



# Blessington Local Area Plan Submission - Report

<b>Who are you:</b>	Agent
<b>Name:</b>	Ms. Lesley McGuire
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<b>Reference:</b>	BLESSLAP-145843
<b>Submission Made</b>	March 28, 2024 4:11 PM

## Topic

Compact Growth - Housing - Population Growth

### Submission

It is suggested that a criterion for determining the zoning of lands in the new Local Area Plan, should be the willingness and capability of landowners to develop their land if zoned for development. Provided that submissions for rezoning relate to lands that are within the future bypass of the town of Blessington, such lands should be considered to be zoned for development in preference to continuing to zone lands that have remained undeveloped despite being zoned for residential development for more than 10 years.

## Topic

Infrastructure - Sustainable Movement - Transportation

### Submission

It is considered important that any Local Area Plan identifies the preferred route option for the town bypass as a development objective in the Plan and that a positive attitude towards rezoning of lands within the route of this future bypass should be adopted where landowners are capable and willing to development their land within the next few years for residential development.

## Topic

Other topics for you to have your say on! - Environmental Assessment - Plan Implementation -Plan Delivery

### Submission

A land parcel that is located alongside the N81 within the Town Boundary, is submitted as suitable for residential development and could be zoned for such development in the new local Area Plan.

## File

Submission Lesley McGuire.pdf, 0.36MB

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*Town Planner*

**Submission to Pre-draft Consultation Blessington Local Area Plan**

**March 2024**

**1 Introduction**

This submission is made in response to the invitation by Wicklow County Council to make submissions or observations with regard to the review of the existing Blessington Local Area Plan 2013-2019 and the preparation of a new Local Area Plan.

This submission is made on behalf of Ms Lesley McGuire, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

This submission addresses the issues that are raised in the Pre-draft Booklet that forms the basis for the public consultation with regard to the new Local Area Plan for the town. The submission addresses the key issue of lack of delivery of housing on currently zoned lands during the plan period of the current Local Area Plan.

**2 Housing, Population, Compact Growth**

According to the pre-draft booklet, Blessington will need approximately 474 new homes built between 2022 and 2031. To facilitate compact growth, it is stated that ca. 30% of new homes need to be in the existing built up area and town centre.<sup>1</sup>

The previous Local Area Plan for Blessington identified a number of areas for new housing development. These are lands with the zoning objective 'proposed residential'.<sup>2</sup> Despite this positive zoning objective, only a small proportion of these lands were developed during the plan period of the existing Local Area Plan while for most of the lands planning permission has not even been achieved.

For example, lands at the northern edge of the built up area were identified as Action Area Plan lands 4. These lands (Roadstone Doran's pit) have not been developed despite having been zoned for new residential development since 2013. There is no guarantee that these lands will be developed in the new development plan period given the fact that no planning application was made during the lifetime of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Blessington Local Area Plan Pre-draft Booklet*, Wicklow County Council, 2024.

previous Local Area Plan. Lands on the western side of the N81 have also not been developed and a decision to refuse planning permission was upheld by An Bord Pleanála as recently as June 2023.<sup>3</sup>

Lands to the northwest of the town centre near the GAA grounds were earmarked for residential development with access from a new inner relief road. Only part of this inner relief road has been built to date and no development on the zoned lands has taken place, although planning permissions for development have been granted.

Further lands that were zoned for residential development and earmarked as Action Area plan 1 to the west of the town, have also not been developed and no planning permission has been granted nor has the necessary access road been constructed.

Of the lands that were zoned for new residential development to the south of the town, only a small portion has been developed in the form of the Milltown Gate and the Burgage Castle developments. Most of the zoned lands have however not been developed.

The pre-draft booklet suggests that the following questions should be asked<sup>4</sup>:

- Where should higher densities be located?
- How can higher densities be delivered?
- What sites in the town could be redeveloped to maximise opportunities?
- Where are the vacant or underutilised sites in the town and how can the plan maximise use of these sites?

It is the view expressed in this submission that the main question that should be asked is why most of the lands that were zoned for new residential development in the last Local Area Plan, remained undeveloped for a period of ten years? This period is four years longer than the lifetime or plan period of the actual Local Area Plan.

**It is suggested that a criterion for determining the zoning of lands in the new Local Area Plan, should be the willingness and capability of landowners to develop their land if zoned for development. Provided that submissions for rezoning relate to lands that are within the future bypass of the town of Blessington, such lands should be considered to be zoned for development in preference to continuing to zone lands that have remained undeveloped despite being zoned for residential development for more than 10 years.**

### **3 Infrastructure, Sustainable Movement, Transportation**

The pre-draft booklet raises the following question:

- What are the key transport and movement issues?

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<sup>2</sup> *Blessington Local Area Plan 2013-2019*, Map 1 – Land Use Zonings.

<sup>3</sup> Planning ref. 21/1396, appeal ref. ABP-31285-22.

<sup>4</sup> *Blessington Local Area Plan Pre-draft Booklet*, Wicklow County Council, 2024.

The answer to the question simple: the need to provide a bypass for the town of Blessington is critical. According to the pre-draft booklet, it is intended to realign the current route of the N81 to the west of the town while in the short term the priority shall be the completion of the partly constructed inner relief road in conjunction with Kildare County Council.<sup>5</sup>

According to the County Development Plan for Wicklow, the National Roads Design Office has identified a preferred route option for the bypass. This bypass was also included as an objective in the previous Local Area Plan.<sup>6</sup>

**It is considered important that any Local Area Plan identifies this preferred route option as a development objective in the Plan and that a positive attitude towards rezoning of lands within the route of this future bypass should be adopted where landowners are capable and willing to development their land within the next few years for residential development.**

#### **4 Zoning of Lands for Residential Development**

A land parcel that is located alongside the N81 within the Town Boundary, is submitted as suitable for residential development and could be zoned for such development in the new local Area Plan. Given the need to avoid the zoning of lands that are likely to remain undeveloped, this land parcel can provide much needed housing for the town.

The landowner is committed to deliver housing development if the lands are zoned for residential development and subject to planning permission being granted. The lands are shown in fig. 1 below with a red line boundary outline.

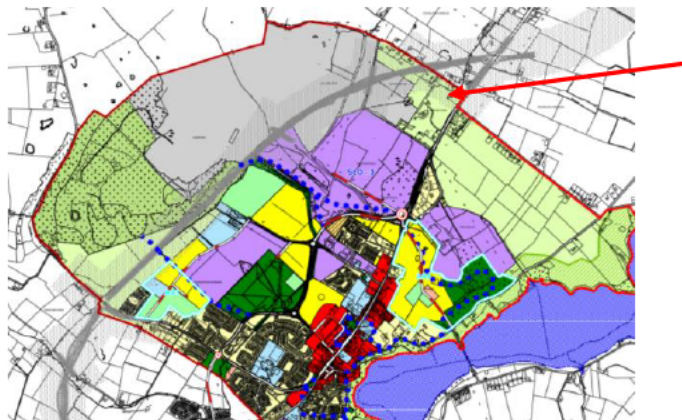
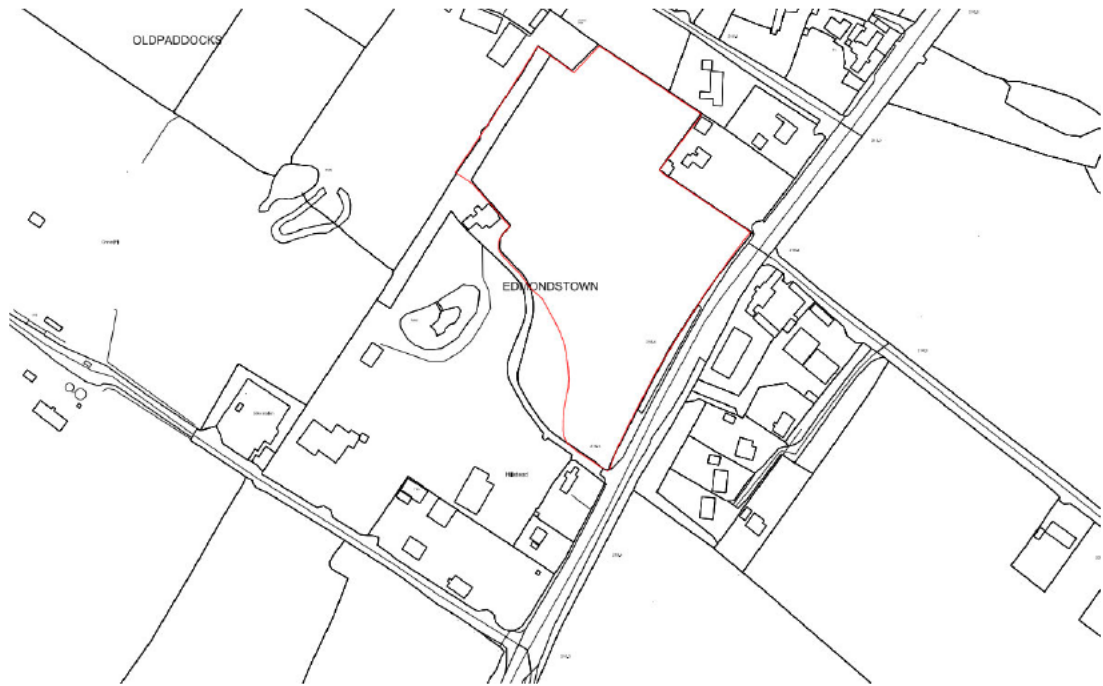
#### **5 Conclusion**

**It is considered to be of critical importance that where lands are zoned in the new Local Area Plan the landowner will be committed to develop their lands within the lifetime of the Local Area Plan. The lack of delivery of housing development on zoned lands during the lifetime of the previous Local Area Plan, is a matter of concern. The planning authority is requested to consider the subject site for rezoning given the commitment of the landowner to develop the land and given the location of the subject site within the route of the future bypass for the town.**

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<sup>5</sup> *Blessington Local Area Plan Pre-draft Booklet*, Wicklow County Council, 2024.

<sup>6</sup> *Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028*, Chapter 12 – Sustainable Transportation.



**Fig. 1 – Suggested land parcel suitable for residential zoning**