



Blessington Local Area Plan Submission - Report

Who are you:	State Body
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Planning Department,
Wicklow County Council,
Station Road,
Wicklow Town,
Co Wicklow

22nd March 2024

Re: Issues Paper – Blessington Local Area Plan 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

The Department of Education welcomes this opportunity to engage with Wicklow County Council in the preparation of the Blessington Local Area Plan 2024.

The Department notes that Local Authorities, in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), are obliged to make all their statutory plans consistent with the core strategies and objectives of the NPF and the relevant RSES. The Department welcomes the reference to this statement in the Issues Paper. It is noted that the current Wicklow CDP 2022-2028 designates Blessington as a ‘Self Sustaining Growth Town’ and provides a population increase of 911 persons for Blessington by 2028. The Department also notes that the section titled “Housing – Population – Compact Growth” of the Issues Paper identifies a housing target of 474 residential units between 2022 and 2031. If the remaining projected units are developed during the lifetime of the LAP, it could generate a population increase beyond the 911 persons identified in the current CDP. If these projected population increases materialise, a requirement for additional education provision at both primary and post-primary level may emerge over the lifetime of the plan.

The Department also notes in the section titled Regeneration of Communities & Places – Healthy Placemaking – Urban Design – Opportunity Sites of the Issues Paper the reference to the potential regeneration of existing areas within the town’s core. The Department notes that the LAP will consider the cumulative impacts of regeneration and redevelopment on existing community facilities. Population growth within the existing “built-up” footprint of the town has the potential to upset the balance of use relative to education provision in the area. The absence of specific school site provision in such locations can significantly challenge the delivery of required school places associated with intensified residential development. It is, therefore, critical that explicit provision for school development to cater for such development be made in existing “built-up” areas, within Blessington.

The Department notes in the section titled Economic Opportunity – Tourism – Shops & Service – Community Facilities the reference to vital role of community infrastructure within the town and its environs and in this regard requests that the Draft Plan would be explicit in its continued support for the provision of adequate and suitable school



accommodation, including the development of new schools and the expansion or alteration of existing ones.

Finally, the Department welcomes the continued engagement with the Council regarding the development of both new and existing schools, as appropriate, and emphasizes the critical importance of the ongoing work of the Council in ensuring sufficient land is zoned for this purpose.

Yours sincerely,

Mairead Garry
Statutory Plans,
Forward Planning Section