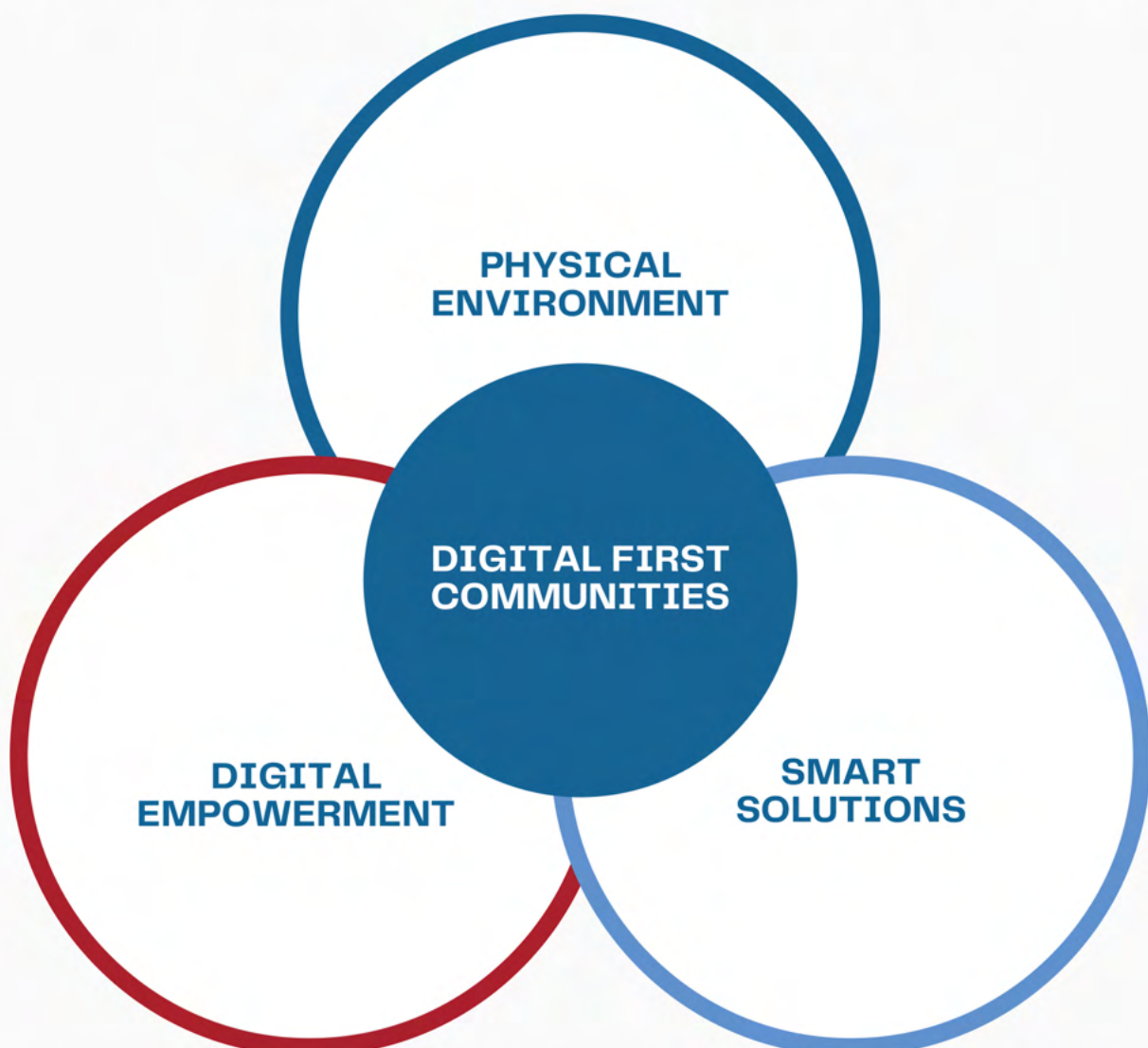


Figure 1 - The pillars of a 'Digital First Community' that are covered by this benchmark




The context for this benchmark is that government and European policy wants to reimagine rural areas as sustainable, vibrant communities that can become increasingly self-sustaining. In the twenty-first century, Ireland can reduce its national dependence on mobile multinationals and city-centric economic growth through digitalisation (in its broadest sense of the application of new technologies and methodologies) which is enabling a new era of work anywhere. For many jobs digital has now broken the link between physical place and the ability to be economically productive.

Some experts predict (such as in the report 'Reimagining Humanity' by Tony Seba and James Arbib) that this decoupling will see us moving towards a bottom-up connected, distributed creative society. Through a myriad of digitally empowered innovations and smart solutions from 3D printing, remote work, vertical farms and solar/wind power (our cinema in Dún Laoghaire is converting its roof to become a solar farm), rural communities will increasingly have the opportunity to become self-organising and self-sufficient.

To bring about real social change it has to be about grass roots up culture change. Empowering people in rural Ireland to think differently about the challenges and obstacles their locality faces and leveraging digital and smart to 'do what they can with what they've got' to work collaboratively to leverage the ideas and technologies of the 21st century. Through the work of @Digital Dun Laoghaire, our town has become a test bed for identifying what digital tools and frameworks work to enable localities to collaboratively attract investment, remote/knowledge workers, home buyers, shoppers and visitors to their place. We call this framework 'Digital First Communities', a framework that seeks to unite local stakeholders to work collaboratively.

A 'Digital First Community' is one that works collaboratively to attract investment, remote/knowledge workers, home buyers, shoppers and visitors by constantly improving the three pillars underpinning a vibrant, sustainable town, namely the physical environment, digital empowerment and relevant smart solutions.



The stakeholders in a 'Digital First Community' will vary based on local circumstances but in our flagship town of Dun Laoghaire they comprised:

- 1.The local Connected Hub - @Digital Dun Laoghaire HUB
- 2.Our Board at the Hub.
- 3.Bank of Ireland - Sponsor of our hub space.
- 4.DLR County Council - In particular their urban regeneration and Smart Dun Laoghaire units.
- 5.The local B2C and B2B business community.
- 6.Enterprise development agencies such as Enterprise Ireland and the LEO.
- 7.Local third level educational institutions.

Pillars of a vibrant, sustainable town

If we look at the components that a 'digital first community' mobilises around to achieve a vibrant, sustainable town we rank them based on their economic multiplier and spill over benefit to the town as a whole. So for example 'Investment' in the form of an innovation driven enterprise taking a long term lease on office space in the town is worth more over time than day tripper visitors that pass through the town and buy an ice cream or drop in to the town's museum.

So the volume of parties that can make a significant investment in a locality, be it the County Council, property investors or national multiple chains, is relatively low, the relative value to the locality of attracting one or more of these parties is very high. Looking at the opposite end of the value hierarchy, while the volume of visitors that can be attracted to a locality can be relatively high, their relative value to the locality in terms of bed nights or ice creams can be relatively low in the greater scheme of things.

What wraps around the value hierarchy for each locality is its **ethos**. In the context of 'Digital First Communities', ethos is the characteristic spirit of a community as manifested in the attitudes and aspirations it displays.



"Whether you think you can, or you think you can't--you're right."

Henry Ford

To illustrate the power of ethos there is a good parallel from the GAA which I quote below from a piece by Joe.ie.

“Slaughtneil GAC used to be like the rest of us. Prior to 2004, they'd never ever won a county senior football championship. Prior to 2014, they'd never won an Ulster.


But somewhere around that time, things began to change in Slaughtneil. They didn't suddenly benefit from a big increase in population to change their fortunes – there are still only 300 houses in the little parish at the foot of the Glenshane mountains – but every single one of them started working together.

The GAA club became the absolute centre of the community – and nothing else would take away from it – kids and their parents would be down there every second night, the kids practising, the parents all giving a helping hand be it through coaching or through organising.

And how it has paid off. JOE.IE”



Slaughtneil - an inspiration to every other GAA club in Ireland



Momentum for positive change must come from within the locality and be at the heart of the relationship patterns that constitute the community. Bruce Katz calls this 'new localism', a belief that the real power of regeneration lies locally in communities where people live, work and raise their children acting together thereby deepening community cohesion, resilience and sustainability.

A locality's ethos captures the degree to which the settlement acts and projects itself in a way that it is clear that the stakeholders evidence the belief that they have more to gain by collaborating, that they are 'in this together'.

Small localities can punch above their weight where there is a strong local ethos, while large localities can punch below their weight due to a lack of ethos. For example Naas performed highly in the Irish Business Against Litter's recent ranking, something the organisation ascribed to locals' collective pride, the enthusiasm from volunteers, from the local authorities, from business – all of that coming together was a recipe for success for Naas. At the other end of the scale IBAL identified Mahon in Cork as seriously littered.

'Digital First Communities'

VALUE HIERARCHY FOR LOCALITIES

ETHOS OF THE LOCALITY

Volume increases
as we go down
the hierarchy

Relative value
increases as we
go up the
hierarchy

INVESTMENT


KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

HOME BUYERS

SHOPPERS

VISITORS





Each element of the value hierarchy is mutually complementary, the more visitors a town can attract the more likely it is to spark a certain percentage of them to consider moving to the town or working in the town. Hence it makes sense to think of the 'Digital First Communities' components as a hierarchy of value.

The relative value to a town of the 'Digital First Communities' components dictates its place in the hierarchy and the relevant investment that should be put by the locality into attracting that component. However, keeping in mind that a locality is an ecosystem in the sense that each component interacts with the others, action on all components is desirable to increase synergistic gains.

Detail of each pillar of what a Digital First Community seeks to position itself to attract

Pillar	What is it	Benefit to the locality	Factors influencing a decision
Investment	This covers innovation driven enterprises taking a long term lease on office space, the County Council spending on placemaking initiatives or improvements to the physical realm, investors buying property in the town, a national chain opening new retail premises in the locality etc.	<p>Increased rates base for the County Council</p> <p>Increased placemaking appeal</p> <p>Increased footfall with high disposable income for local businesses</p>	<p>Projection and perception of the locality - the locality's ethos</p> <p>Vacancy rate</p> <p>Economic and demographic trends</p>
Remote/knowledge workers	This covers those workers that are not part of the town's existing traditional B2B sector that are, or could, use office space in the town in its broadest sense, from short term to long term.	<p>Increased footfall with high disposable income for local businesses</p> <p>Increased rates base for the County Council</p>	<p>Proximity to transport</p> <p>Connection to locality</p> <p>Available office space</p>
Home buyers	People and their families buying in the locality and setting down roots.	From small independent family run boutiques to well-known, high-street brands, restaurants, coffee shops and bars	<p>Schools</p> <p>Work opportunities</p> <p>Amenities</p> <p>Cost and availability of housing</p> <p>Ethos of the locality</p>

Pillar	What is it	Benefit to the locality	Factors influencing a decision
Shoppers	Both staple consumables (milk, bread etc) and discretionary (fashion, jewellery).	From small independent family run boutiques to well-known, high-street brands, restaurants, coffee shops and bars	Convenience Variety Cost
Visitors	Tourists and passing travellers that can be attracted to stop in the town.	It's a lot easier to attract visitors with a low spend than investors who have capital. Increased Bed nights in hotels or B&Bs	Amenities and attractions Awareness of the points of interest of the locality



PART 1

PHYSICAL Benchmark of Dún Laoghaire Town

IN COLLABORATION WITH





In collaboration with Dun Laoghaire Tidy Towns

The physical environment is a crucial contributor to the “wellbeing” of a town and its attractiveness for investors, residents and visitors..

What the Tidy Town Adjudicators considers elements that influence Architectural Character of a locality:

- 1.Public and Private Buildings including Derelict Sites and Buildings
- 2.Building Materials and Colour
- 3.Shopfronts & Upper Storeys – Quality of shop-fronts is considered while the upper floors need to be painted and maintained.
- 4.Public Places – the Public Realm Streets Street furniture Paving Monuments, Sculptures and Art Forms
- 5.Conservation and presentation of heritage buildings is considered.
- 6.Signage – Signage has a significant influence on the streetscape and public areas of our cities, towns and villages. Unnecessary signage should be removed as it causes clutter and detracts from the streetscape.

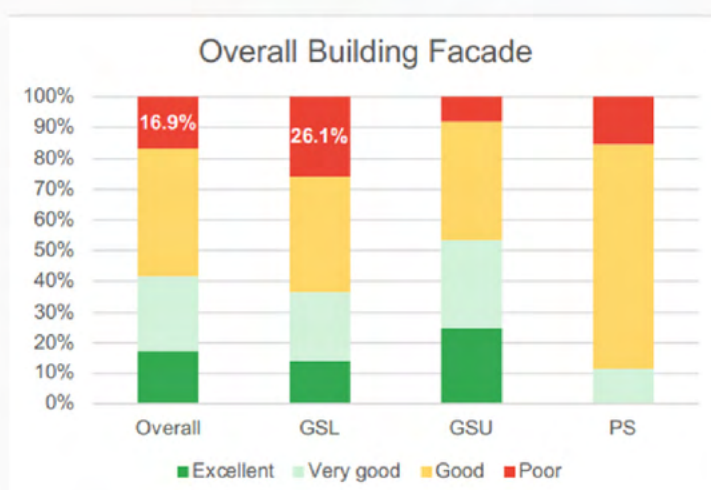
In terms of heritage led placemaking in general towns with a commitment to heritage attract more footfall, have higher premises occupancy rates and capital values. The Government’s ‘Town Centre First’ strategy stresses a ‘heritage led’ approach to town centre regeneration.

Scope of the Physical Audit

The physical audit covered streets typically considered to be the business roads of the town namely:

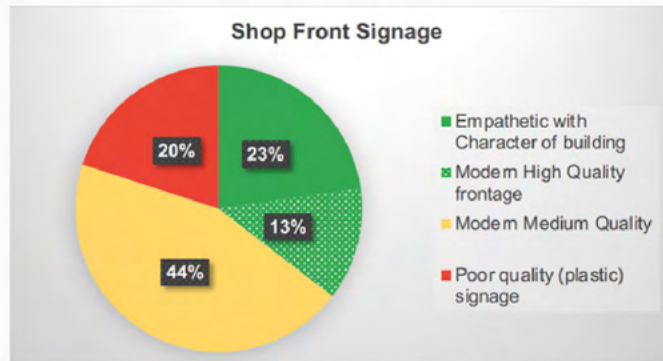
- Horizontally from People's Park to York Road.
- Vertically from the base of Marine Road to the top of Patrick Street where it meets Tivoli Road.
- 255 premises were surveyed in August /September 2022
 - George's Street Upper (GSU)
 - George's Street Lower (GSL)
 - Patrick Street (PS)
- 5 volunteers carried out the survey
- As well as overall results, the results for each of the streets surveyed are presented

Overall Building Facade



- It is encouraging to note that more than 80% of building facades were found to be in good to excellent condition.
- However more than a quarter of facades in GSL were found to be of poor quality.

Shop Front Signage



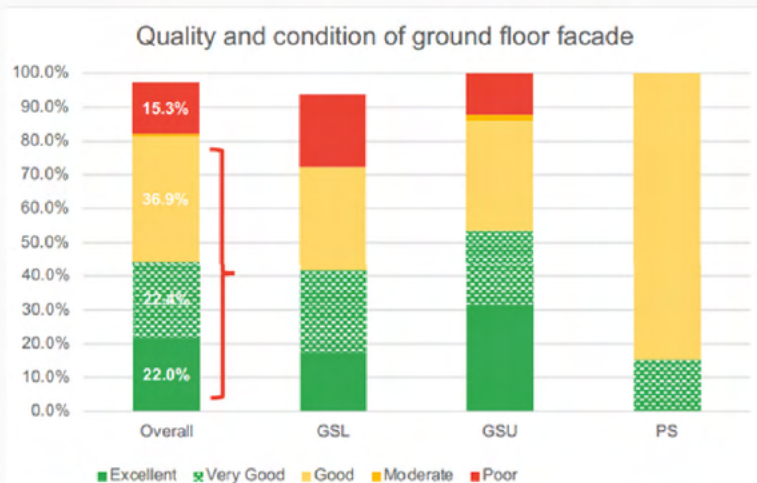
- 14% of premises have no signage (vacant, residential, etc.)
- Of the remainder, 36% have high quality signage (empathetic with character of building or high quality modern).
- 20% have poor quality signage (rising to 34% in the case of GSL)

Pavements



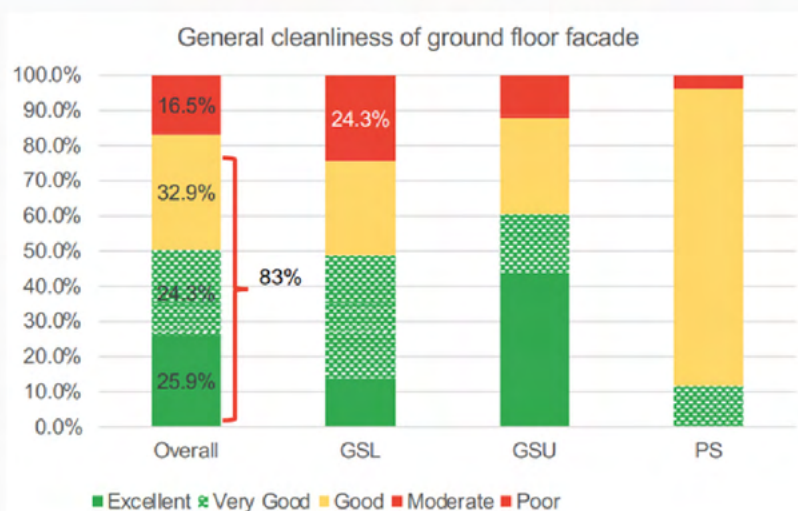
- Pavements were generally found to be in very good conditions (90%)
- However, the pavements outside 12 premises (11 in GSL) were found to be congested with at least one obstacle

Quality and condition of ground floor facade



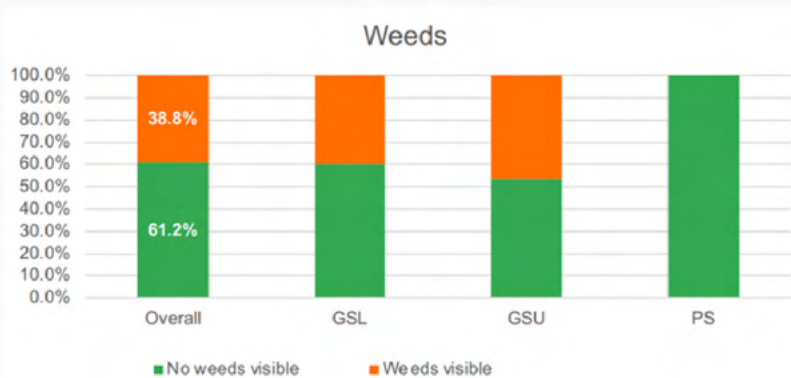
- Overall, 81% were found to be good to excellent.
- However, 22% of the ground floor facades in GSL were found to be in poor condition

General cleanliness of ground floor facade



- A very similar result to quality and condition.
- 24% of the ground floor facades in GSL were found to be in a poor state of cleanliness.

Weeds



- Weeds were observed on 39% of premises.
- The most frequent occurrence of weeds was on the roof / parapet of buildings (48 occurrences – nearly 20% of premises).
- Interestingly GSL scored better than GSU in this category.

Redundant signage

There were 3 instances of redundant signage on upper floors. Examples include:

- Dún Laoghaire Gas – Upper George's Street
- Homefront Letting Agents – Upper George's Street

Hoardings

- 6 premises had hoardings, 3 in good condition, 3 in poor condition
- Mainly in George's Street Upper
- Of particular concern is that the hoardings at the Dunne's Store premises have been there for several years.

Ground floor Usage

	Overall	GSL	GSU	PS	
Vacant	36		19	16	1
Café restaurant / fast food	35		13	16	6
Nails, Hair & Beauty	21		8	8	5
Professional services	19		2	13	4
Home / furniture / interior design	17		10	6	1
Clothing	15		6	6	3
Food retail	10		6	4	0
Charity	9		6	3	0
Residential	8		6	2	0
Pub	7		4	3	0
Non food retail	7		4	2	1
Dry cleaners / shoe repairs	7		3	2	2
Estate agent	6		2	4	0
Jewellers	6		4	2	0
Pharmacy	5		1	4	0
Health/Medical Services	5		2	3	0
Business Services	5		2	3	0
Bank	5		0	5	0
Antiques - vintage	5		1	4	0

- 14% of ground floor premises were classified as vacant.
- There was only one mid priced restaurant recorded, most food outlets are low price / fast food or cafés.
- There is an absence / shortage of outlets such as a fish shop, wine shop, wine bar, butcher, etc.
- The majority of 'nails, hair and beauty' outlets are at the lower end of the market.
- Comparisons with other similar sized (Cobh, Ennis) and neighbouring towns (Dalkey, Blackrock, Monkstown) would be very instructive.

First floor Usage

Apartment	29%
Unknown	16%
Professional Services	15%
Vacant	13%
Storage for stock	8%

- These results must be interpreted with caution (high percentage of unknown)
- The vacancy rate does not seem excessive.

Historic Features

Artefact	Number
Ornate parapet	61
Date built	19
Logo of previous business	3

- Approximately 25% of buildings have an ornate parapet.
- 7% have a sign showing date built
- These historic signs should be highlighted and preserved



Additional results

- Cabling clutter: An additional sub-audit was carried out in GSU on surplus cabling. A large number of premises (number to be confirmed) had significant cable clutter.



- Traditional Vertical shop signs: Many premises had a traditional shop sign holder (pictured below). Half of these have no sign, but the frame is in place. This is a significant heritage artefact.



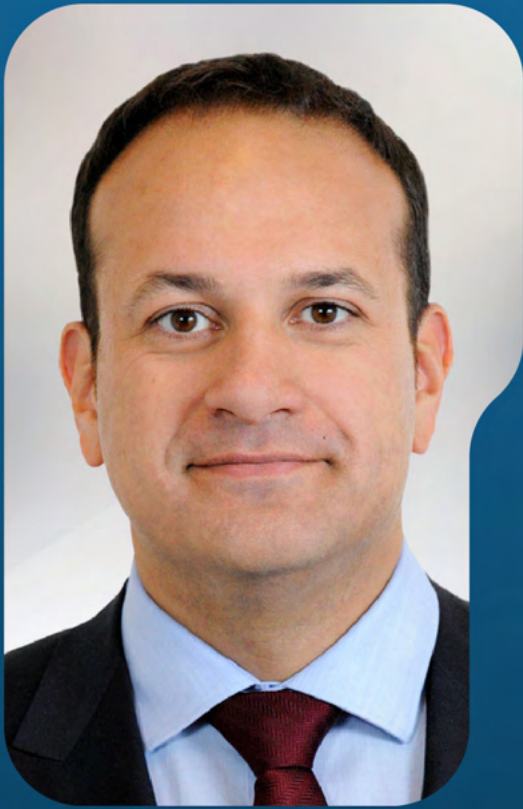


PART 2

DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT Benchmark of Dún Laoghaire Town

PREPARED BY



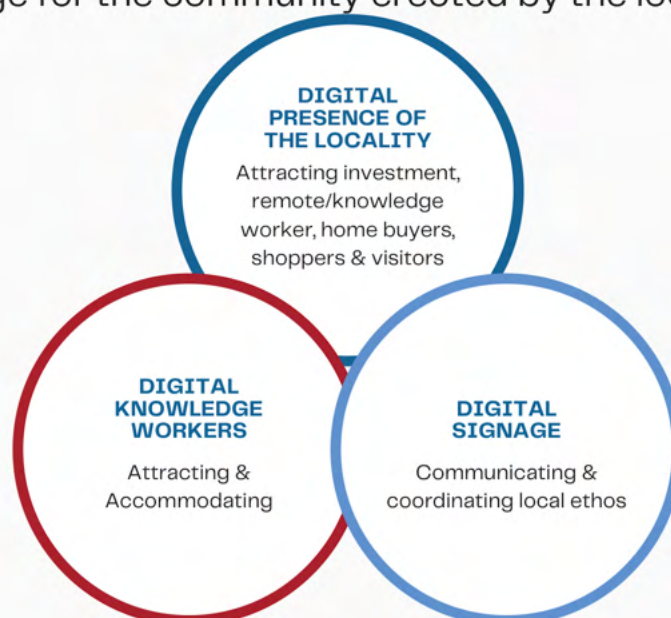


Taoiseach Leo Varadkar TD

"The Digital Ireland Framework will help to maximise the well-being of Irish people and their businesses, the length and breadth of the country. It will help us fully realise many of the benefits of digital including: more flexible and remote working and new job opportunities; new markets and customers for businesses."

Our objective at @Digital Dun Laoghaire is to champion the benefits of digitalisation for localities and their communities of small businesses as a collective. From the point of view of the 'Digital First Communities' framework for localities, digital empowerment encompasses three sections:

1. Digital Footprint of the Locality – The digital 'shop window' or online footprint of the locality plays a key role at multiple levels in advancing the economic agenda for the town. A locality's digital footprint spans its presence in terms of third party references to it (such as Wikipedia, commentary on social media etc), its dedicated website and its voice in terms of its social media channels.
2. Digital / Knowledge Workers – The presence of knowledge workers in a locality is an essential contributor to vibrancy at numerous levels. They spend in local shops, they share their knowledge with local traditional businesses and they increase footfall with a high capture rate. Therefore the goal for this measure is to assess how well positioned the locality is to provide quality office space for them and the touch points that bring them into contact with traditional businesses to create knowledge and skills transfer or transitioning of staff from traditional businesses to innovation driven enterprises.
3. Digital signage – The effective use of digital signage throughout an urban landscape enables towns to use technology to improve services, the sharing of information about events and become more efficient. Such signage includes signage in individual outlets and digital signage for the community erected by the local authority.



Section 1

Assessing the digital presence, or 'shop window', of a locality

At @Digital Dun Laoghaire we focus our efforts on the digital footprint of a locality as this is where the lowest cost investment can achieve the highest impact in a finite amount of time and volunteers can play an important role in this.



“If it’s not shared online, it didn’t happen”

Eoin Costello

Locals will always know the best place to get their bits and bobs, the best pint in the town and the people that make it great to live here. However in the 21st century, as the founder of Wikipedia says, if the things that make your locality special are not visible online no one else will know! So, if a remote/knowledge worker, home buyer, shopper or visitor is doing an online search they may only see the tip of the iceberg of what makes a locality special. Therefore in the 21st century, localities need to find a way to digitise and share the great things about their area and make them widely available online .



The digital projection of a locality, be it on Google Search or social media, can be termed its digital visibility. Digital visibility is the tip of the iceberg, i.e. what is seen digitally of all the activity taking place in a locality. So, for example when we were running the Digital Dún Laoghaire meetups, our motto was ‘If it’s not shared online it didn’t happen.’

The people attending the event itself were the physical manifestation, however, if we didn’t create a range of online outputs from the event such as a live stream, Tweeting, encouraging attendees to Tweet and creating a post-event blog post, we were losing the digital visibility impact of the event. As far as people seeing activity in our locality through the lens of Google or social media, it would have been digitally invisible and in effect “hadn’t happened” despite all our hard work in staging each event.

The Digital Visibility Index


The online projection of a locality as a great place to live, work and spend time is something we call its 'Digital Visibility Index'. The stronger a locality has embraced digital in all its forms (for example tagging the locality's hashtag in posts, selling online, collaborating through WhatsApp groups etc) the stronger its digital visibility will be.

In seeking to provide a simple roadmap for localities as a guide to improving their digital visibility, we looked at the digital assets that might be most relevant to the decision-making of the groups in the value hierarchy for a 'Digital First Community', i.e investors, remote/knowledge workers, home buyers, shoppers and visitors. The window through which 95% of people search according to StatCounter is Google Search therefore our assessment concentrates on viewing the world through Google Search.

DEVELOPED WITH LOCAL VOLUNTEERS IN MIND

When we created the Digital Visibility Index we did so in a way that local stakeholder groups and volunteers can know in an easy, accessible format how well their locality is set up to compete for investment, remote/knowledge workers, home buyers, shoppers and visitors through the method which this type of target group is searching i.e. online. The assessment is:

- Easy To use – 30 minutes to complete.
- Very accessible – Using just a smartphone, groups can rapidly see things about the digital projection of their locality that they hadn't even considered before.
- The assessment provides actionable insights that volunteers can help implement.



To stay practical and implementable by volunteers, we limited the benchmarking of the digital visibility index of a locality to four components. Also from the point of view of being a guide for volunteers our benchmark only assesses assets/entries that a locality has the potential to influence or shape. For example a suitably configured local group can claim and manage the Google Search Knowledge Panel entry or the Wikipedia entry for their locality.

By working on improving a locality's Digital Visibility Index, volunteers can perform the digital equivalent of what Tidy Towns does for the physical environment of the town.


THE COMPONENTS OF THE DIGITAL VISIBILITY INDEX FOR A LOCALITY

In the digital empowerment section what is being assessed is how the digital visibility of a locality is configured to attract investment, remote/knowledge workers, home buyers, shoppers and visitors in a systematic way. The narrative and ethos that the locality projects on social media is core to this.

Town Centre First

The Irish Government's 'Town Centre First' strategy emphasises the importance of creating vibrant and sustainable town centres that serve the needs of the local community. In terms of the narrative of a place, the strategy recognises that every town and city in Ireland has its own unique character and heritage that should be celebrated and promoted.

The strategy emphasises the importance of creating a strong sense of place and identity for each town centre, building on their unique assets and heritage to create a distinct and appealing offer for residents and visitors alike. This includes supporting local businesses, enhancing public spaces and amenities, and promoting cultural and tourism activities that showcase the town's unique character and story.



The Town Centre First strategy recognises that the narrative of a place is important in shaping people's perceptions of a town or city, and it seeks to support the creation of positive and compelling narratives that reflect the town's values, strengths, and potential. By fostering a strong sense of place and identity, the strategy aims to create thriving and sustainable town centres that are attractive and welcoming to both residents and visitors.

The strategy also recognises the importance of the ethos of a place in shaping the character and identity of a town centre. The ethos of a place refers to the values, beliefs, and principles that underpin the social, economic, and cultural life of a town centre. The Town Centre First strategy seeks to support the development of town centres that embody a strong and positive ethos, characterised by a sense of community, civic pride, and a commitment to sustainability and social inclusion.

The strategy emphasises the importance of community engagement and participation in shaping the ethos of a town centre, ensuring that local voices are heard and that the values and aspirations of the community are reflected in the development and management of the town centre.

The Town Centre First strategy also recognizes the role of local businesses, cultural organisations, and other stakeholders in shaping the ethos of a town centre. By supporting and promoting local entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation, the strategy aims to foster a dynamic and inclusive ethos that supports the long-term viability and vitality of the town centre.

Therefore the intangible elements that contribute to the projection of a locality include:

- **Narrative** is concerned with the sense of identity of a locality through projecting what it is best known for, its culture, history and traditions. The narrative may or may not be actively managed by the locality itself, it may be something that evolves from books, visitor posts, Wikipedia entries, Trip Advisor member comments, word of mouth etc.
- **Ethos** is suggested by evidence of a strong and vibrant community, Tidy Towns volunteer groups, sports groups, Town Teams, festivals, events etc.

So while narrative and ethos are more intangible qualities, the Digital Visibility Index seeks to identify these along with the components of the value hierarchy for towns through four components which are as follows:

1. **Landing page presence in Google search** – For a direct search of the locality's name Google provides fixed elements like the Knowledge Panel and dynamic content comprising the page of organic search results.
2. **A Locality's Website** – Websites based on the locality's brand have the potential to provide a coordinated digital marketing platform for the area if it is configured to appeal to the five components of the Digital First Communities value hierarchy.
3. **The Wikipedia entry for the locality** – Wikipedia is important to localities because Google pulls significant amounts of content from its directory to present in Google search results. As a result Wikipedia can often be the first click that a searcher makes, landing on a page containing crowd sourced, and curated, information about the locality.
4. **The locality's #hashtag on social media** – A representative sample of posts from social media feeds are often included in Google search results. As a result Twitter or Instagram can be the second or third click that a searcher makes to browse the posts about the locality.

A locality's digital shop window

Google Search Landing Page



Locality's Website



Wikipedia Entry



Locality's #Hashtag on social media

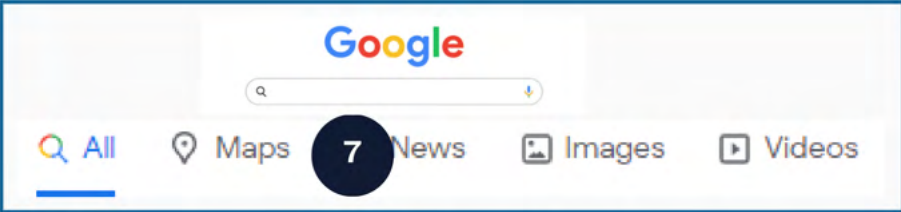


Here is more detail of each component in turn.

Component 1 – Landing page presence in Google search

The first step in going about an assessment of Component 1 is to enter incognito mode in your browser so that your existing searches don't influence what Google shows you. Enter your locality's name, be as specific as possible in respect of the delimited entity ie instead of 'Dun Laoghaire', which forms part of the county name, we would insert 'Dun Laoghaire Town', instead of 'Blackrock', of which there are a number in Ireland, we would enter 'Blackrock Village'. For smaller localities adding the word village to the place name can make it more focussed.

The resulting search results will include standard elements for a locality's place name as follows:

	<p>Photo 1</p> <p>Usually taken from Wikipedia entry</p>
<p>2 Search results</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Knowledge Panel</p> <p>Information about the locality taken from Wikipedia</p> <p>Event Listing</p>
<p>4 People also ask</p>	
<p>5 Wikipedia's entry for the locality</p>	
<p>Search results Search results Search results</p>	
<p>6 Results from Twitter Feed</p>	
<p>Top sights in locality Google compiled results</p>	
<p>Related Searches Locality + shopping - weather - hotels etc</p>	

Looking at the narrative and ethos that emerge on a landing page search for a locality's name is the starting point. Research has found that people using Google search can make their minds up in less than 10 seconds about their first impressions of a set of search results. If you type 'Trim', "Killaloe" or "Sandyford" (Dublin) into the Google search box you very quickly get a sense of the narrative and ethos of those localities from the resulting landing page.

This does not mean that a locality that projects weakly on the Google results landing page has no narrative or ethos, there may be great things happening on the ground, however 'if it's not shared online, it never happened' as far as online searchers are concerned.

Component 1 Assessment Guide

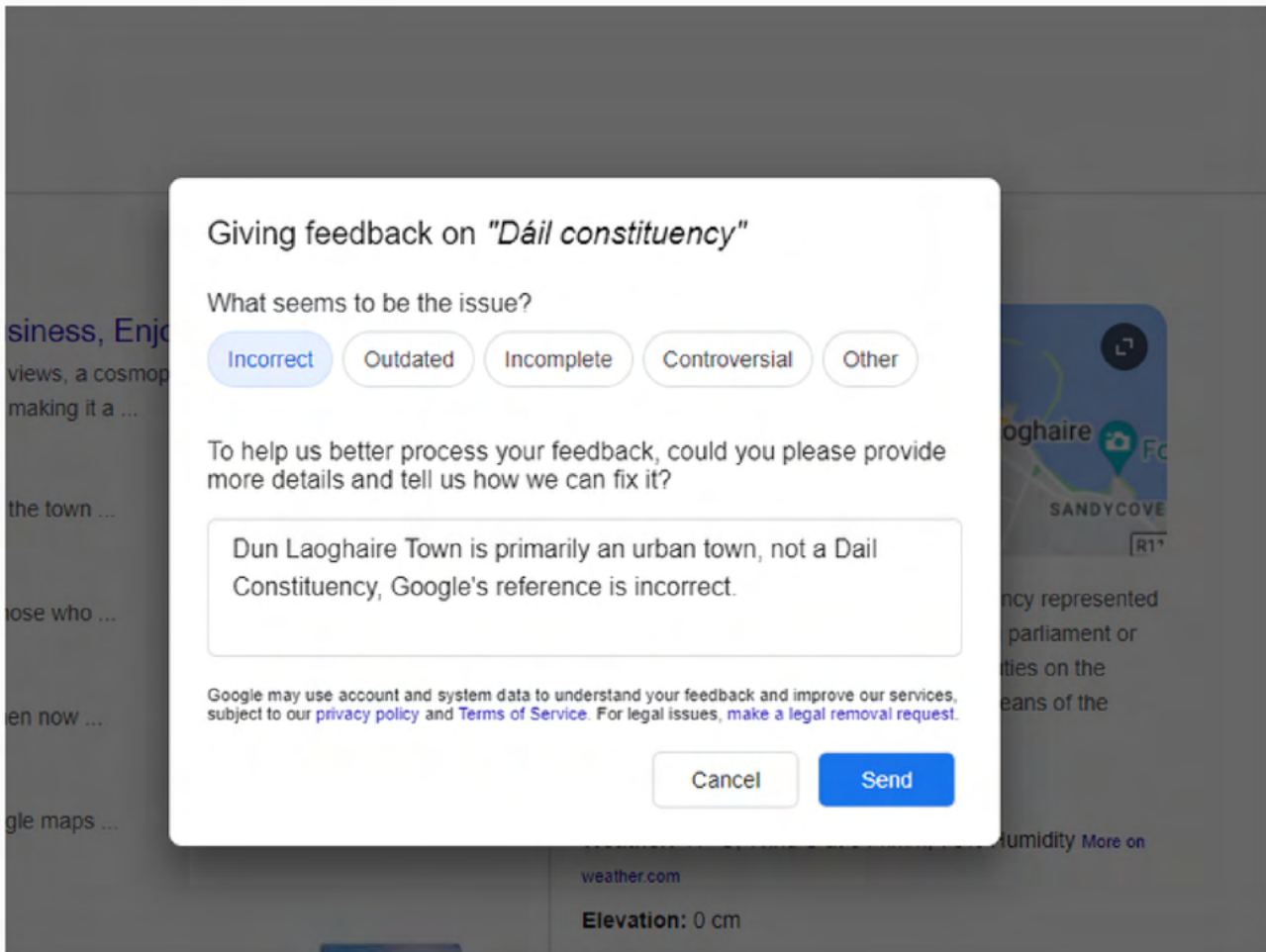
Here is a guide for volunteers to assess the key points from the grid above for your locality:

<p>Narrative - In a 10 second scan of the landing page of results are clear themes evident, what are they?</p>	<p>0 - No clear themes 1 - Some themes 2 - Strong themes</p>
<p>Ethos - In the same scan is there evidence of collaboration or coordination in the landing page, are there entries in the search results for Tidy Towns, Chambers, Councils etc?</p>	<p>0 - No clear evidence of collaborative institutions in action 1 - Some evidence 2 - Strong evidence</p>
<p>1. Image above the Google Knowledge Panel - how representative? A search for Ballinacollig produces a featured image of a small tower in a field. Is the picture of the town generic? Is the photo something specific that represents the town well?</p>	<p>0 - No image 1 - Generic image 2 - Image that captures the essence of the locality</p>
<p>2. Organic search results</p> <p>What are the value hierarchy elements represented in the search results?</p> <p>Score each resulting entry on the first page of Google assign them to which component of the value hierarchy they speak to.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment - Relevant entry Y/N 1/0 • Innovation Driven Enterprises/Knowledge/knowledge/knowledge/remote/knowledge workers - Relevant entry Y/N 1/0 • Home Buyers - Relevant entry Y/N 1/0 • Shoppers - Relevant entry Y/N 1/0 • Visitors - Relevant entry Y/N 1/0 <p>Total =</p>
<p>3. Content of the Google Knowledge panel</p> <p>Knowledge panels are automatically generated by Google with information that comes from various sources, in particular Wikipedia. Entities (people, places or things that are subjects of knowledge panels) can also contribute to its contents after they're verified. you can use the Feedback option at the bottom of each Knowledge Panel and submit user generated content). Anyone can submit feedback on a knowledge panel but if you're a verified user, and if the knowledge panel is about an entity you represent, Google can prioritise your feedback.</p>	<p>0 - Knowledge Panel extracted straight from relevant wikipedia entry containing a significant amount of 'non user friendly' administrative information.</p> <p>1 - Knowledge Panel provides some relevant information about the locality without excessive administrative information.</p> <p>2 = Knowledge Panel is a balanced reflection of the locality.</p>

Component 1 Assessment Guide

<p>4. People also ask</p> <p>This section appears for some locality searches and features common queries about the locality entered into Google search.</p> <p>What you don't want to see here are queries like "Is X safe/dangerous", marginal to 'Is X worth visiting' but definite yes to 'Is X a good place to live'.</p> <p>If Google search doesn't display this segment for your search then ignore this question.</p>	<p>0 - Queries reflect a negative disposition of searches containing the locality's name.</p> <p>1- Queries reflect positive but are unbalanced/ focussed on one aspect of the locality.</p> <p>2 - Queries reflect a balanced proportion of positive searches reflecting the locality being a desirable location for investment, knowledge/knowledge/remote/knowledge workers, home buyers, shoppers and visitors.</p>
<p>5. Wikipedia's entry for a locality - See Component 3 below</p>	
<p>6. Results from Twitter Feed - See Component 4 below</p>	
<p>7. Maps Tab in search - Featured Images</p> <p>Once the Maps tab in search is clicked for the results of the search for the locality's name a relevant image appears on the top left of the resulting page on the desktop (on mobile they appear at the bottom).</p> <p>These images are crowd sourced by Google from people that are logged into Google. Volunteers and stakeholders from a locality can add their own photos to this section.</p>	<p>Scroll through the photographs to assess their quality and how representative they are of the locality.</p> <p>0 - Poor selection of poor quality photos of the locality</p> <p>1 - Reasonable selection of reasonable quality photos of a range of aspects of the locality</p> <p>2. Good selection of good quality photos of a range of aspects of the locality</p>

Example of us asking Google to correct their Knowledge Panel entry for Dun Laoghaire Town



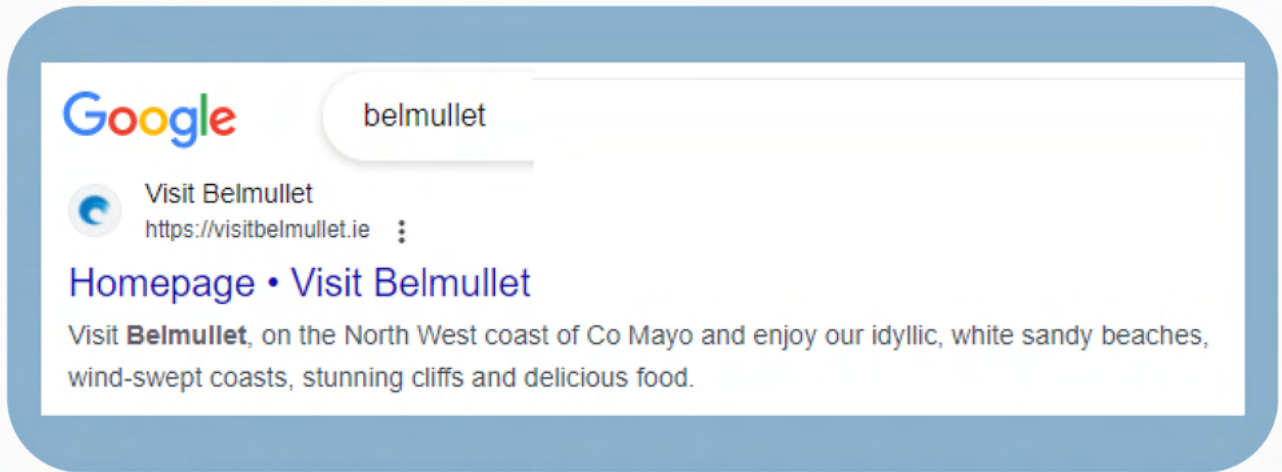
Component 2 – The Locality’s Dedicated Website

To achieve the benefits of 'Digital First Communities', localities need to digitally project their areas as vibrant and attractive locations in which innovation-driven SMEs can thrive. Websites based on the locality's brand have the potential to provide a coordinated digital marketing platform for the area and its small business community through collaborative online campaigns. This platform can then act as a way to augment existing good digital practice amongst local small businesses and thereby leverage peer pressure/local example to bring other small businesses to leverage digital channels.

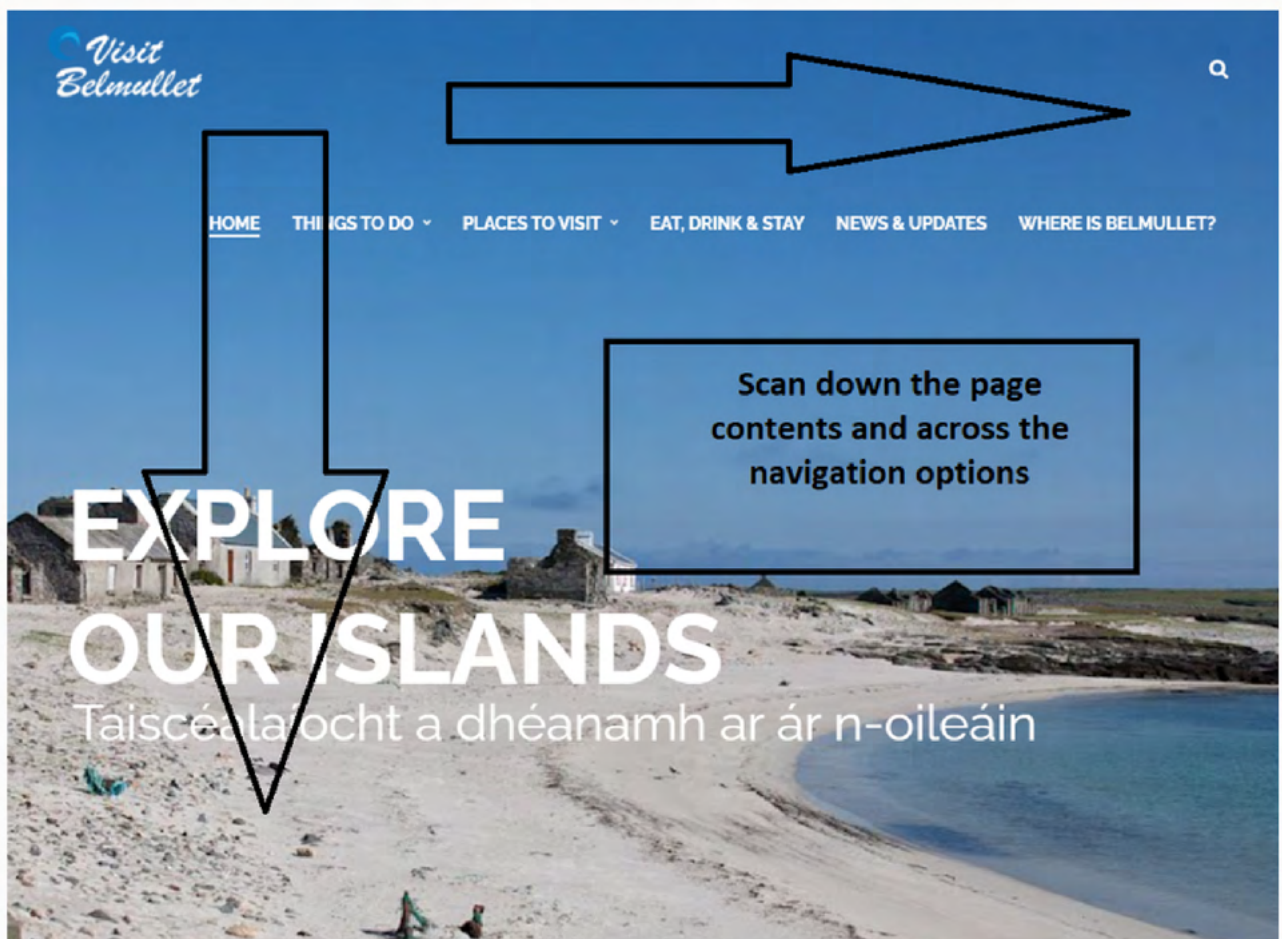
Assessing a locality's website involves applying the components of the Digital First Communities hierarchy, how does the website seek to attract investors, knowledge/knowledge/remote/knowledge workers, home buyers, shoppers and visitors.



There are two steps to doing the assessment. The first is how the website summary appears in Google search results. Google takes this information from the content of the website, it is fully under the control of the website administrator.



The second part is when you click through the search results link for the locality to the underlying website. When doing the assessment of the locality's website scan down the contents of the page. Then scan across the menu options hovering over menu option drop downs, avoid more than 4 clicks as most searchers will not go beyond 4 clicks.



Screen shot taken in February 2023

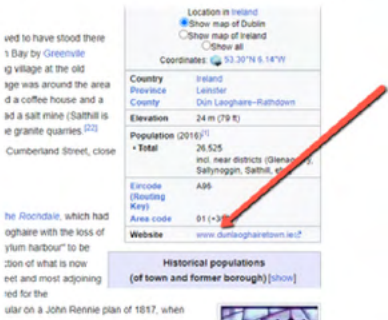
The simplest way to do an assessment is to put a 1 in the relevant box for each item of information you encounter.

<p>Investment</p> <p>Evidence of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Projection and perception of the locality - the locality's ethos• Vacancy rate• Economic and demographic trends	<p>Knowledge Workers Home Buyers</p> <p>Evidence of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schools• Work opportunities• Amenities• Ethos of the locality• Cost and availability of housing• Proximity to transport• Connection to locality• Available office space
<p>Shoppers</p> <p>Evidence of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Convenience• Variety• Cost	<p>Visitors</p> <p>Evidence of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amenities and attractions• Awareness of the points of interest of the locality

Component 2

Assessment guide for The Locality's Dedicated Website

Google Search - first page of results for locality name	
Does a locality focussed website does it appear in the first page of results (ie DunLaoghairetown.ie)?	Yes = 1 No = 0
If no, does a locality focussed website exist, can it be located on other pages	Yes = 1 No = 0
If Yes to either of the above, is the home page Title and Description optimised for Google? I.E. Does the title that appears in the Google search results include words that are descriptive of the features of the locality.	Yes = 1 No = 0

The locality's Website	
<p>Is the narrative of the locality evident on the home page, can you identify 3 strengths from a 10 second assessment?</p>	<p>Yes = 1 No = 0</p>
<p>How many of the components of the Digital First Communities value hierarchy are addressed by the home page (page content + navigation)</p> <p>Give 1 point for each item of content that addresses a component of the Digital First Community value hierarchy:</p> <p>Count each component once only, so if a page has 3 items that are relevant to Visitors/Tourists that = 1.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment - Relevant entry Y/N 1/0 • Innovation Driven Enterprises/Knowledge/knowledge/knowledge/remote/knowledge workers - Relevant entry Y/N 1/0 • Home Buyers - Relevant entry Y/N 1/0 • Shoppers - Relevant entry Y/N 1/0 • Visitors - Relevant entry Y/N 1/0 <p>Total =</p>
<p>Ethos - Is it clear on the home page who are the people that control/manage the website and social media for the locality (i.e. Local Authority, Town Team, Chamber of Commerce, Traders Associations, Tourism Unit etc)</p>	<p>Clear = 1 point Unclear = 0 points</p>
<p>What is the linkage strategy between the locality's website and the County Council and the region? Helps the locality's website appear in the first page of results in Google for the locality's name.</p> <p>Here is a free online checker - https://www.seoreviewtools.com/valuable-backlinks-checker/</p>	<p>40 + Links = 1 Below 40 Links = 0</p>
<p>What is the linkage strategy between the locality's website and Wikipedia - Does the locality's website appear in the Wikipedia entry for the locality, for example</p> 	<p>Yes = 1 No = 0</p>

Component 3 – The WIKIPEDIA Entry for locality

Wikipedia is a free online encyclopaedia that is collaboratively written and maintained by volunteers from around the world. It is one of the largest and most popular reference websites on the internet, containing millions of articles on a wide range of topics, from science and history to current events and pop culture.

As noted earlier Wikipedia is important to localities because Google pulls significant amounts of content from its directory to present in Google search results. As a result Wikipedia is often the first click that a searcher makes, landing on a page containing crowd sourced, and curated, information about the locality.

Local groups can become volunteer editors on Wikipedia for the entry respecting their locality including adding new information, correcting errors, and improving the overall quality of articles about your locality. It is a simple process, and anyone can contribute to the encyclopaedia's articles, provided they follow the website's guidelines and policies.

Component 3 Assessment Guide for the WIKIPEDIA Entry for locality

<p>On an initial viewing how comprehensive is the entry for the locality</p>	<p>Low = only one section is well developed = 0</p> <p>Average = more than one section is well developed = 1</p> <p>Well = more than two sections are well developed = 2</p>
<p>Does the Wikipedia entry reflect sufficient information covering the elements of the Digital First Communities value hierarchy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment - Relevant entry Y/N 1/0 • Innovation Driven Enterprises/Knowledge/knowledge/knowledge/remote/knowledge workers - Relevant entry Y/N 1/0 • Home Buyers - Relevant entry Y/N 1/0 • Shoppers - Relevant entry Y/N 1/0 • Visitors - Relevant entry Y/N 1/0 <p>Total =</p>
<p>Maintenance of the entry - is the information in the entry accurate and up to date, are there mentions of now defunct items?</p>	<p>0 = poorly maintained</p> <p>1 = average maintained</p> <p>2 = well maintained</p>

Component 4 – The locality's #hashtag on social media

Social media can play a role in helping people choose where to live by providing valuable information about a particular area's lifestyle, culture, and community. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter allow people to connect with others who live or have lived in a specific location and to access information about the area's amenities, events, and attractions.

For example, people can use social media to search for local groups or pages dedicated to a specific neighbourhood, city, or region. These groups can provide a wealth of information about the area's schools, restaurants, shopping centres, recreational facilities, and other important features that may influence a person's decision to relocate.

In addition to connecting with locals, social media can also provide valuable insights into a community's culture and values. For example, a person can use social media to research the area's political leanings, social movements, and cultural events to get a better sense of the area's overall ethos and 'vibe'.

Component 4

Assessment Guide for the locality's #hashtag on social media

What shows up for a search of the # <localityname> on Twitter - is it popular	#DunLaoghaireTown is not widely used #DunLaoghaire is more common - Shows X number of results for that hashtag
Is there an official Twitter account for the locality?	Yes = 1 No = 0
Is it clear who are the people managing it?	Yes = 1 No = 0
Is the bio representative of the locality?	Yes = 1 No = 0
Is there any evidence of collaborative campaigns being run for the locality?	Yes = 1 No = 0
Are there recent posts (within the last 30 days)	Yes = 1 No = 0
What is the frequency of the posts? (how many Tweets in the past month)	Frequent = 5 in past month = 1 Infrequent = Less than 5 in the past month = 0
Is there 'good' engagement with the Tweets on that account? The number of likes, comments and retweets compared to the number of followers. (sample the posts from the last 30 days)	Good engagement = 10+ likes and some comments per post = 1 Low engagement = Less than 10 Likes per post = 0

Section 2

Knowledge Workers

As local and international markets evolve heavily influenced by technology enablers, the future the mix of businesses in a locality that support local incomes needs to comprise a diverse range of both business to consumer and business to business companies. SMEs with a local market focus (such as restaurants, dry cleaners, service providers) need a cohort IDEs (innovation driven enterprises with a global market focus with products and innovation at their core) in their vicinity to provide the sustained footfall with a high capture rate. Equally research has found that the employees of these IDEs don't want to be locked away in isolated business parks but prefer job opportunities located in the heart of vibrant urban communities

Knowledge-intensive IDEs create high quality jobs and produce a positive multiplier effect for the locality. Moretti (The New Geography of Jobs 2013) conducted an analysis of 11 million US workers in 320 metropolitan areas and for that for each knowledge-intensive job created in a metropolitan area, 5 additional local jobs were created outside the knowledge-intensive activities in the long run. These five jobs benefit a diverse set of workers. Two of the jobs created by multiplier effect are professional jobs, such as those of doctors or lawyers, while the other three benefit workers in nonprofessional occupations such as waiters or store clerks.

Use of the built environment of towns for knowledge workers

How can urban areas use a digital led approach to maximise the positive impact for job creation and retention in their localities. The most immediate and impactful way to increase footfall with a high capture rate for local businesses in a locality, while also implementing sustainable development goals, is to activate vacant buildings in the town. Promoting the reuse of unoccupied buildings and upper storeys over shops is important to vibrancy. Also as business models change large chains such as Dunnes Stores, Tesco etc no longer need the substantial storage space above the branch as clothes etc arrive on a 'just in time' delivery rather than storage basis.

A key objective in this measure is the regeneration of high street/town centres through conversion of long term empty retail space into coworking hubs for digital businesses. The benchmark makes an assessment of the existing use of the ground and upper floors of each building as to whether it is fully used for its prime purpose (i.e. retail shop floor), used for a secondary purpose (storage space) or not used i.e. vacant. This assessment is contained in the Physical Environment section.

Conversion of street level vacant retail to residential is a third best option, use of even small spaces (15m by 5m) for office space has a long term positive impact on the economic vibrancy of the town.



Stock of bed linen stored in a prime building location facing the town's main street above Dunnes Stores, Dun Laoghaire

CHECKLIST

Opportunity	
Total office employees living within 20 minutes drive of locality	According to the 2016 Census of Ireland, there were 206,261 people living in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County. Of those, 100,305 people stated that they travelled to work
Capacity	
Office space providers in the locality	DSO Digital Dun Laoghaire HUB Glasshouses Office Pods
Total capacity	Approximately 300 desks
Current Occupancy	All full

FINDINGS

The Southern Regional Assembly 'Regional Coworking Analysis' (2021) estimated the number of private sector workers capable of operating remotely in Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown at 15.8% or 39,982. In the 2106 census of DLR 100,305 people stated that they travelled to work. Every worker that commutes out of the county each day is a significant loss to local businesses in terms of the multiplier effect.

For the capital of DLR County, Dun Laoghaire has insufficient hubs and private office space. Respondents to the KPMG Dun Laoghaire Town Study community survey in 2021 stated that half of those who were seeking space could not source the space they were seeking and 39% believe that there is a need for greater provision of coworking spaces.

In 2021 the 'Regional Coworking Analysis' states there are 17 co-working hubs however on close analysis 4 of these are not valid (one is an "Hour Kitchen", another a drop in space, another a centre "relief of poverty and the advancement of education among Travellers" and 2 are no longer operating).

Digital Signage

The effective use of digital signage throughout an urban landscape enables towns to use technology to improve services, the sharing of information about events and become more efficient.

Many locations with footfall from visitors and residents seek to provide timely and relevant information to those people through digital information screens in prominent locations. A number of highly visible screens provided by the local authority in Dun Laoghaire Town could help support local businesses through increased footfall with a high capture rate and increased tourists.

Digital screens would highlight what the town has to offer in a way that –

1. Encourages more local businesses to engage in the digital promotion of their business.
2. Increases the impact of existing digital only campaigns.
3. Provides a physical outlet for information and promotion about local businesses and events.
4. Increases the reach and mobilisation of the DunLaoghaireTown.ie online promotion campaigns.

In particular the presence of a number of digital screens in pedestrianised areas providing a range of information on events, offers from local businesses etc can be part of enlivening the street and helping our local traditional businesses to get the most benefit from the promotion of our town centre.

Use of digital signage by private businesses in Dun Laoghaire Town

The Tidy Towns benchmark found that:

- 35 premises of 255 surveyed had some form of digital signage
- 6 of these had digital signage that were classified as community use as well as business promotion.



PART 3

SMART SOLUTION TOOLKIT

Benchmark of Dún Laoghaire Town

PREPARED BY MASTERS
STUDENTS



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin
Smart Urbanism Unit

What are Smart Solutions?

"Smart solutions" is a general term for systems combining innovative technologies, both in terms of hardware (Internet of Things) and software. They are widely applied in many fields of life – starting from smart offices, cars, urban areas etc.

In Ireland a number of local authorities have smart initiatives operating within their county, and different counties have a different focus for their smart activities. Smart Dublin lists their pillars of smart solutions as:

- Smart Economy
- Smart Environment
- Smart Government
- Smart Living
- Smart Mobility
- Smart People

In preparing this report the Masters students adopted a filter for our work on the 'Digital First Communities' smart benchmark by focussing on solutions that are relevant to a town of 10,000 residents in the areas of:

- Mobility – the green agenda of reducing emissions and improving connectivity
- Economic development
- Power from renewable sources
- Self sustaining agenda – enabling localities to become self sustaining in the long term in respect of power, food local produce, vertical farms etc.

Smart Solutions Toolkit

This section presents a sample toolkit for advancing the Smart pillar of a Digital First Community. These toolkits have been selected from a range of examples to ensure that Dun Laoghaire is a sustainable and smart town and have been grouped into four highly feasible categories at the urban scale of Dun Laoghaire.

The following are the four pillars of our Smart Solutions toolkit:

- Smart mobility
- Smart people
- Smart Energy
- Smart Farming



Figure 1 - The four pillars of Smart Solution Toolkit

Smart Mobility



Smart mobility connects different elements of technology and mobility and a rethinking of the transport infrastructure used in everyday life. It aims to build a sustainable society by reducing environmental pollution, traffic congestion, road accidents and other economic and human losses caused by mobility.

One of these methods is to enable more efficient and labour-saving operations by connecting transport management to smart technologies, and networked vehicles and smart signalling would be included in this category.

Mobility options are also needed to solve last mile problems, such as on-demand ridesharing services and car-sharing programmes, to reduce the use of private petrol cars and to make travelling within Dun Laoghaire more convenient.

In addition, to encourage the use of mobility options, there is a need for an all-in-one Hub and systemic integration to make all sharing services available in one place.

Smart mobility solutions suitable to a town include:

- Expanding sharing mobility services
- Mobility hubs
- Smart transportation systems



Figure 2 - Mobility hub, Fingal(Right), Sharing Service(Left)

Case study

-Smart Mobility-



Ireland

Mobility hub

Blanchardstown
Fingal Co

The Mobility Hub consists of five elements

- Parking for Age-friendly
- Parking for the Disabled
- Electric vehicle charging
- Bike rack (bike share and public)
- Car sharing

The Mobility Hub, to be established in 2020, aims to promote climate action goals by encouraging diverse and sustainable types of transportation in areas close to existing public transportation systems where a variety of functions are concentrated.

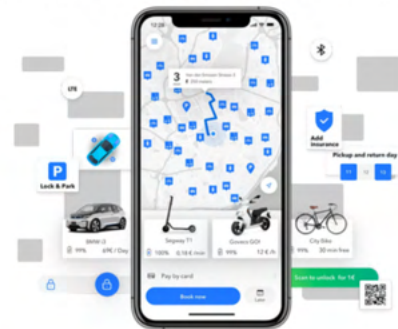


Sharing service

Multiple location

Car and bicycle sharing services are currently available in Dun Laoghaire. The availability of these services does not yet cover the whole city area.

In addition, kick scooter sharing services, which have become fashionable in recent years, are not yet covered. The platforms for these services are disjointed and lack convenience. Although there does not appear to be any implementation in Ireland as yet, if they could be identified on a one-stop platform, it would allow people to choose the service that best meets their needs, making it more convenient and promoting sharing.



Global

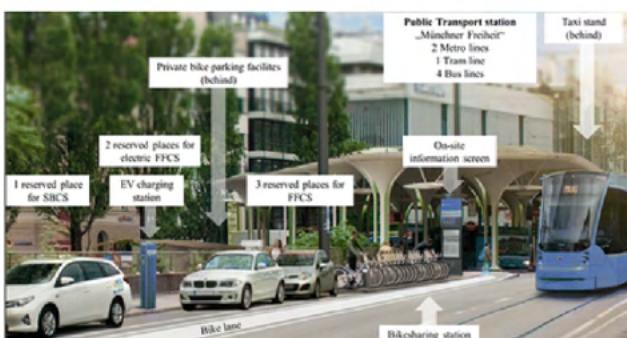
Smart hub

Münchner Freiheit
Munich, Germany

The Mobility Hub consists of 6 elements

- Public Transport station
- Parking for private cars
- Electric vehicle charging
- Bike rack (bike share and public),
- Car sharing
- Taxi stand

This mobility hub was tentatively implemented from 2014 to 2016, in cooperation with the City of Munich and the Technical University of Munich. Similar attempts are spreading to various cities in Germany, such as Kiel.

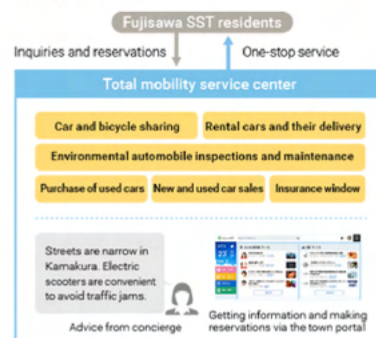


Total mobility service

Fujisawa SST
Fujisawa, Japan

This service is provided by a concierge at the Total Mobility Service Center, who arranges sharing services for various modes of transportation according to residents' needs and delivers them close to the user's home. The dedicated portal also allows users to check the availability of various services and make reservations.

These features enable residents to expand their mobility range without relying on cars, and since they can use the service from home, more active use of the sharing service is expected.



Smart People



Smart People is the most software-oriented of our Smart Solutions toolkit. The principal aim is to increase the frequency and density of community communication and create a base for sustainable urban development.

At the same time, the aim is to enable people to lead more convenient and comfortable lives through this type of smart solution. It requires creating a virtual place that is easily accessible to people and can be accessed without hindrance by people living in Dun Laoghaire, regardless of their age, gender, and location of residence.

Creating the human resources for a sustainable Dun Laoghaire is also important, and classrooms providing digital skills and entrepreneurial support are essential. This area is that Smart Dun Laoghaire is already working on, so close collaboration would increase the impact. Relevant smart solutions include:

- Digital Village (All-in-one platforms)
- Digital Hubs
- Digital skill courses



Figure 3 - Digital village(Left), Digital Hub(Right)

Case study

-Smart People-



Ireland

Donegal's Digital Hubs Donegal Co

It is a public-private partnership across Donegal with the goal of building and innovating digital communities. Initiatives primarily include.

- Construction of Digital Hubs and community hubs
- Deployment of high-speed broadband and construction of public WIFI spots
- Provision of digital skills development courses

Their efforts will also be used to provide new experiences in tourism using digital technology, improve public services, encourage digital startups, and improve the operations of small and medium-sized businesses.

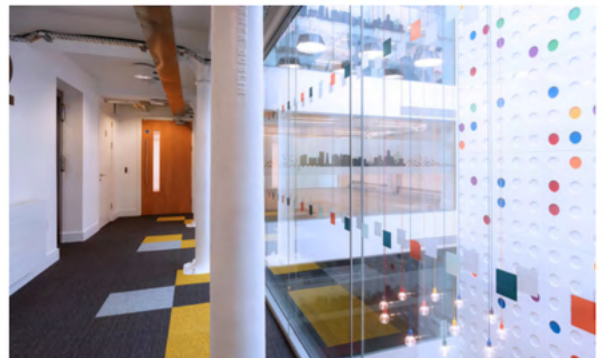


Digital hubs Dublin 8

The initiative, led by the Irish Digital Hub Development Agency, is primarily based on the refurbishment of a historic building located in Dublin 8, which is being used as a hub.

It has become a digital community for digital innovation, with 24/7 access, high-speed internet, meeting rooms and a games room.

Various digital companies have in fact been established from this hub. This type of structure will be essential for the digital and economic development of the region.



Global

Digital Village Germany

Digital Village is a digital platform used by various small municipalities across Germany.

On this platform, residents can report on public services to the administration, get local news and announcements from the administration in one place, chat with other residents, request help, request a ride, etc.

Furthermore, various functions necessary for residents, such as an online shop for local shops, are integrated and can be found on one platform.



Digital high street

Treorchy Wales, UK

A new app has been created to bring online the small, independent businesses that dot the high street of this small town, making it a one-stop shop for attractive local shops online.

It was done in collaboration with digital high street app NearMeNow and involved 20 businesses and began during the shutdown in the Corona virus.

It contributes to the local economy by making small, attractive but inaccessible local shops more accessible through smart solutions.



Smart Energy



Smart energy is using smart devices to improve energy efficiency and renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power to build a sustainable and environmentally friendly society.

These initiatives include optimising the electricity supply and saving energy using smart devices in the home. From a broader perspective, it is also essential to control and optimise the allocation of demand and supply using the Smart Grid.

On the other hand, in addition to controlling energy consumption on the consumer side, Dun Laoghaire needs to be able to produce energy not only at the national electricity supply level but also at the community level to make it a sustainable and independent city. These surplus productions provide income for the community and financial resilience.

Smart solutions here include:

- Smart devices
- Smart energy grid
- Microgeneration, community power system

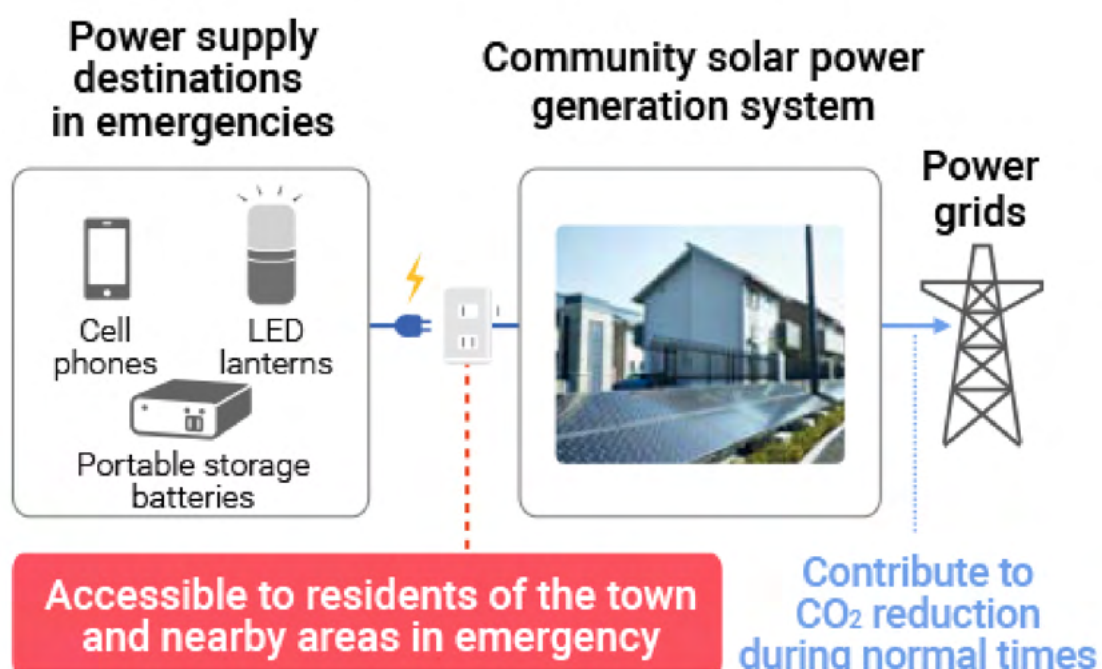


Figure 4- Diagram of community power system(Fujisawa SST, Japan)

Case study

-Smart Energy-



Ireland

Community Power System

Templederry
Tipperary Co

Templederry is Ireland's first community-owned wind farm. It has two turbines and can generate about 15 GWh of electricity each year.

The electricity generated from these turbines is equivalent to the amount of electricity used by a single town and is sold for use by households, businesses and farms. As is the case with many community-owned power stations, these sales are used to maintain the power station and any surplus is also used to benefit the community.



Community energy ecosystem

Inishowen
Donegal Co

The community of Inishowen is working with various stakeholders, including the city, to build a sustainable energy community, with implementation starting in 2021.

These include the installation of geothermal heat pumps in Local creche and solar panels on local family farms. The installation of solar panels has enabled the farm to obtain nearly 50% of its energy from the sun. The policy also includes subsidies for retrofitting of houses and a wide range of energy-saving and energy self-sufficiency measures for the community as a whole.



Global

Community Power System

Fujisawa SST
Fujisawa, Japan

The new town has installed community photovoltaic systems on public land, based on the experience of energy shortages following the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, to supply power to the grid in normal times, but to provide emergency power for Fujisawa and neighbouring communities in the event of a disaster.

The electricity generated from this system is sold and the proceeds benefit the community.

Solar power and storage batteries have also been installed in town centre facilities to increase redundancy with regard to energy demand.



Smart Grids

Nice Cote d'Azur, France

Nice has installed power conversion and storage systems and operates a smart grid.

The energy storage system takes power from the public distribution grid during non-peak periods, stores the energy in storage batteries and releases it during periods of high electricity demand.

There are also solar and diesel generators in the area, which are also connected to the system to ensure the most economical and efficient supply of electricity, while monitoring the overall supply and demand balance.



Smart Farming



Smart agriculture originally emerged as a management concept focused on providing the agricultural industry with an infrastructure to track, monitor, automate and analyse its operations using advanced technologies such as big data and IoT. This includes soil scanning and sensors for water, light, humidity and temperature management, and extensive and precise monitoring regimes using satellites and drones, which will be used for the potential solutions presented.

However, many smart farming technologies are targeted at larger farmlands and are primarily used in rural areas. Dun Laoghaire, the subject of this toolkit, is a relatively densely populated city of around 10000 people, and the demand is different.

This section proposes smart solutions for urban agriculture that enable local production for local consumption and self-sufficiency in tightening communities' bond through the production of their food for Dun Laoghaire to become a sustainable and smart city.

Potential smart solutions here include:

- Urban farming park
- Temporary site farming such as rooftops/walls/Vacant sites
- Monitoring Urban farms by drones



Figure 5 - Urban farming park, Hong Kong(Left), Rooftop farming,New York(Right)

Case study -Smart Farming-



Ireland

Temporary site farming

Cork city
Cork co

St Stephen's Sustainable Food Lab was created by converting an abandoned basketball court near Cork city centre.

The initiative, which was self-funded by members, uses kitchen waste as compost and the harvested crops are sold locally to fund its activities.

In this way, abandoned land as well as urban buildings are very important for urban agriculture.

In addition to this, there are also individuals in Cork who farm on rooftops.



Smart farm management

Carrickmacross
Monaghan Co

Currently restrictions on the use of drones mean that they are not widely used, but research is underway in Ireland, and demonstrations are taking place in Carrickmacross.

Cameras attached to drones can monitor the growth and condition of grass and crops on farms without the need for a close inspection, and can also apply the necessary fertilisers and pesticides, leading to labour savings in urban farming.



Global

Urban farming park

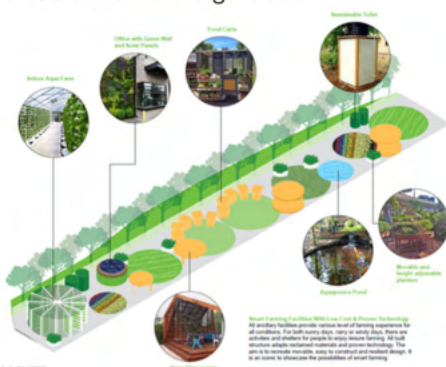
Kennedy town
Hong Kong, China

The farm was formed by converting brownfields along the coast.

The farm has vertical farming racks, farming tables and hydroponics to allow people to access agriculture without having to stoop down.

In addition, the farm serves as a park, a recreational area for local people and the ecosystem of the entire region.

The farm is also integrated with smart technology, as the vegetables in the garden are controlled by smart sensors for water and light, and rainwater collection tanks provide water to the garden.



Temporary site farming

Brooklyn
New York City, US

This case study, Brooklyn Grange, is the largest rooftop soil farm in the world, but the roofs and walls of current urban buildings remain unused and can be converted into farms to improve community sustainability. Food self-sufficiency reduces wasteful energy consumption due to imports and exports, and also reduces susceptibility to price fluctuations of imported goods.

Green buildings also stem the heat island effect and bring biodiversity to cities.



The initiatives of Smart Dun Laoghaire

Based on interviews Smart Dun Laoghaire's initiatives to date have been implemented along four main pillars:

Pillar 1 – Digital Infrastructure

Full coverage of the broadband network throughout the county.

Using the strong digital infrastructure in place, it is also looking at digitising public places and increasing the use of digital asset tracking to improve environmental data collection in the community. Examples of projects undertaken include:

- Dublin Mountain Community Centre / Stars of ErinBCP
- Monna Smart Bench

Pillar 2 – Digital economy

Providing high quality support with the aim of developing local businesses, including start-ups, and facilitating job creation.

Engage local businesses in the digital economy

Promote investment in the region.

Examples of projects undertaken include:

- Digital Vouchers
- E-cargo bike scheme

Pillar 3 – Digital skills

Providing digital skills training to the public, primarily through the library network

Examples of projects undertaken include:

- PPN How-to training support
- DLR Lexicon Lab

Pillar 4 – Digital Government

Delivering DLR services digitally

It also ensures that county policies reflect the data collected and that various initiatives are evidence-based

Examples of projects undertaken include:

- Digital grant scheme
- DLR Economic & Community monitor



Smart Dun Laoghaire's strategy cohort of engagement

Opportunities for Smart Solutions in Dun Laoghaire

Dun Laoghaire is a vibrant coastal city of around 30,000 people, situated in a scenic suburb of Dublin, with direct connections by DART and Bus, which is only 30 minutes away, offering convenience as well as a distinctive harbour. It is also centrally located with a vibrant traditional town centre, compact but well-functioning. The town also attracts many national and international visitors throughout the year.

The following SWOT analysis is extracted from the report Dun Laoghaire 2040, published by DLR in 2021. It shows that Dun Laoghaire does not have good last mile connectivity, which needs to be supplemented by smart mobility. The community also has purchasing power and diversity, but needs to be connected to a higher level, and also needs smart people, as support for entrepreneurs is essential. As stated in Threats, sustainable urban development is essential as a guarantee against future uncertainties. As a seaside city, it is also vulnerable to environmental change, so environmentally friendly urban development is also essential, so smart energy and pharming are also important.

<p><u>Strength</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic location Within the Dublin region • Accessibility Well-connected by public transport • Educated and Connected population • Diversity of Business • Environment and Streetscape Distinctive sense of place and urban identity Strong buy in and interest from local resident and business community 	<p><u>Weakness</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town centre maintenance and vacancy • Ageing population • Permeability, Parking and Public realm -Mobility and permeability within the town is constrained -Poor connection between the town centre and the harbour • Retail and Enterprise Activity
<p><u>Opportunity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting the town to the Waterfront • Collaboration and Investment Growing young entrepreneurial base • Changing perception • A focus on vibrancy • Public realm as a Catalyst • Maximising recreation potential • Changing work practice 	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs and unemployment Threat of reducing jobs • Uneven growth • Macroeconomic factors • Safety and Security High levels of traffic and car-dominance within the town centre • Increasing rents, Rates, and Prices

Opportunities for Smart Solution in Dun Laoghaire



Making the best use of existing build space – A positive sign of the times, I see our local cinema is making its large unused roof a source of renewable energy!

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Appendix

About Digital Dun Laoghaire/DigitalHQ clg

Since Digital Dún Laoghaire's inception in March 2016 our network has run dozens of free business events with a total attendance to date in excess of 1,100 business people. Our work is made possible by the membership fees of the Bank of Ireland contribution of coworking space to DigitalHQ clg. In addition to the support of Bank of Ireland, we receive support from Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council to deliver the following outputs:

- Connecting – Creating a community of innovation driven enterprises and connecting them with the enterprise hubs of the town and with innovation supports offered within the DLR region.
- Business attraction – Identifying available office space in the town and promoting Dun Laoghaire as the ideal business location for innovation driven enterprises.
- Networking & Training – Running @DigitalDunLaoghaire meetups and briefings for both innovation driven enterprises and traditional small businesses.
- Business Promotion – Overseeing the #LoveDunLaoghaire digital business area promotion campaigns.

Current members of our steering group include representatives from IADT Media Cube, .IE Domain Registry, Grow Remote, DLR County Council, Bank of Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, DigitalHQ clg, Nova UCD, DLR Chamber and Local Business Owners.

Website address – <https://www.digitaldunlaoghaire.ie/>