

The background of the entire page is a complex, abstract geometric pattern. It features overlapping translucent shapes in shades of blue, yellow, and white. Some shapes are solid, while others have a dotted or grid-like pattern. The overall effect is a sense of depth and modern design.

# AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN **PUBLIC RELATIONS** **2019**

# Best Public Sector or Civil Service Campaign



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## Campaign

Our Balbriggan

## Description of Campaign

A collaborative approach between Fingal County Council and MediaConsult resulted in a successful multi-platform strategy for the local authority's public consultation process on a ground-breaking €20m transformation plan for Balbriggan. The Our Balbriggan campaign saw 26% of the town's population take the survey and united the community behind the process.

**MediaConsult**

## Public Relations Consultant

MediaConsult

25  
BLIANA  
YEARS

Comhairle Contae  
Fhine Gall  
Fingal County  
Council



## Client

Fingal County Council

## Background to the Campaign

Balbriggan is the youngest town in Ireland, with an average age of 30.5, and has seen rapid population and housing growth without an equivalent rise in amenities.

It is also the country's most diverse community with 28% of its residents born outside the State compared to 13% nationally.

A Residential Satisfaction Survey carried out by REDC for Fingal County Council in 2017 showed that sentiment in Balbriggan was significantly lower than the county average when asked if it was a good place to live (88% v 95%), to visit (71% v 87%), to work (64% v 76%) and to do business (61% v 79%).

This led Fingal County Council to form the Balbriggan Leadership Group in 2018, chaired by Professor Brian MacCraith, President, Dublin City University, and task it with developing a long-term socio-economic strategy for Balbriggan with actions that can be delivered upon. This resulted in local residents being asked to take part in a survey to shape the order of priorities for a list of improvements to transform the town.

The Communications Unit of Fingal County Council was asked by the Leadership Group in June 2018 to prepare a Communications Plan to maximise awareness of their work among target audiences and persuade stakeholders to assist in the ongoing development of Balbriggan.

It was proposed that the Communications Plan would be implemented by a Public Relations Consultant working on behalf of the Balbriggan Leadership Group and, in October 2018, MediaConsult were appointed to the role.

Following their appointment, MediaConsult were immediately tasked with developing a public engagement campaign around the launch of the Balbriggan Rejuvenation Strategy which would give every resident the opportunity to have their say in the future of their town.

This resulted in the creation of the Our Balbriggan brand, logo, website and social media accounts.

An integrated multi-platform campaign across national and local levels resulted in the mobilisation of the town behind the Our Balbriggan – Get Involved call to action and the online survey attracted 4,004 submissions from Balbriggan residents – 26% of the total over-11 population of the town.

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## Statement of Objectives

The objective of the Our Balbriggan consultation and engagement campaign was to engage with every resident in Balbriggan and to give them an opportunity to have their say on the future of their town.

The Balbriggan Leadership Group prepared ambitious and transformative plans for the area with actions that can be delivered upon across four vital pillars – public realm and placemaking; economy and enterprise; community affairs and integration; employment, education and training.

The consultation and engagement campaign was tasked with getting local residents to take part in a public consultation process and survey which will shape the order of priorities for a list of improvements to transform the town.

The results of the Our Balbriggan survey will directly influence the Balbriggan Socio-Economic Strategy, which will be published at the end of Q1 2019 and will contain an implementation plan with a list of actions, activities and accompanying timeline.

The short, medium and long term objectives of the Our Balbriggan campaign were:

### **Short Term: October to December 2018**

1. Create a distinctive brand for the Balbriggan Socio Economic Strategy.
2. Create a website and social media platforms.
3. Communicate with all sections of the community in Balbriggan and enable them to have their say and influence the proposed actions of the Balbriggan Socio Economic strategy through a series of planned public consultation and engagement events.
4. To promote the public consultation survey developed by Fingal County Council and ensure that it was taken by a minimum of 2,000 people.
5. To raise awareness of the Leadership Group's work, its membership and their activities in support of a Balbriggan Socio-Economic Strategy.

### **Medium Term:**

1. To interact with as many people as possible through a range of communication channels and keep them engaged in helping realise the full potential of Balbriggan.
2. To publicise the results of the survey and next steps in the process.

### **Long Term:**

1. To assist in moving the perception of Balbriggan to a much more positive space.

## Programme Planning and Strategy

MediaConsult were given six weeks to prepare and implement a six-month persuasive campaign from the launch of the survey on November 26 to the launch of the Balbriggan Socio Economic Strategy in April 2019.

The integrated strategy worked across both social, traditional and direct media, ensuring that the Our Balbriggan message reached every household, resulting in a superb public engagement response.

Over 4,000 people took the Our Balbriggan survey – double the target objectives.

MediaConsult and partners developed a brand identity that would encompass a positivity around Balbriggan, and that could be used across all platforms leading up to the launch of the strategy.

The Our Balbriggan brand marries the colours of the sea and Balbriggan beach, signified by a heart drawn in the sand.

A local phrase, it was allied to two calls to action – Imagine The Possibilities and Get Involved – to form a powerful message of change through public engagement.

A dedicated website Balbriggan.ie was developed to host information about the plan and its process and progress, the successful online consultation survey and to be a hub for the ever-increasing #ourbalbriggan online tribe.

Extremely successful OurBalbriggan social media channels across a range of platforms were developed which, after proving highly-effective in driving the public engagement programme, are now serving as the identity and information hub for the new Balbriggan.

The team developed a four-page newsletter which was delivered to every house in the area in the lead-up to the public consultation period, as well as a leaflet that was handed out at various community locations by Fingal County Council staff on the ground.

One of the keys to securing great public engagement was the appearance of the Our Balbriggan photographer at a host of public events before, during and after the survey period, with local people urging their neighbours and friends to Get Involved.

Details of the brand story and its effect can be found in the following link:  
<https://spark.adobe.com/page/aU9HwqboPOAEW/>

In the build-up to the launch of the survey, MediaConsult carried out the following actions

1. Developed the 'Our Balbriggan' brand to optimise ownership by Balbriggan residents.
2. Developed a printed newsletter which was delivered to every home in Balbriggan.
3. Branded and developed materials for boards for the dedicated information drop-in centres and leaflets for campaign events and activities.
4. Supported Fingal County Council's development of the online survey that optimised user interaction.
5. Built and maintained the Balbriggan.ie website as the hub for all campaign content and which also hosted the Survey.
6. Developed a core video as key content for use at launch event and on all digital platforms that informed Balbriggan residents of the key proposals mooted for the transformation plan.
7. Created engaging 'Our Balbriggan' social media accounts across Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube to inform residents of the transformation plan and to drive traffic to the website hub to participate in the Survey.
8. Developed and implemented a multimedia plan including TV, print, radio and digital that coincided with the launch of the consultation period.
9. Supported, communicated and published all events associated with the consultation period including the Launch, World Café events and all other Fingal County Council activities.

The launch date of Monday, November 26, was specifically chosen as part of MediaConsult's Media Plan as it was determined that it would offer the best opportunity of maximising national and local media interest in the Balbriggan Strategy.

The public consultation strategy around the plans to transform Balbriggan made headlines across the national media spectrum including Irish Independent, Irish Times and Evening Herald and every major news website.

Fingal CEO Paul Reid and members of the Balbriggan Leadership Group featured on RTÉ's Six-One and Nine O'clock News.

The story featured on every national radio station, with RTÉ Radio's News At One running an extended news piece with Prof Brian MacCraith.

The Fingal Independent led with stories on the process for four weeks in a row.

The survey was available online at Balbriggan.ie from November 26 to December 14 and a target of 2,000 responses, which would represent 13% of the town's population over 11, was set.

The Survey was designed to give citizens of Balbriggan of all ages the opportunity to indicate which ideas under each pillar they felt would bring the most benefit to Balbriggan.

Opportunities were also included to highlight any areas participants felt were important to them but were not included. Aside from the main question under each of the four pillars, all additional questions were optional and did not need to be completed in order to participate.

A team of Fingal County Council staff, armed with tablets, engaged with citizens at events, in shopping centres, at the railway station and on the street and get them to participate in the Survey. These staff wore branded Our Balbriggan clothing and the decision to use Council staff was taken because it was felt this would help build trust that the Council was committed to delivering the Balbriggan strategy.

An event was held on the evening of launch day, November 26, in the Bracken Hotel.

A number of World Café interaction events were also organised for the first week of the survey.

These well-attended workshops gave citizens an opportunity to engage with Fingal County Council staff and others in discussions about the plans and there were opportunities to participate in the Survey.

All events were covered by the Our Balbriggan social media accounts and shared by various Fingal County Council accounts.

Several videos, featuring residents talking about the plans and their hopes for Balbriggan, was also made and shared during this period.

The success of this multi-platform approach was that no event happened in isolation, without full back up from all available channels, and the effect of the online and offline Our Balbriggan activity can be directly seen in daily spikes of people taking the survey.

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## **Measurement**

The brand 'Our Balbriggan' was created, promoted and leads an ongoing public engagement campaign which includes a thriving website and social media tribe across all platforms.

The community launch event attracted 200 people, and three World Café events attracted a total of 156 attendees of all ages. Drop-in engagement sessions were also held.

The work of the Balbriggan Leadership group and Fingal County Council has been promoted throughout the campaign via press, radio and TV interviews and incorporated into the digital video campaigns.

The survey results and next steps received national and local coverage over a four-week period (one per pillar), and a dedicated social media Valentine's campaign to announce the results reached over 200,000 people and more than doubled social media follower numbers.

**Quantitative**

Survey response spikes were tracked and correlated to high levels of national print and broadcast PR aligned with targeted social media video ad campaigns and direct campaigning on the ground by members of Fingal's dedicated team.

43% of all surveys were taken on November 26 (801) and 27 (920), corresponding directly to extensive media coverage at national and local level and the launch of a social video campaign targeting Balbriggan residents.

A direct email with a CTA to Get Involved was sent to all survey respondents and all newsletter subscribers on December 12.

The final number of completed survey forms was twice as many (100%) as the initial target of 2,000.

**Qualitative**

The survey responses comprised rich data clearly indicating the main priorities for the Balbriggan residents.

The survey highlighted the need for a swimming pool for the area which Fingal County Council have now committed to.

The Our Balbriggan campaign was highly engaged across all major social media channels.

Each Facebook post received an average of over 50 reactions, comments and shares. On Instagram, the average was 70 interactions per post.

The campaign also generated over 65,000 video views on Facebook and Instagram. 58% of all traffic to balbriggan.ie originated from our social channels.



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