



# Draft Blessington Local Area Plan Submission - Report

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## Topic

Tourism Development / Greenway Supporting Infrastructure Map

## Submission

Proposal for the Extension of the Blessington Greenway to Include Lacken, Valleymount, and Ballyknockan  
Submission for Local Area Plan

### Introduction

I propose an extension to the Blessington Greenway to incorporate the areas of Lacken, Valleymount, Ballyknockan, and other towns that surround the lake creating a continuous loop around the Blessington Lakes. This extension would enhance the appeal of the greenway, promote tourism, support local businesses, and improve the area's overall economic viability.

### Rationale

The Blessington Greenway is already a significant draw for visitors, with its stunning views of the lakes and surrounding countryside. Extending the greenway to include the picturesque villages of Lacken, Valleymount, and Ballyknockan would:

#### Attract Tourism:

A longer and more diverse route would appeal to tourists seeking a full-day or weekend experience, increasing footfall.

The inclusion of charming villages and scenic landscapes would create a unique offering, encouraging repeat visits and positive reviews.

#### Support Local Businesses:

Villages along the extended route could benefit from increased visitor spending at cafes, pubs, shops, and accommodations.

Local artisans and producers could market their goods more effectively with greater tourist exposure.

#### Enhance Connectivity:

Connecting these communities would foster a stronger sense of regional identity and collaboration.

It would provide safe, accessible routes for local residents to enjoy walking, cycling, and commuting sustainably.

#### Preserve and Showcase Natural Beauty:

The route would highlight the breathtaking beauty of the Blessington Lakes area, promoting it as one of Ireland's prime natural attractions.

## Key Features of the Extension

**Route Design:** The trail would circle the Blessington Lakes, passing through Lacken, Valleymount, and Ballyknockan, with appropriate signage and rest areas.

**Economic Impact:** Increased visitor numbers would boost the local economy while promoting outdoor tourism and sustainability.

**Accessibility:** The trail would be designed to accommodate walkers, cyclists, and families, ensuring inclusivity.

**Environmental Considerations:** Construction and maintenance would prioritize the preservation of local flora and fauna, using eco-friendly materials and methods.

## Benefits

**Economic Growth:** An extended greenway would drive year-round tourism, supporting businesses and creating job opportunities.

**Community Wellbeing:** Access to outdoor recreational spaces promotes health, fitness, and social engagement among residents.

**Sustainability:** Encouraging cycling and walking over driving aligns with Ireland's commitment to reducing carbon emissions.

## Conclusion

This extension would transform the Blessington Greenway into a landmark destination for tourists and locals alike. It would capitalize on the natural beauty of the Blessington Lakes while fostering economic growth and community wellbeing. I urge the local council to consider incorporating this proposal into the Local Area Plan, recognizing its potential to bring long-term benefits to Blessington and the surrounding areas.

Thank you for considering this submission. I am available to provide further details or support any discussions regarding this proposal.

## Topic

Community Development (incl. sports facilities & schools, etc.)

## Submission

Dear Members of the Local Area Plan Committee,

I am writing to advocate for the inclusion and development of dedicated athletics facilities, including a running track, within the Local Area Plan. These facilities would be an invaluable resource for community games, local schools, adult athletes, and sports clubs, significantly enhancing the sporting culture and overall well-being of our region.

Blessington and its surrounding areas—encompassing Ballyknockan, Lacken, Hollywood, Valleymount, and Ballymore Eustace—are home to a growing population eager for improved sports infrastructure. At present, there are no dedicated athletics facilities, leaving our club, particularly as we expand our junior section, without a proper home. This is the largest area in the Wicklow region without proper running and athletics facilities. This gap in resources restricts opportunities for disciplines like shot put, long jump, hurdles, and more. Despite these challenges, our community has produced exceptional talent, and with the right facilities, we believe we could help these athletes achieve their full potential.

Promoting athletics and sport from a young age is especially vital, given that Ireland faces one of the highest obesity rates in the EU. Dedicated sports facilities would not only nurture emerging athletes but also provide a positive outlet for children and families, encouraging lifelong habits of health and fitness. This would have lasting benefits for physical and mental well-being, ultimately reducing the strain on our healthcare system.

The proposed facilities would bring immense benefits to the entire community by:

- Supporting local schools in delivering comprehensive physical education programs.
- Offering a dedicated space for community games and sports events.

- Providing a training ground for Lakeshore Striders, Community Games, and other local clubs.
- Encouraging participation in field sports and diverse athletic disciplines.
- Promoting social inclusion and fostering healthy lifestyles for all age groups.
- We respectfully urge the committee to prioritize this investment in community health and development. Such facilities would ensure that sport and fitness are accessible to everyone, laying a strong foundation for a healthier and more active future.

Thank you for considering this submission. We would be delighted if this proposal could take precedence in the Local Area Plan discussions.

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