

Planning Department,  
Wicklow County Council  
County Buildings,  
Station Road,  
Wicklow Town,  
A67 FW96

Submission via Consultation Portal

[24\_UE\_FP-57 & 58\_Blessingotn\_LAP]

10<sup>th</sup> December 2024

**Re: Public Consultation for the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan  
& associated Variation No.3 to the CDP**

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A Chara,

Uisce Éireann (UÉ) acknowledges receipt of referral for this round of public consultation on the Draft Local Area Plan for Blessington. UÉ welcomes the opportunity to submit observations on the draft LAP.

UÉ is responsible for the provision of public water supply, wastewater collection and treatment services. It is an objective of UÉ to provide both drinking water and wastewater capacity to support national, regional and local economic and spatial planning policy (subject to the constraints of the UÉ Capital Investment Plan).

### EMRA Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

UÉ acknowledges the planning policy and direction provided in the National Planning Framework and the East & Midlands Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) and we are committed to supporting the policies therein, subject to budgetary and environmental constraints. In this regard, we would draw your attention to RPO10.1 in the RSES which provides general policy direction in relation to the sustainable management of water resources.

### Water Services Infrastructure

#### Water Supply and Network

Blessington is supplied from Ballymore Eustace which has capacity. However, it does form part of the overall Greater Dublin Area (GDA) water resource zone that experiences constraints from time to time. UÉ publishes Water Supply Capacity Registers annually for each county. The register is currently being updated and will be revised before the Draft LAP is completed. UÉ will issue the Council a copy of the Water Supply Capacity Register as soon as it is completed. The register can be accessed from the link below.

[Wicklow | Water Supply Capacity Register](#)

Note, the capacity register is only an indication of available capacity at a point in time and will change over the lifetime of the Plan.

The long-term solution for the GDA is the Water Supply Project (WSP). The WSP has been identified in the National Planning Framework as a 'National Strategic Outcome' and is also listed as one of the key 'Strategic Investment Priorities' of the National Development Plan

## **Wastewater Collection and Treatment**

As noted above, the wastewater capacity registers are also being revised and will be available in the coming weeks. UÉ will issue the Council a copy of the Wastewater Capacity Register as soon as it is completed.

There is currently sufficient capacity available to service the growth envisaged in the County Development Plan Core Strategy.

### [Wicklow | Wastewater Treatment Capacity Register](#)

As above, the register is only an indication of available capacity at a point in time.

There are no significant issues with the Blessington sewer network. Uisce Éireann are continually progressing sewer rehabilitation activities, capital maintenance activities at pump stations, storm water overflow assessments county wide. We will continue to monitor the performance of the networks to ensure that the most urgent works are prioritised as required.

## **Water Framework Directive**

### **Drinking Water Source Protection & Human Health**

Protection of public drinking water sources is of the highest priority to Uisce Éireann. It is a requirement of the Drinking Water Directive and the Water Framework Directive that waters used for the abstraction of drinking water are protected so as to avoid deterioration in quality.

It is Uisce Éireann's current policy to maintain safe and secure drinking water supplies and that no development will negatively impact drinking water sources.

Uisce Éireann is currently preparing Drinking Water Safety Plans (DWSPs) for each of our Drinking Water Supplies in line with the requirements of the Drinking Water Directive and National Source Protection Guidelines. As part of this Catchment Action Plans will be prepared which include a risk assessment of the source and source protection and mitigation measures. These Catchment Action Plans will be developed in collaboration with Source Protection Agencies (e.g. EPA, GSI and Local Authorities). The deadline for completed of this work is July 2027 under the Drinking Water Regulations.

In addition to LAP Objective BLESS-42 under Biodiversity and Natural Heritage

*"Where relevant, applications for development must demonstrate that the proposal for development would not, individually or cumulatively, affect a water body's ability to meet its objectives under the Water Framework Directive."*

an additional specific objective to further support water quality (Poulaphouca reservoir in particular) and public health would be welcomed.

**Proposed New Objective under Part B Specific Objectives** - in line with Wicklow County Development Plan Policy Objectives 13.1 and 1.32 in relation to Water Quality and 13.09 in relation to Water Supply.

*"Protect both ground and surface water sources, to avoid water quality deterioration and reduce the level of treatment required in the production of drinking water, in accordance with Drinking Water and Water Framework Directives. New developments which could pose an unacceptable risk to drinking water sources will not be permitted."*

## Nature Based Solutions for Surface Water Runoff & Water Quality

The Poulaphouca Reservoir is a critical source of raw water supply to the populations of Dublin, Kildare and parts of Wicklow. Significant measures should be taken to protect the water quality in the reservoir, including the management of surface water runoff in adjacent towns and villages.

Uisce Éireann recommends the use of the hierarchy of discharge outlined in the recently published guidance document “*Implementation of Urban Nature-based Solutions: Guidance Document for Planners, Developers and Developer Agents*” to complement the approach to surface water management set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan.

In particular, Uisce Éireann encourages a specific focus on the water quality of surface water runoff collected in Blessington town and discharged either directly to the reservoir or to watercourses which drain to the reservoir. This is applicable to both new developments and to any planned improvements to existing urban spaces.

It is recommended that proposals such as the public realm enhancements to Market Square and Blessington Main Street are designed to manage the quality of surface water runoff collected in the town before discharge to the reservoir or watercourses which drain to the reservoir.

**Proposed New Objective under Part B Specific Objectives** - in line with Wicklow CDP Policy Objectives CPO 13.20 to 13.22 in relation to Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and the management of surface water runoff

*“To support and facilitate the improvement of the quality of surface water runoff that directly (or indirectly) will reach Poulaphouca Reservoir. This shall be applied to both new developments and to any planned improvements to existing urban spaces. It is recommended that the hierarchy of discharge, outlined in the recently published guidance document “Implementation of Urban Nature-based Solutions: Guidance Document for Planners, Developers and Developer Agents” is used.”*

## Blessington Town Centre First

Planned public realm and road projects have the potential to impact on Uisce Éireann assets and projects e.g., tree planting, building over of assets, new connections, requirement to programme upgrade works in advance of road projects. Early engagement in relation to planned road and public realm projects is requested to ensure public water services are protected, enable Uisce Éireann to plan works accordingly and ultimately minimise disruption to the public.

## Planning Applications & Connections to the Uisce Eireann Network

The Planning Authority should continue to refer planning applications for developments through the current planning referral route, for assessment in relation to the protection of drinking water sources. New Planning Applications are to submit an EIAR Scoping Request to Uisce Éireann (for qualifying developments) ahead of lodging a planning application to avoid delays.

All new residential and commercial/industrial developments wishing to connect to an Uisce Éireann network are to be assessed through Uisce Éireann’s Connections and Developer Service process which will determine the exact requirements in relation to network and treatment capacity. Connections to Uisce Éireann networks are subject to our Connections Charging Policy. Further information on this process is available at:

<https://www.water.ie/connections/developer-services/>

Uisce Éireann will only process Connection Applications for 'authorised developments'. An authorised development is any development that has been granted planning permission. Queries for the Development Management Planning Team and EIAR Scoping Requests should be sent to [planning@water.ie](mailto:planning@water.ie)

If you require any further information or assistance in respect of this submission or in respect of the availability of capacity in our infrastructure to support the plan making process, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,

*Niamh McDonald*

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**Niamh McDonald**

Asset Strategy

Forward Planning - East and Midlands Region