

Draft

Blessington Local Area

2012 - 2018



August 2012



## Table of Contents

	Page No.
<b>Section 1 Purpose and Status of the Plan</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Purpose of the Plan	1
1.2 Local Area Plan Status	1
1.3 Local Area Plan Process	2
1.4 Physical Context of Blessington	3
1.5 Planning Context of Blessington	3
1.6 Overall Vision and Development Strategy	5
1.7 Implementation	5
<b>Section 2 Population and Housing</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 Population	6
2.2 Housing Growth	6
2.3 Amount of Zoned Housing Land	7
2.4 Population and Housing Objectives	8
<b>Section 3 Town Centre and Retail Strategy</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 Introduction	9
3.2 Strategy	9
3.3 Opportunity Sites	12
<b>Section 4 Employment and Enterprise</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1 Introduction	15
4.2 Economic Context	15
4.3 Economic Profile of Blessington	15
4.4 Strategy for Employment in Blessington	16
4.5 Employment Zoning	17
4.6 Employment Objectives	18
<b>Section 5 Tourism</b>	<b>19</b>
5.1 Introduction	19
5.2 Strategy for Tourism	19
5.3 Tourism Objectives	20
<b>Section 6 Social Infrastructure</b>	<b>22</b>
6.1 Introduction	22
6.2 Social Infrastructure	22
6.3 Community Development and Social Infrastructure Objectives	24

## Table of Contents

	Page No.
<b>Section 7 Service Infrastructure</b>	<b>25</b>
7.1 Introduction	25
7.2 Water	25
7.3 Flooding	25
7.4 Roads and Transportation	26
7.5 Objectives	27
<b>Section 8 Natural Heritage</b>	<b>28</b>
8.1 Introduction	28
8.2 Objectives	28
<b>Section 9 Action Area Plans and Specific Local Objectives</b>	<b>30</b>
9.1 Introduction	30
9.2 Specific Local Objectives	35
<b>Section 10 Zoning</b>	<b>37</b>
10.1 Introduction	37
10.2 Blessington Zoning Matrix	38
<b>Appendix A Figures and Calculations</b>	<b>39</b>
Section 1 Population and Housing	39
Section 2 Employment and Enterprise	42
Section 3 Social and Community Zonings	47
Section 4 Open Space and Recreation Zonings	50
<b>Maps</b>	
Map 1 Blessington Land Use Zoning Map	
Map 2 Blessington Heritage Map	

## List of Tables

	Page No.
Table 1.1 - Progress of statutory LAP process	2
Table 1.2 Consistency with the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan	4
Table 2.1 Population Figures	6
Table 2.2 Projected Household Growth	7
Table 2.3 Residential Zonings	8
Table 4.1 Blessington Occupational Breakdown– source POWCAR (CSO) data 2006.	16
Table 4.2: Summary Table of all proposed Employment Zonings	17

## **Section 1**

### **Purpose and Status of the Plan**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

It is the purpose of this Plan to establish a framework for the planned, co-ordinated and sustainable development of Blessington. The aim of the Plan is to enhance and facilitate the balancing of economic, social and environmental infrastructure in order to maintain and develop a high quality of life without compromising the protection of the environment and the needs of future generations.

In addition to the policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan 2010 –2016 (and any subsequent revisions or updates) that are relevant to the development of Blessington, it is an overarching objective of this Plan to identify the special characteristics of Blessington and accordingly develop objectives which form a basis for the future development of the town within lifetime of this plan while also setting the foundations for the future sustainable development of the town beyond this period.

The Local Area Plan consists of a written statement, appendices and maps. The written statement takes precedence over the maps should any discrepancy arise between them.

#### **1.2 Local Area Plan status**

Part II, Chapter II, Section 19 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (the Act), as amended, provides that a Local Area Plan (LAP) may be prepared in respect of any area which a planning authority considers suitable; and in particular for areas which require economic, physical and social renewal and for areas likely to be the subject of large scale development within the lifetime of the plan.

The Act provides that a LAP shall be made in respect of an area which is designated as a town in the most recent census of population other than a town designated as a suburb or environs in that census, which has a population in excess of 5,000 and is situated within a functional area of a planning authority which is a County Council. While a 'town' population figure for Blessington from the 2011 Census is not yet available, using the Census 2011 'small area statistics' already published, it is estimated that the population within Blessington (i.e. the area defined by the boundary of this plan) is c. 4,784 persons. As this is under 5,000 a LAP would not be mandatory.

However, given the growth target of Blessington of 7,500 for 2022 and its designation as a 'moderate growth town' in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 and the Wicklow County Development Plan 2010-2016 it is considered appropriate to provide a LAP for the settlement.

The Act provides that a LAP shall be consistent with the objectives of the County Development Plan, including its 'core strategy', as well as any regional planning guidelines that apply to the area of the plan. LAPs shall also be consistent with the transport strategy of the National Transport Authority.

In accordance with the Act, a LAP shall have a duration of 6 years, unless after 5 years it is determined that the existing LAP is still consistent with the objectives and core strategy of the County Development Plan and the objectives of the plan have not been substantially secured. In such circumstances, the duration of the plan may be extended for an additional 5 years (i.e. giving the plan a total duration of 10 years) subject to adherence to the procedures set out in Section 19 (1) of the Act.

### 1.3 Local Area Plan process

In accordance with Section 20 of the Planning Act, a Planning Authority is required to take whatever steps it considers necessary to consult the Minister for the Environment and the public before preparing a LAP, including consultations with any local residents, public sector agencies, non-governmental agencies, local community groups and commercial and business interests in the area.

Over the past number of years pre-draft public consultation has been carried out in regard to the preparation of a plan for the town of Blessington. The most recent round of consultation was held in 2009 and involved notification of prescribed bodies of the intention to prepare a draft LAP and the holding of public meetings in Blessington. Submissions on the plan were invited.

While preliminary work and consideration of these submissions was carried out at this time, it was considered premature for the plan to move forward until such time as the National Roads Design Office had significantly progressed and finalised a preferred route option of the N81 upgrade.

The preferred route option has been prepared and is to be finalised in 2012. This plan has now been prepared in light of the final route corridor selected and following further consideration of higher order plans, strategies and guidelines and submissions already on file

Once the draft LAP is prepared, the Planning Authority is required to send notice of the proposals to make the plan to the Minister, An Bord Pleanála and to the prescribed authorities and to publish a notice of the proposal in one or more newspapers circulating in the area.

Information will also be disseminated through the planning public counter, County Council website and by phone. The statutory time frame as set out in the Planning Act commences upon public display of the Draft LAP.

Timeframe	Table 1.1 - Progress of statutory LAP process
Week 0	Draft Local Area Plan on display and submissions invited Minimum <b>6 weeks</b>
Week 6	Preparation of Manager's Report on submissions received Maximum <b>6 weeks</b>
Week 12	Manager's Report issued to Council Members for their consideration Maximum <b>6 weeks</b>
Week 18	Plan made unless Council Members decide not to make it, or to materially alter it, in which case the proposed alterations must be advertised within <b>3 weeks</b>
Week 21	Material alterations on display and submission invited Minimum <b>4 weeks</b>
Week 25	Preparation of Manager's Report on submissions (alterations only) Maximum <b>4 weeks</b>
Week 29	Manager's Report issued to Council Members for consideration Maximum <b>6 weeks</b>
Week 35	Plan made by Council Members with all, some or none of the material alterations
Week 39	Plan shall have effect 4 weeks from day that it is made

#### **1.4 Physical context of Blessington**

Blessington is located on the Kildare / Wicklow border approximately 27km southwest of Dublin and 11km from Naas, the county town of Kildare.

The national secondary road N81 links Blessington to Dublin to the north and to Baltinglass to the south. To the north-west, the regional road the R410 links the town to Naas in Kildare. Transport links to the east are more restricted by the Poulaphouca Reservoir and the Dublin and Wicklow Mountains, with the regional routes the R759 and R758 and R756 linking Blessington to the east via the Sally Gap and Wicklow Gap.

To the east and south Blessington is bounded by the Poulaphouca Reservoir, a man-made lake created in the 1940's by the damming of the River Liffey at Poulaphouca waterfall, to the south of the town. Hydroelectricity is generated at the dam, and the reservoir also supplies water to the Dublin region, following treatment at the nearby Ballymore Eustace water treatment plant in Co. Kildare. Recreational use is also made of the reservoir and it is an important asset to the town and its surrounds.

The south-west boundary of the settlement is formed by the county boundary with Co. Kildare, and to the west of the town are the East Kildare Uplands and the locally elevated Glen Ding / Deerpark woodlands. These forested areas are bounded to the west and south by Regional Road R410 (Blessington-Naas). For most of its northern and eastern flank this woodland area bounds an existing quarry. Much of the site is commercial coniferous forest, mainly of spruce, fir and larch. There is a mix of deciduous species in pockets throughout, notably stands of beech to the northwest and southeast. There are two national monuments located in this woodland area, the most notable being Rath Turtle Moat located near the top of Glen Ding hill.

Lands immediately adjoining the settlement to the north have been extensively quarried for sand and gravel. While 'Doran's Pit' on the east side of the N81 has been inactive for some time, the Roadstone quarry to the west of the N81 has been intensively quarried up until the recent downturn in the construction sector.

#### **1.5 Planning context of Blessington**

This plan exists in a hierarchy of plans flowing from national level (National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020) to regional level (Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022), to County level (Wicklow County Development Plan 2010-2016). It is through the County Development Plan that these higher order strategies, as well as other national and regional policies (e.g. relating to transportation and the environment) are translated to a 'local level'.

The County Development Plan 2010-2016 includes a 'core strategy' which sets out the 'direction' for the future growth of the County, in accordance with these higher level strategies, and in particular sets out the settlement and population growth strategy up to 2022, evaluates the demand for housing and adequacy of zoned lands to meet those needs, as well as providing strategies for infrastructure, environmental protection and retail development.

Table 1.2 below sets out the key elements of the Wicklow County Development Plan Core Strategy



Core Strategy of the CDP	Application to Blessington	Consistency
<b>Settlement, Population &amp; Housing Strategies</b>	<i>Blessington designated as a 'Moderate Growth Town' with a 2022 population target of 7,500</i>	<i>The objectives of this plan in terms of settlement population and housing are consistent with those of the County Development Plan (see Sections 2 and 10 of this plan)</i>
<b>Retail Strategy</b>	<i>Blessington designated as a 'Level 3 Tier 1' settlement and described as a centre which serves a wide catchment due to its distance from a major or county town</i>	<i>The objectives of this plan relating to retail are consistent with those of the County Development Plan (see Section 3 of this plan).</i>
<b>Economic Development Strategy</b>	<i>The economic function of moderate growth towns is to be attractor's for substantial investment from both foreign and local sources, in both 'product' and 'people' intensive industries.</i>	<i>The economic development objectives of this plan are consistent with those of the County Development Plan (see Sections 4 and 5 of this plan)</i>
<b>Social Development</b>	<i>In accordance with the County Development Plan the plan must ensure that sufficient lands are reserved for community uses in line with the future development of the area.</i>	<i>The social development objectives of this plan are consistent with those of the County Development Plan (see Sections 6, 7 and 10 of this plan)</i>
<b>Infrastructure Strategy</b>  <b>- Wastewater</b>  <b>- Water Supply</b>  <b>- Roads</b>	<i>In accordance with the County Development Plan;</i>  <i>The plan is required to ensure sufficient wastewater treatment capacity exists to cater for the projected population within the plan area</i>  <i>The plan is required to ensure the plan area is served by a water supply capable of meeting the demands of projected population within the plan area.</i>  <i>The plan is required to facilitate and encourage measures to improve the capacity and efficiency of the N81 and facilitate improved national routes by public transport.</i>	<i>The infrastructural development objectives of this plan are consistent with those of the County Development Plan (see Section 8 of this plan)</i>
<b>Environmental Strategy</b>	<i>To ensure the objectives of the plan are consistent with the conservation and protection of the Environment</i>	<i>The environmental protection objectives of this plan are consistent with those of the County Development Plan (see Section 9 of this plan and the SEA, AA and FRA)</i>

**Table 1.2 Consistency with the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan**



## **1.6 Overall vision and development strategy**

A key aim of a Local Area Plan is to set out the vision and overall strategy for the future development of a settlement and from this vision, all policies and objectives can be developed and implemented with the overall aim of achieving this vision.

The key elements of the vision for Blessington are to:

- Improve the quality of life of the resident population of Blessington by planning for and encouraging the provision of high quality housing and employment, social and community facilities, and a range of recreational options, in a quality environment;
- Regulate pressures from both urban and rural development, in particular sporadic development in rural areas and development pressures emanating from south-west Dublin by providing a sustainable settlement and growth strategy to create a compact urban form and to enhance the physical, economic and social profile of Blessington;
- Develop the tourism potential of Blessington as a visitor / tourist destination in itself and in its role as a 'gateway' to the west of the County and Wicklow Mountains.
- Protect the heritage of the existing town of Blessington and its environs along with its identity, in terms of its built and natural heritage and landscape conservation in the area.

This will be achieved by:

- Reinforcing and improving the visual appearance of the central area of the town with particular attention on the town centre area which is a designated architectural conservation area, and encouraging development that will enhance the town's vitality and vibrancy;
- Addressing the problems that arise for the town resulting from a national route passing through the centre of the town and the implications of the re-routing of the N81;
- Improving linkages between the existing main street and the new town centre development and providing further linkages between these areas and the remainder of the plan area;
- Facilitating the provision of infrastructure to meet the demand for development and future population needs in a sustainable manner;
- Promoting and ensuring the protection and suitable recreational and tourism use of natural habitats (in particular the protected habitats of the Poulaphuca Reservoir), cultural heritage, ecological resources, networks, quality landscapes and the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.

## **1.7 Implementation**

As this Plan must conform to the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan it is not proposed to include a repetition of the policies, objectives or strategies as set out in the CDP. Where standards or objectives for a particular development are not included in this Plan, the provisions of the CDP shall apply. The Plan will however include appropriate Blessington specific development objectives and guidance, compatible with those of the CDP, to assist the Development Management process in managing sustainable progress for the town.

Having regard to the capital expenditure required to adequately provide for Roads and Transportation, Environmental and Community Facilities Infrastructure, the Council will require contributions from benefiting developers. Contributions shall be made in accordance with Wicklow County Council's development contribution scheme, adopted by the elected members and crafted by virtue of its powers enacted under Section 48 (1) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000.

In addition Wicklow County Council will continue the practice of granting planning permissions with the inclusion of conditions requiring levies and or bonds to be paid and/or works undertaken to facilitate developments in the interests of the common good.

## Section 2

### Population and Housing

#### 2.1 Population

Blessington is designated a 'Moderate Growth Town' in the Wicklow County Development Plan. In 1996, the population of Blessington was 1,860. This had grown to c. 4,784 by 2011, an increase of 157% over 15 years. The most rapid increase occurred between 2002 and 2006 when the population increased at an average rate of 12% per annum on the previous year. However growth slowed to c.3% per annum between the years 2006 and 2011, with growth in the latter years of this period likely to have been lower than 3% per annum given the lack of housing completions in this period. While it is impossible to predict housing growth given the current economic climate, this plan must plan for the longer term and in this regard the County Development Plan population targets for 2016 and 2022 are 6,000 and 7,500 respectively.

Year	Population	Annual % change on previous population	Source
1996	1,860	-	1996 Census
2002	2,509	+4% pa	2002 Census
2006	4,018	+12% pa	2006 Census
2011	4,784 <sup>1</sup>	+c. 3%	2011 Census
2016	6,000	+c. 4.5. pa	CDP Indicative Population
2022	7,500	+c. 4% pa	CDP Indicative Population

Table 2.1

#### 2.2 Housing Growth

The plan must put in place a framework to allow for population growth, and this will require the designation and servicing of land for the development of housing. The development of infrastructure is addressed in section 7 to follow.

Although this Plan will cover the six years from 2012/3 to 2018/9<sup>2</sup>, this plan shall provide enough zoned housing land to meet residential needs up to 2022 i.e. 3 years beyond the life of the plan for the following reasons:

- in order to provide a robust, long term framework for growth, in accordance with 'Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' Department of the Environment', 2007
- while it is intended initially that this plan shall have a duration of 6 years, in accordance with Section 19 of the Act, this plan could be extended to a 10 year duration if it is deemed that it remains a robust planning framework for this additional time period and the objectives of the plan have not been substantially secured.

In accordance with the 'Core Strategy' of the County Development Plan, a target population of 7,500 is provided for Blessington up to 2022. Given the results of the 2011 Census which provides an estimated population of 4,784 / 1,634 housing units, the projected housing growth required up to 2022 is set out in Table 2.2 below. This table makes allowance for an 'excess factor' of 6.5%<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Source 2011 Small Area Population Statistics

<sup>2</sup> The duration is dependent on the adoption date

<sup>3</sup> Appendix A provides full explanation of the sources and calculations of these figures

Year	Projected Population	Projected Household Size	Households	+ Excess Factor	Total Additional Units Required
2011	4,784			1,634	
2016	6,000	2.56	2,344	2,496	862
2019	6,750	2.43	2,778	2,959	463
2022	7,500	2.3	3,261	3,473	515
Total number of additional units required up to 2022					1,840

**Table 2.2**

### **2.3 Amount of zoned housing land**

Residential zoning has had regard to the following planning criteria:-

- Undeveloped lands closest to the existing town centre were considered first for zoning (the 'town centre' being taken as the Market Square). Within this context the choice of zoned land has been informed by the avoidance of protected areas, natural topography, accessibility, infrastructure and the location of established residential areas. In this regard, all undeveloped lands within 0.5km, 1km and 1.5km bands were evaluated;
- Lands adjacent to existing or planned community and social infrastructure such as schools and open space sites / zones were considered for residential zoning;
- The total number of units allowed to be developed before 2019 shall be limited to c. 1,325 units but the plan shall make provision for zoning for 1,840 units in total to allow for a longer term planning framework and appropriate 'headroom';
- The need to reserve free from development all lands located in current route corridors for the N81 realignment;
- The need to appropriately manage land uses in vicinity of the Poulaphuca Reservoir, which is designated a Natura 2000 site.

The proposed residential zonings are thus as follows:

Location/Description	Zoning	Proposed Density/Ha	Area (Ha)	Potential No. of Units
Cookehill Zone 2	R1	28	4.403	131
Cookehill Zone 3	R1	36 <sup>4</sup>	3.168	115
Cookehill Zone 4	R1	29	9.817	287
Lands adjoining Woodleigh	R1	28	0.172	5
Lands at Santry Hill	R1	28	2.624	74
Lands at Burgage to north of Avon Ri (Action Area 2)	R1	28	5.48	153
Lands at Burgage to the south of Avon Ri (Action Area 3)	R1	28	3.57	100
Lands at Burgage to the south of Action Area 3	R1	28	3.348	94
Lands to the west of Action Area 3	R1	28	2.178	61
Undeveloped lands within Milltown Gate Development	R1	28	1.318	37
Lands adjoining the Naas Road to the west of Glenview Court	NC	28	0.3864	10
Lands within Action Area 1	R1	28	4.15	116
Lands to the north of Action Area 1	R1	20	2.5	50
Doran's Pit (1)	R2	28	17.01	476
Adjacent to Woodleigh Estate (LD)	R2	20	0.9487	19
Burgage More (LD)	R2	20	1	20
Town Centre, Opportunity Sites and Infill Development	TC	40		Infill
<b>Totals</b>			<b>44.96</b>	<b>1,840</b>

**Table 2.3**

## **2.4 Population and housing objectives**

- S1** To adhere to the objectives of the Wicklow County Development Plan in regard to population and housing as are applicable to the plan area.
- S2** Notwithstanding the zoning of land for residential purposes, the Development Management process shall monitor and implement the population targets for Blessington as set out in the County Development Plan and shall phase and restrict, where necessary, the granting of residential planning permissions to ensure these targets are not exceeded.

<sup>4</sup> Note a higher density is allowable on these lands given the close proximity of these lands to the proposed public park adjoining these lands.

## **Section 3**

### **Town Centre Strategy and Retail**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The viability and vitality of any town centre is a barometer of the overall health and well being of the entire town. At present the town of Blessington has two distinct areas which make up the 'Town Centre' and core of urban activity where residential, commercial and community functions take place side by side.

The Main Street forms the original town centre area and has a traditional, generally 2-storey village appearance, including a number of protected structures, with the core area designated as an architectural conservation area (ACA)<sup>5</sup>. The 'new town centre' area located on the former Downshire lands to the rear of the Market Square / Credit Union comprises a more contemporary development, in terms of design, layout and finishes.

#### **3.2 Strategy**

A strategy aimed at creating a more vibrant and attractive retail and commercial core within the plan area is vital in order for the town of Blessington to be capable of adequately meeting the demands of the projected population and the large catchment area currently served by the town.

The factors that make town centres economically viable and attractive to visitors are numerous and often hard to predict and influence, but for the purpose of this land use plan, the strategy for the retail and commercial core will be based around the following goals:

- Addressing vehicular / pedestrian circulation and car parking;
- Ensuring high quality surroundings and addressing dereliction / vacant sites;
- Protecting the buildings, features and places of heritage value;
- Encouraging a varied mix of uses in the core area and reinvigorating the retail role of the core through application of an appropriate retail strategy.

#### **1) Circulation and car parking**

##### **Vehicular movement**

Access to Blessington Main Street is easily available from all parts of the town, but as the Main Street forms part of the N81, the route is heavily trafficked which can delay journeys, slow turning times at junctions and making use of on street car parking spaces more hazardous. The high levels of traffic also impact on the pedestrian experience with more of the Main Street being given over to car parking and traffic lanes than footpaths, cycleways or outdoor eating / seating areas. Access to the new town centre development is either from the Main Street through Market Square or from the west from the inner relief road. The use of a Market square as a conduit between the two sectors reduces the attractiveness of the Market square as an amenity or shopping area.

Therefore in terms of vehicular traffic circulation, it is an objective of this plan to facilitate the completion of the inner relief road as this will have the outcomes of diverting through traffic away from Main Street (which would allow for a more accessible and shopping friendly environment) whilst also facilitating enhanced access to the new town centre.

---

<sup>5</sup> The objective of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA) is to preserve the character of places, areas, structures which when grouped together are of high architectural, historical, archaeological, cultural, social, technical or scientific interest, or which contribute to the appreciation of protected structures.

### **Pedestrian / cyclist movement**

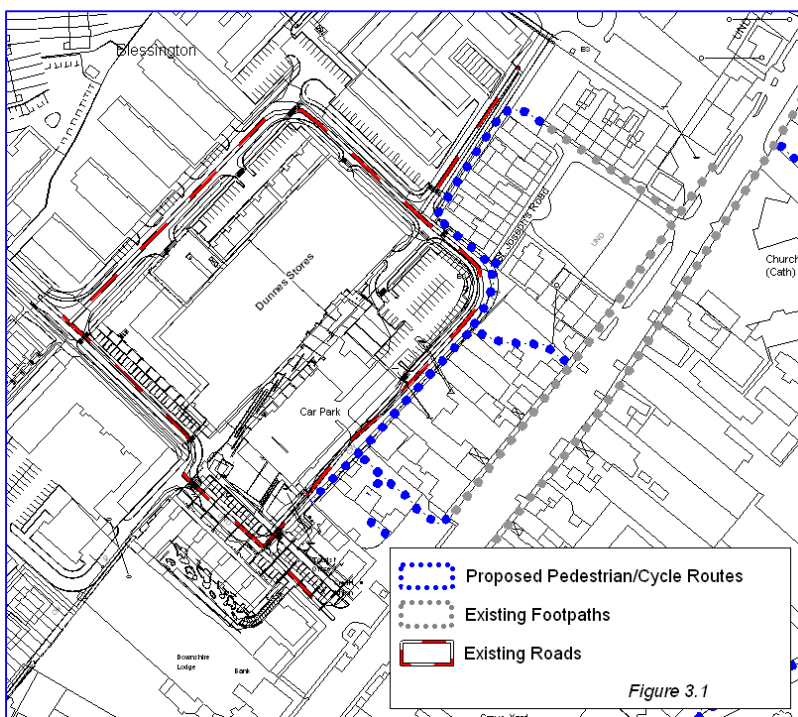
The Main Street provides for footpaths on both sides that are limited in width and do not provide for any cycleways. Footpath widening and cycling lane provision in the core town centre area between Dempsey's Lane and the Catholic Church (on both sides) would provide a significant opportunity to create a pleasant pedestrian and shopper experience, potentially including the use of the space for outdoor seating / eating. In the interest of keeping the Main Street accessible and vibrant, it is considered that the removal of on-street car parking would not be desirable to achieve this outcome and therefore the possible re-alignment of the N81 away from the town centre, or the completion of the inner relief road, (which would allow for carriageway narrowing) is the preferred strategy.

The layout of the new town centre area provides for ease of pedestrian movements and while this area links up to the Market Square, the footfall between the main street and this area is low. In order to address this issue, this plan aims to create the right planning framework to improve the range of uses and retail offer in both areas so that they work together as single retailing area and to require a number of sites between the two areas to provide for new pedestrian linkages if development occurs.

### **Car parking**

Prior to the construction of the new town centre development, car parking in Blessington town centre was generally limited to on-street parking along the Main Street and in Market Square. As there is no parking enforcement regime in Blessington, spaces in these areas are often taken up with residents, employees or other long term users and therefore do not always provide for the needs of shoppers or visitors, who generally will have a shorter term parking requirement. Furthermore, the location of the on-street spaces on a national secondary road, where traffic volumes are high, presents traffic hazard issues for entering and leaving spaces.

There are now however other parking options available for both long and short term parking namely the large car parks that have been provided as part of the new town centre development. However, these car parks are not seen as being convenient to those wishing to access shops / services on the Main Street and the plan aims to address this issue.



## **2) Ensuring high quality surroundings**

The 'Public Realm' can be best described as the form and use of outdoor areas and spaces that are accessible to the public. This includes many familiar types of places, such as streets, squares, parks, car parks, as well as the physical and visual connections between them and with buildings. Quality public realm can provide the venue for multiple activities, including commerce, education and of course, fun and enjoyment for residents and visitors alike.

It is an objective of this plan to ensure that all new developments contribute positively to the public realm and the overall appearance of the town. The design standards for new / altered developments as set out in the County Development Plan will be implemented in Blessington.

While the Main Street in Blessington is substantially intact with no significant vacant sites there are numerous properties which are in poor condition and are under-utilised. While the Local Authority will continue to use its powers to address dereliction where possible, it cannot force redevelopment. This plan, along with the County Development Plan, encourages town centre / infill / brownfield redevelopment before 'greenfield' development. In particular, the Planning Authority may allow a relaxation in car parking and / or open space standards on such sites subject to adequate amenity / facilities being available for users of the development.

## **3) The protection of buildings, features and places of heritage value**

The original main street of Blessington is the location of a number of structures/features listed for preservation, while also containing a designated Architectural Conservation Area. These designations play an important role in the overall attractiveness of the town centre. It is also important that new developments respect the existing scale of the town and have regard to the ACA designation.

The designation of an ACA does not prejudice innovative and contemporary design; on the contrary, in principle, design of a contemporary and minimalist style will be encouraged within ACAs provided it does not detract from the character of the area.

## **4) Retailing in the town centre**

The County Retail Strategy 2010-2016 designates Blessington as a 'Level 3 Tier 1' settlement in the retail hierarchy, which is defined as a 'sub County town centre'. Where such towns have a large catchment and are not close to a larger centre, as is the case of Blessington, it is expected that there will be a good range of comparison shopping though no large department stores or centres, with a mix of retail types benefiting from lower rents away from larger urban sites, leisure & cultural facilities and a range of cafes and restaurants.

In this regard, the retail strategy identifies a need for growth in convenience floor space by 2,000sqm-2,500sqm and comparison floor space of 2,000sqm-3,000sqm. There are currently two major convenience shops in Blessington – Supervalu and Dunnes Stores, with the comparison offer mainly being provided by small independent shops on the Main Street, a small number of new shops in the new town centre development and the comparison element of the Dunnes unit. Aldi stores provide discount retail shopping and there is limited retail warehousing in Blessington.

The retail strategy for Blessington as set out in the County Retail Strategy is:

- To promote and encourage enhancement of retail floorspace and town centre activities in Blessington, in accordance with the allocation set out in the strategy;
- To direct larger scale new retail development into the identified core area and failing suitable sites being available, to edge of centre sites;
- To reserve 50% of the growth allocated to the identified core retail area;
- Expansion of the retail-warehousing sector



### 3.3 Objectives

- TC1** To support and facilitate activities and developments that will improve the vitality, connectivity and vibrancy of the town centre areas.
- TC2** To promote the development of opportunity sites within the town centre in accordance with the specific criteria set out for each identified area as set out in subsection 3.3.3. below.
- TC3** To ensure that all new applications for retail development accord with the provisions of the “Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities” (DOEHLG 2012), and any subsequent Ministerial Guidelines or directives and the Wicklow County Retail Strategy.

#### 3.3.1 Opportunity Sites

In order to achieve the aims of the town centre and retail strategy for Blessington a total of four opportunity sites have been identified within the plan area. Each identified site offers significant opportunities to achieve a number of the above aims which once developed will collectively provide for a more vibrant, viable and cohesive Town Core capable of meeting the needs of the projected population and surrounding catchment areas.

##### OP1: Main Street link site:

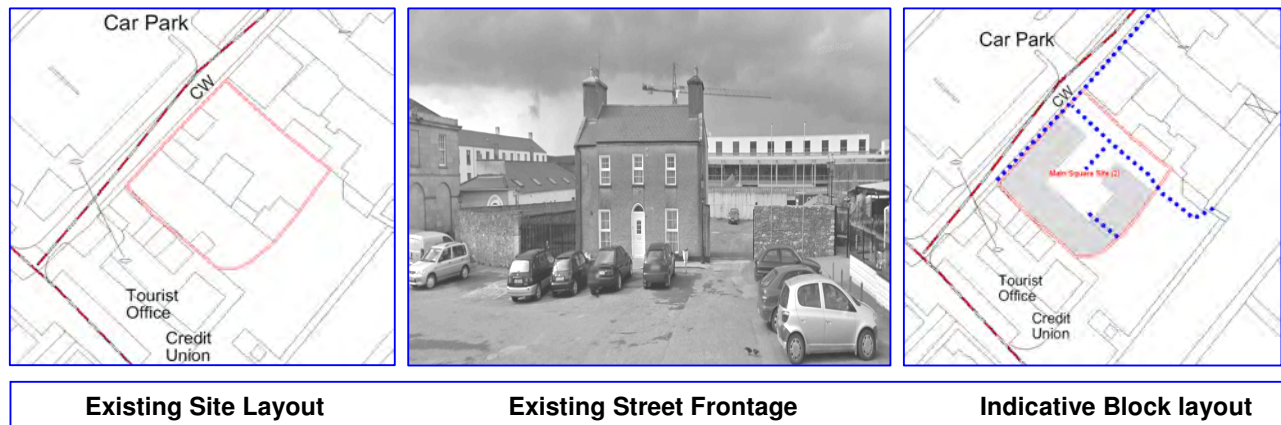


This site measures 0.114ha and provides an opportunity to link the northern section of the Main Street to the new town centre and St. Mary's School and crèche facility.

##### Objectives:

- To facilitate the redevelopment of the site for a mix of uses and providing for a new street dedicated to pedestrians, passively supervised by ground floor retail/office/town house style development.
- *The proposed pedestrian street should be a minimum 3m wide and of a design/finish capable of attracting pedestrians through this area.*
- *The design should provide for a dual aspect building(s) addressing both the Main Street and the new town centre development while the height, massing and proposed finishes of any proposed development must take cognisance of the Architectural Conservation Area designation of the site and the surrounding developments.*

### OP2: Market Square/Old Forge Site:



This site measures 0.1366ha and is situated in a very prominent location within the Market Square and backing onto the new town centre site.

#### Objectives:

- To provide for the redevelopment of the site for a mix of uses and providing for a new street dedicated to pedestrians, passively supervised by ground floor retail/office/town house style development.
- The proposed pedestrian street should be a minimum of 4m wide and of a design/finish capable of attracting pedestrians through this area while also acting as an extension to the traditional Market Square.
- The design should provide for a dual aspect building(s) addressing both the Market Square and the new town centre development while the height, massing and proposed finishes of any proposed development must take cognisance of the Architectural Conservation Area designation of the site and the surrounding developments in particular the existing credit union building.

### OP3: Lands adjoining the Naas Road opposite Rockypool Villas



The subject lands are situated in a very prominent location, fronting onto two major routes the N81 and the Naas Road. The site measures c. 1ha.

## Objectives

- To provide for a Mixed Use development of a strong architectural design capable of addressing all frontages.
- The height and scale of any proposed development should reflect that of the existing surrounding developments while also maximising the potential of the site through use of the sloping topography of the lands. .
- A public park/civic space measuring c. 0.3 ha should be integrated in to the design of the site along the northern and eastern boundary of the site in a manner capable of providing linkages to the green space opposite Rocky Pool Villas and the green walkway at Dempsey's Lane.

## OP4: Open space at St. Josephs Road



Existing Site Layout

Existing Street Frontage

The subject lands are located adjacent to St. Josephs Road housing development and form part of the old public park area which is currently underutilised. The opportunity site measures 0.241 ha.

## Objective:

- To facilitate and promote the re-development of the public park area providing for both passive and active recreational green and hard landscaped areas.
- The redevelopment of the existing open space should be easily accessible and highly visible from the Main Street in order to create a more inviting park area for the public.
- The public park area should provide for soft landscaping in the form of small green spaces with more formal hard landscaping such as park benches/tables in sections.
- A section of the open space should be dedicated to an informal play area for children.

## Section 4

### EMPLOYMENT & ENTERPRISE

#### 4.1 Introduction

This section will set out the strategy and objectives of the Council for enterprise and employment that are relevant to and implementable through a land-use plan. The strategies and objectives of this plan aim to complement and facilitate the strategies of the County Development Board (CDB) and County Enterprise Board / Enterprise Ireland and the IDA, all of which have a more particular remit than this Local Area Plan in the area of economic development.

#### 4.2 Economic Context

The economic development strategy for Blessington derives from the County Development Plan, which is in turn derived from the RPGs. The economic function of a moderate growth town is to be an attractor for substantial investment from both foreign and local sources, in both 'product' and 'people' intensive industries.

The location of the town, situated on a national secondary route provides opportunities for significant growth in 'product based' intensive industries. These industries, by reason of the product based nature of the traded commodity, require ease of access to the main transportation networks, for efficient and rapid transportation of goods from the source of manufacture to markets, including the GDA, other regions of the Country, and other settlements within the County.

Given Blessington's strategic location in the west of the County it has an important role to play in acting as an economic centre which can revitalise and stimulate activity within the town and surrounding areas while also fostering links with the primary dynamic cluster of Newbridge, Naas and Kilcullen and taking advantage of their accessibility to the M9 and the South Western Transport Corridor.

#### 4.3 Economic Profile of Blessington

For the purposes of analysing the employment characteristics of Blessington, the CSO place of work data known as POWCAR data was used to assess current employment within the town of Blessington as defined by the CSO. Unfortunately, POWCAR results from the 2011 census are not yet available and therefore use must be made of 2006 data, although this data is obviously now out of date. However, 2006 represents a time during which the town would have experienced high employment and therefore this data is considered to give a good reflection of the employment capacity of the town.

The 2006 figures showed a resident population of 4,018 of which 2,256 were in the Labour Force<sup>6</sup>. The Census also revealed that 859 people indicated that their place of work was Blessington. According to the 2006 Census the dominant categories of employment in Blessington were commerce, manufacturing industries/quarrying, education, health and social work. Of the 859 "jobs" in the town of Blessington, the principle occupations were broken down as follows in Table 4.1.

---

<sup>6</sup> The Labour Force is defined as the total number of people employed or seeking/eligible for employment over the age of 15

Industry Category	Jobs	Jobs % Share
Not stated	5	0.68%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	9	0.92%
Manufacturing industries, mining, quarrying and turf production, electricity, gas and water supply	216	25%
Construction	56	6.5%
Commerce	291	34%
Transport, storage and communications	18	2%
Public administration and defence	32	3.7%
Education, health and social work	132	15.3%
Other	100	12%
<b>Total Employment</b>	<b>859</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 4.1 Blessington Occupational Breakdown– source POWCAR (CSO) data 2006.**

#### 4.4 Strategy for Employment in Blessington

A measure often used to determine what a sustainable target for job creation would be is the 'jobs ratio'. This is the ratio of the number of jobs in any given geographical area compared to the number of people in the labour force living in that same area. In 2006 (a time of high national levels of employment), the jobs ratio in Blessington was 38%, compared to the County ratio of 46%.

It is an objective of the County Development Plan to increase the jobs ratio in the County overall to 70%. Clearly in order to achieve a jobs ratio of 70% overall in the County, some areas would need to have a higher jobs ratio than 70% as some areas will always be much lower (such as rural areas and small towns). Given the 38% jobs ratio that existed in Blessington in 2006, it is considered reasonable to aim to increase this to 67% for the target year of 2022<sup>7</sup>. This will require the number of jobs in the settlement to grow from c. 859 in 2006 to c. 3,294 in 2022 (see Appendix A for more details in this regard).

The development of employment is dependent on numerous factors, many of which are outside the scope of a land use plan such as financial / taxation incentives, availability of funding, development levies / rates and the provision of public transport linkages. However, a land use plan can do the following, which together can provide a clear framework for employment growth:

- Put in place a framework for population growth, which will provide a large enough catchment zone for potential employers and a market for the sale of products / services;<sup>8</sup>
- Ensure that adequate zoned land is available for employment creation;<sup>9</sup>
- Set the priorities for investment in new infrastructure such as water supply, wastewater disposal, roads etc;
- Provide policies and objectives clearly setting out the Planning Authority's position with regard to the development of various types of employment, at various locations in the town.

<sup>7</sup> An increase of 75%, which is considered appropriate given the status of Blessington in the County settlement and employment hierarchy

<sup>8</sup> Please refer to Appendix A

<sup>9</sup> Please refer to Appendix A



## 4.5 Employment Zoning

In recognition of the fact that the level of enterprise and employment development has not kept pace with residential development, it is the goal of this plan to facilitate an increase in the number of jobs in Blessington and to bring jobs closer to where people live. Taking this into consideration a detailed statistical analysis of employment within the town was carried out.

The details of this analysis are set out in Appendix A of this plan. In short the analysis showed that even if all lands and buildings currently in employment use were utilised to their potential maximum capacity, there would still be a need to designate sufficient greenfield lands to accommodate up to 1,730 new jobs. Making assumptions for likely density and allowing a generous 'headroom' of 100% this plan designates the following lands for employment purposes.

Name	Total Lands SQM	Buildings Sqm at Plot Ratio of 0.4	Average Sqm/EMP	Potential Job Provision
<b>*Target Job Provision based analysis and adding 100% headroom = 3,460</b>				
<i>Step 4) Infill Employment Lands</i>	32,307	17920	75	254
<i>Step 5) Existing Permitted Employment Lands</i>	189550	75,820(0.4 plot ratio)	75	1,011
<i>Lands EMP 1 and EMP 2: New Lands at Burgage Mor and Park and Ride Site</i>	44,570	17828	75	237
<i>Lands EMP3 and EMP4: Mart Site Expansion and Redevelopment</i>	180,300	72,120	75	962
<i>Lands EMP5: New Roadstone Redevelopment Business and Amenity Park</i>	498,000	49,800(0.1 Plot Ratio)	50	996
<b>Totals</b>	<b>358,633</b>	<b>116,900</b>	<b>66 Sqm per Employee</b>	<b>3460</b>

**Table 4.2: Summary Table of all proposed Employment Zonings<sup>10</sup>**

<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that the above table only refers to new lands proposed to be zoned for employment purposes and does not include existing employment lands within Blessington. Please refer to Appendix A for further details in this regard.

#### 4.6 Employment Objectives

- E1** To facilitate the development of employment generating activities on suitably zoned lands within Blessington in accordance with the objectives and development standards set out in the County Development Plan
- E2** To protect employment zoned land from inappropriate development that would undermine future economic activity or the sustainable development of such areas.
- E3** To encourage the redevelopment of already developed or brownfield employment / mixed use lands for enterprise and employment creation throughout the settlement, subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and compliance with all other objectives of this plan.
- E4** To encourage the development of significant new employment zones at
- Downshire demesne lands (part of permitted 'Cookehill' development)
  - Roadstone
  - Haylands / Mart site
- in accordance with the detailed requirements set out in Section 10 of this plan.
- E5** To require the design and layout of employment lands located at Blessington Demesne to provide for a pedestrian walkway (linked to the proposed public park) along the southern boundary, adjoining Action Area 1.
- E6** To facilitate and encourage the exploration and exploitation of minerals in the plan area in a manner, which is consistent with the principle of sustainability, the protection of residential, environmental and tourism amenities within the plan area and the objectives of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2010 – 2016 in particular section 8.3.



## Section 5

### Tourism

#### 5.1 Introduction

Blessington and its immediate surroundings have both the natural and built assets and the strategic location to act as a major tourism draw and gateway in the west of the County. In particular,

- its proximity to the western ends of both the Sally and Wicklow Gap roads means that Blessington can act as a service centre to both those travelling through and for those visiting the Gaps and the Wicklow Mountains themselves;
- the Poulaphuca Reservoir adjoins the town and while there are controls on its recreational usage for water security and safety reasons, there are a number of sports clubs on the lakeshore including sailing, rowing and outdoor pursuits;
- while the town itself is an attractive historical town, there are a number of other architectural and archaeological heritage attractions in the area including Russborough House and Glen Ding Wood.

#### 5.2 Strategy for Tourism

While the potential for the expansion of the tourism industry in Blessington and surrounding areas is recognised, a local area plan is limited somewhat in its scope to setting a suitable planning framework within which tourism opportunities can be developed.

The tourism strategy of this plan will therefore be based around the following goals:

- Encouraging the development of tourism at appropriate locations in the town, as set out in the land use framework and matrix associated with this plan
- Ensuring that new tourism developments meet the highest standards of location, layout and design through the implementation of the tourism design standards as set out in the County Development Plan
- Ensuring that new / expanded tourism development respect the natural and built environment so that they do not damage the feature that has attracted the visitor to the area in the first instance
- Facilitating a number of specific developments that may add to the tourism product and / or increase accessibility to attractions / facilities as follows:
  - 1) The development of new / improved amenity routes around the reservoir
  - 2) The development of new / improved connections between the town and reservoir / lakeshore clubs including the development of a new link road between Blessington Bridge and the N81 through Doran's Pit
  - 3) The development of new amenity routes from the town centre to Glen Ding from both the inner relief road and through lands designated for low density employment / recreational use at the Roadstone quarry

These specific objectives are shown on Map 5.1 below and on the main plan map

##### 1) Amenity routes around the reservoir

While it is recognised that there are limitations to the development of tourism centred around the use of the Poulaphuca reservoir due to its use as a water source serving the Dublin region, its designation as a Special Protection Area under the EU Habitats Directive<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> The 1992 Habitats Directive seeks to establish Natura 2000, a network of protected areas including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) - throughout the European Union. SACs are designated and protected under the Habitats Directive due to their conservation value for habitats and species of importance in the European Union while SPAs are designated and protected under the 1979 Birds

and Proposed Natural Heritage Area status, the potential for the development of attractions such as amenity walks and cycle routes bordering the lakeshore and surrounding area is recognised.

In recognition of the amenity and habitat value of the lakeshore, a 100m buffer zone has been provided along the eastern boundary of the plan area aimed at preserving the scenic and ecological value of this area. Lands within this buffer have been zoned agriculture in recognition of these existing activities however within this zone the plan will facilitate and encourage the development of walking and cycling routes and other tourist related activities subject to such developments meeting the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive.

## **2) Links between the town and the reservoir**

Where possible, new developments in the lakeshore area will be required to provide new roads / footways / cyclepaths as deemed necessary and appropriate between existing roads / built up area and the lakeshore.

The redevelopment of Action Area 4 forms a key site in opening up a significant new link between the town and the lakeshore on the northern side of the town. The planning criteria for this Action Area is detailed in Section 10 of this plan and requires the development of this land to be accompanied by a new road between the Kilbride Road (adjacent to Blessington Bridge) and the N81 and a new open space area in the form of a landscaped woodland park with car parking and pedestrian/cycle routes adjoining the Kilbride Road.

## **3) Links between the town and Glen Ding**

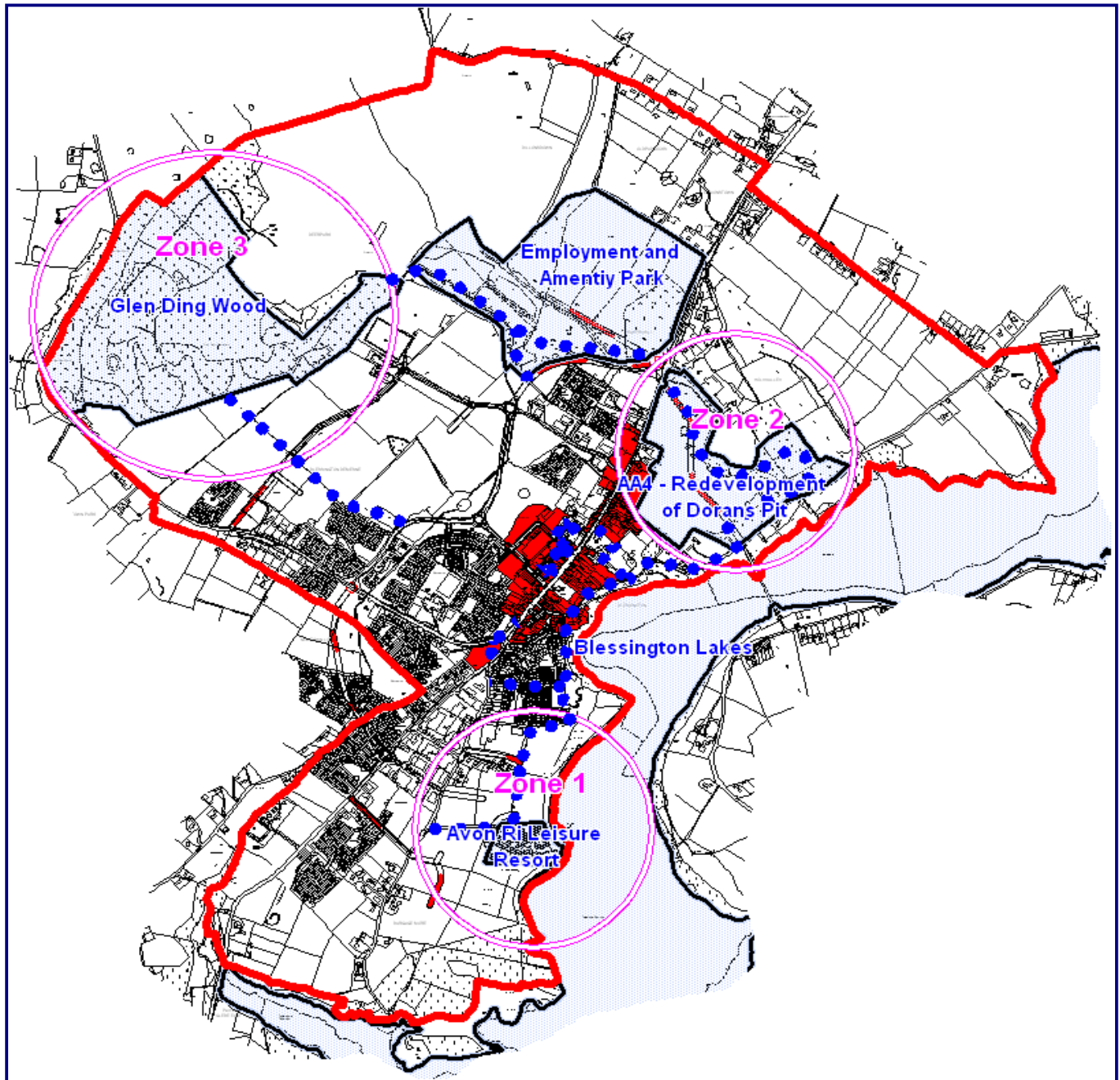
The potential of Glen Ding Wood as a further tourist attraction for the town is recognised. At present this area acts as a separate entity with no distinct linkages provided between the wood itself, its associated archaeological remains, the town and adjoining lakes. Recognising the potential of this area as a significant amenity for the local people within the town and as a tourist attractor it is an objective of this plan to facilitate the development of increased linkages between this amenity area and the town as shown on the map below via the planned heritage park / AA1 and via the Roadstone lands.

## **5.3 Tourism Objectives**

- T1** To promote and facilitate improvements to tourism and recreation infrastructure in the Blessington area.
- T2** To improve, as funding allows, the principle access routes and junctions linking Blessington town centre to surrounding tourist attractions such as the lakeshore and its associated villages, the Wicklow Mountains, Russborough House and Glen Ding
- T3** To support and facilitate in co-operation with relevant bodies, the provision of amenity routes around the Poulaphuca reservoir in an environmentally sustainable manner
- T4** To require new developments in proximity to the reservoir / Glen Ding (or between the town centre and these areas) to provide / fund the development of new roads, and pedestrian / cycle linkages between the development and the existing town centre (generally as shown on Figure 5.1 below).

---

*Directive (European Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 79/409/EEC). Both Directives are transposed into Irish law through various Habitats Regulations*



## Blessington Local Area Plan

Figure 5.1

## Tourism Strategy

### Legend



Local Area Plan Boundary



Town Centre



Key Tourism Zones



Pedestrian/Cycle Routes



Road Links



Key Tourism Sites

## Section 6

### Social Infrastructure

#### 6.1 Introduction

The provision of accessible social and community infrastructure contributes to the quality of life for all and it is important that such facilities also be provided in tandem with the development of new dwellings and neighbourhoods. The increased emphasis on the provision of social and community infrastructure has been emphasised by the DoE through the production of guidance documents relating to childcare, school provision and urban design, which have in turn been further expanded upon, through publications and work carried out by the Planning and Community & Enterprise Sections of Wicklow County Council.

#### 6.2 Social Infrastructure

The provision of 'social infrastructure', in the form of buildings, facilities, clubs and the means of accessing and using services, is necessary for the development of sustainable communities. The purpose of such infrastructure is both to provide a service and also to promote community cohesion and community identity and in doing so combat social isolation and alienation. A wide variety of facilities are required in order to have a functioning and developing society, and one's use of facilities will depend on a range of factors including age, family structure and physical ability.

The County Development Plan, and various publications of the Council's Community and Enterprise section provide detailed strategies and objectives for a whole range of social facilities including education, care, health, leisure and recreation and cultural facilities. As these provisions apply directly to Blessington it is not considered necessary to restate all of these objectives; however, this plan will address a number of the specific local social infrastructural issues in the area namely (a) education, (b) leisure and recreation and (c) cultural facilities.

##### 6.2.1 Education

###### Primary Education:

At present there are 5 no. primary schools located either within the town itself or on the outskirts of the town with an enrolment of 767 students as of 2011. The Department of Education and Skills estimates that on average 12% of the population is of primary school going age so the current population of Blessington of 4,784 persons (as defined by this plan boundary) would only account for c. 574 of the pupils in the local schools. The enrolment figures indicate that the current primary schools provide for a much wider catchment than that envisaged by the Department of Education and Skills standard with the figure of 767 students representing 16% of the total population.

Making allowance for local schools continuing to draw from this wider catchment area outside this plan area, it is determined that there will be a need for up to 1,352 primary school places or 48 classrooms by 2022. Having regard to this it is considered prudent to provide for adequate zoned 'Community and Educational' (CE) land within the plan area for the development of a new primary school if the need arises. Having regard to this the plan has zoned lands within Action Area 1 for Community and Educational purposes capable of meeting this demand.

### **Post Primary Education:**

There is one post-primary school in Blessington, Blessington Community College, with a September 2010/11 enrolment of 271 pupils, on a site of c. 4 hectares. While a site of this size could in theory accommodate a school of up to 500 pupils, 271 is considered its current built capacity.

Given the location of post primary schools in the area, the current catchment for post primary is considered to be in the region of 10,000 persons. This would generate c. 850 pupils of secondary school going age of which c. 400 would be residents of the plan area. It is evident however that a larger proportion of pupils in the possible catchment zone attend schools other than Blessington Community College with some being attracted towards schools in Kildare and Dublin.

Moving forward to 2022, this catchment area could increase to c. 15,000 persons which would give a post primary school population of 1,275 pupils. While it is acknowledged that the current pattern of students travelling outside the immediate area for secondary school may continue into the future, it is considered more sustainable planning to make provision for additional school places in the town so that staying in the locality for secondary education becomes a viable option. Therefore this plan will make provision for both (a) maintenance of CE zoned land around the existing secondary school to allow for possible expansion and (b) the zoning of sufficient greenfield CE land to accommodate another post primary school. This is located adjacent to the Blessington No. 1 National School on the west side of the settlement, close to existing sports facilities.

### **6.2.2 Leisure & recreation**

The types of leisure and recreational facilities provided/required vary greatly from person to person ranging from active to passive activities. The Council recognises this fact and aims to provide for adequate leisure and recreational facilities throughout the plan area, which are capable of meeting the requirements of the resident population.

### **Community Centres:**

Community centres and other indoor facilities such as youth clubs / youth cafes provide an important function for all groups in society, by providing for an indoor space for active recreation and for meetings / club use. There are a number of buildings / spaces that are available for community uses in Blessington such as St. Kevin's Community Centre, St. Josephs' Hall, the VEC further education centre and Blessington library and there are large range of groups that provide services from these locations. As the town grows, there may however be a need for further spaces and this plan shall make provision for the development of a community space in Action Area 4 and shall also require any new secondary school to be so designed to provide for space suitable for other non-educational uses.

### **Sport Facilities:**

In accordance with the Wicklow Local Authorities 'Play Policy' and 'Sports & Recreation Policy' outdoor sports facilities should be provided at a rate of 2.4ha per 1,000 population. Taking a possible catchment population of 10,000 for Blessington sports facilities in 2022, this would require 24 ha broken down as follows;

- 16ha of outdoor sports area
- 2ha of equipped play spaces<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Such as playgrounds for younger children and Mixed Use Games Areas (MUGAs) or outdoor gyms for teenagers / adults.

- 6 ha of casual play area

Blessington GAA occupies a site of c. 8 ha and therefore there is a deficiency in outdoor sports areas, which will be made up for in the Action Areas where any development proposals will have to be accompanied by the delivery of lands suitable for outdoor sports (of a format that will be determined in due course). The permitted heritage park on the former Downshire lands (c. 15ha), as well as the existing passive open spaces and playgrounds around the settlement will adequately provide for casual recreation into the future.

Further details relating to the provision of lands reserved for leisure and recreation facilities are set out in Appendix A.

### **6.2.3 Cultural Facilities**

Cultural facilities are places for the creation, production and dissemination of culture and include buildings and cultural sites. Blessington has a new library which can support the community's needs for education, information, recreation, arts and culture. There are also a number of churches and a cemetery in Blessington. This cemetery is however nearing capacity and this plan shall make provision for an area of zoned 'CE' land to the immediate east of the existing cemetery.

## **6.3 Community Development and Social Infrastructure Objectives**

- CD1** To ensure sufficient lands are zoned for community needs within the plan area and to implement the objectives of the Chapter 15 'Social and Community Infrastructure' of the Wicklow County Development 2010 - 2016 as applicable to the plan area.
- CD2** To co-operate with the Department of Education & Skills, the Vocational Education Committee for Co.Wicklow and school management boards in the provision of school places where a need is identified.
- CD3** To facilitate opportunities for play and sport and support the implementation of the County Council 'Play' and 'Sports & Recreation' Policies and their objectives, including the collection of development levies.
- CD4** The redevelopment for alternative uses of open space and recreational lands whether owned by private recreational clubs or publicly owned, will normally be resisted by the Council unless suitable alternative recreational facilities can be provided in a convenient location.



## **Section 7**

### **Service Infrastructure**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

The provision of transport and services Infrastructure is essential to the development of any town providing; ease of movement within towns, connecting towns to surrounding areas and providing sufficient services infrastructure capable of meeting the demands of the resident, commercial and employment population.

The County Development Plan, and various programmes of Council's Roads and Environmental Services Departments provide detailed strategies and objectives for a whole range of service infrastructure. As these provisions apply directly to Blessington it is not considered necessary to restate all of these objectives; however, this plan will address a number of the specific local infrastructural issues in the area namely water, flooding and roads and transportation services.

#### **7.2 Water**

##### **Wastewater:**

The plan area is deficient in wastewater services. The existing wastewater treatment plant in Blessington has a p.e.<sup>13</sup> of 6,000 and this plant is operating at or near capacity. In accordance with the County Development Plan it is the strategy to facilitate significant improvements in waste water infrastructure within the town as the lack of such infrastructure may prevent Blessington from fulfilling its functions under the Regional Planning Guidelines and the County Development Plan 2010 – 2016.

##### **Water Supply:**

As part of the West Wicklow Water Supply Scheme Blessington is now served from the Dublin Regional Water Supply, in this case from the Ballymore Eustace Treatment Plant. The scheme has adequate capacity for existing needs, for future growth of the plan area, and to allow the connection of surrounding areas which are currently served by problematic group water schemes.

##### **Surface Water:**

In the main, surface water in the town is collected in the combined sewer system which is directed to the wastewater treatment plant. In accordance with current practice, newer developments have separate surface water collection and attenuation systems. Clearly the addition of surface water to foul water significantly impacts on the efficiency of a foul water collection and treatment system, and there is an ongoing programme to replace the combined system with separate networks, as funding allows.

#### **7.3 Flooding**

Some areas in Blessington are subject to localised flooding. As part of this plan, a Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out and is set out in Appendix B and has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of '*The Planning System and Flood Risk Management*' Guidelines (DoEHLG 2009).

These guidelines require the planning system at national, regional and local levels to:

---

<sup>13</sup> Population equivalent



- (1) Avoid development in areas at risk of flooding by not permitting development in flood risk areas, particularly floodplains, unless where it is fully justified that there are wider sustainability grounds for appropriate development and unless the flood risk can be managed to an acceptable level without increasing flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reducing flood risk overall;
- (2) Adopt a sequential approach to flood risk management based on avoidance, reduction and then mitigation of flood risk as the overall framework for assessing the location of new development in the development planning processes; and
- (3) Incorporate flood risk assessment into the process of making decisions on planning applications and planning appeals.

## **7.4 Roads and transportation**

### **7.4.1 Walking & cycling**

Government Policy, as set out in “Smarter Travel - A New Transport for Ireland 2009-2020”, places an emphasis on walking and cycling as alternatives to vehicular transport. The provision of walking and cycling routes within Blessington forms an essential part of the linked-up transport system, involving a variety of transport modes where public transport facilities can be availed of. While the land-use plan cannot influence whether members of the public will walk or cycle to a destination it can include objectives that would promote these forms of transport.

Generally the built up parts of Blessington are well served by footpaths but there are areas where footpaths require significant improvement, in particular along the Main Street and in the town centre in general. Footpaths are lacking in some peripheral areas of the town and towards and along the reservoir. There are no designated cycleways in Blessington other than along the newly constructed Inner Relief Road.

### **7.4.2 Roads**

#### **National roads:**

Access into Blessington from the north (Dublin) and the south (Baltinglass and south-west Wicklow) is via the N81, which is designated a national secondary road. The N81 passes directly through the Main Street and the town centre. The National Roads Design Office have published a preferred route corridor for the N81 realignment between Tallaght and Hollywood cross. An indicative road line is shown in this plan and land uses around this route have been crafted so as to not conflict with its implementation.

#### **Regional roads:**

There is one regional road entering Blessington – the R410 coming from Naas, which meets the N81 south of the town centre. A number of housing estates are accessed from this road. The junction of the R410 and N81 is deficient in terms of right turning facilities and displays poor vertical alignment.

#### **Inner Relief Road:**

This is a new partially completed distributor road, which is designed to provide a town centre ‘by-pass’ from a new roundabout adjacent to the existing entrance to Roadstone on the north side of the town, to a point on the N81 south of the town centre. To date, this road is complete between the Naas Road and the Blessington Industrial Estate junction (opposite Maxol petrol station) and between the N81 south of the town and the Kilmalum Road. This road has the potential, once completed, to remove significant quantities of through- and Naas bound- traffic from the town centre of Blessington.

### Local roads:

Blessington is served by a network of local roads which primarily link the town centre area to the reservoir area and further east / north-east. There are deficiencies in a number of the junctions of these roads with the town centre (i.e. with the N81) primarily due to junction layout and to the priority given to traffic on the N81. It is an objective of this plan to require the development of Action Area 4 to include a new link road between the N81 and Blessington Bridge. Other local roads also required by this plan are the completion of the road from the roundabout at the GAA playing fields in a southerly direction to meet the Naas Road through Action Area 1.

## 7.5 Objectives

- S1** To implement the objectives and development standards of Chapters 11, 12, 13 and 14 of the County Development Plan as applicable to Blessington.
- S2** To improve and expand wastewater treatment facilities sufficiently to ensure that no barriers exist in Blessington fulfilling its role as a moderate growth town as set out in the Wicklow 'Core Strategy' and Regional Planning Guidelines for the GDA 2010 – 2022.
- S3** To have regard to the provisions of the '*The Planning System and Flood Risk Management*' Guidelines (DoEHLG 2009) and the Flood Risk Assessment carried out as part of this plan
- S4** Applications for developments in high or moderate flood risk areas (Flood Zones A and B) shall be assessed in accordance with 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (Nov 2009 DEHLG & OPW)'. Where the planning authority is considering proposals for new development in areas at high or moderate risk of flooding that include types of development that are vulnerable to flooding and that would generally be inappropriate as set out in Table 3.2 of the Guidelines, the planning authority shall be satisfied that the development satisfies all the criteria of the Justification Test for development management, as set out in Box 5.1 of the Guidelines. Flood Risk Assessments shall be in accordance with the requirements set out in the Guidelines.
- S5** Notwithstanding the identification of an area as being at low or no risk of flooding (Flood Zone C) where the Planning Authority is of the opinion that flood risk may arise or new information has come to light that may alter the flood designation of the land, an appropriate flood risk assessment may be required to be submitted by an applicant for development permission.
- S6** To facilitate the N81 (Tallaght to Hollywood) re-alignment and to work with the NRA road design office to ensure that amenity routes from the town centre to Glen Ding are facilitated in the final design of the road. Any development within the preferred route corridor will be assessed for acceptability having regard to potential effects on the future viability of the proposed road.
- S7** To facilitate the completion of the Inner Relief Road
- S8** To reserve lands of c. 0.75ha on the N81 as shown on the plan map for a future bus park-and-ride facility
- S9** To improve / provide new footpaths and cycleways on existing roads as funding allows and to facilitate the provision of new roads, footpaths and cycleways as detailed in chapters 3, 5 and 10 of this plan.

## Section 8

### Built and Natural Heritage

#### 8.1 Introduction

Heritage is defined under the Heritage Act 1995 as items such as monuments, archaeological objects, heritage objects, architectural heritage, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscape, seascapes, geology, heritage gardens and parks and inland waterways. The County Wicklow Heritage Plan 2009-2014 provides an agreed framework around which actions to conserve natural, built and cultural heritage, and increase appreciation and enjoyment of it can be advanced. This development plan will support the objectives and actions contained in the County Heritage Plan.

The protection and enhancement of heritage assets through the plan will help to safeguard the local character and distinctiveness of the town of Blessington and its surroundings, providing local economic, social and environmental benefits.

Blessington has a rich and diverse natural and built heritage. The Council has a role to play in helping to ensure the conservation of these resources for current and future generations. Of importance are designated wildlife habitats and species (e.g. NHAs, SPAs), non-designated habitats for wildlife such as the areas identified in the Blessington Local Biodiversity Study such as trees, hedgerows and streams and areas of archaeological and architectural interest.

The County Development Plan 2010 - 2016 categorises the landscape surrounding the settlement as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with the western Corridor Zone surrounding the N81 to the north and south of the designated Urban Area. In formulating additional policies for the protection of the built and natural heritage in the Blessington area the Council will be required to give consideration to EU Habitats and Bird Directives, as well as national legislation in the form of the Natural Habitat Regulations.

The historic core of Blessington is designated an 'Architectural Conservation Area'. The 'Blessington Architectural Conservation Appraisal' study which details the features that contribute to this area and are worthy of protection is included in Appendix C of this plan.

#### 8.2 Objectives

- BD1** To protect the natural, architectural and archaeological heritage of the town, in accordance with the objectives and development standards set out in Chapters 16 and 17 of the County Development Plan as are applicable to Blessington and its environs.
- BD2** No development will be permitted that adversely affects the integrity of a Natura 2000 site. All development proposals shall comply with the following objectives:
- (i) Any proposed development with potential to impact upon a Natura 2000 site shall be subject to an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive 1992 and 'Appropriate Assessment of plans and projects in Ireland- Guidance for Planning Authorities' (DoEHLG, 2009).
  - (ii) Avoid encroachment on a Natura 2000 site and implement an appropriate buffer zone on adjacent sites, as required, where feasible or as determined following consultation with NPWS or other relevant body.
  - (iii) Ensure that recreational use is directed away from sensitive areas within the Natura 2000 sites.

In order to ensure the protection of the integrity of Natura 2000 sites, the planning authority is not limited to the implementation of the above objectives, and shall implement all other relevant objectives of the CDP as it sees fit.

- BD3** To protect trees, hedgerows, wooded areas, watercourses and other features of the natural landscape that contribute to the biodiversity of Blessington
- BD4** To designate Glen Ding Wood as a conservation and amenity zone
- BD5** To facilitate the use of natural areas for active outdoor pursuits, subject to the highest standards of habitat protection and management and all other normal planning controls.
- BD6** The Council shall seek to promote access to amenity areas of the plan for the benefit of all, on the basis of co-operation with landowners, recreational users and other relevant stakeholder groups to promote “agreed access” on public and privately owned land in the plan area on the basis of sustainability, consultation and consensus.
- BD7** To protect those features that have been identified in the Architectural Conservation Area Appraisal as contributing to the town centre's overall appearance and heritage value and to ensure that new development contributes positively to the designated Architectural Conservation Area.
- BD8** To facilitate the appropriate refurbishment and renewal of architecturally significant buildings and to accommodate new uses in old buildings to ensure their continued use/preservation;
- BD9** To encourage the retention of original features, which are important to a building's character such as window type, materials, detailing, chimneys, entrances and boundary walls, both within and outside the architectural conservation area.

## Section 9

### Action Areas and Specific Local Objectives

#### 9.1 Introduction

Four Action Areas have been identified in this (draft) plan. Action Areas are to be the subject of comprehensive (not piecemeal) integrated schemes of development that allow for the sustainable, phased and managed development of the Action Area during the plan period. Separate applications for sections of each Action Area will not be considered until an overall Action Area Plan has been agreed in writing with the Planning Authority unless it can be shown that any application will not undermine the achievement of the overall objectives for that Action Area.

The position, location and size of the land use zonings shown on Map 1 within the Action Areas are indicative only and may be altered in light of eventual road and service layouts, detailed design and topography, subject to compliance with the criteria set out for the Action Areas below. However, any lands that are located in Flood Zone A as per the Flood Risk Assessment that forms part of this plan shall be restricted to 'water compatible uses' as set out in Table 3.1 of 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2009) and any lands that are located in Flood Zone B as per the Flood Risk Assessment that form part of this plan shall be restricted to 'less vulnerable uses' and 'water compatible uses' as set out in Table 3.1 of 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2009)

The plan also provides for 3 'Specific Local Objectives' within the plan area. The purpose of the specific local objective is to guide developers as to the aspirations of the plan regarding the development of certain lands where more than one land use is proposed in a manner similar to Action Areas as detailed above with the exception of the necessity for an agreed action area prior to the submission of a planning application.

By time related conditions, agreements or otherwise, the Council will regulate the building programme to ensure that the needs of the population do not exceed the provision of essential support systems and the Council will use its powers under the Planning & Development Acts to effect this control.

##### 9.1.1 Action Area 1 – Lands adjoining the Naas Road

This Action Area adjoins the Naas Road R410 and the Glending housing development. The Action Area measures c. 10ha and shall be developed as a mixed residential, community/educational and active open space development in accordance with the following criteria;

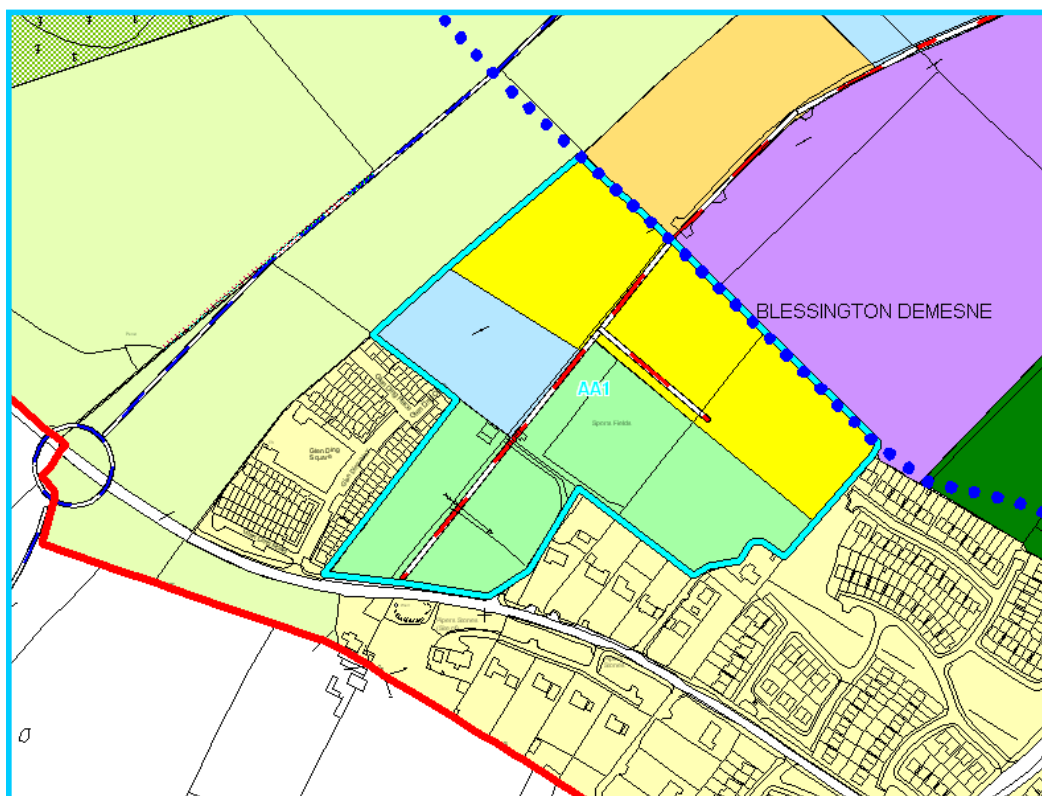
- 1.32ha for Community and Educational purposes
- 4.51ha for Active Open Space
- 4.15ha for Residential

Any plan prepared or development proposed for these lands, while respecting all relevant development control standards and plan objectives must provide for phased and integrated development. Any plan shall comply with the following objectives:

- o Prior to the commencement of any development a through road shall be provided linking the R420 to the adjoining lands and roadway currently serving the Blessington No. 1 School and KARE Centre of a design to be agreed with Wicklow County Council Planning and Roads sections.
- o The Action Area shall be developed in 2 phases.
  - Phase 1 shall comprise of the development of the Active Open Space lands alongside the provision of the residential element of the lands to the east of the proposed new link road only.

Phase 2 shall comprise of the development of the remaining residential units within the action area alongside the reservation of lands for the proposed community/educational development. Phase 2 may only be developed once the Active Open Space lands have been provided and laid out in a manner suitable for sporting activities.

- The design and layout of the Action Area in particular the residential element shall address and provide for passive supervision of the proposed through road and Active Open Space areas. At no point should the design or layout allow for housing backing onto this road network.
- The design and layout of the residential element of the Action Area shall incorporate a passively supervised pedestrian walkway linked to the proposed pedestrian route required by objective E5.
- Any development proposals shall have regard to the setting and curtilage of structures and sites of heritage value, and habitats of biodiversity value and appropriate buffer zone/mitigating measures shall be provided as required.



**Figure 9.1 Action Area 1**

#### **9.1.2 Action Area 2 - Lands at Burgage Mor (north of the Avon Ri Resort)**

This Action Area is located at Burgage Mor, is accessed off the L-8858 Local Road and is bounded by the Avon Ri access driveway, existing residential development, employment lands and the lake shore. Measuring c. 9.4ha this Action Area shall be developed as a mixed use Residential Development and Active Open Space area in the following manner;

- 3.95ha for Active Open Space 5.48ha for Mixed Residential Purposes





### 9.1.3 Action Area 3 – Lands at Burgage More

This Action Area is also located at Burgage Mor, is accessed off the L-8858 Local Road and is bounded by the Avon Ri access drive to the north and east, existing agricultural lands to the south and the local road to the west. Measuring c. 10.3ha this Action Area shall be developed as a mixed residential/employment, community and active open space development in the following manner;

- 2.577ha for employment purposes
- 0.8ha for community use (graveyard extension)
- 3.558ha for mixed residential purposes
- 3.352ha for active open space purposes

The following criteria shall apply to these lands:

- To provide for junction improvements at the intersection point between the L8370 and the L8858 and a vehicular entrance sufficiently wide to cater for traffic movements through the proposed residential and employment lands.
- Access to the Active Open Space lands shall be provided off the L-8858 through the site or alternatively off the existing avenue serving the Avon Ri Resort subject to agreement with relevant owner(s) of this roadway.
- The design and layout of the proposed residential element of the Action Area shall facilitate a through access into the residential lands to the immediate south, with the housing units to the extreme east of this zoning being orientated in a manner that provides passive surveillance of the adjoining Active Open Space lands.
- The uses for the proposed Active Open Space lands shall be decided in consultation with the Community and Enterprise Section of Wicklow County Council and upon decision the subject lands shall be levelled and drained to an appropriate standard capable of accommodating such proposed facilities.
- The design and layout of the proposed employment element of the Action Area shall be sympathetic to the adjoining uses and shall provide for extensive landscaping along all boundaries.
- Any development proposals shall have regard to the setting and curtilage of structures and sites of heritage value, and habitats of biodiversity value and appropriate buffer zones-/mitigating measures shall be provided as required.

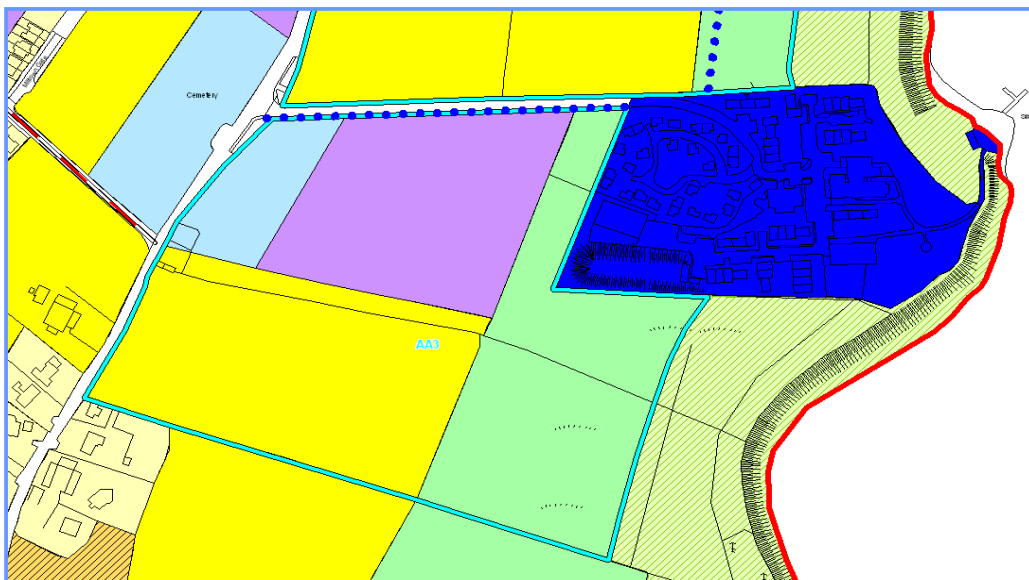


Figure 9.3 Action Area 3

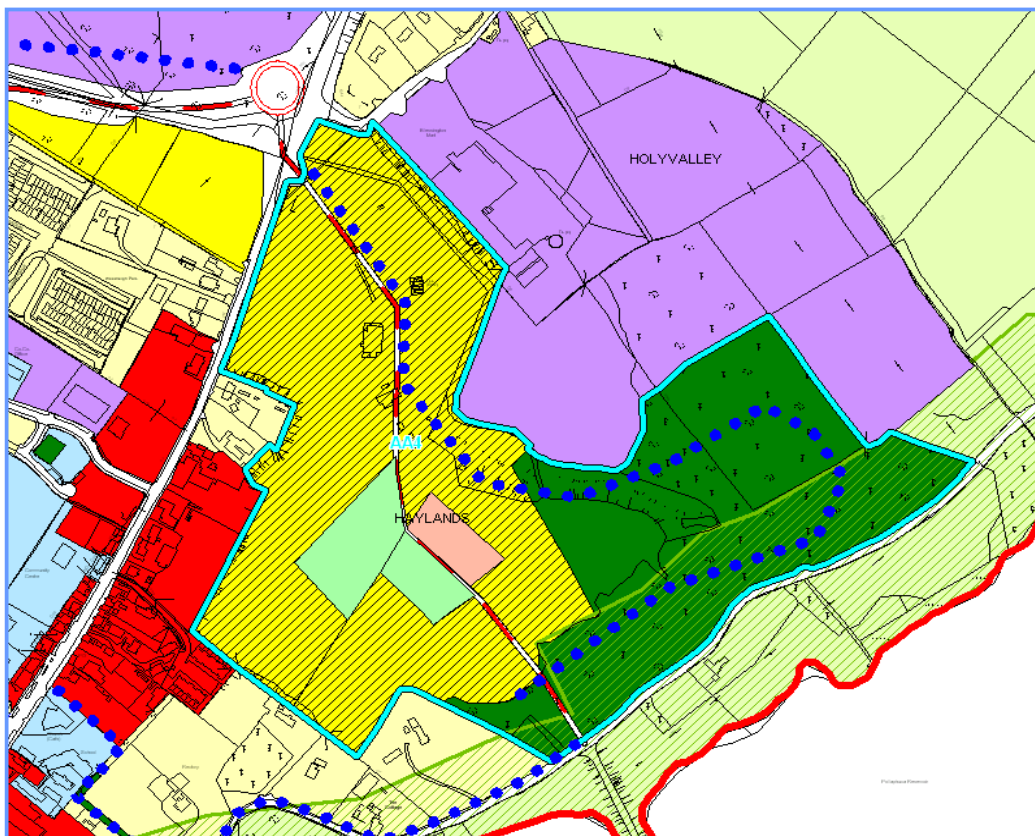
#### 9.1.4 Action Area 4 – Lands at Doran’s Pit

This Action Area is located at Holyvalley (Doran’s Pit) is accessed directly off the N81 and is bounded by the existing mart site to the north, existing forestry and agricultural lands to the east and south and existing residential development to the south west. The N81 runs along the northern section of the western boundary, with the L-4371 (Kilbride Road) running along the south east of the subject lands. The subject lands measure a total of c 29.81ha and shall provide for mixed residential development, a local neighbourhood centre and active open space areas in the following manner:

- 17.01ha for mixed residential development
- 0.5ha for community/local neighbourhood centre uses
- 1ha and 0.5ha for equipped play spaces
- 10.8ha for open space and amenity use in the form of a woodland Park

The development of this Action Area plan offers significant opportunities to link the L-4371 – Kilbride Road and the L-4372 Blessington Bridge to the N81 directly and sit at a prominent location acting as a gateway into the town of Blessington. The proximity to the lakeshore and the potential tourism value of this site is also recognised. Having regard to this the following criteria shall apply to these lands:

- The development of this action area shall be contingent on the provision of a through road linking the N81 directly to the L-4371 (Kilbride Road) and the L-4372 (Blessington Bridge). No residential development shall take place until a programme for the delivery and completion of this road from the N81 to the L-4371 has been agreed with the Planning and Roads Sections of Wicklow County Council. The provision of a continuous footpath along the L-4372 from Blessington Bridge to the subject lands will also be required.
- The residential element of the Action Area shall be developed in 3 phases which shall be tied in with the provision of the Active Open Space lands and the local neighbourhood centre / community lands as follows:
  - Phase 1 shall provide for a maximum of 250 residential units alongside the delivery of an active open space area measuring a minimum of 1ha. The type, form and layout of this active open space area shall be subject to agreement with the Planning, Community and Enterprise Sections of Wicklow County Council.
  - The commencement of any further phases shall be contingent on the completion and opening of the N81 to L-4371 link road
  - Phase 2 shall comprise the provision of a maximum of a further 100 residential units which shall be developed alongside the delivery of a passive open space area / casual play area and the local community/neighbourhood centre area both measuring a minimum of 0.5ha. The type, form and layout of any such open space shall be subject to agreement with the Planning, Community and Enterprise section of Wicklow County Council.
  - A neighbourhood centre including community facilities, of scale commensurate with the needs of the future population of the Action Area shall be provided on a site of 0.5ha. This local neighbourhood centre shall adjoin the active open space area and provide for a small anchor retail unit alongside smaller local shops and services including non-retail and professional services. The community element of this zoning shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of the Planning, Community and Enterprise section of Wicklow County Council.
  - Phase 3 shall comprise of the provision of a maximum of 126 units which shall be developed in conjunction with the delivery of a lakeside open park and amenity area measuring 10.8ha. Units within this phase shall be only be occupied upon completion of the parkland area. This parkland shall provide sufficient car parking and open onto the lake to the east. The proposed lakeside park area shall provide for extensive hard and soft landscaping to be agreed with the Planning, Heritage and Community and Enterprise Sections of Wicklow County Council.



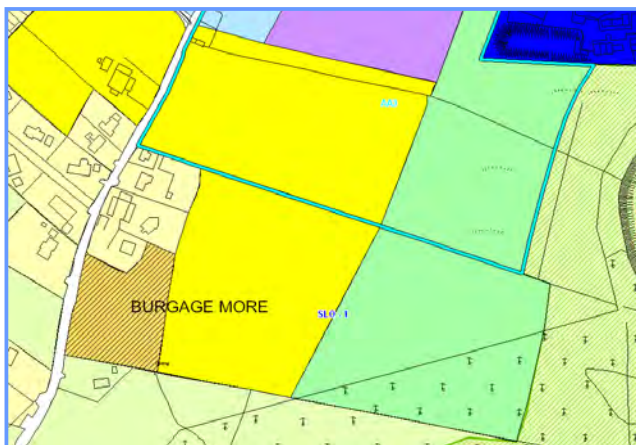
**Figure 9.4 Action Area 4**

## 9.2 Specific Local Objectives

In addition to the proposed four Action Area Plans as set out above it is proposed to provide three Specific Local Objectives on lands viewed as being key to achieving the vision of the plan. In a manner similar to the opportunity sites identified in Chapter 3 and the above Action Areas the idea of the Specific Local Objective, is to highlight the key planning principles required to be achieved in order for these sites to progress to construction stage.

### Specific Local Objective 1:

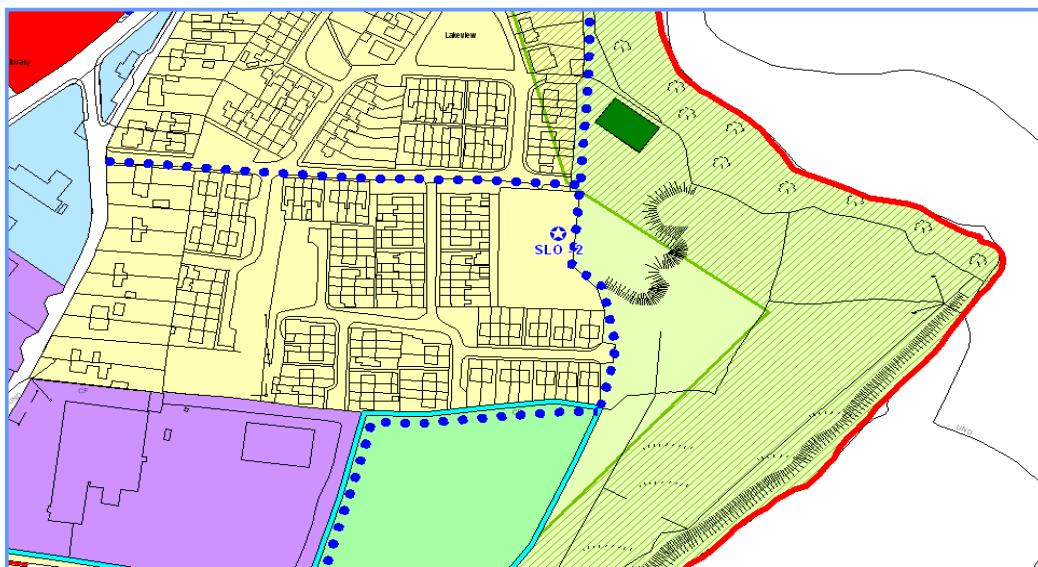
Lands to the south of Action Area 3 shall be developed in a manner which provides for a mix of housing (c. 3.348ha at 28/ha) with the main point of access being provided through Action Area 3. The development of these lands shall be carried out in conjunction with the laying out of lands to the east for Active Open Space (c. 3.646ha) to an appropriate standard capable of accommodating such activities i.e. levelled and drained. Low density housing at a maximum density of 20/ha shall be provided on c. 1ha of land adjoining the L-8858 in keeping with the existing neighbouring developments and in recognition of the rural nature of this area.



**Figure 9.5 Specific Local Objective 1**

### Specific Local Objective 2:

This objective provides for the redevelopment of the Open Space area, located to the east of the Carrig Glen Estate to cater for a maximum of 18 residential units designed and orientated in a manner capable of passively supervising the open space areas to the east which are to be redeveloped and laid out in a manner capable of providing for a new playing field, redeveloped hard surfaced area to the rear of the housing at Lakeview, potential redevelopment of the former scouts den and the continuation of the proposed pedestrian and cycle route from Action Area 2 through to the L-4371 Road.

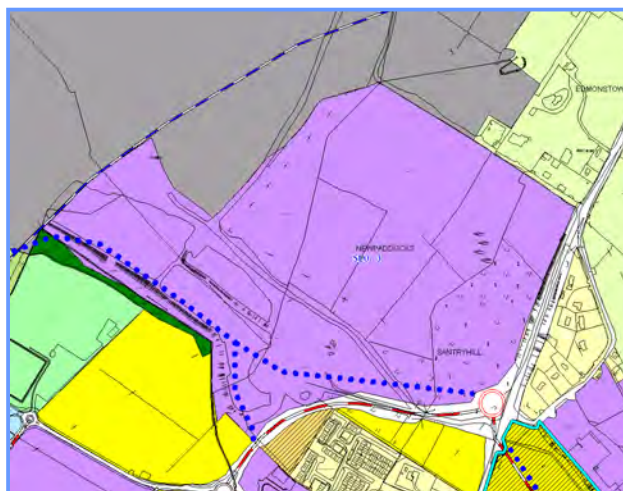


*Figure 9.6 Specific Local Objective 2*

### Specific Local Objective 3:

These lands located within the Roadstone Quarry to the west of the N81 shall be developed as a comprehensive (not piecemeal) integrated scheme providing for low density employment use, alongside the provision of an open public amenity/nature park, capable of facilitating pedestrian and cycle access to the Glending Woods from the N81 and the Blessington Inner Relief Road. The proposed employment units within this area shall be designed and finished in a manner capable of fully integrating into the surroundings of the amenity lands, whilst also providing passive supervision of surrounding walks and cycle routes.

A comprehensive scheme outlining the design and layout of this scheme will be required which shall include a detailed phasing programme.



*Figure 9.7 Specific Local Objective 3*



## Section 10

### Zoning

#### 10.1 Introduction:

The purpose of land use zoning objectives is to indicate the Council's intentions for all lands in the town. The various land use zones and their objectives are identified on the Maps of this Local Area Plan. Land use zoning objectives and the associated vision for each zone are as follows:-:

<b>Zoning Objectives</b>	
<b>RE: Residential</b>	Existing residential. To protect, provide and improve residential amenities of adjoining properties and areas while allowing for infill residential development that reflects the established character of the area in which it is located
<b>R1: New residential</b>	To protect, provide and improve residential amenities
<b>R2: New residential Low Density</b>	To protect, provide and improve residential amenities at a lower density generally being 20/ha.
<b>TC: Town Centre</b>	To provide for the development and improvement of appropriate town centre uses including retail, commercial, office and civic use, and to provide for 'Living Over the Shop' residential accommodation, or other ancillary residential accommodation.
<b>NC: Neighbourhood Centre</b>	To provide for retail and non retail services such as grocery shops, newsagents hairdressers, dry cleaners etc and local professional services.
<b>E: Employment</b>	To provide for the development of enterprise and employment
<b>CE: Community &amp; Education</b>	To provide for civic, community and educational facilities
<b>OS: Open Space</b>	To preserve, provide and improve recreational amenity and passive open space.
<b>AOS: Active Open Space</b>	To provide for active recreational open space
<b>Park and Ride</b>	To provide for a bus park and ride facility
<b>T: Tourism</b>	To facilitate the provision of tourist based activities
<b>AG</b>	To protect and provide for agriculture and amenity in a manner that protects the physical and visual amenity of the area and demarcates the urban and rural boundary
<b>AG – RB: Agriculture within 100m buffer</b>	To provide a 100m buffer from the designated Poulaphuca Reservoir that protects the physical and visual amenity of the area
<b>GD – CZ: Glen Ding Conservation and Amenity Zone</b>	To preserve and protect Glen Ding Wood in its current form as a conservation and Amenity Zone.
<b>EX – Extractive Industry</b>	To provide for extraction / quarrying and associated activities including processing of extracted materials and land restoration

The acceptability of certain uses in particular zones are self evident, as is the unacceptability of others. Over a wide range of uses, the degree of acceptability will be assessed on the basis of a specific planning application where its nature, extent, intensity and its incidental effects can be evaluated properly.

The following table indicates the acceptability levels for any use in each of the groups:

<b>Acceptability of Uses</b>	
<b>Y</b>	<b>Permitted in Principle</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>Not Normally Permitted</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>Prohibited</b>

'Not Normally Permitted' means a use is not acceptable in principle and will only be permitted in special cases where the Council is satisfied that the use would not conflict with the general objective for the zone and could be permitted without undesirable consequences for the permitted uses and which can be allowed subject to compliance with pertinent control criteria consistent with the proper planning and development of the area, having regard to the Local Area Plan.

Uses not recorded in the Land Use Matrix will be considered in relation to the general policies of the plan and the zoning objectives of the particular area.

Many uses exist where they do not conform to the designated use zoning objectives. When extensions to, or improvements of premises accommodating such uses are proposed, each shall be considered on its merits and permission may be granted where the development does not adversely affect the amenities of properties in the vicinity and does not prejudice the proper planning and development of the area. Development within the Agricultural zoning shall be strictly in accordance with the provision of the County Development Plan.

## 10.2 Blessington Zoning Matrix:

Development Categories	R	TC	NC	E	CE	OS	AOS	P+R	T	AG	AG - RB <sup>14</sup>	GD - CZ	EX-IND
Bed & Breakfast/ Guesthouse	Y	Y	N	X	X	X	X	X	Y	N	X	X	X
Car Parks	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	X	X
Community Facility	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	X	Y	Y	Y	N	X
Crèche/ Nursery school	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	X	X	N	X	X	X	X	X
Doctor/Dentist etc/Health Centre	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Education	Y	Y	Y	X	Y	X	X	X	N	X	X	X	X
Garden Centre	N	Y	X	N	N	X	X	X	N	N	X	X	N
Halting Site	Y	N	X	N	Y	X	X	X	X	Y	X	X	X
Heavy Vehicle Park	X	X	X	Y	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hospital/Nursing Home	Y	Y	N	N	Y	X	X	X	X	N	X	X	X
Hotel	X	Y	X	N	X	X	X	X	Y	N	N	X	N
Industry	X	N	X	Y	X	X	X	X	N	X	X	X	Y
Motor Sales Outlet	X	Y	X	Y	X	X	X	X	N	X	X	X	X
Offices	X	Y	Y	Y	X	X	X	X	N	X	X	X	X
Petrol Station	X	Y	N	Y	X	X	X	X	N	X	X	X	X
Public House	N	Y	Y	X	X	X	N	X	N	X	X	X	X
Public Services	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	X	X	X
Recreational Building/ Facility	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	X	Y	Y	Y	N	X
Residential	Y	Y	N	X	X	X	X	X	N	X	X	X	X
Residential Institution	Y	Y	X	X	N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Restaurant	N	Y	Y	N	X	X	X	X	Y	X	X	X	X
Service Garage	X	Y	X	Y	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Shops (Local) <sup>15</sup>	Y	Y	Y	N	X	X	X	N	X	X	X	X	X
Shops (Other)	X	Y	N	Y	X	X	X	X	N	X	X	X	X
Retail Warehouse/ Cash and Carry	X	N	X	Y	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N
Warehousing/ Distribution.	X	N	X	Y	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N

<sup>14</sup> All development proposals within the 100m reservoir buffer zone shall be subject to the provisions of objective BD2 of this plan.

<sup>15</sup> A Local Shop is one that primarily serves a local community and does not generally attract business from outside that community.



## Appendix A – Figures and Calculations

This document forms part of the Blessington Local Area Plan. It includes the background analysis in relation to the designation of lands and the formulation of objectives within the plan boundary.

The settlement of Blessington is a designated a Level 4 'Moderate Growth Town' under the Wicklow County Settlement Hierarchy. The plan will aim to facilitate the development of the settlement so that it performs the housing, economic, and service functions of a 'Moderate Growth Town', as set out in the Settlement Hierarchy, Economic Strategy and Retail Hierarchy of the County Development Plan.

### Section 1: Population and Housing

#### 1.0 Introduction

As provided in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2010-2016, the target population for Blessington in 2016 is 6,000 and 7,500 in 2022. It is intended that the necessary physical infrastructure will be in place in the town to cater for this level of growth. The town will serve as a hub for the development of social, cultural and economic services necessary to maintain and improve quality of life thereby developing a sustainable community.

Year	Population	Annual % change on previous population	Source
1996	1,860	-	1996 Census
2002	2,509	+4% pa	2002 Census
2006	4,018	+12% pa	2006 Census
2011	4,784 <sup>1</sup>	+c. 3%	2011 Census
2016	6,000	+4.5% pa	CDP Indicative Population
2022	7,500	+4% pa	CDP Indicative Population

#### Quantity of Zoned Land:

Although this Plan will cover the six years from 2012/2013 to 2018/2019<sup>2</sup>, this plan shall provide enough zoned land to meet residential needs up to 2022 i.e. 3 years beyond the life of the plan for the following reasons:

- in order to provide a robust, long term framework for growth in accordance with 'Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' Department of the Environment', 2007
- while it is intended initially that this plan shall have a duration of 6 years, in accordance with Section 19 of the Act, this plan could be extended to a 10 year duration if it is deemed that it remains a robust planning framework for this additional time period and the objectives of the plan have not been substantially secured.

#### Calculations for number of units required up to 2022:

The average household size has been steadily falling in Co. Wicklow, from 3.23 in 1996 to 2.89 in 2006, a fall of 0.033 per annum over the 10 year period. The Regional Planning Guidelines review group for the Greater Dublin Area estimates that the average household size by 2016 will be in the region of 2.56 persons per household and 2.3 persons per household in 2022.

Based on the Census enumerated population of 4,784 in 2011 and an average household size of 2.9<sup>3</sup>, there were 1,634 households in Blessington in 2011. Using the 2016 and 2022 household

<sup>1</sup> Source 2011 Small Area Population Statistics

<sup>2</sup> The duration is dependent on the adoption date

<sup>3</sup> The number of households in the town in 2011 can be estimated from the An Post GeoDirectory, which shows all addresses receiving post, and includes a breakdown for buildings with multiple units. Based on the 2011 census population figure of 4,639 and using the geo-directory figure of 1,634 units this provides for an average household size of 2.8 in 2011.

sizes as per the RPGs, the population targets for Blessington will require 1,324 additional units up to 2019 and a further 515 units up to 2022.

These figures include an excess factor of 6.5%. The excess factor describes the fact that demand for housing will exceed actual household formation due to:

- Some of the additional units being required to replace obsolete housing;
- Some units being vacant at any one time due to market frictional factors;
- Some units being second homes or pieds à terre.

This essentially means that not all new houses in the town will result in the formation of a new “household” as (a) the new occupants may have previously resided in the town, in now obsolete housing (b) the house may be vacant or (c) the house may be a second home for someone who resides permanently elsewhere.

Year	Projected Population	Household Size	Units	Excess Factor +6.5%	Total Units Required
2011 <sup>4</sup>	4,784	2.9	1634	N/A	N/A
2016	6,000	2.56	2344	2,496	862
2019	6,750	2.43	2778	2,959	463
2022	7,500	2.3	3261	3,473	515
Total number of Units required up to 2022					1,840

### Headroom

This is the amount of extra land that should be designated for development over and above the minimum amount needed to accommodate population targets. It is also known as “market factor” and is intended to allow for that element of designated land that may not be released to the market for housing purposes during the plan period. While ‘headroom’ is usually calculated as a percentage increase on the minimum amount required, in the case of Blessington, ‘headroom’ will be provided by designating sufficient land for 1,840 new units (i.e. the 2022 target), all of which will be considered suitable for development during the lifetime of this plan, subject to the 2019 population target not being breached within the lifetime of the plan.

### Housing Density

The County Development Plan 2010-2016 provides a guide for appropriate housing density at different locations vis-à-vis the proximity of the land to town centres / services and the characteristics of the area / settlement. Generally, a plot ratio of 0.35-0.5 is suggested for greenfield sites in settlements, which would equate to a density of 28-40 units (of 125sqm each) to the hectare or 11-16 units to the acre.

Given the restricted availability of substantial Town Centre sites it is assumed that the vast majority of new residential development in Blessington will occur on both edge of centre and new greenfield sites. The majority of Town Centre development shall occur as infill development alongside the opportunity sites identified in section 3 of the plan with a strong likelihood that these town core sites will only provide for a small proportion of the future growth.

therefore provision shall be made for c.85% of the required housing growth to occur on greenfield sites. A range of densities will be allowed from between 20/ha and 40/ha, the lower limit being lower than that suggested in the County Development Plan having regard to the character of the settlement and the somewhat rural nature of the surroundings.

<sup>4</sup> 2011 Census of Population

## Amount of zoned housing land

The designation of lands for residential zoning has had regard to the following planning criteria:-

- Undeveloped lands closest to the existing town centre were considered first for zoning (the 'town centre' being taken as the Market Square). Within this context the choice of zoned land has been informed by the avoidance of protected areas, natural topography, accessibility, infrastructure and the location of established residential areas. In this regard, all undeveloped lands within 0.5km, 1km and 1.5km bands were evaluated;
- Lands adjacent to existing or planned community and social infrastructure such as schools and open space sites / zones were considered for residential zoning;
- The total number of units allowed to be developed before 2019 shall be limited to c. 1,325 units but the plan shall make provision for zoning for 1,840 units in total to allow for a longer term planning framework and appropriate 'headroom';
- The need to reserve free from development all lands located in current route corridors for the N81 realignment;
- The need to appropriately manage land uses in vicinity of the Poulaphuca Reservoir, which is designated a Natura 2000 site.

The proposed residential zonings are thus as follows:

Location/Description	Zoning	Proposed Density/Ha	Area (Ha)	Potential No. of Units
Cookehill Zone 2	R1	28	4.403	131
Cookehill Zone 3	R1	36 <sup>5</sup>	3.168	115
Cookehill Zone 4	R1	29	9.817	287
Lands adjoining Woodleigh	R1	28	0.172	5
Lands at Santry Hill	R1	28	2.624	74
Lands at Burgage (Action Area 2)	R1	28	5.48	153
Lands at Burgage to the south of Avon Ri (Action Area 3)	R1	28	3.57	100
Lands at Burgage to the south of Action Area 3	R1	28	3.348	94
Lands to the west of Action Area 3	R1	28	2.178	61
Undeveloped lands within Milltown Gate Development	R1	28	1.318	37
Lands adjoining the Naas Road to the west of Glenview Court	NC	28	0.386 4	10
Lands within Action Area 1	R1	28	4.15	116
Lands to the north of Action Area 1	R1	20	2.5	50
Doran's Pit (1)	R2	28	17.01	476
Adjacent to Woodleigh Estate (LD)	R2	20	0.948 7	19
Burgage More (LD)	R2	20	1	20
Town Centre, Opportunity Sites/Infill Development	TC	40		Infill
<b>Totals</b>			<b>44.96</b>	<b>1,840</b>

<sup>5</sup> Note a higher density is allowable on these lands given the close proximity of these lands to the proposed public park adjoining these lands.

## Section 2: Employment and Enterprise

### 2.0 Introduction

A detailed analysis of employment in Blessington was carried out using POWCAR Employment Data (2006) and on the ground analysis of existing employment lands within the plan area. While it is accepted that the available POWCAR data, which dates from the 2006 Census, is now out of date, it is considered that it is still relevant to consider this data source as it reflects a time of high employment in the Country / County and it is assumed that the premises where these jobs were located are still in existence and if not currently utilised or utilised to the same degree, could be brought back to the same employment levels prevailing in 2006.

The following steps were taken in order to ascertain any requirements for employment additional zoning within the Local Area Plan:

- 1) Analysis of the existing (2006) employment figures from POWCAR Data
- 2) Analysis of existing employment lands within the proposed plan area
- 3) The projected number of jobs required was established and 100% headroom was added
- 4) Infill sites were identified and the capacity of these lands was analysed
- 5) An analysis of existing permissions for employment development were analysed in order to ascertain their capacity
- 6) New greenfield lands were identified in order to accommodate the remaining job requirements to meet the projected population for the plan area.

### 2.1 Stages in the Analysis of Employment

#### Step 1: Analysis of existing Employment Figures

POWCAR Data from the 2006 census indicates that 859 people indicated Blessington as being their place of work. This was broken down as follows:

Employment Type	Number Employed
Not stated	5
Agriculture	9
Manufacturing	216
Construction	56
Commerce	291
Transport etc	18
Public Administration	32
Education/Health	132
Other	100
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>859</b>

**Table 1: Detailed Breakdown of Employment by sector**

Based on an analysis of the above figures, using previous analysis of existing building uses/retail survey from 2009/analysis of school sizes and capacities within the plan area the following simplistic categorisation of the employment numbers is considered reasonable.

Employment Type	Town Centre	Other	EMP lands outside the town centre
Not stated	5		
Agriculture		9	
Manufacturing			216
Construction		56	
Commerce	203		88
Transport etc			18
Public Administration	32		
Education/Health	57	75	
Other	25	25	50
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>372</b>

**Table 2: Simplistic Breakdown of Employment figures**

It is considered reasonable to assume that the TC zonings and opportunity sites, densification of existing units and the re-opening of empty units will facilitate an expansion of an additional 97 jobs specifically within the TC zoning - an increase of 30%

This would provide a figure of 419 people working within the Town Centre.

It is also considered reasonable that the sector of work listed in the 'Other' category would also rise but not at the same pace. Based on an analysis of the existing schools and future requirements etc it is envisaged that an additional 70 jobs will be created within this sector and while construction through future development may rise, the development of land will lead to a reduction in the extent of agricultural activities within the town area. The existing figure of 165 produced by the above table breakdown equates to c. 19% of the overall working population of 859 jobs.

Given the above it is considered reasonable that this sector will grow and cater for c. 10% of the overall employment population requirement. This equates to  $3294 * c.10\% = 324$  people

Employment Requirements	Town Centre (2022)	Other (2022)	EMP lands outside the town centre required in 2022
3294 <sup>6</sup>	419	324	2,551

**Table 3: Target - Based on the above analysis and assumptions the plan will need to be capable of accommodating 2,551 new jobs**

## **Step 2: Analysis of Existing Employment Lands within the proposed Plan Area: What exists at present?**

A desk analysis of all existing employment units within the plan area was carried out which produced an average plot ratio of 0.3 with an average site coverage of 25%. Taking into

<sup>6</sup> This figure has been derived by adding the projected 2022 population of 7,500 and the projected resident population from the zoned residential lands within County Kildare that border the plan area 1,264 providing a total of 8,764. This was then broken down by the Number of people over 15+ (75.6%), the Labour Force (74.2%) and applying the CDP jobs ratio of 67% for Blessington. ( $8764 * 75.6\% = 6626$   $*74.2\% = 4917$   $*67\% = 3294$ ). These figures were produced following use of 'Place of Work Census of Anonymised Records'.

consideration the figures outlined in section 7.5.2 of the County Development Plan and the above analysis of existing employment trends in Blessington it is considered reasonable to allow for a densification of existing employment sites within the town by increasing the allowable plot ratio to 0.4.

The increased plot ratio of 0.4 provides for 61,551.75sqm of floor space. Given the nature of the developments listed above which would have a floor space per employee ranging from c. 50sqm per employee to c. 100sqm per employee it is considered reasonable to allow an average of 75sqm be used. The use of 75sqm per employee alongside the new densified floor space equates to 821 jobs. This equates to a c. 121% increase in the number of jobs capable of being provided on these lands. 372 jobs (2006 census figures)\* c. 121% = 821 jobs.

### Step 3: Ascertaining the requirements for completely new developments and adding a 100% headroom

The population growth projections for the area require 2,551 jobs to be provided as set out above in table 3. Taking away the potential jobs provision of the existing employment developments (821) this figure is reduced to a requirement for 1,730 new jobs. Adding 100% headroom to this figure provides a requirement for enough land to be provided capable of accommodating 3,460 new Jobs.

### Step 4: Identification of potential infill lands for employment purposes

Six infill sites have been identified within existing employment areas. Sites A and A1 are located within the existing employment area to the south of the plan area and are to be allowed to / encouraged to develop at a plot ratio of 0.4 in keeping with the adjoining lands.

Infill sites B, C and D are located along the existing relief road and have been given a plot ratio of 0.6 in keeping with the adjoining properties in this area.

Site E located within the Town Centre zoning is situated in a prominent location as one enters the town from the north and should be developed in a manner which is sympathetic to this location. It is envisaged that this site will be developed at a plot ratio of 0.6, be of a high architectural design and provide for extensive landscaping along the eastern boundary providing an attractive entrance at this significant junction in the town. All infill sites will provide for c. 254 jobs.



Figure 1 - Infill Sites to the south of the town A and A1



Figure 2 - Infill Sites to the north of the town B, C, D & E

### Step 5: Analysis of Lands with existing Permissions within Blessington

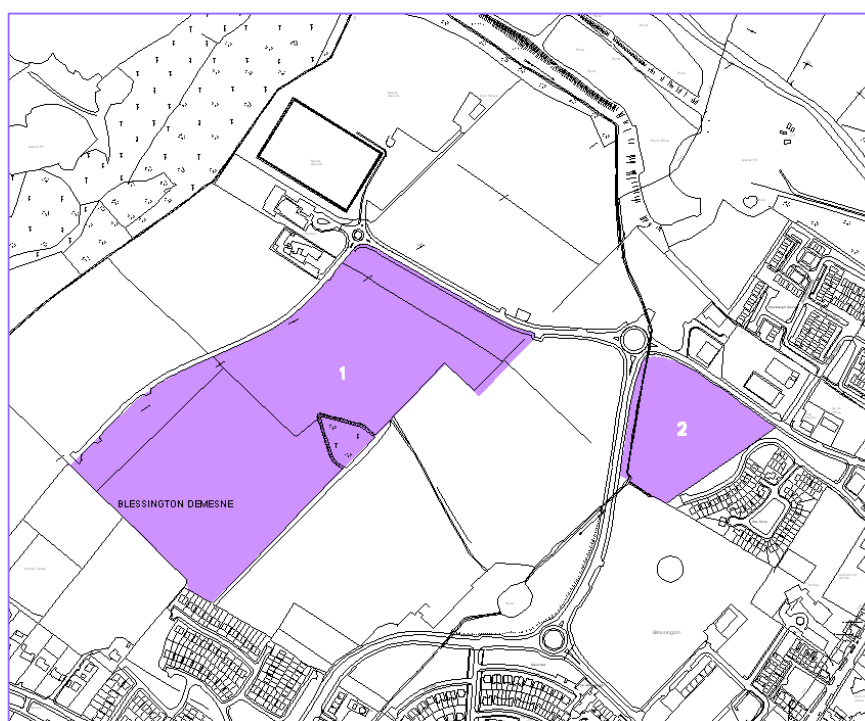


An analysis of lands with existing permissions was carried out in order to ascertain the potential job provision on these lands. Given the current economic climate and the possibility that these sites may not be developed in accordance with these permissions it is considered reasonable to apply a standard plot ratio of 0.4 to these lands with an average of 75sqm/employee.

Sites 1 and 2 as set out in Figure 3 below provide for the following jobs.

Site Number	Area (SQM)	Plot Ratio	Area (SQM)	SQM/Employee	Job Numbers
1	158,600	0.4	63,440	75	846
2	30,950	0.4	12,380	75	165
Total jobs potential					1,011

**Table 4: Analysis of Lands with existing permissions for employment**



**Figure 3 – Employment Lands with existing permissions**

#### **Step 6: Identification of proposed new green field lands required to be zoned**

The identification of new employment lands was required in order to meet the projected employment requirements for the plan population and its immediate environs. A total of 5 sites were identified as being suitable for employment purposes and based on a plot ratio of 0.4 and applying an average of 75sqm per employee where identified as being suitable to meet the remaining employment requirements of the plan area.

The following table sets out a breakdown of the lands identified for meet these required remaining job provision of 2,195.

Name	Total Lands SQM	Buildings Sqm at Plot Ratio of 0.4	Average Sqm/EMP	Job Provision
<i>Lands EMP 1 and EMP 2: New Lands at Burgage Mor and off the N81.</i>	44,570	17828	75	237
<i>Lands EMP3 and EMP4: Mart Site Expansion and Redevelopment</i>	180,300	72,120	75	962
<i>Lands EMP5: New Roadstone Redevelopment Business and Amenity Park</i>	498,000	49,800(0.1 Plot Ratio)	50	996
<b>Total Job Provision</b>				<b>2,195</b>

*Table 5 – New Employment Lands to be zoned.*

### 2.3 Summary of new employment zonings

Table 6 below sets out a complete summary of all proposed lands to be zoned for employment purposes in order to meet the projected employment requirements for the plan area.

Name	Total Lands SQM	Buildings Sqm at Plot Ratio of 0.4	Average Sqm/EMP	Potential Job Provision
<b>*Target Job Provision based analysis and adding 100% headroom = 3,460</b>				
<i>Step 4) Infill Employment Lands</i>	32,307	17920	75	254
<i>Step 5) Existing Permitted Employment Lands</i>	189550	75,820(0.4 plot ratio)	75	1,011
<i>Lands EMP 1 and EMP 2: New Lands at Burgage Mor and Park and Ride Site</i>	44,570	17828	75	237
<i>Lands EMP3 and EMP4: Mart Site Expansion and Redevelopment</i>	180,300	72,120	75	962
<i>Lands EMP5: New Roadstone Redevelopment Business and Amenity Park</i>	498,000	49,800(0.1 Plot Ratio)	50	996
<b>Totals</b>	<b>358,633</b>	<b>116,900</b>	<b>66 Sqm per Employee</b>	<b>3460</b>

*Table 6: Summary Table of all proposed Employment Zonings*

## Section 3: Social and Community Zonings

### 3.0 Introduction:

The following sets out the social and community land use requirements of the plan area based upon the projected population of 7,500 in 2022 and takes into account the additional projected population to arise from the development of lands within Kildare that form part of the 'Blessington Environs Plan' (part of the Kildare County Development Plan). The overall projected population to be catered for therefore equates to 8,764 people.

### 3.2 Community Facilities

Existing Community lands within the Blessington Plan Area excluding educational and open space lands amount to 3.2ha of land. While there are no specific guidelines in relation to the provision varying types of community facilities it is considered prudent based on the projected future population projections to provide for an additional community facility forming part of the neighbourhood centre zoning on lands within the 'Doran's Pit' Action Area measuring a minimum of 750sqm. The exact use of these lands shall be subject to agreement with the Community section of Wicklow County Council.

In addition to the above it is recognised that there is a need for new lands to be zoned to allow for the expansion of the existing graveyard within the town. Having regard to this it is proposed to zone 0.8ha at Burgage to accommodate an extension to the existing graveyard.

Zoning	Use	Location	Area (ha)
CE	Community Facility	Dorans Pit	0.075
CE	Graveyard extension	Burgage Mor	0.8
Total Lands to be provided			0.875

Table 3.1 Community Facility Zonings

### 3.3 Education

#### Primary Education

At present there are 5 no. primary schools located either within the town itself or on the outskirts of the town with an enrolment of 767 students between all primary schools as of 2011. Based on the Department of Education's standard that 12% of the resident population are of primary school going age and with the census indicating a population in 2011 of 4,784 this provides a requirement for 574 school places.

The enrolment figures indicate that the current primary schools provide for a much wider catchment than that envisaged by the department of education standard with the figure of 767 students representing 16% of the total population. Given the difficulty encountered with attempting to ascertain the extent of the school catchment into the rural area it is considered reasonable to carry this figure of 16% forward in calculating the primary school requirements of the plan area up to 2022. It should be noted that the figure of 16% already includes the existing Kilmalum estate within County Kildare.

Taking the projected population of the plan in 2022 of 7,500 and adding the undeveloped zoned lands located within the Blessington Environs Plan (Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017) which provides for c. 950 people this provides for a projected resident population of 8,450 people.

Taking this figure and carrying forward the existing school going population of 16% this equates to a need for 1,352 school places within the plan area or 48 classrooms at 28 students per classroom. Based on the standards set out in the document 'Development Plans' Guidelines for Planning

Authorities June 2007 it is considered prudent to zone 1.22ha of land within Action Area 1 for future Community needs.

Zoning	Use	Location	Area (ha)
CE	New Primary School	Blessington Demesne West within Action Area 1	1.22
Total Lands to be provided			1.22

*Table 3.2 Primary Educational Zonings*

### Post Primary Education

There is one post-primary school in Blessington, Blessington Community College, with a September 2010/11 enrolment of 271 pupils, on a site of c. 4 hectares. While a site of this size could in theory accommodate a school of up to 500 pupils, 271 is considered its current built capacity.

Given the location of post primary schools in the area, the current catchment for post primary education is considered to be in the region of c.10,000 persons<sup>7</sup>. Based on the Department of Educations standard that on average 8.5% of the resident population are of post primary school going age this would generate c. 850 pupils of secondary school going age of which c. 400 would be residents of the plan area. It is evident however that a larger proportion of pupils in the possible catchment zone attend schools other than Blessington Community College with some being attracted towards schools in Kildare and Dublin.

Moving forward to 2022, this catchment area could increase to c. 15,000 persons which would give a post primary school population of 1,275 pupils. While it is acknowledged that the current pattern of students travelling outside the immediate area for secondary school may continue into the future, it is considered more sustainable planning to make provision for additional school places in the town so that staying in the locality for secondary education becomes a viable option. Therefore this plan will make provision for both (a) maintenance of CE zoned land around the existing secondary school to allow for possible expansion and (b) the zoning of sufficient greenfield CE land to accommodate another post primary school. This is located adjacent to the Blessington No. 1 National School on the west side of the settlement, close to existing sports facilities.

Zoning	Use	Location	Area (ha)
CE	New Post Primary School	Blessington Demesne West within Action Area 1	3.7
Total Lands to be provided			3.7

### Third level / Adult education:

County Wicklow VEC runs a number of educational programmes from Blessington Community College and the Blessington Further Education Centre which is located at the junction of N81 and local road L-8858, providing a range of educational services as follows:-

- Day and evening courses (including languages, computing, childcare business studies, accounting, art, creative writing)

<sup>7</sup> This Figure has been derived using Census 2011 Small Area Population Statistics (SAPs)

- Adult learning services (including communications, personal & interpersonal skills, maths, work preparation, computer literacy, information technology and financial education and child development).

This site measures 0.8ha and is considered to have sufficient capacity to expand if needed to meet the future requirements of plan area.

## Section 4: Open Space and Recreation Zonings

### 4.0 Introduction

At present there is an absence of public open space available for the existing resident population within Blessington. Existing informal open space areas within the town measure a combined total of c. 1 ha with the addition of the Blessington GAA grounds measuring c. 8ha bringing this total to 9ha. This falls considerably short of the required standards of the Wicklow County Council Sports and Recreation Policy and therefore the plan must address this situation while also making provision for the future projected population of the area.

### 4.1 Open Space Requirements

It is the policy of the Council to ensure the provision of active open space at a rate of 2.4ha of land per 1,000 population. While the projected population as set out in chapter 2 is 7,500 by 2022 this does not include the potential development of land within the Blessington Environs Plan as set out above which has the potential to generate a further 1,264 people or the immediate surrounding rural catchment area. The plan therefore must make provision for a projected population of c. 10,000 which equates to a requirement of c. 24ha.

In accordance with the adopted Active Open Space policy of the Council, this should be divided into:

- 16.5ha of outdoor sport areas
- 2ha of equipped play spaces
- 6ha of casual play areas

### Active Open Space Provision

Active open spaces are those that are used for organised recreation and sporting activities. There are a number of existing sporting organisations in the town which must be accommodated and therefore the following land allocations have been made within the plan area. These lands allocations include lands already granted planning permission within the overall Cookehill development and are set out as in table 5.1 below.

As will be seen from the table below and the zoning map the plan has provided for a number of sites in excess of that required by the projected population. These sites ranging in size from c. 0.78ha up to 3.95ha have been designated in order to ensure that clubs requiring Active Open Space land have options in which to locate and are not locked into one specific location or landowner. It is envisaged that the lands designated 2(a) within AA3 would be developed initially with the possibility for future expansion possible onto the lands designated 2(b) as needs arise. It is also worth noting that each of these sites has been allocated to areas within close proximity to existing and proposed schools and residential zones while the lands designated in close proximity to the lake shore will also provide a further buffer between sensitive lands and future development within the plan area.

Location	Zoning	Area	Description
New Town Park	AOS	0.781	Tennis Courts and Bowling Green tied into Cookehill permission
Burgage More Option (1)	AOS	3.95	Optional Playing Fields
Naas Road Land	AOS	4.51	Optional Playing Fields
Burgage More Option (2a/2b)	AOS	3.352(a) 3.646 (b)	Playing Fields
GAA Lands	AOS	8	Existing Facilities
<b>Totals</b>		<b>24.24</b>	

*Table 5.1 Active Open Space Provision*



## Equipped Play Space Provision

Equipped Play spaces are defined as areas which are accessible, available and safe areas, designed and dedicated to facilitating the play, recreational and social interaction activities of children up to and including teenagers. At present there is 1 playground within the plan area measuring c. 0.06ha while another older hard surface equipped space is located at Lakeview measuring 0.072ha which is in very poor repair. The equipped play space located within the green area of the St. Josephs Road estate has been removed for some time however this plan will encourage the redevelopment of this area measuring 0.2282ha in order to re-invigorate this central open area within Town Centre with 0.06ha being designated for equipped play space.

Having regard to this, the plan will include an objective encouraging the re-development of this open space area while also designating 1.5ha of land within Action Area 4 for equipped play space. The specific details relating to this open space are set out in the detailed objectives relating to Action Area Plan 4.

## Casual Play Spaces Provision

Casual Play Space is open space that is not laid out for defined, formal sport, recreation or playspace, but is accessible, available and safe for informal use by children and adults for such purposes. The existing lands as detailed above adjoining the St. Josephs Road Development alongside the green area adjoining Rockypool Villas form the main areas of open casual space within the plan area. Other casual spaces exist within the plan area however these are located within existing housing developments and therefore not taken into consideration in the calculations for the provision of this form of play space.

Additional informal recreational spaces existing within the plan area such as the Forest Walk adjoining St. Mary's Junior School, Dempsey's Lane walkway, The Lakeshore and Glending Wood further enhance the recreational provision for the area but are restricted in their use and therefore cannot be included in the calculation for the provision of this form of play space.

Taking the above into consideration the plan will encourage the development of the proposed public park forming part of the overall new town centre development while also encouraging the provision of an informal open space as set out in the objectives relating to Opportunity Site 3.

Table's 5.2 and 5.3 below set out the proposed provision of Equipped and Casual Plays Space proposed for the plan area:

Location	Zoning	Area (ha)	Description
Existing Wicklow Coco Playground	CE	0.06	Existing Playground adjacent to Oakdrive
Hard Surface Play Area	CE	0.72	Hard Surfaced Courts at Lakeview
Proposed Doran's pit phase 1 - AA4	OS	1	Provision of a Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)
Proposed Doran's Pit Phase 2 (AA4)	OS	0.5	Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)
Proposed Open Area adjoining St. Josephs Road	OS	0.06	Equipped Playground facilities
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2.34</b>	

**Table 5.2 Equipped Play Spaces**

Location	Zoning	Area (ha)	Description
Green Area Adjacent to Rockypool Villas	OS	0.3	Public Park/Civic Space on lands within Opportunity Site 4
Proposed New Town Centre Public Park	OS	14.27	New Public Park Located on Downshire Lands
Proposed open Area adjoining St. Josephs Road – Redevelopment	OS	0.167	Redevelopment of existing Area with the provision of hard and soft landscaping
Parkland areas adjoining the Blessington Stream along the Naas Road	OS	1.546	OS/Public Park Area
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>16.28</b>	

**Table 5.3 Casual Play Space Provision**

The above analysis indicates that there will be more than sufficient Open Space/AOS designated under the proposed 2012-2018 LAP to account for the needs of the anticipated population up to and beyond 2022.

In addition to the above and in recognition of the Local Biodiversity study carried out in Blessington, the existing natural amenities within the plan area and in the interests of promoting and enhancing these natural amenities it is proposed that two additional areas of Open Space and Natural Amenity be zoned within the plan area.

### Open Space and Amenity Zonings

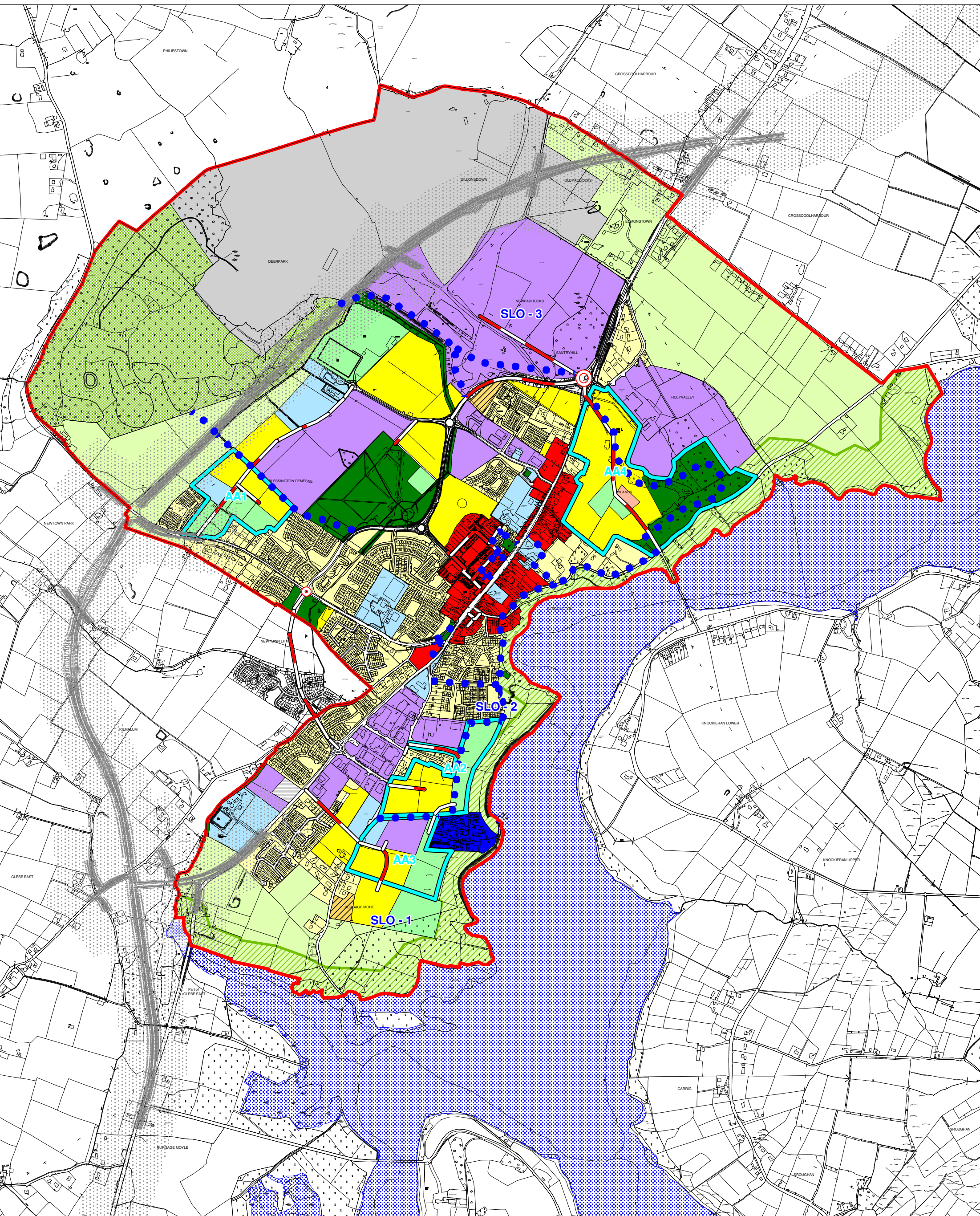
The first of these open space and amenity areas is to be located to the east of Doran's pit within Action Area 3 in recognition of the existing local biodiversity in this area and to act as a natural buffer between the development of this area and the lakeshore.

The second Open Space and Natural Amenity area is to be located to the west of the N81 on the lands zoned for employment purposes as set out in Chapter 4 of the plan. This area is to be developed with a very low plot ratio of 0.1 with employment units being designed and integrated into a new natural amenity park linked to Glen Ding Wood to the west.

Location	Zoning	Area (ha)	Description
East of Dorans Pit adjoining the Kilbride Road	OS and Amenity	10.8	Open Space in the form of a landscaped wood with walkways and picnic areas
Business/Open Space Amenity Park to the west of the N81 at Roadstone.	OS and Amenity	49.8 overall site including EMP element	Open Space and Amenity Park with employment uses at a plot ratio of 0.1.
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>10.8+</b>	

**Table 5.4 Open Space and Amenity Zonings**





**WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL**

Wicklow County Council Planning  
Department County Buildings,  
Station Road, Wicklow  
Tel: (0404) 20100  
Email: [plandev@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:plandev@wicklowcoco.ie)

**Draft Blessington Local Area plan**  
**Map 1: Land Use Zonings**

**Legend**

Existing Residential

Proposed Residential

Proposed Residential LD

Town Centre/  
Neighbourhood Centre

Employment/  
Proposed Employment

Open Space

Active Open Space

Agricultural Lands

Community, Education  
and Institutional

Tourism

Quarry Lands

Indicative Road Line

Indicative Pedestrian  
& Cycle Routes

Park and Ride Lands

NRDO Indicative  
N81 Route and Corridor

Glend Ding Conservation  
& Amenity Zone

Poulaphuca Reservoir  
SPA

Reservoir c. 100mtr  
buffer/Conservation zone

Action Areas

SLO

Town Boundary

Director of Services: Desmond O' Brien

Scale: 1: 6000 @ A3

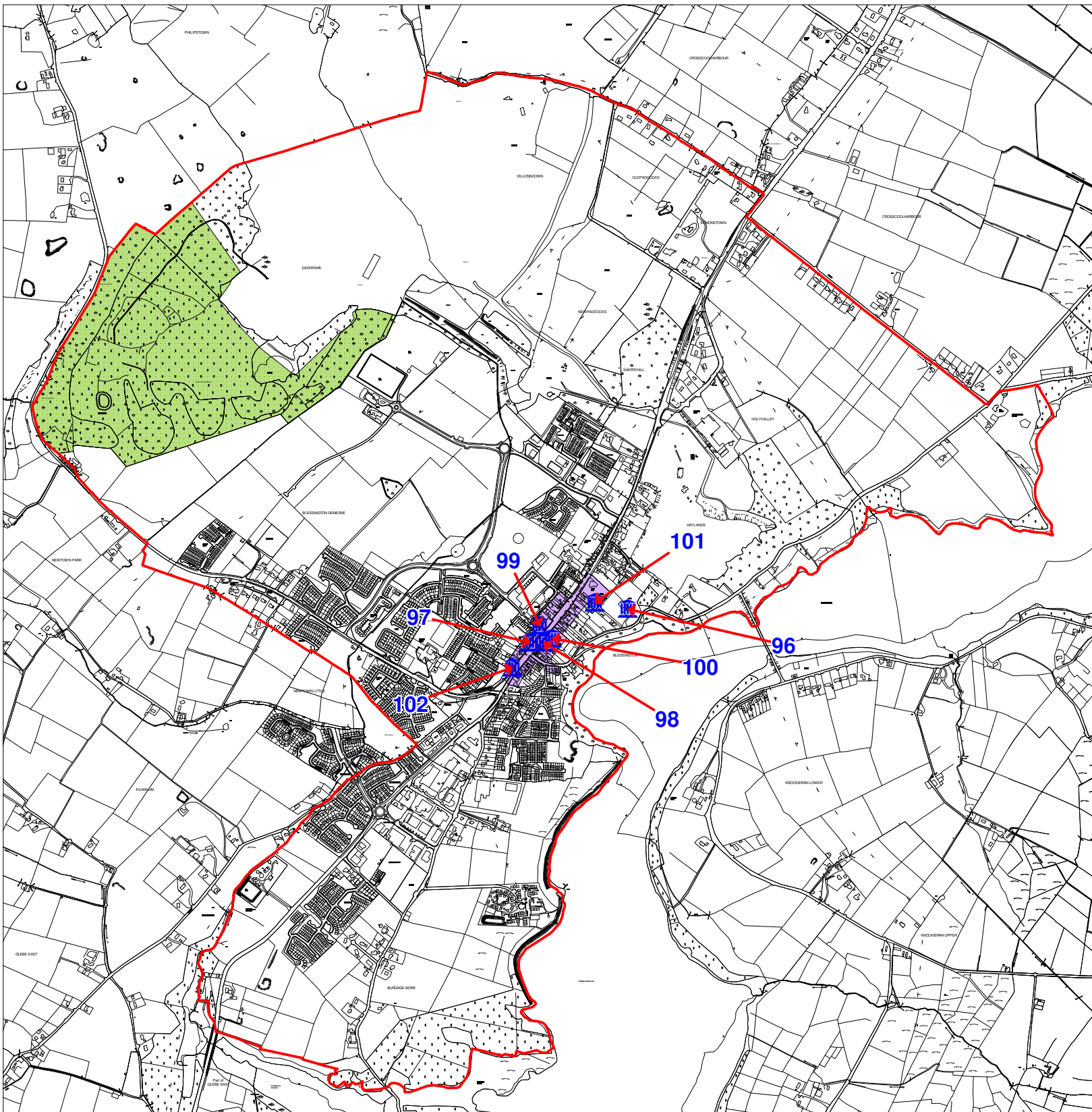
Drawn By: SW

Date: August 2012

Checked By: SW

Ordnance Survey Ireland. All rights reserved.  
Licence Number 2003/07CCMA/Wicklow County Council





## WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Wicklow County Council Planning  
Department County Buildings,  
Station Road, Wicklow  
Tel: (0404) 20100  
Email: [plandev@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:plandev@wicklowcoco.ie)

**Draft**

**Blessington Local Area plan  
MAP 2 Blessington Heritage Map**

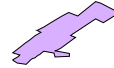
### Record of Protected Structures



Glending Wood



Blessington ACA



Ref_No	Number	Building_Address	Structure	Townland
05-02	96	Blessington The Rectory	House	Blessington
05-03	97	Blessington Main Street	Bank, formerly a house.	Blessington
05-04	98	Blessington Main Street Downshire Hotel	Hotel	Blessington
05-05	99	Blessington Main Street Credit Union House	Former Market House	Blessington
05-06	100	Blessington Main Street Church of Ireland	Church	Blessington
05-07	101	Blessington Main Street Former Catholic church	Hall	Blessington Td
05-08	102	Blessington Main Street 'Dempsey'	House and shop	Blessington Td