2nd CE Report – Draft Blessington LAP 2025

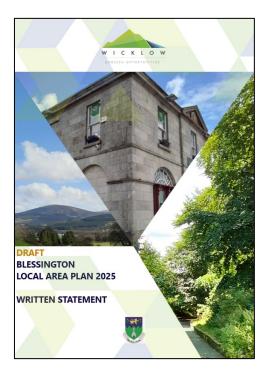


WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031

Second report to the members of Wicklow County Council under Section 20(3) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)

on the submissions received during the public consultation of the PROPOSED MATERIAL AMENDMENTS to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031





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PART I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The draft Blessington Local Area Plan (LAP) 2025 was published on the 30 October 2024 and the 1st Chief Executive's Report was issued on 31 January 2025. By resolution at the Council meeting on the 3 March 2025, the members of the planning authority decided to make amendments to the draft LAP.

As said amendments constituted 'material' amendments to the draft LAP, the planning authority was required to publish notice of the Proposed Material Amendments (PMAs) and any determination that required the carrying out of a Strategic Environmental Assessment or Appropriate Assessment for public consultation.

The Proposed Material Amendments (PMAs) and associated determinations went on public display for a period of not less than 4 weeks on **24 March 2025** with submissions invited until **23 April 2025**.

All valid submissions shall be taken into account before the draft LAP is made.

This Chief Executive's (CE) Report relates to the submissions or observations received on the Proposed Material Amendments of the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan (LAP) 2025- 2031. This Chief Executive's Report is submitted under Section 20(3)(k) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). This report contains the following:

- (i) a list of the persons or bodies that made submissions,
- (ii) a summary of the issues raised by them,
- (iii) the opinion of the Chief Executive in relation to the issues raised, and her recommendations in relation to the Proposed Material Amendment to the Draft LAP, including any change to the Proposed Material Amendment as he considers appropriate, taking account of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, the statutory obligations of any local authority in the area and any relevant policies or objectives for the time being of the Government or of any Minister of the Government.

The members of the planning authority are required to consider the Proposed Material Amendments of the Draft LAP and the report of the Chief Executive.

It should be noted that some submissions (either in full or in part) raise issues that do not relate to any Proposed Material Amendments. Such submissions / issues cannot be considered in this report or at this stage in the plan making process.

1.2 Next steps

As set out in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), following consideration of this Chief Executive's Report, the local area plan shall be made by the planning authority by resolution, with all, some, some with further modifications or none of the material amendments.

Where the planning authority decides to make the local area plan or further modify the material amendments of the local area plan by resolution, (A) shall apply in relation to the making of a resolution, and (B) shall apply in relation to any modifications to the material amendment proposed:

- (A) It shall be necessary for the passing of the resolution that it shall be passed by not less than half of the members of the planning authority. This requirement is in addition to, and not in substitution for, any other requirements applying in relation to such a resolution.
- **(B)** A further modification to the material amendment:
 - i. may be made where it is minor in nature and therefore not likely to have significant effects on the environment or adversely affect the integrity of a European site,
 - ii. shall not be made where it refers to(a) an increase in the area of land zoned for any purpose, or(b) an addition to or deletion from the record of protected structures.

When performing their functions under this subsection, the members of the planning authority shall be restricted to considering the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, the statutory obligations of any local authority in the area and any relevant policies or objectives for the time being of the Government or of any Minister of the Government.

This report is being issued to the members in May 2025.

The consideration of this report and the making of the Local Area Plan, is a matter that will be on the agenda for consideration at the County Council meeting on the 16th June 2025.

The Local Area Plan shall have effect six weeks from the day that it is made.

1.3 Proposed Variation No. 3 to the County Development Plan 2022 – 2028

The process for making Proposed Variation No. 3 to the County Development Plan (CDP) 2022 – 2028 is running alongside the draft Blessington Local Area Plan process. The reason for the proposed variation is to integrate the LAP maps into the CDP and to ensure consistency of the draft and final Blessington LAP with the CDP.

The proposed amendments to the draft LAP and through a separate variation process (section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)) the proposed alterations to the proposed variation went out on display at the same time with submissions invited. Some submissions to the PMAs to draft LAP referred to the PMAs Proposed Variation in the title / introduction of their submission however the content of the submission related to the PMAs draft LAP. Such submissions are dealt with in this CE report on the PMAs to draft LAP.

The submissions to the PMAs to the Proposed Variation are dealt with in a separate CE report on the Proposed Variation.

For completeness, it is recommended that interested parties should consider both processes in tandem, including the Proposed Material Alterations to the Proposed Variation and the 2nd Chief Executives Report on the Proposed Material Alterations to the Proposed Variation, published concurrently with this report.

1.4 Draft Consultation Process

The Proposed Material Amendments to the draft Blessington Local Area Plan (LAP) 2025-2031 were placed on display during the period of 24 March 2025 to 23 April 2025 (4 weeks). The aim of the consultation process was to enable the public and interested parties to give their observations on the Proposed Material Amendments to the draft LAP. An online consultation portal was provided that allowed the submitter to identify whether their submission related to the Proposed Material Amendments to the draft LAP or the PMAs to the Proposed Variation. Posted or hand delivered submission were also accepted. A total of **14** submissions were made in relation to the Local Area Plan. All submissions are available to view online on Wicklow County Councils website <u>HERE</u>

1.5 Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment

In accordance with the relevant legislative requirements, the draft Local Area Plan was accompanied by the Strategic Environmental Assessment - Environmental Report, an Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report and a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment; the Proposed Material Amendments to the draft LAP were accompanied by an Addendum to the Environmental Report (including the Non-Technical Summary- NTS), an Addendum to the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report and an Addendum to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. This Chief Executive's Report should be read in conjunction with all of these reports, with specific reference to the addendums as they assess the Proposed Material Amendments.

- **SEA** The Proposed Material Amendments to the Draft Local Area Plan have been evaluated in the manner set out in the SEA Regulations and the findings of that analysis was published with the Proposed Material Amendments.
- AA An Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report accompanied the Draft Local Area Plan. The Proposed Material Amendments to the draft plan have also been evaluated in this manner and it has been determined that the Proposed Material Amendments to the LAP will not result in likely significant effects on any European site.

Following circulation of the CE's report to the Members, a final, consolidated Appropriate Assessment (AA) Natura Impact Report will be prepared, taking into account the original AA NIR for the Draft Plan, the AA NIR for the Proposed Material Amendments and submissions received during the Plan-preparation/AA process. This consolidated AA Natura Impact Report will be circulated to Members in advance of adopting the Plan.

SFRA - The Proposed Material Amendments have undergone Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the results of that assessment are presented in the SFRA addendum to the Proposed Material Amendments.

It is incumbent on the elected members to take account of the findings of the above assessments and to have regard to same in their decision whether to adopt or modify the plan / proposed material amendments. In all cases, it will be necessary for a full record to be made of any decision made and how the environmental consideration were taken account of in the decision making process.

Following adoption of the Plan, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement, summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan, and an AA Conclusion Statement, summarising the findings of the AA process, will be prepared.

Submissions received on the SEA and AA have been addressed in Part 5 of this report. Submissions on the SFRA have been dealt with as part of any individual PMA relevant to flooding.

1.6 Considering the Submissions

The written submissions have been analysed by the Planning Executive of the County Council. The valid individual submissions are summarised and the opinion and recommendations of the Chief Executive have been given in Part 4.

Wherever the published proposed amendment is referred to, changes are shown as follows: Amended / new text in red, deleted text in <u>blue strikethrough</u>. Any **further modification** proposed by the Chief Executive is shown in **purple text** for new text, and deleted text in <u>purple strikethrough</u>.

Each Proposed Material Amendment and any recommended further modification has been assessed for impacts on the environment and / or impacts on designated European sites. The associated SEA and AA processes have confirmed that, from an environmental perspective, the recommendations for further modification are minor in nature and therefore not likely to have significant effects on the environment or adversely affect the integrity of a European site.

A summary table of each published Proposed Material Amendment (PMA), details of any valid submission on the PMA and the CE's recommendation is presented here in section 1.7.

This Report is submitted to the Members for their consideration.

1.7 Summary of Proposed Material Amendments

The table below provides a summary of the published Proposed Material Amendments and details whether any submission were made in relation to each. Those marked 'CE' were recommended by the Chief Executive in her 1st Report and were approved for public consultation by the Elected Members (EM). Those marked 'EM' were proposed by the Elected Members for public consultation.

An asterisk * after 'Not Proceed' indicates that a modification is recommended where the Elected Members wish to proceed with a proposed material amendment.

No.	CE	EM	Brief description	Valid Submissions	CE recommendation
1	CE		Amend the text of A.4 Overall Strategy in relation to change in settlement boundary.		Proceed
2		EM	Amend the text of B.1 Town Centre Regeneration in relation to Market Square improvements.		Proceed
3	CE		Amend the text of B.1 'Blessington Opportunity Sites' in relation to phasing and development of individual land parcels		Proceed
4	CE		Omit the concept plan and amend the text of OP7 'Horseshoe Arch & Backlands'.		Proceed
5	CE		Omit the concept plan and amend boundary of OP8 'North Blessington Main Street'		Proceed
6		EM	Add new Opportunity Site OP9 'Naas Road – N81 Junction'	UÉ, DHLGH	Not Proceed*
7	CE	EM	Amend the text of B.2 Housing Development in relation to the phasing of RN2 lands	Cairn Homes Properties Ltd	Further Modify and Proceed
8	CE	EM	Amend Objective BLESS7 in relation to the phasing of RN2 lands	Cairn Homes Properties Ltd	Further Modify and Proceed
9A	CE		Amend the text of B.7 Tourism is relation to the Blessington Greenway	Blessington & District Forum	Proceed
9B	CE		Amend Objectives BLESS18, BLESS19, and BLESS20 is relation to the Blessington Greenway	Blessington & District Forum	Proceed
10	CE		Insert figure of Blessington ACA and OP sites into B.1 Town Centre Regeneration		Proceed
11	CE		Include new objective (local transport plan) in B.7 Infrastructure	TII, NTA	Further Modify and Proceed
12	CE		Amend Objective BLESS49 in relation to public transport/active travel		Proceed
13	CE		Amend Objective BLESS50 in relation to the N81	TII	Proceed

14	CE		Amend Transport Strategy Maps with additional information.		Proceed
15	CE		Amend Objective BLESS51 in relation to flood risk	OPW	Proceed
16	CE		Add additional text and objectives in B.7 Infrastructure in relation to Water Protection	UÉ, Cairn Homes Properties Ltd	Proceed
17	CE		Amend text of B.8 Zoning in relation to essential infrastructure on OS1/OS2 lands.		Proceed
18	CE		Amend text of B.8.1 Specific Local Objectives in relation to TII guidelines	ТІІ	Proceed
19	CE	EM	Merge SLO2 & SLO8 and amend text, Amend the land use of zoning of c. 10.4ha from AOS to RN1; Amend c. 2.3ha from RN2 to RN1.	Dept Education, UÉ, NTA, OPR, Cairn Homes Properties Ltd, Blessington & District Forum	Not Proceed*
20	CE	EM	Amend SLO4 Concept Plan and amend text.	Belgard Estates Ltd, Blessington & District Forum	Proceed
21		EM	Amend zoning of land at SLO-6 measuring c. 0.8ha from MU to CE	Blessington & District Forum	(A) Proceed
21			and amend text		(B) Not Proceed
22		EM	Amend zoning of land at Santryhill/New Paddocks measuring c. 2.4ha from RN2 to RN1 and add new SLO.	UÉ, OPR	Not Proceed
23		EM	Add new SLO at Blessington Demesne (East)		Proceed
24		EM	Amend zoning of land at Burgage More measuring c. 1.3ha from E to RN1 and add new SLO.	TII, UÉ, OPR, Dunmoy Properties Ltd.	Not Proceed*
25	CE		Amend zoning from OS2 to E at Blessington Mart	DHLGH	Proceed
26	CE		Amend zoning from RE to TC at Blessington Town Centre (including amended SLO4 boundary).		Proceed
27	CE		Amend Map 1 to show zoning objectives for Blessington from Kildare County Development Plan		Proceed
28		EM	Amend zoning of land measuring c. 1ha from OS1 to TC at N81 – Naas Road junction.	UÉ	Not Proceed
29		EM	Amend zoning of lands at Blessington Demesne, north of Oak Drive measuring c. 0.5ha from E to SLC and add new zoning objective		Not Proceed
30		EM	Amend zoning of c. 6.9ha at Deerpark from EX to AOS.	NTA, OPR, Belgard Estates Ltd	Not Proceed
31	CE		Include link to Department archaeology data sources <u>www.archaeology.ie</u> on Map 2A		Proceed
32	CE		Omit the active travel objective through Mart lands from Map 6		Proceed

33		EM	Amend Map No. 6 to include a new indicative pedestrian/cyclist	NTA	Not Proceed*
33			route (greenfield/brownfield) on former quarry lands		
34	CE		Review numbering and headings of sections in Local Transport		Proceed
54			Assessment		
35	CE		Insert additional maps in SFRA	OPW	Proceed
26	CE	EM	Amend Objective BLESS7 in Appendix 6 in relation to the phasing		Further Modify and Proceed
36			of RN2 lands		
37	CE		Insert new implementation tables under Appendix 6	NTA, Cairn Homes Properties Ltd.	Proceed

1.8 Guidance for the Elected Members

Responsibility for approving a local area plan, including the various policies and objectives contained within it, in accordance with the various provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, rests with the elected members of the planning authority, as a reserved function under Section 20 of the Act.

In making the local area plan, the elected representatives, acting in the interests of the common good and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, must, in accordance with the "Code of Conduct for Councillors" prepared under the Local Government Act 2001, carry out their duties in this regard in a transparent manner, must follow due process and must make their decisions based on relevant considerations, while ignoring that which is irrelevant within the requirements of the statutory planning framework.

The members, following consideration of the draft plan and this report, shall decide whether to adopt the local area plan (with or without the agreed PMAs).

PART 2: FURTHER MODIFICATIONS

This part sets out the Chief Executive's recommended further modifications to the Proposed Material Amendments to the draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025 – 2031.

Proposed Material Amendments to the written statement of the Draft Local Area Plan (LAP) are indicated as follows: new text in red, deleted text in <u>blue strikethrough</u>. The proposed amendments are ordered in the sequence of the LAP and should be read in conjunction with the Draft LAP.

4 No. 'further modifications' are proposed to the 'Proposed Material Amendments of the Draft LAP and the further modifications are indicated as follows: new text in **purple**, deleted text in **purple** strikethrough.

FURTHER MODIFICATION PROPOSED TO PROPOSED AMENDMENT NO. 7

To further modify the written text of PMA No. 7 (Amend the text of B.2 Housing Development in relation to the phasing of RN2 lands) and proceed to make the amendment.

Having regard to the Core Strategy and population / housing targets provided therein for Blessington, there is capacity within the lands zoned TC, RE (all located in the serviced, built up envelope) and lands zoned RN1 (greenfield residential lands either within the built envelope or with extant planning permission) to meet current targets.

In order to ensure a long term supply of zoned land, in particular to ensure flexibility in the event of an increase in housing targets during the lifetime of this plan, this plan also provides for additional zoned serviced / serviceable residential lands, over and above that needed to meet current targets, zoned 'RN2 – New Residential Priority 2'. Permission will not be considered during the lifetime of this plan for RN2 lands unless the following *two* conditions are satisfied:

- 75% of Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consent obtained and development initiated) or after 3 years following adoption of the LAP, less than 50% of the RN1 lands have been activated;;
- It can be shown that the housing / population generated by the proposed development would not result in the prevailing Core Strategy targets at the time of the decision to grant permission being significantly breached.

FURTHER MODIFICATION PROPOSED TO PROPOSED <u>AMENDMENT NO. 8</u>

To further modify the written text of PMA No. 8 (Amend Objective BLESS7 in relation to the phasing of RN2 lands) and proceed to make the amendment.

BLESS7

Notwithstanding the zoning / designation of land for new 'greenfield' residential development (RN), permission will not be considered for RN2 Priority 2 lands unless the following two conditions are satisfied:

 75% of Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consent obtained and development initiated) or after 3 years following adoption of the LAP, less than 50% of the RN1

lands have been activated;;

- It can be shown that the housing / population generated by the proposed development would not result in the prevailing Core Strategy targets at the time of the application being significantly breached.

FURTHER MODIFICATION PROPOSED TO PROPOSED <u>AMENDMENT NO. 11</u>

To further modify the written text of PMA No. 11 (Include new objective (local transport plan) in B.7 Infrastructure) and proceed to make the amendment.

Include new objective:

BLESS - XX In collaboration and with the support of the relevant transport agencies, to prepare a Local Transport Plan for Blessington **and integrate its provisions into the LAP/CDP as appropriate**

FURTHER MODIFICATION PROPOSED TO PROPOSED AMENDMENT NO. 36

To further modify the written text of PMA No. 36 (Amend Objective BLESS7 in Appendix 6 in relation to the phasing of RN2 lands) and proceed to make the amendment.

Notwithstanding the zoning / designation of land for new 'greenfield' residential development (RN), permission will not be considered for RN2 Priority 2 lands unless the following two conditions are satisfied:

- 75% of Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consent obtained and development initiated) or after 3 years following adoption of the LAP, less than 50% of the RN1 lands have been activated;;
- It can be shown that the housing / population generated by the proposed development would not result in the prevailing Core Strategy targets at the time of the application being significantly breached.

PART 3: LIST OF SUBMISSIONS

3.1 List of submissions

The 'Proposed Amendment Number' reflects the PMA where the submission has been considered. Note this may differ from the PMA number that the submitter selected in the consultation portal. Each name is also a hyperlink to view the submission on line.

No.	Portal Reference	Name	Proposed amendment Number	Comment
1	144349	Environmental Protection Agency	SEA	
2	120628	Transport Infrastructure Ireland	11, 13, 18, 24	
3	161804	Department of Education	19	
4	150902	Meath County Council		No content relevant to any PMA
5	160551	<u>Uisce Éireann</u>	6, 16, 19, 22, 24, 28	
6	161319	National Transport Authority	11, 19, 30, 33, 37	
7	122554	Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage	25, 6	It was indicated that the submission was in relation to PMA 5, however the content under that heading rather relates to PMA 6.
8	140351	Office of Public Works	15, 35	It was indicated that the submission was also in relation to PMAs 16, 36, 37, however there was no content in relation to these amendments
9	141302	Office of the Planning Regulator	11, 19, 22, 24, 30	It was indicated that the submission was also in relation to PMAs 1, however there was no content in relation to that PMA.
10	153418	Belgard Estates Ltd	20, 30	Contains further requests for additional amendments that cannot be considered at this stage.
11	170922	Cairn Homes Properties Ltd	7, 8, 19, 16, 37	
12	174109	Dunmoy Properties Ltd	24	Contains alternative zoning request that cannot be considered

				at this stage.
13	224343	Blessington District Forum	9A, 9B, 19, 20, 21.	Contains several requests for additional amendments that cannot be considered at this stage.
14	154344	Lorraine McNamara		The submission indicates that it is in relation to Proposed Variation No. 3, but the content indicates that it is rather in relation to the LAP. However, there is no reference to any specific proposed material amendment and therefore cannot be considered at this stage.

PART 4: SUMMARY OF ISSUES RAISED AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OPINION AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE PROPOSED MATERIAL AMENDMENTS

The Proposed Material Amendments are presented in the order they appear in the Local Area Plan. The Proposed Material Amendments are presented in the 'Proposed Material Amendments to the Blessington LAP 2025' document published on 24 March 2025.

PART A

No.	Section	Proposed Amendment
1	A.4	Amend text as follows:
<u>No.</u> 1		 Amend text as follows: In light of Sections A2 and A3.1 and A3.2 above, the development strategy adopted in this plan has a number of elements: The key parameters for the future physical development of Blessington are based around protection of the environment, sustainability, compact growth and developing the settlement in a manner that will generate the minimal number of private car journeys and maximise walking, cycling and use of public transport. Consolidate the existing built pattern in Blessington by maximising the development potential of large sites close to the core and any infill sites and backland sites along the main roads within the town core of Blessington; To provide a framework for the future development of Blessington town centre to facilitate the development of this core area as the centre/focus of the settlement. To enhance the public realm in this centre and enhance connections and linkages to the residential areas surrounding the centre, as well as providing connections between this area and important recreational assets such as the Poulaphouca Reservoir. To promote and encourage the appropriate regeneration of quarry lands with a mix of uses including residential and other such uses that provide local job opportunities, and uses that support the existing town centre; To facilitate the appropriate development of greenfield residential lands that are serviced and serviceable within the settlement, particular to the west of the town on the grounds of the former Blessington Demesne, in a managed / phased manner so as to align with the housing / population growth targets set out in the County Development Plan and the delivery of commensurate community services; To provide for new employment opportunities on serviced / serviceable greenfield lands at appropriate locations that are connected to local residential areas with walking,
		 uses that support the existing town centre; To facilitate the appropriate development of greenfield residential lands that are serviced and serviceable within the settlement, particular to the west of the town on the grounds of the former Blessington Demesne, in a managed / phased manner so as to align with the housing / population growth targets set out in the County Development Plan and the delivery of commensurate community services; To provide for new employment opportunities on serviced / serviceable greenfield lands
		 for employment growth, e.g. former quarry lands, lands in the vicinity of Blessington WWTP, and on infill sites within existing industrial estates; To provide for new community, educational and recreational opportunities on serviced/ serviceable greenfield lands at appropriate locations that are connected to local residential areas with walking, cycling and public transport facilities. There are a number of sites that have the potential for new schools, community infrastructure and recreation / sports facilities, primarily along a part-constructed link roads to the west of the town centre, south from the GAA grounds and towards Naas Road. To ensure that the lands surrounding the European Site of the Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA are protected from adverse impacts arising from new development and to carefully manage and control the extension of existing development in proximity to these areas. Generally, zoning for new development will only be provided for above the 194m contour adjoining the lakeshore.
		• To rationalise and consolidate the settlement boundary of Blessington to omit extensive areas

	of lands previously zoned AG 'Agricultural Lands' in the Blessington Local Area Plan 2013, where possible, as the objectives of the Wicklow County Development Plan in relation to the rural area already applies to these areas. AG 'Agriculture', shall be retained within the plan boundary only where necessary to create a zoned bridge to OS2 'Natural Areas' zoned lands e.g. lands in the vicinity of the lakeshore or the intervening lands between the town and Glen
	e.g. lands in the vicinity of the lakeshore or the intervening lands between the town and Glen Ding.

Proposed Material Amendment No. 1

Submissions

A number of submissions have ticked PMA No. 1 on the consultation portal as the subject of their submission. However, on review it is evident that the majority of such submissions relate primarily to subsequent PMAs.

In these circumstances, these submissions have therefore been considered under the relevant PMA and in order to avoid duplication, are not considered here.

Opinion of Chief Executive

This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous report and is still recommended.

Recommendation of Chief Executive

To proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 1

PART B

No.	Section	Proposed Amendment
2	Public Realm	Amend plan text as follows:
		Section B.1 Town Centre Regeneration
		Public Realm
		Footpath widths are not consistent throughout Blessington Town Centre, and in some
		cases can be constrained or are lacking on both sides of a road. Furthermore, historical
		issues in relation to maintenance and the private ownership of Newtown Square have
		resulted in areas of paving and signage being in poor condition, as identified in a 2019
		Street Route Accessibility Audit. Many (though not all) of the issues raised in that 2019
		audit could be addressed as part of a comprehensive public realm project on Market
		Square and its immediate vicinity on Blessington Main Street. Furthermore, Market Square
		and Newtown Square currently present as two distinct areas that are visually and spatially
		poorly connected to one another. Improvements could involve the provision of a linear
		green space visually linking the two developments, and the spatial integration of the two
		areas by infill development on surface car parking that currently divides the squares.
		Such a public realm improvement project is proposed in the Blessington Town Centre
		First Plan and the Local Area Plan will facilitate and support its implementation. Public
		realm and other road improvement schemes within Blessington could also provide an
		opportunity to underground cabling along Blessington Main Street.
		While the improvement of the Market Square is a key element of the town centre
		regeneration strategy for Blessington, any alterations to the layout and public usage of the
		Square shall be determined by Wicklow County Council and the Elected Members of
		Baltinglass MD, taking into account the views and needs of residents and business owners in
		area, who will be consulted through any future consent processes.

B.1 TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION AND OPPORTUNITY SITES

Proposed Material Amendment No. 2 No submissions received. Opinion of Chief Executive

This proposed amendment was proposed by the Elected Members at the County Council meeting in March 2025.

While the CE does not see the necessity for the proposed sentence as this is the intended process for the development of improvements to the Market Square already (via the Town Regeneration Officer), there are no particular objections.

Recommendation of Chief Executive

To proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No.2

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Blessington	Amend text as follows:
Opportunity Sites (OP)	
	'Opportunity sites' (OP) are identified in this Local Area Plan, which would, if developed, contribute to the enhancement of the public realm, streetscape, vibrancy, vitality, and the retail/services offer in the town centre. There are numerous underutilised and unoccupied properties within Blessington Town Centre that could be redeveloped to contribute to the enhancement of the area and any development proposal for these sites should have regard to the objectives of the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan, and the Blessington Town Centre First Plan as relevant. Development proposals on individual land parcels within OP sites may be considered subject to the delivery of relevant development objectives and the safeguarding of the delivery of objectives/access on adjacent lands. Note that this Local Area Plan has included all opportunity sites identified in the Blessington Town Centre First Plan, but has also identified further opportunity sites as relevant.
	In terms of phasing or priority, while the Local Authority will support where possible the development of all OP sites during the lifetime of the plan, the focus for the Local Authority's own efforts, including developing projects and seeking funding will be OP1, 2 and 3 located in the very core of the town centre, around Market Square.

Proposed Material Amendment No. 3
No submissions received.
Opinion of Chief Executive
This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous report and is still recommended.
Recommendation of Chief Executive
To proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 3

4	OP7 Horseshoe Arch	Amend text as follows:
	& Backlands	
	& Backlands	 This site is comprised of a series of back land plots behind Blessington Main Street and south of Kilbride Road. The plots are currently accessible through a horseshoe-shaped arch from the Main Street. This arch is constrained in width and height and would present difficulties in accessing back lands for larger vehicles and emergency services. Rather, the horseshoe arch would present an attractive pedestrian and cyclist access way to these backlands, with vehicular traffic requiring an alternative access point to this block of back lands. Some alternative access points could be created through Lakeside Downs (c. 13m at the narrowest point) or directly from Kilbride Road (c. 7m at the narrowest point). To support the development of these lands for provide for mixed use town centre infill development (which could include residential use). Indicative block formats are provided in the below concept plan. Development should provide an appropriate architectural response to the Blessington Architectural Conservation Area. To provide for a pedestrian and cyclist only passageway through the horseshoe arch onto Blessington Main Street, and ancillary pedestrian/cyclist access ways from Lakeside Downs, or directly via Kilbride Road. This vehicular access should also service the rears of existing premises on Blessington Main Street adjoining this opportunity site and allow for potential future access to backlands to the south, while site layouts should allow the development of both vehicular entrances. The development of any individual landholding, or plot therein, should not 'land lock' or prejudice the development of adjacent/intervening plots. No— individual development proposal for any part of the Opportunity Site will be approved unless accompanied by an overall proposal for the accessing of the entire Opportunity Site.
		Omit Figure B1.9 Concept Plan for OP7

Proposed Material Amendment No. 4

No submissions received.

Opinion of Chief Executive

This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous report and is still recommended. **Recommendation of Chief Executive**

To proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 4



Proposed Material Amendment No. 5 Submissions 7. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

[This submission indicated that it was in relation to PMA No. 5, however its contents are rather in relation to

PMA No. 6. This submission is therefore addressed under PMA No. 6]

Opinion of Chief Executive

This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous report and is still recommended. **Recommendation of Chief Executive**

To proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 5

Blessington Add new OP – Opportunity Site Opportunity Sites

6

(OP)

Add new text to Section B.1 Town Centre Regeneration, 'Blessington Opportunity Sites (OP)', as follows:

BLESS OP9 Naas Road – N81 junction

This site is comprised of a large field at the junction of the N81/Blessington Main Street and the Naas Road. The site slopes steeply to the west, with hedgerows and significant mature trees along the northern/north-western, eastern and southern boundaries. The western boundary has a modern ornamental hedge boundary. The site is located to the immediate south of Dempsey's Lane and to the west of the green space at Rockypool Villas. The redevelopment of this site provides an opportunity to link these two green spaces through the creation of a public open space on this site that is well located to the south of Blessington Main Street.

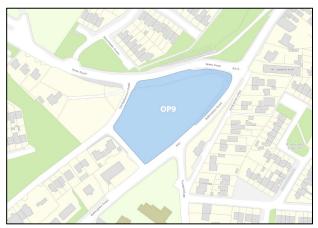
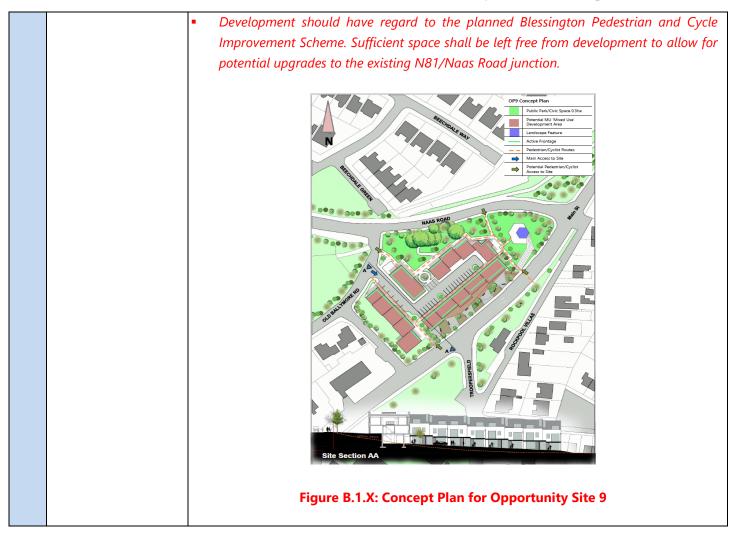


Figure B.1.X: Opportunity Site OP9

Objectives BLESS OP9

- To provide for mixed use town centre infill development. Development should provide an appropriate architectural response to the Blessington Architectural Conservation Area, which is located a short distance to the north of the opportunity site.
- A public park/civic space measuring c. 0.3ha (including the existing wide verges along the northern boundary) should be integrated in to the design of any development along the northern and eastern boundary of the site in a manner capable of providing linkages to the green space opposite Rockypool Villas and the green walkway at Dempsey's Lane. This public park/civic space should be provided as one contiguous area that is not bisected by access roads. There should not be excessive areas of car parking between north/northeast-facing frontages and this space.
- Hedgerows and mature trees should be retained on the site to the north/northwestern, eastern, and southern boundaries. Vehicular access to the site should be via the western boundary, unless otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority.
- The potential of the site should be maximised through use of the sloping topography of the lands. Strong urban and active frontages should be provided on the northern and eastern frontages subject to maximum retention of mature trees;



Proposed Material Amendment No. 6

Submissions

5. Uisce Éireann

UÉ have no objections to the proposed Material Amendment. In addition to their submission at the Draft Plan Stage, provides the following high-level comments:

MA Ref	Zoning Change Comment	
Part B.1 – MA No.6	New Site - Bless OP9	Can be serviced for water. Gradient of the site will influence connection to the gravity sewer network.

7. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

[This submission indicated that it was in relation to PMA No. 5, however its contents are rather in relation to PMA No. 6 and is addressed here.]

PMA No.5 includes the amendment from 'OS1' to 'TC Town Centre'. The Department welcomes the objectives for this site to retain hedgerows and treelines to the north/northwest, east, and southern boundaries. In order for these features to retain their suitability for foraging and commuting bats and other nocturnal species, lighting should also be limited in this site. There should be no additional light spill on the features where dark zones are existing currently, and any lighting proposed should have regard to best practice guidance, such as the Institute of Lighting

Professionals Guidance on bats and artificial lighting.¹

The Department further recommends text is included to ensure all impacts as a result of any proposed works by itself and in combination with other plans or projects on the nearby SPA and any other European sites within the Zone of Influence of the site, are considered, and that all proposed projects must have regard to the Habitats Directive in this site.

¹Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting (BCT and Institute of Lighting Professionals 2023)

Opinion of Chief Executive

It should be noted that the CE does not support the proposed amendment for the reasons already set out in the 1st CE Report, namely:

"The rationale for the zoning of this land OS1 'Open Space' is set out in some detail in the accompanying Blessington Green Infrastructure Audit. The Audit includes the report of the WCC Biodiversity Officer, which made reference to the Ecological Impact Assessment raised in the submission, and clearly states that uses such as substantial numbers of structures, hard surfacing, etc. would be considered inappropriate with regard to the essential biodiversity quality and ecological function/connectivity of the lands".

This proposed amendment was proposed by the Elected Members at the County Council meeting in March 2025.

Uisce Éireann – The CE notes the submission from Uisce Éireann, which does not object to the proposed amendment.

DHLGH – The CE notes the submission of the Department. In relation to additional text regarding the Habitats Directive, Objectives CPO17.4, CPO17.5, CPO17.6 and CPO17.7 of the County Development Plan 2022 -2028 address European Sites and are relevant to any development proposal within the LAP. Further to the County Plan objectives the draft Local Area Plan includes the following objective on European Sites:

'European Sites Objectives To protect European Sites and a suitable buffer area from inappropriate development. Projects giving rise to adverse effects on the integrity of European Sites (cumulatively, directly or indirectly) arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall not be permitted on the basis of this plan15. Ensure that development proposals, contribute as appropriate towards the protection and where possible enhancement of the ecological coherence of the European Site network and encourage the retention and management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild fauna and flora as per Article 10 of the EU Habitats directive. All projects and plans arising from this Plan will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. In order to ensure the protection of the integrity of European Sites, the planning authority is not limited to the implementation of the above objectives, and shall implement all other relevant objectives of the CDP and LAP as it sees fit.'

It is not considered necessary to include a site specific AA objective for each individual parcel of land that may the potential for impacts on European Sites. The objectives of the CDP and the draft LAP are considered appropriate and sufficient to protect European Sites.

In relation to bat lighting on the site, should the members wish to proceed to make the Proposed Material Amendments, it is recommended that the text of the Proposed Material Amendments be modified as detailed to follow.

Recommendation of Chief Executive

To **not proceed** to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 6

Should the Elected Members decide to proceed with this proposed amendment, the following modification is recommended:

Add new OP – Opportunity Site

Add new text to Section B.1 Town Centre Regeneration, 'Blessington Opportunity Sites (OP)', as follows:

BLESS OP9 Naas Road – N81 junction

This site is comprised of a large field at the junction of the N81/Blessington Main Street and the Naas Road. The site slopes steeply to the west, with hedgerows and significant mature trees along the northern/north-western, eastern and southern boundaries. The western boundary has a modern ornamental hedge boundary. The site is located to the immediate south of Dempsey's Lane and to the west of the green space at Rockypool Villas. The redevelopment of this site provides an opportunity to link these two green spaces through the creation of a public open space on this site that is well located to the south of Blessington Main Street.

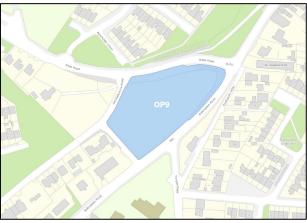
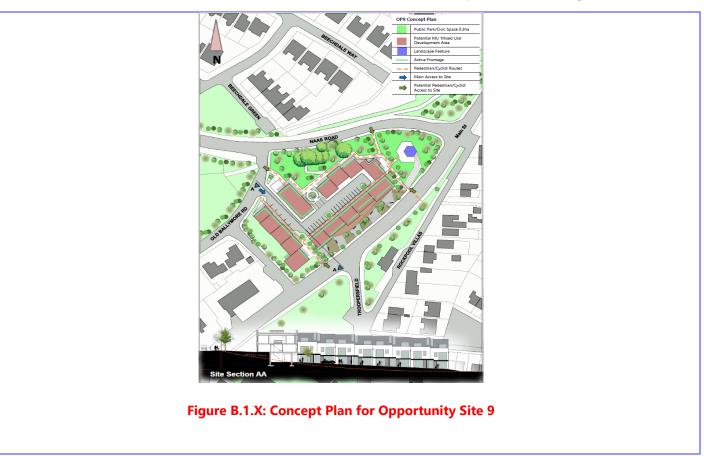


Figure B.1.X: Opportunity Site OP9

Objectives BLESS OP9

- To provide for mixed use town centre infill development. Development should provide an appropriate architectural response to the Blessington Architectural Conservation Area, which is located a short distance to the north of the opportunity site.
- A public park/civic space measuring c. 0.3ha (including the existing wide verges along the northern boundary) should be integrated in to the design of any development along the northern and eastern boundary of the site in a manner capable of providing linkages to the green space opposite Rockypool Villas and the green walkway at Dempsey's Lane. This public park/civic space should be provided as one contiguous area that is not bisected by access roads. There should not be excessive areas of car parking between north/northeast-facing frontages and this space.
- Hedgerows and mature trees should be retained on the site to the north/north-western, eastern, and southern boundaries. Vehicular access to the site should be via the western boundary, unless otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority.
- The potential of the site should be maximised through use of the sloping topography of the lands. Strong urban and active frontages should be provided on the northern and eastern frontages subject to maximum retention of mature trees;
- Development should have regard to the planned Blessington Pedestrian and Cycle Improvement Scheme. Sufficient space shall be left free from development to allow for potential upgrades to the existing N81/Naas Road junction.
- Any lighting proposed should have regard to best practice guidance on bats and artificial lighting.



B.2 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

No.	Section	Proposed Amendment
7	Housing Targets & Extant Planning	Amend text as follows:
	Permissions	 Having regard to the Core Strategy and population / housing targets provided therein for Blessington, there is capacity within the lands zoned TC, RE (all located in the serviced, built up envelope) and lands zoned RN1 (greenfield residential lands either within the built envelope or with extant planning permission) to meet current targets. In order to ensure a long term supply of zoned land, in particular to ensure flexibility in the event of an increase in housing targets during the lifetime of this plan, this plan also provides for additional zoned serviced / serviceable residential lands, over and above that needed to meet current targets, zoned 'RN2 – New Residential Priority 2'. Permission will not be considered during the lifetime of this plan for RN2 lands unless the following <i>two</i> conditions are satisfied: 75% of Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consent obtained and development initiated) or after 3 years following adoption of the LAP, less than 50% of the RN1 lands have been activated;; It can be shown that the housing / population generated by the proposed development would not result in the prevailing Core Strategy targets at the time of the decision to grant permission being significantly breached.

Proposed Material Amendment No. 7

Submissions

11. Cairn Homes Properties Ltd.

This is a lengthy submission, which is difficult to summarise succinctly without omissions and the interested reader is therefore directed to the full submission (link <u>here</u>).

The following issues are raised:

- This rebalancing of residential zoned land in the plan was absolutely necessary. It is also important to stress
 that the LAP remains consistent with the CDP Core Strategy and still faces challenges in redressing the shortfall
 in lands highlighted.
- At the Draft Stage it is estimated that the new LAP reduced the area of new Residential Zoned Land by 38 hectares. The Amended Draft LAP has reduced this shortfall to some 27 ha. This is equivalent to 1,092 homes or population of some 2,948 persons. Furthermore, a significant part of this landbank at Doran's Pit (12 hectares) is on former quarry lands that may be unlikely to come forward in the initial period of the LAP.
- The quantum of zoned land in isolation cannot be the sole metric against which alignment with the core strategy is gauged, but rather ensuring maximum flexibility is enshrined in an LAP to ensure the core strategy targets are secured.
- A recent report by Goodbody research demonstrates that actual activation and housing completion rates are far below the 75% rate of all zoned land which the County Development Plan presumes will be delivered in a 6year period. WCC secured only 20% activation of zoned land over the last LAP period.
- The wording "will not be considered" remains problematic. The LAP policy to refuse to even 'consider' development proposals on Priority 2 lands until the majority of Priority 1 lands are activated (or after 3 years) is highly restrictive and will fail to secure the quantum of homes required due to unsuccessful land activation (the concerning legacy statistics from Goodbody Research set out above). The draft LAP statement that permission will not be considered during the lifetime of this plan for RN2 lands unless... is overly negative and should be omitted. It is vital that a pipeline of development permissions is encouraged to progress through the planning system.
- Overall, it is considered that the Priority approach to residential zoning is not necessary.
- WCC is invited to consider that there is scope for further flexibility.

Opinion of Chief Executive

Cairn Homes Properties Ltd. – The CE notes the submission of Cairn Homes Properties Ltd, welcoming the proposed amendment and requesting further flexibility in the phasing of land. The development of phase 2 'RN2' lands is not solely linked to the full / majority development of RN1 lands; the key factor affecting the developability of RN2 lands is consistency with the housing targets of the Wicklow Core Strategy. Introducing further flexibility in the phasing conditions of RN2 lands, noting that the CE only supports the proposed amendment in part, would exceed Core Strategy requirements, including likely longer term requirements, and therefore would be inconsistent with the Wicklow County Development Plan, which is precluded under Section 19(2) of the Planning Act 2000 (as amended).

This proposed amendment was recommended (in part) by the Chief Executive in her previous report; the Proposed Material Amendments recommended by the CE was as follows:

Having regard to the Core Strategy and population / housing targets provided therein for Blessington, there is capacity within the lands zoned TC, RE (all located in the serviced, built up envelope) and lands zoned RN1 (greenfield residential lands either within the built envelope or with extant planning permission) to meet current targets.

In order to ensure a long term supply of zoned land, in particular to ensure flexibility in the event of an increase in housing targets during the lifetime of this plan, this plan also provides for additional zoned serviced / serviceable residential lands, over and above that needed to meet current targets, zoned 'RN2 – New Residential Priority 2'. Permission will not be considered during the lifetime of this plan for RN2 lands unless the following conditions are satisfied:

- 75% of Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consent obtained and development initiated;
- It can be shown that the housing / population generated by the proposed development would not result in the prevailing Core Strategy targets at the time of the decision to grant permission being significantly breached.

Additional amendments were proposed by the Elected Members at the County Council meeting in March 2025.

The CE does not support the additional amendments proposed by the Elected Members for the following reasons: The residential zoning provisions of the draft plan have been carefully calibrated to ensure compliance with:

- The NPF, RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan requirements and objectives, in particular consistency with the Wicklow Core Strategy;
- Sound spatial principles in accordance in particular with the requirements of guidance set out in the NPF and Ministerial Guidelines 'Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2022).

In these regards, the request for greater flexibility in the criteria for the development of RN2 lands could result in a situation whereby RN2 lands may be developed ahead of certain RN1 lands, such that RN1 lands may not then be able to be developed within the constraints of the prevailing Core Strategy of the Wicklow County Development Plan. This could result in 'leapfrogging' and peripheral development, contrary to Section 6.3.4 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028.

Recommendation of Chief Executive

To further modify and proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 7. **Amend text as follows:**

Having regard to the Core Strategy and population / housing targets provided therein for Blessington, there is capacity within the lands zoned TC, RE (all located in the serviced, built up envelope) and lands zoned RN1 (greenfield residential lands either within the built envelope or with extant planning permission) to meet current targets.

In order to ensure a long term supply of zoned land, in particular to ensure flexibility in the event of an increase

in housing targets during the lifetime of this plan, this plan also provides for additional zoned serviced / serviceable residential lands, over and above that needed to meet current targets, zoned 'RN2 – New Residential Priority 2'. Permission will not be considered during the lifetime of this plan for RN2 lands unless the following *two* conditions are satisfied:

- 75% of Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consent obtained and development initiated) or after 3 years following adoption of the LAP, less than 50% of the RN1 lands have been activated;;
- It can be shown that the housing / population generated by the proposed development would not result in the prevailing Core Strategy targets at the time of the decision to grant permission being significantly breached.

 8 Objective BLESS7 Notwithstanding the zoning / designation of land for new 'greenfield' resident development (RN), permission will not be considered for RN2 Priority 2 lands unless to following two conditions are satisfied: 75% of Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consecutive) obtained and development initiated) or after 3 years following adoption of the LA less than 50% of the RN1 lands have been activated;; It can be shown that the housing / population generated by the propose development would not result in the prevailing Core Strategy targets at the time the application being significantly breached. 	8 Objective BLESS7
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Proposed Material Amendment No. 8 Submissions 11. Cairn Homes Properties Ltd.

This is a lengthy submission, which is difficult to summarise succinctly without omissions and the interested reader is therefore directed to the full submission (link here).

The following issues are raised:

- This rebalancing of Residential zoned land in the Plan was absolutely necessary. It is also important to stress that the LAP remains consistent with the CDP Core Strategy and still faces challenges in redressing the shortfall in lands highlighted.
- At the Draft Stage it is estimated that the new LAP reduced the area of new Residential Zoned Land by 38 hectares. The Amended Draft LAP has reduced this shortfall to some 27 ha. This is equivalent to 1,092 homes or population of some 2,948 persons. Furthermore, a significant part of this landbank at Doran's Pit (12 hectares) is on former quarry lands that may be unlikely to come forward in the initial period of the LAP.
- The quantum of zoned land in isolation cannot be the sole metric against which alignment with the core strategy is gauged, but rather ensuring maximum flexibility is enshrined in an LAP to ensure the core strategy targets are secured.
- A recent report by Goodbody research demonstrates that actual activation and housing completion rates are far below the 75% rate of all zoned land which the County Development Plan presumes will be delivered in a 6-year period. WCC secured only 20% activation of zoned land over the last LAP period.
- The wording "will not be considered" remains problematic. The LAP policy to refuse to even 'consider' development proposals on Priority 2 lands until the majority of Priority 1 lands are activated (or after 3 years) is highly restrictive and will fail to secure the quantum of homes required due to unsuccessful land activation (the concerning legacy statistics from Goodbody Research set out above). The draft LAP statement that permission will not be considered during the lifetime of this plan for RN2 lands unless... is overly negative and should be omitted. It is vital that a pipeline of development permissions is encouraged to progress through the planning system.
- Overall, it is considered that the Priority approach to residential zoning is not necessary.
- WCC is invited to consider that there is scope for further flexibility.

Opinion of Chief Executive

Cairn Homes Properties Ltd. - The CE notes the submission of Cairn Homes Properties Ltd, welcoming the proposed amendment and requesting further flexibility in the phasing of land. The development of phase 2 'RN2' lands is not solely linked to the full / majority development of RN1 lands; the key factor affecting the developability of RN2 lands is consistency with the housing targets of the Wicklow Core Strategy. Introducing further flexibility in the phasing conditions of RN2 lands, noting that the CE only supports the proposed amendment in part, would exceed Core Strategy requirements, including likely longer term requirements, and therefore would be inconsistent with the Wicklow County Development Plan, which is precluded under Section 19(2) of the Planning Act 2000 (as amended).

This proposed amendment was recommended (in part) by the Chief Executive in her previous report and this part is still recommended, as follows:

BLESS7 Notwithstanding the zoning / designation of land for new 'greenfield' residential development (RN), permission will not be considered for RN2 Priority 2 lands unless the following conditions are satisfied:

- 75% of Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consent obtained and development initiated);
- It can be shown that the housing / population generated by the proposed development would not result in the prevailing Core Strategy targets at the time of the application being significantly breached.

Additional amendments were proposed by the Elected Members at the County Council meeting in March 2025.

The CE does not support the additional amendments proposed by the Elected Members for the following reasons: The residential zoning provisions of the draft plan have been carefully calibrated to ensure compliance with:

- The NPF, RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan requirements and objectives, in particular consistency with the Wicklow Core Strategy;
- Sound spatial principles in accordance in particular with the requirements of guidance set out in the NPF and Ministerial Guidelines 'Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2022).

In these regards, the request for greater flexibility in the criteria for the development of RN2 lands could result in a situation whereby RN2 lands may be developed ahead of certain RN1 lands, such that RN1 lands may not then be able to be developed within the constraints of the prevailing Core Strategy of the Wicklow County Development Plan. This could result in 'leapfrogging' and peripheral development, contrary to Section 6.3.4 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028.

Recommendation of Chief Executive

To further modify and proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 8.

BLESS7

Notwithstanding the zoning / designation of land for new 'greenfield' residential development (RN), permission will not be considered for RN2 Priority 2 lands unless the following two conditions are satisfied:

- 75% of Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consent obtained and development initiated) or after 3 years following adoption of the LAP, less than 50% of the RN1 lands have been activated;;
- It can be shown that the housing / population generated by the proposed development would not result in the prevailing Core Strategy targets at the time of the application being significantly breached.

B.4 TOURISM

The amendments to follow relate to amending the text, objectives etc of the draft plan with respect to the Blessington Greenway. The main changes required are set out hereunder; other 'changes consequent' may also be required.

No.	Section	Proposed Amendment
9A	Blessington	Amend the plan as follows:
	Greenway	
		Blessington greenway
		The Blessington Greenway, a 6km walking and cycling trail, was opened in 2014. The existing
		Greenway passes along the lakeshore between the Avon, Burgage Castle, and towards
		Russborough House, terminating at Russelstown. The trail is well used by both residents and visitors alike.
		The proposed Blessington eGreenway, While An Bord Pleanala refused permission in 2024
		for an extension of the existing greenway to a route of 33km, will linking the settlements of
		Ballyknockan, Valleymount, Lackan, as well as other attractions and tourist facilities at
		Russborough (proposed to be accessed via an underpass through a currently disused
		tunnel) and Tulfarris, Wicklow County Council is committed to enhancing tourism
		infrastructure and attractions in the Blessington area, particularly those related to the Blessington Lakes and those that bring benefit to the villages surrounding the lakes,
		subject to the utmost protection of the environment, including water quality and natural
		habitats. Options for alternative projects around the Blessington Lakes that capitalise on,
		but appropriately protect, this asset are currently being reviewed.
		. This proposed extension to the Greenway has the potential to draw significant numbers of
		visitors to the area and have a transformative effect on the tourism economy in Blessington.
		On this basis, the priority tourism issue in the settlement is the provision of adequate tourist
		facilities to cater to the impending proposed extension to the Blessington Greenway, future
		tourism projects in the Blessington lakeside area including facilitating tourist accommodation
		within the settlement.
		Wicklow County Council has purchased the former HSE building on Kilbride Road to act as a
		hub for the eGreenway future tourism projects in the Blessington Lakes area which in turn would draw visitors into the town centre. Furthermore, this local area plan has identified a
		range of supporting infrastructure that would aid in the possible expansion of the existing
		greenway and lakeside tourism within the settlement. This infrastructure includes feeder
		routes for active travel users and additional Park&Ride locations for those accessing the
		eGreenway lakes area by private vehicle. See Map No. 7 'Supporting Tourism Greenway
		Infrastructure'.

Proposed Material Amendment No. 9A
Submissions
13. Blessington & District Forum
The following issues are raised:
 As from the zoning maps it can be seen that the proposed Greenway has been completely removed. The
Forum feels that the recently refused Greenway should not be completely discarded and feels a resubmission

- should be pursued at its earliest convenience. The refusal from An Bord Pleanala has given a clear indication of the insufficient information within the previous submission and clearly outlines the necessary information/surveys required to overcome this refusal. This includes:
- Enhanced Surface Water Management Plan.
- Comprehensive Wildlife and Conservation Study.
- Robust Water Quality Assessment.

- Early Engagement with Key Stakeholders.

Opinion of Chief Executive

Blessington & District Forum – The CE notes the submission of Blessington & District Forum. The CE is of the opinion that the amended wording does not preclude further actions / projects in support of the development of greenways in the area. The removal of the indicative route from Map No. 1 recognises that in light of the recent refusal, such an indicative route may require amendment and it would be premature to include same on the relevant maps.

This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous report and is still recommended. **Recommendation of Chief Executive**

To proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 9A

9B		Amend objectives as follows:
	Objectives	
		BLESS18
		To facilitate and support future tourism projects in the Blessington lakeside area including
		but not limited to links between the town centre and the lakes, and a possible extension
		proposed Blessington eGreenway as an expansion to the existing Blessington Greenway.
		BLESS19
		To facilitate the redevelopment of the former HSE building on Kilbride Road as an eGreenway
		Visitor Hub supporting future tourism projects in the Blessington area.
		BLESS20
		To facilitate and encourage the delivery of supporting greenway tourism infrastructure as
		indicated on Map No. 7 Supporting Greenway Tourism Infrastructure.

Proposed Material Amendment No 9B

Submissions

13. Blessington & District Forum

The following issues are raised:

- As from the zoning maps it can be seen that the proposed Greenway has been completely removed. The Forum feels that the recently refused Greenway should not be completely discarded and feels a resubmission should be pursued at its earliest convenience. The refusal from An Bord Pleanala has given a clear indication of the insufficient information within the previous submission and clearly outlines the necessary information/surveys required to overcome this refusal. This includes:
- Enhanced Surface Water Management Plan.
- Comprehensive Wildlife and Conservation Study.
- Robust Water Quality Assessment.
- Early Engagement with Key Stakeholders.

Opinion of Chief Executive

Blessington & District Forum – The CE notes the submission of Blessington & District Forum. The CE is of the opinion that the amended wording does not preclude further actions / projects in support of the development of greenways in the area. The removal of the indicative route from Map No. 1 recognises that in light of the recent refusal, such an indicative route may require amendment and would be prematurely displayed on the relevant maps.

This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous report and is still recommended. **Recommendation of Chief Executive**

To proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 9B

B.6 HERITAGE/BIODIVERSITY

No.	Section	Proposed Amendment
10	Architectural	Add 'ACA boundary' to maps as appropriate.
	Conservation Areas	
	(ACA)	Insert Figure X: Town Centre Opportunity Sites (blue) and Blessington Architectural
		Conservation Area (hatched orange) under Part B.1 Town Centre Regeneration,
		Blessington Opportunity Sites (OP)
		OP13

Proposed Material Amendment No. 10

No submissions received.

Opinion of Chief Executive

This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous report and is still recommended. **Recommendation of Chief Executive**

To proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 10

PART B.7 INFRASTRUCTURE

No.	Section	Proposed Am	Proposed Amendment		
11	Transportation	Include new o	nclude new objective:		
	Objectives				
		BLESS - XX	In collaboration and with the support of the relevant transport agencies, to prepare a Local Transport Plan for Blessington.		

Proposed Material Amendment No. 11	
Submissions	
2. Transport Infrastructure Ireland	
Proposed amendment no. 11 proposes a new Transportation development objective as follows:	

"BLESS – XX

In collaboration and with the support of the relevant transport agencies, to prepare a Local Transport Plan for Blessington."

Having regard to the TII submission to the Draft LAP, that highlighted the prescribed necessity for a Local Transport Plan (LTP) to be prepared in respect of Blessington, TII endorses proposed material amendment no. 11.

TII reminds that the NTA's *Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022-2042* at Section 8.11 describes LTPs and their formulation utilising the ABTA methodology. It remains the Authority's opinion that the Council should have considered undertaking appropriate Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) to support the preparation of the draft LAP, particularly in relation to areas of planned development which have an interface with the national road network. Section 1.4 of the NRA/TII Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (2014) refers. In addition, guidance is also available in TII Publications PE-PDV-02046 Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) Guidance Notes, jointly prepared by TII and the NTA. Furthermore, having regard to TII ABTA Guidance, it was requested that TII be formally engaged in any ABTA process to be undertaken to inform the Draft LAP.

6. National Transport Authority

The NTA welcomes the inclusion of MA 11 which includes an objective that seeks the preparation of a Local Transport Plan for Blessington and is ready to support Wicklow County Council in the preparation of same, in line with the Area Based Transport Assessment guidance.

9. Office of the Planning Regulator

Overview

The Office welcomes the positive response to the issues raised by the Office through the recommendations and observations made in the Office's submission to the draft Local Area Plan including the commitment to prepare a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Blessington,

The Office recognises the preparation of an LTP provides an opportunity for active travel linkages to / from and within SLO 2 (MA 19) to be considered given its proximity to the town centre, community facilities and amenities, and for active travel and sustainable transport measures to be key considerations for the future development of proposed Active Open Space zoned lands under MA 30.

It is critical that this evidence-based assessment informs the plan and provides a clear rational for decision making. As such, the Local Area Plan should include a commitment to integrating the key measures from the LTP into the Local Area Plan area in the County Development Plan via the variation process under section 13 of the Act. This is addressed in MA Recommendation 1 below.

It is within this context the submission below sets out one (1) recommendation under the following theme:

Integrated Land Use and Transport Planning

The Office welcomes the Planning Authority's commitment to prepare an LTP for Blessington, as proposed under MA 11, which will be prepared following adoption of this draft Local Area Plan. To ensure integration of land use and transport planning, as per RPO 8.1 and 8.4 of the RSES, the key provisions of the LTP should be integrated into the Local Area Plan area in the County Development Plan via a variation under section 13 of the Act, and any amendments should be made to the Local Area Plan accordingly.

The Office recognises the preparation of an LTP provides an opportunity for active travel measures and linkages to be incorporated as part of the development of New Residential Priority 1 zoned lands proposed under MA 19 within SLO 2, given the sites proximity to the town centre, community facilities and amenities, and as part of the future development of Active Open Space zoned land under MA 30 given its peripheral location, supporting the development of a long-term vision for Blessington.

MA Recommendation 1 – Integration of land use and sustainable transport

Having regard to the need for the integration of land use and sustainable transportation, and in particular to:

- RPO 8.1 and RPO 8.4 of the RSES for the integration of land use and transport planning;
- the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended, mandatory target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51%, and the Climate Action Plan 2025, and associated actions including the National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022) targets to reduce vehicle kilometres travelled per year and the National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (2021);
- CPO 12.3 to prepare a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Blessington of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 (the County Development Plan);
- sustainable mobility objectives CPO 12.1 and CPO 12.2 of the County Development Plan;
- cycling and walking objectives CPO 12.13, CPO 12.14, CPO 12.15, CPO 12.16 and CPO 12.17 of the County Development Plan; and
- public transport objectives CPO 12.20 and 12.21 of the County Development Plan,

the Planning Authority is recommended to modify the material alterations as follows:

 (i) MA 11 to incorporate the key provisions of the forthcoming LTP for Blessington into the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025 area as a Variation under section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (or any equivalent provision under the Planning and Development Act 2024);

Opinion of Chief Executive

TII – The CE notes the submission from TII, endorsing the proposed amendment.

NTA – The CE notes the submission from NTA.

OPR – The CE notes the submission from the OPR and is amenable to recommending the modification of PMA 11 accordingly.

This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous report and is still recommended. **Recommendation of Chief Executive**

To further modify Proposed Material Amendment No. 11 (below) and proceed to make the amendment.

Include new objective:

BLESS - XX In collaboration and with the support of the relevant transport agencies, to prepare a Local Transport Plan for Blessington **and integrate its provisions into the LAP/CDP as appropriate.**

12	Transportation Amend objective as follows: Objectives	
	,	BLESS 49
		To continue to work with the NTA on the improvement of bus services to Blessington
		and to provide for the significant enhancement of services, facilities and infrastructure
		at a suitable location in Blessington, including but not limited to,
		 Enhanced pedestrian and cycling connectivity and enhanced car / bike / bus parking.
		- Bus priority along Blessington Main Street via a reduction in through traffic
		through the town centre, upon completion of the Blessington Inner Relief Road.
		 Support for the NTA's BusConnects programme as it relates to the plan area.
		- Support for the NTA's Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan as it relates to the plan area.
		 To continue to work with the NTA to promote the delivery of improved and new bus services, facilities and infrastructure within the plan area and connecting the plan area to the wider region by: supporting the development and delivery of bus service enhancement projects, under the Connecting Ireland and Bus Connects programmes and measures to improve bus priority such as additional bus lanes and priority signalling etc as may be deemed appropriate; facilitating the needs of existing or new bus providers with regard to bus stops and garaging facilities (although unnecessary duplication of bus stops on the same routes / roads will not be permitted); supporting the development of enhanced bus shelters, of secure covered bicycle parking facilities at key locations along bus routes, to promote and support the improvement of N81 in a manner capable of facilitating greater free flow of public transport,
		 to support and facilitate the existing service providers and encourage the further development of the Local Link Rural Transport Programme (and any other or subsequent rural transport programmes). Enhancing pedestrian and cycling connectivity to public transport services.

No submissions received.

Opinion of Chief Executive

This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous report and is still recommended. **Recommendation of Chief Executive**

	•	Amend objective as follows:	
	Objectives	BLESS - 50	
		To protect the strategic function of the N81-(and any upgrade/bypassed route thereof) as it relates to the plan area. in accordance with the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoECLG, 2012) and in compliance with TII Publications.	

Submissions

2. Transport Infrastructure Ireland

TII welcomes and endorses this proposed amended objective made by Amendment No. 12 in the interests of transport objectives and/or measures promoted in the draft LAP will have had regard to national road network requirements by assessment of land use transportation measures sought to be developed against national road policy and standards ensuring the implementation of local transport objectives are complementary to maintaining the strategic function of the national road network.

Opinion of Chief Executive

TII – The CE notes the submission from TII, endorsing the proposed amendment.

This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous report and is still recommended. **Recommendation of Chief Executive**

14	Transport Strategy	Amend Transport Objectives Map as follows:
	Maps	- Add additional information on active travel projects
		- Add SLO areas
		- Add OP sites

Proposed Material Amendment No. 14
No submissions received.
Opinion of Chief Executive
This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous report and is still recommended.
Recommendation of Chief Executive
To proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 14

lood Management Dbjectives	Amend the objective as follows:
Djectives	BLESS 51
	Applications for new developments or significant alterations/extension to existing
	developments in an area at risk of flooding shall comply with the following:
	Follow the 'sequential approach' as set out in the Flood Risk Management'
	Guidelines
	 An appropriately detailed flood risk / drainage impact assessment will be required with all planning applications, to ensure that the development itself is not at
	risk of flooding and the development does not increase the flood risk in the relevant
	catchment (both up and down stream of the application site), taking into account all sources of flooding;
	 Restrict the types of development permitted in Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B
	to that which are 'appropriate' to each flood zone, as set out in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines unless the 'plan making justification test' has
	been applied and passed;
	 Where an development application site located in Flood Zone A or B a site has
	been subject to and satisfied the 'Plan Making Justification Test' development will only
	be permitted where a proposal complies with the 'Justification Test for Development
	Management', as set out in Box 5.1 of the Flood Risk Guidelines.
	 Flood Risk Assessments shall be in accordance with the requirements set out in
	the Flood Risk Guidelines and the SERA.
	Where flood zone mapping does not indicate a risk of flooding but 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, including the latest future
	scenario flood mapping, an appropriate flood risk assessment will be required to be
	submitted by an applicant for planning permission and the sequential approach shall be applied as the 'Plan Making Justification Test' will not be satisfied.
	Applications for new developments or significant alterations/extension to existing
	developments in an area identified as at risk of flooding (Flood Zones A and B) as set out in the SFRA and flood maps appended to this plan OR in Flood Zone C but within an area
	 that is deemed by the Local Authority at any time to be at possible risk of flooding
	having regard to new information with respect to flood risk in the area that has come to light; or
	 that is identified as at possible future risk of flooding having regard to climate
	change scenarios either on Map X attached to this plan or on any future maps prepared by the OPW during the lifetime of the plan;
	shall comply with the 'Justification Test for Development Management', as set out in Box
	5.1 of 'the Planning System and Flood Risk Management' Guidelines 2009 (as may be
	amended, supplemented or replaced during the lifetime of this plan) and shall be
	accompanied by a site specific Flood Risk Assessment. Site Specific Flood Risk
	Assessments shall be in accordance with the requirements set out in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and the plan SFRA.

Submissions

8. Office of Public Works

The OPW welcomes the following alterations:

Amendment number 15 which strengthens objective BLESS 51 to clarify that SSFRAs will be required for development

in areas deemed by Wicklow County Council to be at possible risk of flooding having regard to new information that has come to light, or that is identified as at possible future risk of flooding having regard to climate change scenarios in mapping attached to the plan or any future scenario mapping prepared by the OPW during the lifetime of the plan

Opinion of Chief Executive

OPW – The CE notes the submission of the OPW, welcoming the proposed amendment.

This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous report and is still recommended. **Recommendation of Chief Executive**

16	Other Infrastructure Objectives	ure Add the following text and objectives:	
		Water ProtectionThe Poulaphouca Reservoir is a critical source of raw water supply to the populations of Dublin, Kildare and parts of Wicklow. Significant measures are required to 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 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.	
		BLESS-XX: To 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.	
		BLESS-XX: 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/expanded developments and to any planned improvements to existing urban spaces. In this regard, developments shall be designed in accordance with the guidance document "Implementation of Urban Nature-based Solutions: Guidance Document for Planners, Developers and Developer Agents" LAWPRO 2024.	

Proposed Material Amendment No. 16 Submissions 5. Uisce Éireann

UÉ have no objections to the proposed Material Amendment In addition to their submission at the Draft Plan Stage, UE has some high-level comments below.

MA Ref	Zoning Change	Comment
Part B.7 Infrastructure – MA No.16	New Objective on Water Protection	We welcome this new objective

11. Cairn Homes Properties Ltd.

DBFL Consulting Engineers have reviewed this objective on behalf of Cairn Homes. Cairn Homes has also reviewed the submission of Uisce Éireann on the Draft LAP. The UE submission is favourable, indicating that there is currently capacity for both water and foul systems. While a future water supply project has been identified for the area, the main point of the UE submission is that there is existing capacity.

Opinion of Chief Executive

Uisce Éireann – The CE notes the submission from Uisce Éireann, welcoming the proposed amendment.

Cairn Homes Properties Ltd. – The CE notes the submission of Cairn Homes Properties Ltd, in which no modification is sought.

This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous report and is still recommended. **Recommendation of Chief Executive**

PART B.8 ZONING

No.	Section	Proposed Amendment	
17	17 Zoning Objectives Amend the text as follows		
		Insert new sentence at end of Zoning table:	
		Essential infrastructure, including roads / footpaths / cycleways and utilities that are necessary to support development lands, are generally permissible in all zones. Where such infrastructure would be required in OS1 or OS2 zones, and no other routes are viable, such infrastructure shall only be considered where it is shown it will not undermine the purpose of this zoning or give rise to significant adverse environmental impacts.	

No submissions received. Opinion of Chief Executive This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous	
This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous	
This proposed untertainent was recommended by the effect executive in her previous	report and is still recommended.
Recommendation of Chief Executive	
To proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 17	

PART B.8.1 SPECIFIC LOCAL OBJECTIVES

No.	Section	Proposed Amendment
18	Specific Local Objectives (SLO) –	(a) Amend text as follows:
	preamble / general	 The purpose of an SLO 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, where there is a new infrastructure necessitated on the subject lands or where the lands are zoned for 'mixed use' to give more detail on the development objective of these lands. A masterplan for the entire SLO area may be required to be submitted as part of the first application within the SLO. All masterplans / development applications shall have regard to the requirements of the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoECLG, 2012) and in compliance with TII Publications. (b) Add National Monuments points onto final SLO maps.

Proposed Material Amendment No. 18

Submissions

2. Transport Infrastructure Ireland

TII welcomes and endorses the proposed amended objective made by Amendment No. 18(a) in the interests of the progression of SLO 3 and SLO 4 in accordance with official national roads policy and in compliance with the relevant technical standards of TII Publications.

Opinion of Chief Executive

TII – The CE notes the submission from TII, endorsing the proposed amendment.

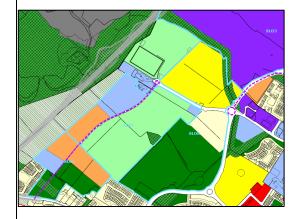
This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous report and is still recommended. **Recommendation of Chief Executive**

19 SLO2 – Blessington Demesne (West) & SLO8 – Blessington Demesne (East)

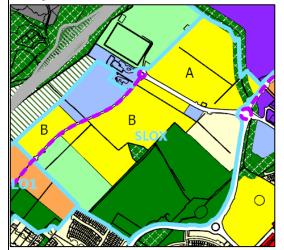
Amend SLO2 and SLO8 as follows

- 1. Merge SLO2 and SLO8
- 2. Amend the land use of zoning of c. 10.4ha in SLO2 from AOS 'Active Open Space' to RN1 'New Residential Priority 1'
- 3. Amend c. 2.3ha in SLO2 from RN2 'New Residential Priority 2' to RN1 'New Residential Priority 1'
- 4. Amend SLO2 and SLO8 Specific Local Objectives' areas and text as follows:

Change from:



Change to:



Replace existing SLO2 and SLO8 text with new text as follows:

This SLO is located in the townland of Blessington Demesne. This SLO measures c. 51ha and comprises

- c. 4.5ha zoned for AOS 'Active Open Space',
- c. 15.3 ha zoned OS1 'Open Space',
- c. 1.4 ha zoned for OS2 'Natural Areas';
- c. 3.8 ha zoned CE 'Community & Education',
- c. 21.8ha zoned RN1 'New Residential Priority 1' and
- c. 3.3 ha zoned RE 'Existing Residential'.

The RN1 zones are located in two parcels – A and B (A being the parcel to the north of Oak

Drive and B comprising two RN1 sites to the south of Oak Drive/west of the new park).

Any development proposals for this SLO shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following requirements:

- No dwelling units that may be permitted on foot of the RN1 (Parcel A) zoning may be occupied until the new town park, which shall include a dog park, located on lands zoned OS1, is completed in full. The development of the town park should have regard to and integrate demesne features and other heritage elements associated with the former Blessington Demesne, and should include appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures in relation to habitats of biodiversity value (including areas identified as Local Biodiversity Areas).
- Any new residential development proposals for the RN1 (Parcel B) lands shall be accompanied by proposals for the concurrent development of community sports facility on lands zoned AOS measuring not less than 4.5ha, of a design and layout and including such facilities and support buildings to be agreed with the Planning Authority but which shall include at a minimum a full size polyurethane 400m 8-lane running track, with field athletics space within, a separate full size (i.e. 90mx145m) multi sport all weather pitch, mixed use all weather sports courts (suitable in size and finish for a range of uses) and an all-weather 7-a-side pitch
 - Car parking to serve the AOS lands should also be of a sufficient size, layout, and location to serve as an alternative car park for access to Glen Ding via the (under construction) green link that passes through the SLO from the town park. The scale of this car parking should not exceed that necessary to serve the AOS lands and alternative access to Glen Ding (noting the limited existing provision of parking spaces at the entrance to Glen Ding), and should not detract from the efficient use of the AOS lands for the primary purpose of active open space/sports/recreation uses.
- No dwelling units that may be permitted on foot of the RN1 (Parcel B) zoning may be occupied until this community sports facility is fully developed suitable for community sports use (including necessary buildings/structures, layout, drainage, surfacing, lighting, access and car parking) and is available for community use;
- This community sports facility shall be suitable for the needs of, and shared use by, potential future educational uses on the site reserved for such within this SLO.
- CE zoned lands (excluding the under construction childcare facility) measuring not less than 3.56ha shall be serviced as part of the development of the SLO and reserved for future education use.
- The development of structures along all existing and proposed arterial and link roads should provide a **strong** sense of enclosure as per Section 4.2.1 of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, subject to the adequate protection of visual/landscape amenity from Blessington Main Street/Blessington Inner Relief Road to Glen Ding Forest.

 Adequate areas should be left free of development to preserve the view from St. Mary's Church to Bastion Wood and Glen Ding Forest.
 The development of appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures which shall have regard to the setting and curtilage of structures and sites of heritage value, and habitats of biodiversity value including area identified as LBAs.
• Any new residential development proposals for the RN1 (Parcel A) lands shall be accompanied by proposals for the concurrent development of northern sections of the BIRR. No dwelling units that may be permitted on foot of the RN1 (Parcel A) zoning may be occupied until the northern section of the BIRR is completed in full and is available for public use.
• Any new residential development proposals for the RN1 (Parcel B) lands shall be accompanied by proposals for the concurrent development of link road between Blessington GAA and the Naas Road. No dwelling units that may be permitted on foot of the RN1 (Parcel B) zoning may be occupied until this road is completed in full and is available for public use.
 Development within the SLO shall ensure maximum pedestrian/cyclist permeability into the (under construction) green link that passes through the SLO, and provide strong passive surveillance to this link.
 The following pedestrian/cyclist links shall be provided : from Blessington Inner Relief Road along the southern boundary of the SLO towards Glen Ding Forest (under construction), refer to Map No. 6 Active Travel. from the town park northwards towards the SLO boundary, joining with links within SLO3, refer to Map No. 6 Active Travel. This link should cross watercourses in line with CPO 17.26 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028. Elements of this link are under construction. along the boundary of OS2 lands around the Deerpark watercourse, as relevant, as per objective BLESS48.

Submissions

3. Department of Education

Proposed Material Alteration No. 19

The department notes the proposed changes to merge SLO2 – Blessington Demesne (West) and SLO8 – Blessington Demesne (East). The new SLO will include 3.8ha of land zoned CE 'Community & Education' of which 3.56 ha shall be reserved for future education use. The department acknowledges the crucial importance of the ongoing work of the Council is ensuring sufficient and appropriate land is zoned for educational needs. The department wishes to thank Wicklow County Council for the consideration given to the department's submission to the draft Local Area Plan. We look forward to continuing to work with you.

5. Uisce Éireann

UÉ has no objections to the proposed Material Alterations. In addition to their submission at the Draft Plan Stage, UE has some high-level comments below.

MA Ref	Zoning Change	Comment
Part B.8.1 SLO – MA 19	SLO 2 & 8 - AOS to RN1; RN2 to RN1 Blessington Demesne	Although there are watermains in the roads surrounding these sites, there is limited sewer network & none to the north or west of the sites. Network extensions will be developer driven.

6. National Transport Authority

It is noted that under MA 19, there is a proposed change in the designation of lands from the 'Active Open Space' land use zoning objective to the 'New Residential Priority 1' land use zoning objective. Given the location of these lands relative to Blessington Town Centre and Sorrel Wood Park, it is important that adequate new active travel connections are provided in advance of or part of the development of these lands. Without appropriate direct connections to the Blessington Inner Relief Road/Oak Drive to the south, residential development at these lands would be isolated from much of the wider settlement, with relatively high walking and cycling times to surrounding services, public transport stops and the town centre. In this regard, the inclusion of a future active travel connection along the southern boundary of the SLO is welcomed and should continue to be a necessary deliverable for the future development of these lands.

9. Office of the Planning Regulator

In relation to proposed New Residential Priority 1 lands (MA 19, MA 22 and MA 24), while the Office recognises the addition of these lands exceeds the housing land required to meet population and housing targets set out in the County Development Plan core strategy, the sites are well-located in terms of proximity to the town centre, supporting compact growth and the sequential approach. In addition, MA 19 is supported by a clear policy framework (SLO 2) in respect of phasing the development of the lands in conjunction with the delivery of community and physical infrastructure.

The Office recognises the preparation of an LTP provides an opportunity for active travel linkages to / from and within SLO 2 (MA 19) to be considered given its proximity to the town centre, community facilities and amenities, and for active travel and sustainable transport measures to be key considerations for the future development of proposed Active Open Space zoned lands under MA 30.

It is critical that this evidence-based assessment informs the plan and provides a clear rational for decision making. As such, the Local Area Plan should include a commitment to integrating the key measures from the LTP into the Local Area Plan area in the County Development Plan via the variation process under section 13 of the Act. This is addressed in MA Recommendation 1 below.

The Office recommends additional text is included, as a minor modification, in MA 19 (SLO 2) and MA 30 to address this, in accordance with CPO 12.13 and 12.14 of the County Development Plan.

MA Recommendation 1 – Integration of land use and sustainable transport

Having regard to the need for the integration of land use and sustainable transportation, and in particular to:
 RPO 8.1 and RPO 8.4 of the RSES for the integration of land use and transport planning;

- the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended, mandatory target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51%, and the Climate Action Plan 2025, and associated actions including the National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022) targets to reduce vehicle kilometres travelled per year and the National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (2021);
- CPO 12.3 to prepare a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Blessington of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 (the County Development Plan);
- sustainable mobility objectives CPO 12.1 and CPO 12.2 of the County Development Plan;
- cycling and walking objectives CPO 12.13, CPO 12.14, CPO 12.15, CPO 12.16 and CPO 12.17 of the County Development Plan; and
- public transport objectives CPO 12.20 and 12.21 of the County Development Plan,

the Planning Authority is recommended to modify the material alterations as follows:

- (ii) MA 11 to incorporate the key provisions of the forthcoming LTP for Blessington into the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025 area as a Variation under section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (or any equivalent provision under the Planning and Development Act 2024);
- (iii) MA 19 to provide pedestrian and cycle linkages through and between the New Residential Priority 1 lands and surrounding developments to improve permeability and provide shorter and more direct access to schools, public transport, local services and amenities; and
- (iv) MA 30 to provide pedestrian and cycle linkages between the Active Open Space zoned lands and surrounding developments to improve permeability and provide shorter, more direct routes to the site.

11. Cairn Homes Properties Ltd.

This is a lengthy submission, which is difficult to summarise succinctly without omissions and the interested reader is therefore directed to the full submission (link <u>here</u>).

The following key issues are raised:

- Cairn Homes supports the Amended Local Area Plan's increase in quantum of RN1 zoned lands overall and particularly in Blessington Demesne SL02 area.
- Cairn supports the Council's general objective to link infrastructure delivery and phasing of development for the SLO2 area. However, there is a need for a more nuanced approach to this policy and potential planning conditions that links (by agreement) progress in delivery of infrastructure stages with release of residential stages (percentages of development) to the market.
- The approach to phasing should be proportional. The burden of delivering public open space or roads within a housing estate are entirely different to providing infrastructure for town as a whole. A phasing approach that allows release of complete housing in stages to the market is proposed.
- It is suggested that the wording of this text be amended as follows:
 - "No dwelling units that may be permitted on foot of the RN1 (Parcel A) zoning may be occupied on an agreed phased basis until to ensure the timely delivery of the new town park, which shall include a dog park, located on lands zoned OS1, has commenced. The balance of units may be occupied upon practical completion of the town park, unless otherwise agreed with Wicklow County Council. The development of the town park should have regard to and integrate demesne features and other heritage elements associated with the former Blessington Demesne, and should include appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures in relation to habitats of biodiversity value (including areas identified as Local Biodiversity Areas). A detailed phasing programme shall be submitted for the agreement of the planning authority."
 - The Amended Draft LAP now provides the provision of a substantial Community Sports facility on AOS lands. In principle, Cairn supports recreational amenities for residential communities. There are complexities in the layout, design and operation of this facility which need to be resolved at the planning application stage in a detailed landscape masterplan design exercise which can also accommodate car parking for AOS lands. There is potential for funding commitments in LAP to be shared rather than wholly dependent on development (i.e. Capital Sports Grant etc.).
 - It is suggested that the wording of this text be amended as follows:

- "Any new residential development proposals for the RN1 (Parcel B) lands shall be accompanied by **landscape masterplan** proposals for the concurrent development of community sports facility on lands zoned AOS measuring not less than 4.5ha, of a design and layout and including such facilities and support buildings to be agreed with the Planning Authority **but which shall**, **and which may** include **at a minimum** a full size polyurethane 400m 8-lane running track, with field athletics space within, a separate **full size (i.e. 90mx145m) multi sport** all weather pitch **and/or** mixed use all weather sports courts (suitable in size and finish for a range of uses) and/or an all-weather 7-a-side pitch. **The phasing and mechanism for delivery of these facilities will be agreed with WCC.**"
- The phasing approach for the SLO2 parcel should be proportional. It is suggested that the wording of this text be amended as follows:
- "No dwelling units that may be permitted on foot of the RN1 (Parcel B) zoning may be occupied on a phased basis in agreement with the planning authority until this to ensure the timely delivery of the community sports facility is fully developed suitable for community sports use (including necessary buildings/structures, layout, drainage, surfacing, lighting, access and car parking) and is available for community use;

This community sports facility shall be suitable for the needs of, and shared use by, potential future educational uses on the site reserved for such within this SLO."

- Cairn Homes supports the development of the education campus in the SLO2 area.
- Cairn Homes supports urban design objectives in the policy statement.
 - Cairn Homes supports amenity/masterplan objectives in the policy statement.
- The same phasing approach advocated for the delivery of the town park should be applied to the BIRR, as follows:

"Any new residential development proposals for the RN1 (Parcel A) lands shall be accompanied by proposals for the concurrent development of northern sections of the BIRR. **No** dwelling units **that may be** permitted on foot of the RN1 (Parcel A) zoning may be occupied **on a phased basis in agreement with the planning authority until this to ensure the timely delivery of until** the northern section of the BIRR is completed in full and is available for public use. **A detailed phasing programme shall be submitted for the agreement of the planning authority.**"

- It is suggested that the wording of the objective to deliver the Link Road in Phase B should be applied to the SL02 lands only as the road reservation in the SL01 area is outside its control. Cairn advocates a more viable and phased approach for road delivery of this link, as follows:
- "Any new residential development proposals for the RN1 (Parcel B) lands in the SLO2 area shall be accompanied by proposals for the development of link road between Blessington GAA and the Glen Ding Greenway Naas Road. Any application for dwelling units shall include a phasing agreement with the planning authority relating to the link road No dwelling units that may be permitted on foot of the RN1 (Parcel B) zoning may be occupied until this road is completed in full and is available for public use."
- Cairn Homes supports the active travel objectives in the policy statement.

13. Blessington & District Forum

The following issues are raised:

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- The Forum is in full agreement with the planners change in zoning as per the below zoning map and written detail at Blessington Demesne. The Forum is in agreement so long as the written detail remains the same and the facilities remain as noted as there has been a reduction from 15 hectares of AOS lands to 4.5 hectares in this area.
- Request for an internal basketball court as opposed to an external basketball court, as the permission for the
 expansion of Blessington Community College includes numerous external basketball courts. The need for an
 internal court is greater than further external courts.

Opinion of Chief Executive

Department of Education – The CE notes the submission from the Department of Education, which notes the merging of SLO2 and SLO8 in this amendment, including that 3.56 ha shall be reserved for future education use.

Uisce Éireann – The CE notes the submission of Uisce Éireann, which does not object to the proposed material amendment and states that network extensions will be developer driven.

NTA – The CE notes the submission of the NTA, welcoming the inclusion of a future active travel connection along the southern boundary of the SLO. Though the CE does not support the proposed material amendment, the CE wishes to draw attention to the layout of Phase 2 of the town park to the immediate east, as permitted under WCC Reg. Ref. 23/689, which includes multiple potential entrances into the lands that may allow further pedestrian permeability to/from the Blessington Inner Relief Road.

Should the elected members decide to proceed with the amendment against the CE's advice, it is suggested that a modification of this proposed amendment is made to clarify this, and other general permeability improvements.

OPR – The CE notes the submission of the OPR, accepting the zoning change as reasonable though it exceeds the housing land required to meet population and housing targets. The CE does not share the view of the OPR and does not support the proposed amendment as outlined below. In relation to the recommendation to provide pedestrian and cycle linkages, attention is drawn to the above response to the NTA.

Cairn Homes Properties Ltd. - The CE notes the submission of Cairn Homes Properties Ltd., supporting the proposed amendment and requesting further modifications. In relation to requested amendments to the phased restriction dwelling unit occupation, the CE is of the opinion that the requirement for infrastructure to be available for use upon the occupation of the first dwelling is entirely appropriate and crucial for the proper and sustainable planning of the lands in questions and the wider settlement of Blessington. It is entirely within the gift of the landowner to deliver housing (on part or all of the residential lands) 'in tandem' with the required infrastructure, noting that construction can commence alongside infrastructure, only occupation is restricted. Modifications in relation to landscape masterplanning for the AOS lands are not considered necessary by the CE, as such masterplanning will necessarily occur as part of the development of any proposals ahead of planning application stage, with phasing/mechanism agreement not considered necessary considering the clear objectives set out in the SLO. Requested text modifications in relation to AOS facilities which introduces several 'may' and 'and/or' statements has the potential to materially diminish the quantum of facilities delivered as part of the SLO and may be beyond the scope of modification at this stage. In relation to requested modifications to the text objectives regarding the link road in phase B, the CE is of the opinion that this road is an essential infrastructural component of the overall development of the lands, as without its delivery all Naas-bound traffic (regardless of volume) would be directed further inside the built-up area and closer to the town centre of the settlement.

Blessington & District Forum – The CE notes the submission of Blessington & District Forum, supporting the proposed amendment. The CE does not support the proposed amendment as set out below. In relation to the request for internal courts rather than external courts, it is considered that such a change in wording, though minor, would result in a material change to the proposed amendment, i.e. the replacing of external courts with internal courts represents a requirement for the development of a sports hall of a size large enough to accommodate indoor basketball. This request is likely beyond the scope of modifications to the proposed amendment.

This proposed amendment was recommended (in part) by the Chief Executive in her previous report and this part is still recommended, as follows:

Amend the text of SLO2 as follows:

"Car parking to serve the AOS lands should also be of a sufficient size, layout, and location to serve as an alternative car park for access to Glen Ding via the (under construction) green link that passes through the SLO from the town park. The scale of this car parking should not exceed that necessary to serve the AOS lands and alternative access to Glen Ding (noting the limited existing provision of parking spaces at the entrance to Glen Ding), and should not detract from the efficient use of the AOS lands for the primary purpose of active open space/sports/recreation uses."

Additional amendments were proposed by the Elected Members at the County Council meeting in March 2025.

The CE does not support the additional amendments proposed by the Elected Members for the following reasons:

The residential zoning provisions of the draft plan have been carefully calibrated to ensure compliance with:

- The NPF, RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan requirements and objectives, in particular consistency with the Wicklow Core Strategy;
- Sound spatial principles in accordance in particular with the requirements of guidance set out in the NPF and Ministerial Guidelines 'Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2022).

In these regards, the request for the zoning of additional land for residential use as detailed in this proposal would

- Exceed Core Strategy requirements, including likely longer term requirements, and therefore would be inconsistent with the Wicklow County Development Plan, which is precluded under Section 19(2) of the Planning Act 2000 (as amended)
- Result in a reduction in AOS 'Active Open Space' zoned lands. These are essential zonings that are necessary to support the sustainable development of the plan area, and the location and area of these zones has been carefully
- determined in order to meet Wicklow County Development Plan requirements and sustainable development principles. The subject lands represents a significant area of Active Open Space land which, if re-zoned as
- proposed, would reduce the overall provision of AOS within the draft plan area from c. 18.2ha to 7.8ha, below that recommended by the Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit.

Recommendation of Chief Executive

To not proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 19

Should the Elected Members decide to proceed with proposed amendment 19(B), the following modification is recommended:

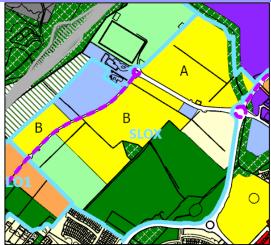
Amend SLO2 and SLO8 as follows

- 1. Merge SLO2 and SLO8
- 2. Amend the land use of zoning of c. 10.4ha in SLO2 from AOS 'Active Open Space' to RN1 'New Residential Priority 1'
- 3. Amend c. 2.3ha in SLO2 from RN2 'New Residential Priority 2' to RN1 'New Residential Priority 1'
- 4. Amend SLO2 and SLO8 Specific Local Objectives' areas and text as follows:

Change from:



Change to:



Replace existing SLO2 and SLO8 text with new text as follows:

This SLO is located in the townland of Blessington Demesne. This SLO measures c. 51ha and comprises

- c. 4.5ha zoned for AOS 'Active Open Space',
- c. 15.3 ha zoned OS1 'Open Space',
- c. 1.4 ha zoned for OS2 'Natural Areas';
- c. 3.8 ha zoned CE 'Community & Education',
- c. 21.8ha zoned RN1 'New Residential Priority 1' and
- c. 3.3 ha zoned RE 'Existing Residential'.

The RN1 zones are located in two parcels – A and B (A being the parcel to the north of Oak Drive and B comprising two RN1 sites to the south of Oak Drive/west of the new park).

Any development proposals for this SLO shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following requirements:

- No dwelling units that may be permitted on foot of the RN1 (Parcel A) zoning may be occupied until the new town park, which shall include a dog park, located on lands zoned OS1, is completed in full. The development of the town park should have regard to and integrate demesne features and other heritage elements associated with the former Blessington Demesne, and should include appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures in relation to habitats of biodiversity value (including areas identified as Local Biodiversity Areas).
- Any new residential development proposals for the RN1 (Parcel B) lands shall be accompanied by proposals for the concurrent development of community sports facility on lands zoned AOS measuring not less than 4.5ha, of a design and layout and including such facilities and support buildings to be agreed with the Planning Authority but which shall include at a minimum a full size polyurethane 400m 8-lane running track, with field athletics space within, a separate full size (i.e. 90mx145m) multi sport all weather pitch, mixed use all weather sports courts (suitable in size and finish for a range of uses) and an all-weather 7-a-side pitch
- Car parking to serve the AOS lands should also be of a sufficient size, layout, and location to serve as an alternative car park for access to Glen Ding via the (under construction) green link that passes through the SLO from the town park. The scale of this car parking should not exceed that necessary to serve the AOS lands and alternative access to Glen Ding (noting the limited existing provision of parking spaces at the entrance to Glen Ding), and should not detract from the efficient use of the AOS lands for the primary purpose of active open space/sports/recreation uses.
- No dwelling units that may be permitted on foot of the RN1 (Parcel B) zoning may be occupied until this community sports facility is fully developed suitable for community sports use (including necessary buildings/structures, layout, drainage, surfacing, lighting, access and car parking) and is available for community use;

- This community sports facility shall be suitable for the needs of, and shared use by, potential future educational uses on the site reserved for such within this SLO.
- CE zoned lands (excluding the under construction childcare facility) measuring not less than 3.56ha shall be serviced as part of the development of the SLO and reserved for future education use.
- The development of structures along all existing and proposed arterial and link roads should provide a **strong** sense of enclosure as per Section 4.2.1 of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, subject to the adequate protection of visual/landscape amenity from Blessington Main Street/Blessington Inner Relief Road to Glen Ding Forest.
- Adequate areas should be left free of development to preserve the view from St. Mary's Church to Bastion Wood and Glen Ding Forest.
- The development of appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures which shall have regard to the setting and curtilage of structures and sites of heritage value, and habitats of biodiversity value including area identified as LBAs.
- Any new residential development proposals for the RN1 (Parcel A) lands shall be accompanied by proposals for the concurrent development of northern sections of the BIRR. No dwelling units that may be permitted on foot of the RN1 (Parcel A) zoning may be occupied until the northern section of the BIRR is completed in full and is available for public use.
- Any new residential development proposals for the RN1 (Parcel B) lands shall be accompanied by proposals for the concurrent development of link road between Blessington GAA and the Naas Road. No dwelling units that may be permitted on foot of the RN1 (Parcel B) zoning may be occupied until this road is completed in full and is available for public use.
- Development within the SLO shall ensure maximum pedestrian/cyclist permeability into the (under construction) green link that passes through the SLO, and provide strong passive surveillance to this link.
- The following pedestrian/cyclist links shall be provided, alongside general good permeability via pedestrian/cyclist linkages through and between the SLO lands and surrounding areas :
 - from Blessington Inner Relief Road along the southern boundary of the SLO towards Glen Ding Forest (under construction), refer to Map No. 6 Active Travel.
 - from the town park northwards towards the SLO boundary, joining with links within SLO3, refer to Map No. 6 Active Travel. This link should cross watercourses in line with CPO 17.26 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028. Elements of this link are under construction.
 - along the boundary of OS2 lands around the Deerpark watercourse, as relevant, as per objective BLESS48.





(c) Amend the text of SLO4 as follows:

Specific Local Objective 4 – Doran's Pit

This SLO is located in the townlands of Haylands and Holyvalley. The SLO measures c.33.4 ha and comprises c.18 ha zoned MU 'Mixed Use' and c.15.4 ha zoned OS2 'Natural Areas' zonings. For the avoidance of doubt, residential development within the area shall be considered RN2 'New Residential Priority 2' for the purposes of phasing and in relation to the Core Strategy as set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan.

The vision for this SLO is of a new compact urban residential/mixed use neighbourhood bounded by a link street linking the N81 and Knockieran Bridge, with a range of community, sporting, and tourism facilities adjacent to an area of recreational woodland, in proximity to the proposed Blessington eGreenway. *the Poulaphouca Reservoir*. In relation to SPPR 1 of the Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2018, this area is explicitly identified as an area where height increases may be suitable, subject to adequate screening from the Poulaphouca Reservoir.

Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following:

- The delivery of the road objective linking the N81 to Kilbride Road/Knockieran Bridge. The layout of this road should form an arm off the planned roundabout at the northern end of the Blessington Inner Relief Road, while the road from Blessington Mart should terminate in a junction onto this road objective, with the exact layout to be agreed with the Planning Authority. Permission will not be considered for any development within these SLO unless accompanied by delivery of this road in full before any development is occupied / brought into use.
- The development of a pedestrian/cyclist only street (with two-way segregated cycle track) running southwest-northeast through the SLO. Modal filters should be employed to restrict vehicular access onto this street. This street should link to Blessington Main Street in the south directly via OP8 with ancillary access via the public road serving the Tramway residential development.
- The MU zone shall be developedment as follows:
 - (a) Predominantly residential development, as per the RN2 zoning objective, shall be provided to the south/southwest of the road objective through this SLO, pending the agreement of the exact route of this road objective and in any event shall not exceed 12 ha in total area. This predominantly residential area should be laid out as urban streets and squares with a well-enclosed central park/plaza focal point and appropriate buffers to existing adjacent residential areas. Only 50% of the predominantly residential area may be developed without the complete provision of the above active travel link to Blessington Main Street via OP8.
 - (b) The following additional infrastructure shall be provided within the predominantly residential area
 - A multi-purpose community building fronting onto the central park/plaza
 - A childcare facility of a sufficient size fronting onto the central park/plaza.
 - (c) The development of at least c.3.3 ha c. 5ha of active open space / sport uses and ancillary facilities on the north-eastern side of the road objective in the vicinity of the N81. The exact type and layout of active open space uses shall be agreed with the Planning Authority. Permission for residential

 development within this SLO will not be considered unless this sport ground will be completed and available for use upon the occupation of the 1st house. (d) The reservation of land of not less than c.2.7 ha c. 1ha or the possible future development of an amenity car park and other tourism infrastructure. The location of this reserved land shall allow for easy access to both the above wooded area and the Blessington Lakes (via the road objective), while minimising the interaction between parking cars and cyclists/pedestrians.
 The development of structures along the above road objective, pedestrian/cyclist street and Blessington Main Street/N81 should provide a strong sense of enclosure as per Section 4.2.1 of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, subject to adequate screening from the Poulaphouca Reservoir.
The lands identified as OS2 'Natural Areas' shall be reserved in as natural a condition as possible with appropriate undeveloped buffer zones. Any development on such lands shall protect natural habitats, mature trees and hedgerows as identified in the GI Audit; road / cycleway / footpath crossings over / through OS2 lands shall be minimised to that absolutely necessary for access; any such crossing of OS2 lands shall be carried out in a manner that maintains ecological connectivity and maintains a natural character. The large wooded area within this SLO, located on the northern part of the lands zoned OS2 shall be made safe for public access with a series of low impact trails, which should include a trail leading to Kilbride Road at the eastern extent of the SLO. The above pedestrian/cyclist route should also continue through this area in the direction of Holyvalley while maintaining a level route, and include a spur north to the SLO boundary in the direction of Blessington Educate Together (refer to Map No. 6 Active Travel). A management plan for the phased regeneration of plantation woodland into native woodland in this area shall be included as part of any planning application.
 The reservation of land of not less than c.2.7 ha for the possible future development of an amenity car park and other tourism infrastructure. The location of this reserved land shall allow for easy access to both the above wooded area and the proposed Blessington eGreenway (via the road objective), while minimising the interaction between parking cars and cyclists/pedestrians.
 The development of appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures which shall have regard to the setting and curtilage of structures and sites of heritage value, and habitats of biodiversity value, including Local Biodiversity Areas.

Proposed Material Amendment No. 20 Submissions

10. Belgard Estates Ltd.

The submission raises the following issues:

- In the submission on the Draft LAP, a reduced quantum of Active Open Space/Tourism requirement was requested on the basis that there was insufficient justification provided. 6ha of land was allocated for these uses, however no rationale for this amount of space at this location was provided in the Draft LAP. 2ha is considered sufficient to meet the requirements for this area. [The submission states that the shortfall in AOS can be zoned elsewhere, however this cannot be considered at this stage].
- PMA 20 increased the AOS requirement from c. 3.3ha to c. 5ha, with a decrease in amenity car park/tourism infrastructure from c.2.7ha to c. 1ha.
- No rationale for this increase in AOS has been identified and the revised amount is contrary to the findings of the Social Infrastructure Audit (e.g., pg. 70).
- The concept map for SLO4 has also been amended. The tourism facility's orientation has been changed with a

smaller car park, with an additional area for 'Potential Active Open Space'. Without an identified end-user for both the sports and tourism facility this requirement renders the development of SLO4 unviable and undeliverable. It is requested that these elements of the concept plan are removed.

 Requested Amendment 2: Removal of sports and tourism facility from Concept Plan for SLO 4 and reverse the increase in active open space requirement in the mixed-use area from c. 5 ha to c. 2 ha as previously requested. The remaining active open space requirement of 1.3ha can be met by Proposed Amendment 1.

13. Blessington & District Forum

The following issues are raised:

• The Forum is in agreement with the updated amendments of Doran's Pits lands. There is substantial potential here the Forum feels for sporting facilities, a tourist area and a community building as well as the much needed residential units.

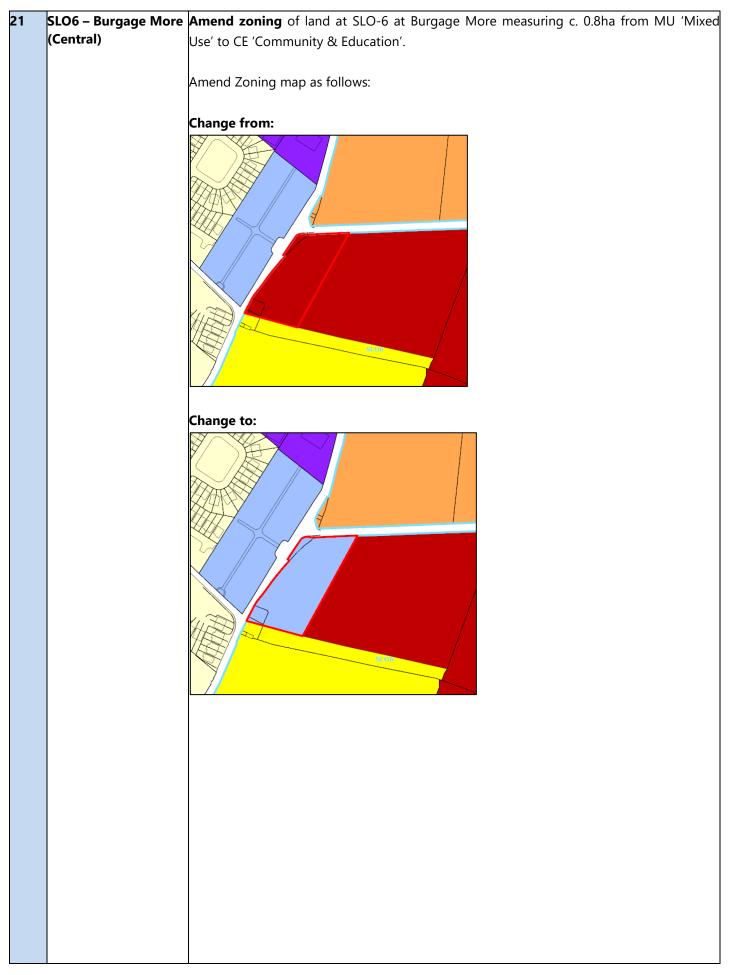
Opinion of Chief Executive

Belgard Estates Ltd. – The CE has considered the submission of Belgard Estates Ltd. The CE does not oppose the Proposed Material Amendment for the reasons set out below. It is the opinion of the CE that the cumulative loss of AOS 'Active Open Space' lands arising from other proposed material amendments, to below that recommended by the Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit, justifies the increase of AOS lands proposed. The submission further requests that the provision of AOS lands in this location be reduced below that provided for in the Draft LAP, where the shortfall can thereafter be made up on alternative lands in the ownership of the submitter. Having regard to the Planning Act, this change cannot be considered at this time. In relation to questions of viability arising from the amended concept plans, the CE notes that the increase in requirements for AOS 'Active Open Space' facilities arises from a reduction in the land reserved for car parking/tourism uses, with no reduction in the area of predominantly residential development. The CE is thus satisfied that the viability of the SLO lands is comparable to that of the Draft LAP.

Blessington & District Forum – The CE notes the submission of Blessington & District Forum, supporting the proposed amendment.

Having regard to PMA 19 (reducing the amount of AOS lands) The CE recommends that Proposed Amendment No. 20 is made. The cumulative loss of AOS 'Active Open Space' lands throughout the plan area arising from other proposed material amendments (e.g. PMA 19) reduces the provision of such to below that recommended by the Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit, which accompanied the Draft Plan. The audit recommended that c. 18.48ha at a minimum should be zoned for additional AOS 'Active Open Space' use, not accounting for existing developed AOS facilities. Proposed Material Amendment No. 20 would contribute to making up the shortfall of AOS lands within the plan area, in a location in close proximity to the built-up area with an accompanying policy framework that is conducive to the development of active travel routes to serve the lands.

Recommendation of Chief Executive



Amend the text of the Draft LAP Written Statement, Section B.8 Zoning, 'Specific Local Objectives', as follows:

Specific Local Objective 6 – Burgage More (Central)

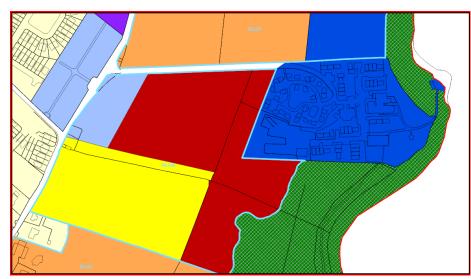


Figure B.8.8: Specific Local Objective 6

This SLO is located in the townland of Burgage More and is in Local Authority ownership. The SLO measures c. 9.4 ha and comprises c. 5.8ha 5.0ha ha zoned MU 'Mixed Use', c. 0.8ha zoned CE 'Community & Education' and c.3.6 ha zoned RN1 'New Residential Priority 1'. Consent is already in place for the development of the RN1 lands for residential purposes. The boundary with the OS2 zone is generally defined by the 194m contour. Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following:

- Lands zoned CE shall be reserved for cemetery and associated car parking development;
- Lands zoned MU may be developed for a range of uses, including (but not limited) to tourism (*including tourism accommodation*), *sport*, community (including cemeteries), employment and residential use, subject to the following criteria:
 - 1. Lands to the west of the north-south hedgerow / tree line:
 - a) The development of a link street through the SLO leading from an agreed future potential crossing point from SLO5. This link street should continue south and west through the SLO to join to the junction at Burgage Castle estate/Burgage Cemetery.
 - b) Development in this SLO shall provide vehicular access from this link street into SLO 7 to the south.
 - c) The development of an active travel link from the potential crossing point from SLO 5 to meet the existing Blessington Greenway to the south of the Avon resort. Such a link should not include the levelling or draining of the low lying area zoned OS2 'Natural Areas'.

	2. Lands to the east of north-south hedgerow / tree line:
	a) All mature trees and hedgerows on the lands shall be maintained other than
	strictly required to facilitate appropriate development and detailed
	compensatory landscaping and tree planting to account for any loss due to the
	development and natural die back
	b) No uses will be considered that require floodlighting; street lighting and residential lighting must be bat friendly as per Dark Sky guidelines
	c) Any development shall be designed following detailed ecological evaluation to
	ensure no adverse impacts, either directly or indirect, on biodiversity, protected
	species, European Sites or ecological corridors

Submissions

13. Blessington & District Forum

The following issues are raised:

• The Forum would be in agreement with the SLO 6 as per the adjacent image and the written detail with an area to be utilised for Community, Tourism accommodation & Sport.

Opinion of Chief Executive

Blessington & District Forum – The CE notes the submission of Blessington & District Forum, in support of the proposed amendment.

The CE does not support the proposed zoning amendment for the reasons already set out in the 1st CE Report, namely:

"The concerns with regard to the need to expand the existing and/or provide a new cemetery are noted. The Social Infrastructure Audit identifies that cemeteries/burial grounds in the settlement of Blessington are near capacity and there is a need for additional cemetery space within the Blessington area."

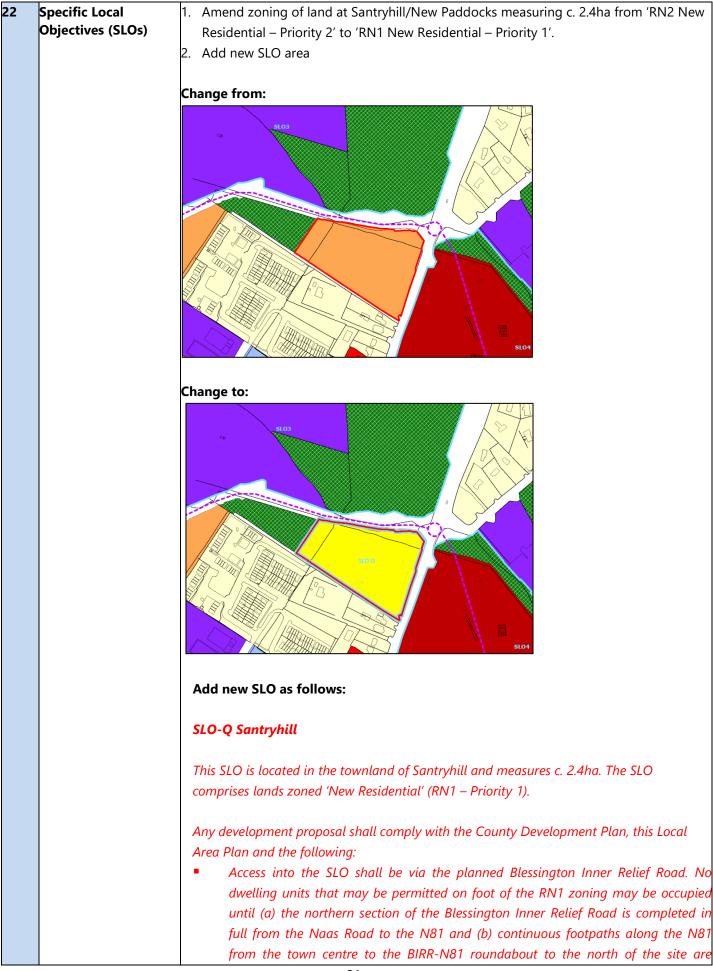
"It is noted that cemeteries are open for consideration on lands zoned for Mixed Use (MU) and Community & Education (CE), and therefore a new cemeteries or a cemetery car park are not ruled out for the Council's land at Burgage. However, the options for the future development of these lands have not been finalised at this time".

The CE has no objections to the proposed **text changes**.

Recommendation of Chief Executive

(A) To proceed to make text changes associated with Proposed Material Amendment No. 21

(B) To not proceed to make changes to land use zoning associated with Proposed Material Amendment No. 21



	•	completed. The design of any development in this SLO shall provide a high quality design and a strong sense of enclosure and passive surveillance along all road facing frontages i.e. along the planned BIRR and N81, as per Section 4.2.1 of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets.
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Proposed Material Amendment No. 22	
Submissions	
5. Uisce Éireann	

UÉ has no objections to the proposed Material Amendment. In addition to their submission at the Draft Plan Stage, UÉ has e some high-level comments below.

MA Ref	Zoning Change	Comment
MA 22	New SLO Q Santry Hill RN2 to RN1	It is currently feasible to service this site
9. Office of the Planning	Regulator	

In relation to proposed New Residential Priority 1 lands (MA 19, MA 22 and MA 24), while the Office recognises the addition of these lands exceeds the housing land required to meet population and housing targets set out in the County Development Plan core strategy, the sites are well-located in terms of proximity to the town centre, supporting compact growth and the sequential approach. In addition, MA 19 is supported by a clear policy framework (SLO 2) in respect of phasing the development of the lands in conjunction with the delivery of community and physical infrastructure.

Opinion of Chief Executive

Uisce Éireann – The CE notes the submission of Uisce Éireann, which states that it is currently feasible to service this site.

OPR - The CE notes the submission of the OPR, accepting the zoning change as reasonable though it exceeds the housing land required to meet population and housing targets. The CE does not share the view of the OPR and does not support the proposed amendment as outlined below.

The CE does not support the proposed amendment for the reasons already set out in the 1st CE Report, namely:

'The residential zoning provisions of the draft plan have been carefully calibrated to ensure compliance with:

- The NPF, RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan requirements and objectives, in particular consistency with the Wicklow Core Strategy;
- Sound spatial principles in accordance in particular with the requirements of guidance set out in the NPF and Ministerial Guidelines 'Development Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2022).

In these regards, the request for the zoning of additional land zoned RN1 'New Residential – Priority 1' as detailed in this submission would exceed Core Strategy requirements, including likely longer term requirements, and therefore would be inconsistent with the Wicklow County Development Plan, which is precluded under Section 19(2) of the Planning Act 2000 (as amended).'

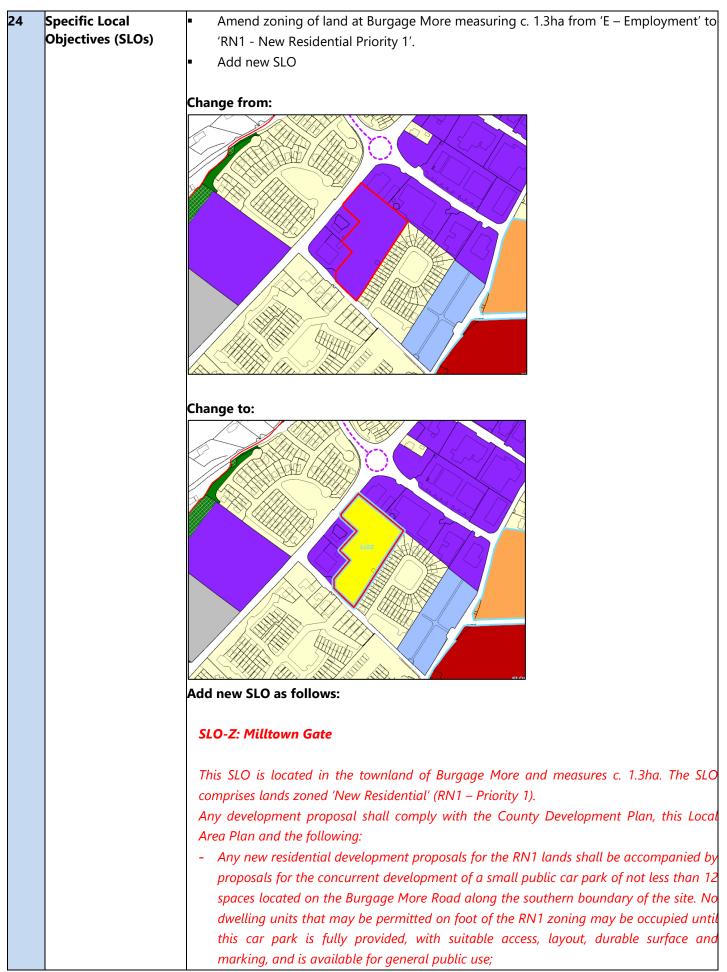
Recommendation of Chief Executive

23	Specific Local Objectives (SLOs)	Create new SLO area – 'Specific Local Objectives' at Blessington Demesne
		Change from:
		Change to:
		SLO-Y Blessington Demesne (East)
		This SLO is located in the townland of Blessington Demesne and measures c. 5.6ha. The SLO comprises lands zoned 'RN1 – New Residential (Priority 1)' and 'OS2 – Natural Areas'
		 Any development proposals on these lands shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following: Any residential development proposals for the RN1 lands shall be accompanied by proposals for the concurrent development of a community building on the lands of

 No reside occupied communi / womens Lands ide developm 	nan 300sqm GFA; ential units that may be permitted on foot of the RN1 zoning may be until this community facility is fully developed suitable for a range of ty uses (e.g. community meeting / activity rooms, youth clubs, scouts, mens ' shed) and is available for community use; ntified as OS2 shall be retained and maintained in a natural condition; no ent proposed on foot of this plan shall interfere with river / stream beds, I channels.
banks and	1 channels.

Proposed Material Amendment No. 23	
No submissions received.	
Opinion of Chief Executive	
The CE does not oppose the proposed amendment.	

Recommendation of Chief Executive



	- No dwelling units that may be permitted on foot of the RN1 zoning may be occupied	
until the 'Blessington Gateway' road	d safety improvement scheme along the N81	
(currently being developed by the TII) is	is completed.	

Submissions

2. Transport Infrastructure Ireland

Proposed amendment no. 24 proposes a revised land use zoning and new SLO at Burgage More:

The safety scheme referenced is a Wicklow County Council project. TII recommends minor alteration to the final line of the proposed amendment in the interests of clarity and consistency as follows (in green):

"- No dwelling units that may be permitted on foot of the RN1 zoning may be occupied until the 'Blessington Gateway' road safety improvement scheme along the N81 (currently being developed by the TII) is completed."
 5. Uisce Éireann

UÉ has no objections to the proposed Material Amendment. In addition to their submission at the Draft Plan Stage, UE has some high-level comments below.

MA Ref	Zoning Change	Comment
MA 24	E to RN1	It is currently feasible to service this
		site

9. Office of the Planning Regulator

In relation to proposed New Residential Priority 1 lands (MA 19, MA 22 and MA 24), while the Office recognises the addition of these lands exceeds the housing land required to meet population and housing targets set out in the County Development Plan core strategy, the sites are well-located in terms of proximity to the town centre, supporting compact growth and the sequential approach. In addition, MA 19 is supported by a clear policy framework (SLO 2) in respect of phasing the development of the lands in conjunction with the delivery of community and physical infrastructure.

12. Dunmoy Properties Limited

The following issues are raised:

- Dunmoy Properties Limited wish to formally raise an objection to the proposed rezoning of the Milltown Gate lands—1.3 hectares currently designated for Employment use—to RN1 New Residential Priority 1. While housing delivery is a crucial priority for Blessington, the proposed location is fundamentally unsuitable for residential use, both in planning terms and in terms of the lived experience it would offer future residents.
- The National Planning Framework emphasis compact growth through well serviced infill sites and the careful integration of new housing with surrounding uses and infrastructure.
- Similarly, the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out specific criteria for zoning decisions, prioritising sustainable locations that support community integration and ensure the long term well being of residents.
- The Draft Blessington LAP identifies Blessington as a Moderate Growth Town with a housing delivery target of 519 units. While this requires proactive land use planning, it also demands that development occurs in locations that align with national and local policies for safety, environmental quality, and sustainable design.
- The Milltown Gate Site is in direct proximity to existing employment uses, including a petrol station, which presents challenges fundamentally at odds with the creation of a healthy residential environment (e.g. 24 hour noise, heavy vehicle movements, fuel deliveries, harmful emissions/vapour, security concerns/anti-behaviour, light pollution). International Best Practise guidelines recommend a minimum buffer distance of 50-100m, which to achieve and deliver a meaningful number of homes would be nearly impossible.
- Traffic and Infrastructure Constraints: Site accessed via L8370, which already experiences pressure due to

connection to N81.

• [The submission sets out a lengthy proposal for the zoning of other lands as an alternative to PMA 24. This cannot be considered at this stage].

Opinion of Chief Executive

TII – The CE notes the submission from TII.

Uisce Éireann – The CE notes the submission of Uisce Éireann, which states that it is currently feasible to service this site.

OPR – The CE notes the submission of the OPR, accepting the zoning change as reasonable though it exceeds the housing land required to meet population and housing targets. The CE does not share the view of the OPR and does not support the proposed amendment as outlined below.

Dunmoy Properties Limited – the CE notes the submission of Dunmoy Properties Limited. The CE does not support the Proposed Material Amendment as set out below.

The CE does not support the proposed amendment for the reasons already set out in the 1st CE Report, namely:

'The residential zoning provisions of the draft plan have been carefully calibrated to ensure compliance with:

- The NPF, RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan requirements and objectives, in particular consistency with the Wicklow Core Strategy;
- Sound spatial principles in accordance in particular with the requirements of guidance set out in the NPF and Ministerial Guidelines 'Development Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2022).

In these regards, the request for the zoning of additional land for residential use as detailed in this submission would

- Exceed Core Strategy requirements, including likely longer term requirements, and therefore would be inconsistent with the Wicklow County Development Plan, which is precluded under Section 19(2) of the Planning Act 2000 (as amended)
- Result in a reduction in E 'Employment' zoned lands. These are essential zonings that are necessary to support the sustainable development of the plan area, and the location and area of these zones has been carefully determined in order to meet Wicklow County Development Plan requirements and sustainable development principles. The subject lands represents one of a relatively small number of undeveloped employment sites within the built-up area, and as such its re-zoning may undermine the expansion of existing businesses in Blessington or the establishment of new businesses requiring employment lands of this scale.'

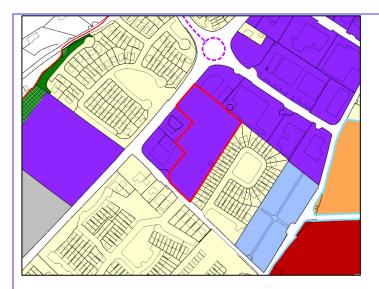
Recommendation of Chief Executive

To not proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 24.

Should the Elected Members decide to proceed with this proposed amendment, the following modification is recommended:

- Amend zoning of land at Burgage More measuring c. 1.3ha from 'E Employment' to 'RN1 New Residential Priority 1'.
- Add new SLO

Change from:



Change to:



Add new SLO as follows:

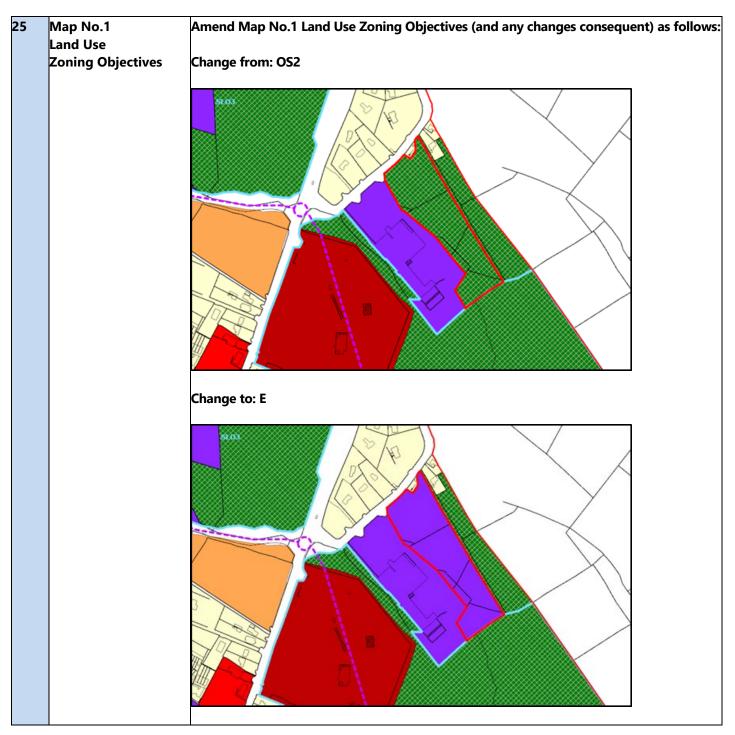
SLO-Z: Milltown Gate

This SLO is located in the townland of Burgage More and measures c. 1.3ha. The SLO comprises lands zoned 'New Residential' (RN1 – Priority 1).

Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following:

- Any new residential development proposals for the RN1 lands shall be accompanied by proposals for the concurrent development of a small public car park of not less than 12 spaces located on the Burgage More Road along the southern boundary of the site. No dwelling units that may be permitted on foot of the RN1 zoning may be occupied until this car park is fully provided, with suitable access, layout, durable surface and marking, and is available for general public use;
- No dwelling units that may be permitted on foot of the RN1 zoning may be occupied until the 'Blessington Gateway' road safety improvement scheme along the N81 (currently being developed by the TII) is completed.

B.8.2 MAP AMENDMENTS (EXCLUDING MAP CHANGES IN SLO AREAS ALREADY DETAILED ABOVE)



Proposed Material Amendment No. 25 Submissions Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

The Department is concerned about the Proposed Material Amendment from 'OS2 – Natural Space' to 'E – Employment', and potential impacts on the adjacent Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA. The Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA is designated for two Special Conservation Interest (SCI) bird species, greylag goose (Anser anser), and lesser black-backed gull (Larus fuscus). The PMA No.25 is approximately 530m from the SPA boundary. The SPA is of national importance for its Greylag Goose population, which is one of the largest in the country. The SPA provides the main roost for the birds, with feeding occurring mostly on improved grassland outside of the site.

Several waterbird species may at times use habitats situated within the immediate hinterland of the SPA or in areas ecologically connected to it [i.e., ex-situ sites]. The reliance on these habitats will vary from species to species and from site to site. Significant habitat changes or increased levels of disturbance within these areas could result in the displacement of the listed waterbird species from areas within the SPA, and/or a reduction in their numbers. A Conservation Objective target for the SPA is to have sufficient area of utilisable habitat available in ecologically important sites outside the SPA. It is not known whether zoning this land will lead to loss of such supporting habitat and thereby undermine the conservation objectives for the SPA. A number of other Annex I and Annex II species listed on the Birds Directive also utilise the SPA and surrounding suitable habitats for foraging, roosting, and breeding, including whooper swan, lapwing, snipe, wigeon, teal, mallard, to name a few.

In addition, a reduction in water quality (either alone or in combination with other pressures on water quality) from construction activities could result in the degradation of sensitive habitats present within Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA, which in turn could negatively affect the SCI bird species that rely upon these habitats for foraging and/or roosting. It could also negatively affect the quantity and quality of prey available to SCI bird species. These potential impacts (in the absence of mitigation) could occur to such a degree that they result in significant effects which could have implications for the conservation objectives of The Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA.

The Department recommends that text is included for the zoning of PMA 25, to ensure all impacts as a result of any proposed works by itself and in combination with other plans or projects on the nearby SPA and any other European sites within the Zone of Influence of the site, are considered, and that all proposed projects must have regard to the Habitats Directive in this site.

The Department further recommends all hedgerows and treelines and other natural features are retained and light spill is avoided on these features within this site, to ensure ecological corridors between habitats to the south and north of SLO4 are maintained.

Opinion of Chief Executive

DHLGH – The CE notes the submission of the DHLGH. While the issues raised are noted, the CE is satisfied that the distance of the lands to the European Site as well as the application of the wide suite of environmental protection objectives in both the County Development Plan and this LAP to any application for permission that may be made on the lands, will fully ensure that no adverse impacts would arise on the Poulaphuca SPA. Attention is drawn to the following additional information:

Addendum I to the AA Natura Impact Report for the Draft LAP provides a focused consideration of Proposed Material Amendments with respect to European sites.

As detailed under Section 1 "Introduction" of this Addendum: "This report is part of the overall and ongoing AA process that is being undertaken alongside the preparation of the Draft Plan (an AA Natura Impact Report has already been placed on public display alongside the Draft Plan). It will be considered, alongside other documentation prepared as part of this process, at adoption of the Plan."

Section 3 of this Addendum provides the findings of screening for AA for relevant European sites and all Proposed Material Amendments.

As detailed under Section 4 "Conclusion": "The risks to the safeguarding and integrity of the qualifying interests, special conservation interests and conservation objectives of the European sites have been addressed through measures that have already been integrated into the Draft Plan and through existing, already in force, policies and objectives within the Wicklow County Development Plan (as varied) with which the Proposed Material Amendments and all lower tier plans/projects must comply."

Appendix II to the Addendum identifies the measures that have been incorporated into the Draft Plan and associated existing Wicklow County Development Plan (as varied) in order to mitigate against potential effects to European sites, as already identified by the AA Natura Impact Report for the Draft Plan. These include various European Sites

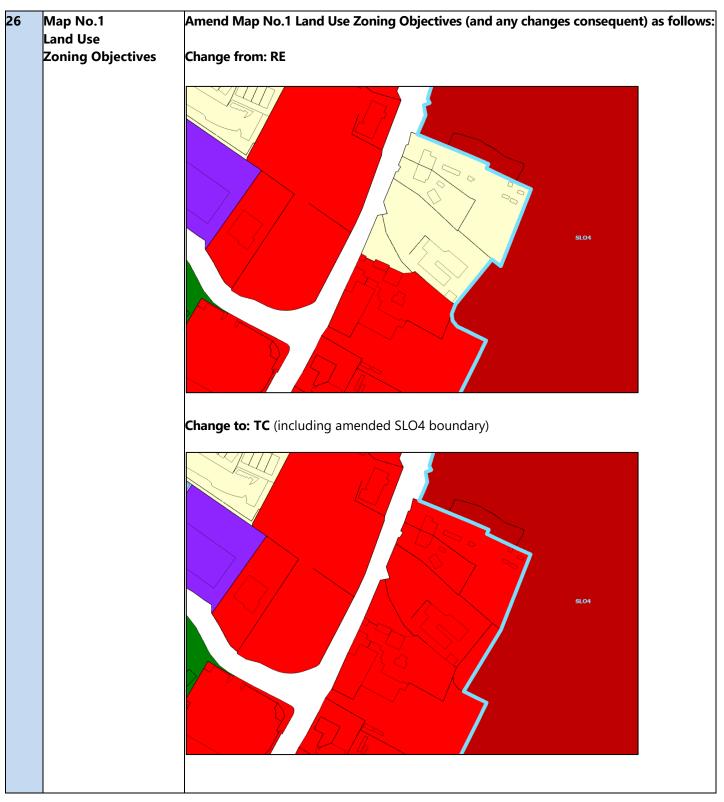
Objectives and measures relating to the protection of water quality, trees, hedgerows and lighting.

Zoning of lands as "E -Employment" does not mean development will be permitted on these lands. Any proposal for development on zoned land must demonstrate compliance with the provisions of both the Local Area Plan and the Development Plan in order to be granted permission.

This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous report; all of the CE's recommended amendments were subject to SEA and AA screening and through said process no adverse impacts on the environment or on the European Site were identified as likely. The CE is satisfied that this assessment remains robust.

Recommendation of Chief Executive

To proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 25



 Proposed Material Amendment No. 26

 No submissions received.

 Opinion of Chief Executive

 This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous report and is still recommended.

 Recommendation of Chief Executive

 To proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 26

2nd CE Report – Draft Blessington LAP 2025

27	Map No.1	Amend Map 1 to show zoning objectives for Blessington from Kildare County Development
	Land Use	Plan
	Zoning Objectives	

Proposed Material Amendment No. 27
No submissions received.
Opinion of Chief Executive
This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous report and is still recommended.
Recommendation of Chief Executive
To proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 27



Proposed Material Amendment No. 28
Submissions
5. Uisce Éireann

UÉ comments as follows:

Ν	/A Ref	Zoning Change	Comment
N	/A 28	From OS to TC	This should be feasible. Gradient of the site will influence connection to the gravity sewer network.
			5,

Opinion of Chief Executive

Uisce Éireann – The CE notes the submission of Uisce Éireann, which states that it should be feasible to service the

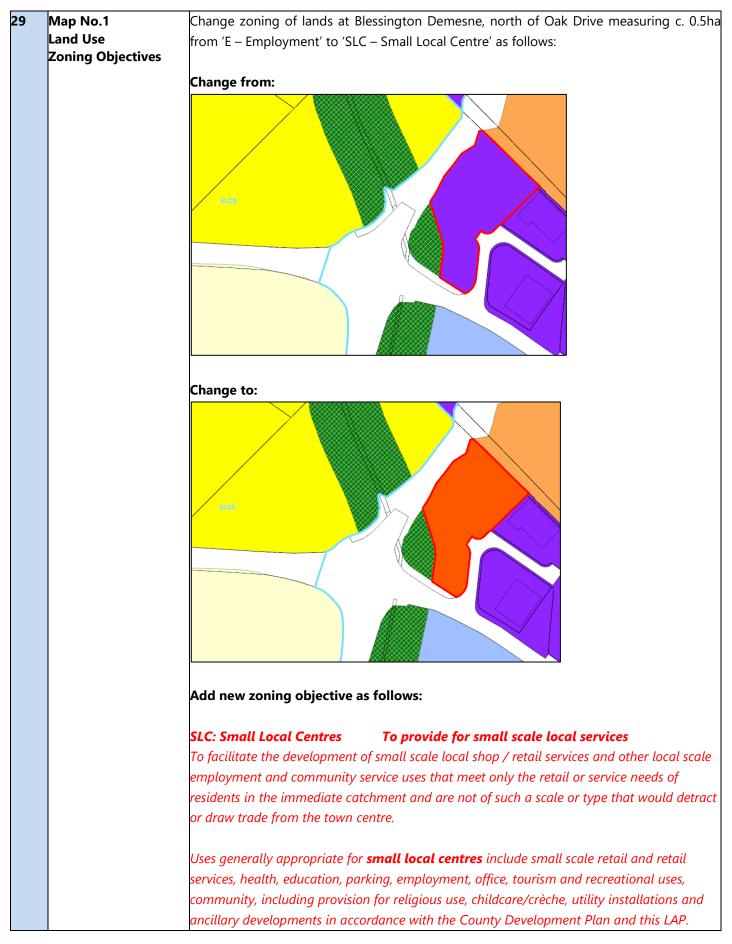
site.

The CE does not support the proposed amendment for the reasons already set out in the 1st CE Report, namely:

"The rationale for the zoning of this land OS1 'Open Space' is set out in some detail in the accompanying Blessington Green Infrastructure Audit. The Audit includes the report of the WCC Biodiversity Officer, which made reference to the Ecological Impact Assessment raised in the submission, and clearly states that uses such as substantial numbers of structures, hard surfacing, etc. would be considered inappropriate with regard to the essential biodiversity quality and ecological function/connectivity of the lands".

Recommendation of Chief Executive

To not proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 28



Proposed Material Amendment No. 29 No submissions received. Opinion of Chief Executive

The CE does not support the proposed amendment for the reasons already set out in the 1st CE Report, namely:

'In relation to the lands zoned E 'Employment', the subject lands are located outside the Blessington Core Retail Area as set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 and outside of lands zoned TC 'Town Centre' in the Draft LAP. The Draft Blessington LAP 2025 Written Statement states the following: 'Blessington is fortunate in that retail uses are currently concentrated within Blessington Town Centre, with no large out-of-centre retail activity. The current, and envisioned, spatial extent of Blessington does not indicate that such out-of-centre or 'neighbourhood centre' retail areas are currently required or desirable.' Therefore, rezoning the subject lands to allow for retail uses would undermine objective BLESS4, which states the following:

'To direct retail development into the Core Retail Area as a first priority, as set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 (or any update thereof), in line with its position in the County Retail Hierarchy & Strategy. This will be accomplished as follows:

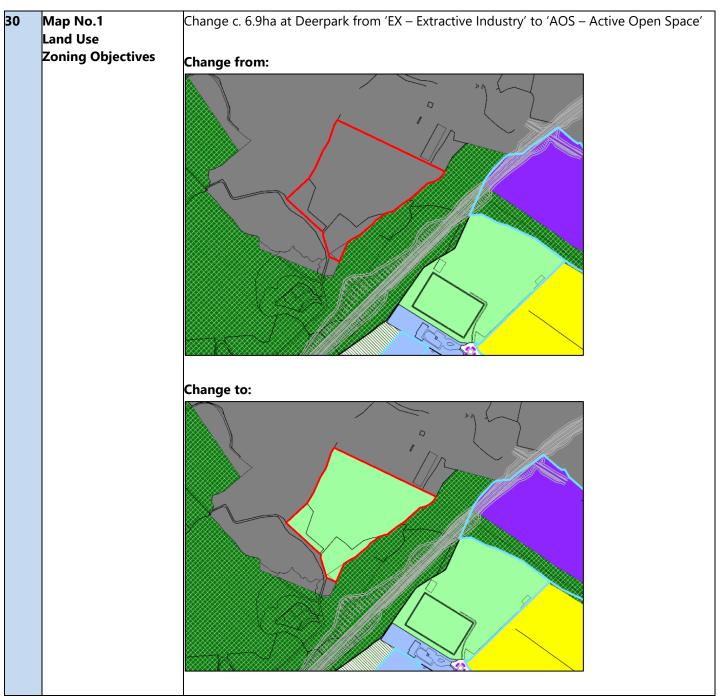
- There will be no quantitative restriction on the development of retail floorspace within the Blessington Core Retail Area.
- All developments for additional retail floorspace, which are both outside the Core Retail Area and within Blessington Town Centre (as zoned for such purposes), will be required to be accompanied by a Retail Impact Assessment in line with 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities – Retail Planning' 2012 and any updated or relevant quidelines.
- The development of retail floorspace outside of Blessington Town Centre (as zoned for such purposes) will not be facilitated unless absolutely necessary.'

Note that childcare uses, as raised in the submission, may be permissible under the E 'Employment' zoning. Furthermore, attention is drawn to objective BLESS14, which facilitates and supports the incremental reconfiguration of Blessington Business Park/Oak Drive toward a secondary 'people'-based employment area, which would allow for the development of higher density employment, as raised in the submission.'

It is noted that the above CE opinion was in response to a submission request for a MU 'Mixed Use' zoning, as opposed to the SLC 'Small Local Centre' as per this proposed amendment. However, the SLC 'Small Local Centre' zoning facilitates the development of retail uses. On this basis, the above response remains valid.

Recommendation of Chief Executive

To not proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 29



Proposed Material Amendment No. 30

Submissions

6. National Transport Authority

[Note that the below submission also makes reference to PMA 33]

MA 30 proposes a rezoning of land for 'Active Open Space' uses at a location north-west of the existing built-up area. Given the peripheral location of the land, removed from the existing built-up area of Blessington as well as active travel infrastructure and public transport services, the NTA is concerned that the future development of this land as a sporting facility or similar trip intensive use, could attract a large proportion of trips by car. Such a scenario would undermine objectives seeking sustainable travel patterns and not support the proper planning and sustainable development of Blessington.

Whilst it is noted that MA 33 indicates potential future active travel connections to this site, given the potential

constraints in delivering this infrastructure at this location in the short term, it is submitted that the Local Authority should carefully consider whether it is appropriate to zone the site for 'active open space' uses during the lifetime of the LAP.

Should the Local Authority consider the zoning to be appropriate, it is recommended that the LAP notes that the future development of the site would be dependent on quality and direct active connections being delivered between the site, the established built-up area and future residential development areas. Notwithstanding the proposed inclusion of indicative active travel routes as part of MA 33, it is considered that the overall Active Travel Strategy proposed does not adequately accommodate for the future provision of active travel trips to this location.

NTA Recommendation

• The NTA recommends that the Local Authority carefully consider the appropriateness of MA 30 given the peripheral location of the subject land.

• The NTA recommends that should the Local Authority consider the zoning to be appropriate, the LAP notes that the future development of the site would be dependent on quality and direct active travel connections being delivered to link the site with existing and future residential areas.

9. Office of the Planning Regulator

The Office recognises the preparation of an LTP provides an opportunity for active travel and sustainable transport measures to be key considerations for the future development of proposed Active Open Space zoned lands under MA 30.

Integrated Land Use and Transport Planning

The Office welcomes the Planning Authority's commitment to prepare an LTP for Blessington, as proposed under MA 11

The Office recognises the preparation of an LTP provides an opportunity for active travel measures and linkages to be incorporated as part of the future development of Active Open Space zoned land under MA 30 given its peripheral location, supporting the development of a long-term vision for Blessington.

The Office recommends additional text is included, as a minor modification, in MA 30 to address this, in accordance with CPO 12.13 and 12.14 of the County Development Plan.

MA Recommendation 1 – Integration of land use and sustainable transport

Having regard to the need for the integration of land use and sustainable transportation, and in particular to:

- RPO 8.1 and RPO 8.4 of the RSES for the integration of land use and transport planning;
- the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended, mandatory target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51%, and the Climate Action Plan 2025, and associated actions including the National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022) targets to reduce vehicle kilometres travelled per year and the National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (2021);
- CPO 12.3 to prepare a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Blessington of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 (the County Development Plan);
- sustainable mobility objectives CPO 12.1 and CPO 12.2 of the County Development Plan;
- cycling and walking objectives CPO 12.13, CPO 12.14, CPO 12.15, CPO 12.16 and CPO 12.17 of the County Development Plan; and
- public transport objectives CPO 12.20 and 12.21 of the County Development Plan,

the Planning Authority is recommended to modify the material alterations as follows:

(i) MA 30 to provide pedestrian and cycle linkages between the Active Open Space zoned lands and surrounding developments to improve permeability and provide shorter, more direct routes to the site.

10. Belgard Estates Ltd.

The submission raises the following issues:

- The PMA has replaced 6.9ha EX 'Extractive Industry' with AOS 'Active Open Space'. No reasoned justification for this amendment has been provided in the Proposed Amendments to the Draft LAP. This change has been made without adequate reasons and is contrary to Page 244 of the Chief Executives Report, where the CE recommends no change to the Draft LAP and states the following:
 - 'The CE is satisfied, on the basis of the detailed analysis conducted in the Social Infrastructure Audit, that the draft plan makes appropriate provision of land zoned for future sports development in the plan area (land zoned AOS). In relation to the suggested greater than anticipated population growth, the Social Infrastructure Audit has accounted for both the existing population as per the 2022 Census, the planned population growth as per the Wicklow County Development Plan and the population in Blessington within Co. Kildare and the targeted population as per the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029. The CE is satisfied that the recommended area of Active Open Space as set out in the Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit accounts for the planned growth as per the prevailing Core Strategies as relevant to Blessington. The CE is satisfied that the areas identified, based on sound planning principles, for new AOS in the draft plan are the most suitable to serve the needs of the settlement and its wider catchment, in terms of proximity to the built up parts of the town, existing and planned residential areas, as well as being most accessible to active travel infrastructure and public transport routes. The main areas identified for future AOS use are located in very close proximity to the existing GAA grounds and are better located than the lands suggested in the submission, which are peripheral. In relation to the request for playing fields to be included as permitted in principle under the AG 'Agriculture' zoning, the CE would have no issue with such a use being included as 'permitted in principle' but this would appear to be an unnecessary recommendation given that the request to zone additional lands in this submission for AG is not supported.' [emphasis in submission]
 - The PMA contradicts the conclusions of the Social Infrastructure Audit and exceeds the requirements outlined.
 - The site is entirely inaccessible from the town centre, leading to hazardous traffic conditions on the BIRR.
 - Additionally, a comprehensive justification for zoning within a development plan is necessary to align with legal precedents, particularly the case of Sister Mary Christian and Others v Dublin City Council, which mandates that councils provide sufficient rationale for their zoning decisions.
 - Requested Amendment 3: the reversal of the amendment that has resulted in a change of c. 6.9ha at Deerpark from 'EX – Extractive Industry' to 'AOS – Active Open Space.

Opinion of Chief Executive

NTA – The CE notes the submission of the NTA. The CE shares the concerns raised in relation to the peripheral location of the lands and does not support the proposed material amendment. The CE does not share the concerns raised in relation to the potential constraints in delivering active travel infrastructure in the short term. Attention is drawn to PMA 33 below, which includes an indicative pedestrian/cyclist route (greenfield/brownfield) around the lands subject of PMA 30. In addition, Objective BLESS45 supports the delivery of new pedestrian and cyclist routes through green field and brownfield lands, as indicatively indicated on Map No. 6 Active Travel. The indicated active travel routes are largely in the same landholding as the lands to be rezoned, which would allow direct connection to the recently constructed Glen Ding Greenway. The CE is satisfied that no modification to the proposed amendment is required in this regard, noting again that the CE does not support the proposed amendment.

OPR – The CE notes the submission of the OPR, accepting the zoning change as reasonable. The CE does not share the view of the OPR and does not support the proposed amendment as outlined below. The submission further recommends the modification of PMA 30 to provide pedestrian and cycle linkages between the Active Open Space zoned lands and surrounding development to improve permeability and provide short, more direct routes to the site.

Attention is drawn to PMA 33 below, which includes an indicative pedestrian/cyclist route (greenfield/brownfield) around the lands subject of PMA 30. In addition, Objective BLESS45 supports the delivery of new pedestrian and cyclist routes through green field and brownfield lands, as indicatively indicated on Map No. 6 Active Travel. The CE is satisfied that no modification to the proposed amendment is required in this regard, noting again that the CE does not support the proposed amendment.

Belgard Estates Ltd. – The CE notes the submission of Belgard Estates Ltd and does not support the proposed amendment. In relation to statements in the submission regarding sufficient rationale for zoning decisions, the CE wishes to draw attention to the full minutes of the Council meeting of the 3rd of March 2025, which includes a document circulated before the meeting containing all proposed amendments raised by elected members (where advance notice was given) and their reasons for the amendments.

The CE does not support the proposed amendment for the reasons already set out in the 1st CE Report, namely:

'The CE is satisfied, on the basis of the detailed analysis carried out in the Social Infrastructure Audit, that the draft plan makes appropriate provision of land zoned for future sports development in the plan area (land zoned AOS). The CE is satisfied that the areas identified, based on sound planning principles, for new AOS in the draft plan are the most suitable to serve the needs of the settlement and its wider catchment, in terms of proximity to the built up parts of the town, existing and planned residential areas, as well as being most accessible to active travel infrastructure and public transport routes. The main areas identified for future AOS use are located in very close proximity to the existing GAA grounds and are better located than the lands suggested in the submission, which are peripheral.'

In addition, the CE is concerned with the potential impact on the proposed zoning on the protection of the N81 realignment corridor.

Recommendation of Chief Executive

To not proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 30

31	Map No 2A Built	Include link to Department archaeology data sources www.archaeology.ie
	Heritage	

Proposed Material	Amendment No. 31
No submissions rec	eived.
Opinion of Chief Ex	ecutive
This proposed amend	dment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous report and is still recommended.
Recommendation of	of Chief Executive
To proceed to make	Proposed Material Amendment No. 31

32	Map No.6 Active	Omit the active travel objective through Mart lands
	Travel Strategy	

 Proposed Material Amendment No. 32

 No submissions received.

 Opinion of Chief Executive

 This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous report and is still recommended.

 Recommendation of Chief Executive

 To proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 32

33	Map No.6 Active Travel Strategy	Amend Map No. 6 Active Travel Strategy to include the below indicative pedestrian/cyclist route (greenfield/brownfield):

Proposed Material Amendment No. 33

Submissions

6. National Transport Authority

[Note that the below submission also makes reference to PMA 30]

MA 30 proposes a rezoning of land for 'Active Open Space' uses at a location north-west of the existing built-up area. Given the peripheral location of the land, removed from the existing built-up area of Blessington as well as active travel infrastructure and public transport services, the NTA is concerned that the future development of this land as a sporting facility or similar trip intensive use, could attract a large proportion of trips by car. Such a scenario would undermine objectives seeking sustainable travel patterns and not support the proper planning and sustainable development of Blessington.

Whilst it is noted that MA 33 indicates potential future active travel connections to this site, given the potential constraints in delivering this infrastructure at this location in the short term, it is submitted that the Local Authority should carefully consider whether it is appropriate to zone the site for 'active open space' uses during the lifetime of the LAP.

Should the Local Authority consider the zoning to be appropriate, it is recommended that the LAP notes that the future development of the site would be dependent on quality and direct active connections being delivered between the site, the established built-up area and future residential development areas. Notwithstanding the proposed inclusion of indicative active travel routes as part of MA 33, it is considered that the overall Active Travel Strategy proposed does not adequately accommodate for the future provision of active travel trips to this location.

NTA Recommendation

• The NTA recommends that the Local Authority carefully consider the appropriateness of MA 30 given the peripheral location of the subject land.

• The NTA recommends that should the Local Authority consider the zoning to be appropriate, the LAP notes that the future development of the site would be dependent on quality and direct active travel connections being delivered to link the site with existing and future residential areas.

Opinion of Chief Executive

NTA – The CE notes the submission of the NTA, noting that no modifications are sought to PMA 33. The CE shares the concerns raised in relation to the peripheral location of the lands and does not support the proposed material amendment. The CE does not share the concerns raised in relation to the potential constraints in delivering active travel infrastructure in the short term. The indicated active travel routes are largely in the same landholding as the lands to be rezoned, which would allow direct connection to the recently constructed Glen Ding Greenway. In addition, Objective BLESS45 supports the delivery of new pedestrian and cyclist routes through green field and brownfield lands, as indicatively indicated on Map No. 6 Active Travel.

This proposed material amendment is intrinsically linked to PMA 30 above, which the CE does not support for the reasons already set out in the 1st CE Report, namely:

'The CE is satisfied, on the basis of the detailed analysis carried out in the Social Infrastructure Audit, that the draft plan makes appropriate provision of land zoned for future sports development in the plan area (land zoned AOS). The CE is satisfied that the areas identified, based on sound planning principles, for new AOS in the draft plan are the most suitable to serve the needs of the settlement and its wider catchment, in terms of proximity to the built up parts of the town, existing and planned residential areas, as well as being most accessible to active travel infrastructure and public transport routes. The main areas identified for future AOS use are located in very close proximity to the existing GAA grounds and are better located than the lands suggested in the submission, which are peripheral.'

In addition, the CE is concerned with the potential impact on the proposed zoning on the protection of the N81 realignment corridor.

Therefore, as the CE does not support PMA30, there is no reason for PMA 33 to be made.

Recommendation of Chief Executive

To **not proceed** to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 33

Should the Elected Members decide to proceed with Proposed Material Amendment No. 30, it is recommended that the members proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 33.

APPENDICES

Appendix 4 Local Transport Assessment

No.	Section	Proposed Amendment
34	All	Review numbering and headings of sections
54		
Proposed Material Amendment No. 34		

No submissions received.

Opinion of Chief Executive

This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous report and is still recommended. Recommendation of Chief Executive

To proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 34

Appendix 5 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (see Addendum I to SFRA)

Ν	lo.	Section	Proposed Amendment
3	5	Insert at end of SFRA	Map 1 Flood Risk Zones (Present day)
			Map 2 Flood Risk Zones (Future Climate Change Scenario)
			Map 3 Overlay of Flood Maps with Zoning Map

Proposed Material Amendment No. 35		
Submissions		
8. Office of Public Works		
The OPW welcomes the follo	ing alterations:	
	5	

Alteration number 35 which adds mapping for present day and future scenario flood risk zones, and includes overlays on Land Use Zonings.

Opinion of Chief Executive

OPW – The CE notes the submission of the OPW, welcoming the proposed amendment.

This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous report and is still recommended. **Recommendation of Chief Executive**

To proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 35

Appendix 6 Blessington Infrastructure Delivery Schedule and Implementation

No.	Section	Proposed Amendment
36	Section 6	Amend text as follows:
		 BLESS 7 Notwithstanding the zoning / designation of land for new 'greenfield' residential development (RN), permission will not be considered for RN2 Priority 2 lands unless the following two conditions are satisfied: 75% of Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consent obtained and development initiated) or after 3 years following adoption of the LAP, less than 50% of the RN1 lands have been activated;;
		 It can be shown that the housing / population generated by the proposed development would not result in the prevailing Core Strategy targets at the time of the application being significantly breached.

Proposed Material Amendment No. 36 No submissions received. Opinion of Chief Executive

This proposed amendment was recommended (in part) by the Chief Executive in her previous report and this part is still recommended, as follows:

- **BLESS7** Notwithstanding the zoning / designation of land for new 'greenfield' residential development (RN), permission will not be considered for RN2 Priority 2 lands unless the following conditions are satisfied:
- 75% of Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consent obtained and development initiated);
- It can be shown that the housing / population generated by the proposed development would not result in the prevailing Core Strategy targets at the time of the application being significantly breached.

Additional amendments were proposed by the Elected Members at the County Council meeting in March 2025.

The CE does not support the additional amendments proposed by the Elected Members for the following reasons:

The residential zoning provisions of the draft plan have been carefully calibrated to ensure compliance with:

- The NPF, RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan requirements and objectives, in particular consistency with the Wicklow Core Strategy;
- Sound spatial principles in accordance in particular with the requirements of guidance set out in the NPF and Ministerial Guidelines 'Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2022).

In these regards, the request for greater flexibility in the criteria for the development of RN2 lands could result in a situation whereby RN2 lands may be developed ahead of certain RN1 lands, such that RN1 lands may not then be able to be developed within the constraints of the prevailing Core Strategy of the Wicklow County Development Plan. This could result in 'leapfrogging' and peripheral development, contrary to Section 6.3.4 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028.

Recommendation of Chief Executive

To further modify and proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 36

Notwithstanding the zoning / designation of land for new 'greenfield' residential development (RN), permission will not be considered for RN2 Priority 2 lands unless the following two conditions are satisfied: - 75% of Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consent obtained and development initiated) or after 3 years following adoption of the LAP, less than 50% of the RN1 lands have been activated;;

- It can be shown that the housing / population generated by the proposed development would not result in the prevailing Core Strategy targets at the time of the application being significantly breached.

37	Section 7	nsert new implementation tables as follows under Appendix 6:		
		(note that the objectives details in the table to follow reflect the amendments		
		proposed above)		

Town Ce	ntre Objectives	Implementation	Timeframe
BLESS1	To support and facilitate activities and developments that will improve the vitality, connectivity and vibrancy of Blessington Town Centre.	To be supported on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan through the Development Management system and via projects and programmes of the Municipal District team, the TRO and the Council's Roads and Transportation Department.	Ongoing
BLESS2	 To encourage the development of infill sites and back lands within Blessington Town Centre in a manner that preserves/creates fine grain building plots and presents strong urban frontages to existing and proposed streets. Active frontages at ground floor level will be encouraged. Traditional arches on Blessington Main Street should be used/reused as primarily pedestrian and cyclist passages to back lands, with vehicular traffic accessing plots from alternative locations if practical. Such areas include: Opportunity Sites as identified in this plan and the Blessington Town Centre First Plan. Back lands of premises on Blessington Main Street facing onto Kilbride Road, between the junction with Blessington Main Street and the Rectory residential development, subject to the preservation of historic boundary walls and landscape amenity in relation to the Poulaphouca Reservoir. 	To be proactively pursued on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan through the Development Management system and via projects and programmes of the Municipal District team, the TRO and the Council's Roads and Transportation Department.	Ongoing
BLESS3	 To support and facilitate improvements to the public realm in Blessington Town Centre to provide an attractive, comfortable environment for pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport. Such improvements could include the following: Reductions in through traffic along Blessington Main Street The rationalisation and reconfiguration of car parking within Blessington Town Centre. The reconfiguration of traffic movements around Newtown Square. Improvements to the spatial and visual connectivity between Blessington Main Street, Market Square and Newtown Square The implementation of a comprehensive public realm scheme on Market Square and adjacent areas of Blessington Town Centre. The undergrounding of cabling along Blessington Main Street. 	To be proactively pursued on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via projects and programmes of the Municipal District team, the TRO and the Council's Roads and Transportation Department.	Ongoing
BLESS4	To direct retail development into the Core Retail Area as a first priority, as set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 (or any update thereof), in line with its position in the County Retail Hierarchy & Strategy. This will be accomplished	lifetime of the plan via the Development Management	Ongoing

	 as follows: There will be no quantitative restriction on the development of retail floorspace within the Blessington Core Retail Area. All developments for additional retail floorspace, which are both outside the Core Retail Area and within Blessington Town Centre (as zoned for such purposes), will be required to be accompanied by a Retail Impact Assessment in line with 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities – Retail Planning' 2012 and any updated or relevant guidelines. The development of retail floorspace outside of Blessington Town Centre (as zoned for such purposes) will not be facilitated unless absolutely necessary. 		
BLESS5	To promote the development of opportunity sites within Blessington Town Centre in accordance with the specific criteria set out for each identified area within this Local Area Plan. Regard should also be had to concept and access plans for opportunity sites as included in the Blessington Town Centre First Plan (or any update thereof).	To be proactively pursued on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via projects and programmes of the Municipal District team and the TRO.	Ongoing
Residenti	al Objectives	Implementation	Timeframe
BLESS6	The priority for housing growth shall be the existing built up area of the settlement, on lands zoned 'town centre', and 'existing residential'. In cognisance that the potential of such regeneration / infill / brownfield sites is difficult to predict, there	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system	Ongoing
	shall be no quantitative restriction inferred from this plan or the associated tables on the number of units that may be delivered within the built up envelope of the town.	System	

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Employm	ent Objectives	Implementation	Timeframe
BLESS8	To facilitate and support all forms of employment creation on appropriately zoned land in Blessington and to promote the intensification of activities on existing employment sites.	To be proactively implemented and pursued on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system and the operations of the Council's Economic Development unit and LEO.	Ongoing
BLESS9	To protect employment zoned land from inappropriate development that would undermine future economic activity or the sustainable development of such areas.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system.	Ongoing
BLES10	To facilitate and support the development of large-scale employment generating developments in Blessington, as the only settlement in West Wicklow designated for strategic employment development.	To be proactively implemented and pursued on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system and the operations of the Council's Economic Development unit and LEO.	Ongoing
BLESS11	To facilitate and support Blessington Town Centre as the priority for 'people'-based employment development, in line with the Core Retail Area as set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan.	To be proactively implemented and pursued on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system and the operations of the Council's Economic Development unit, LEO and TRO.	Ongoing
BLESS12	To facilitate and support the regeneration of current and former quarry lands for employment uses, as zoned for such purposes. The redevelopment of these lands would be suitable for a single large scale employer or for a wide variety of individual 'people'- or 'product'-based industries operating within an overall integrated layout within the lands.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system.	Ongoing
BLESS13	To encourage the redevelopment of brownfield sites for enterprise and employment creation throughout the plan area and to consider allowing 'relaxation' in normal development standards on such sites to promote their redevelopment, where it can be clearly demonstrated that a development of the highest quality, that does not create an adverse or unacceptable working environment or create unacceptable impacts on the built, natural or social environment, will be provided. For the avoidance of doubt, the redevelopment of quarry lands for employment purposes should not generally require the relaxation of standards due to the scale of employment lands in this area.		Ongoing
BLESS14	To facilitate and support the incremental reconfiguration of Blessington Business Park/Oak Drive toward a secondary 'people'-based employment area with a high		Ongoing

	quality public realm, active frontages, and safe active travel accessibility. New applications for employment developments will be considered subject to the inclusion of proposals for the above public realm improvements. New applications for developments deemed to be 'product'-based, or applications concerning existing developments of that type, will be further required to demonstrate that HGV traffic sufficient to create a hazard to active travel users within and around a subject site would not be generated.	Economic Development unit, LEO, TRO, and Roads and	
BLESS15	To facilitate and encourage the exploration and exploitation of aggregates and minerals, 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 relating to the Extractive Industry in Chapter 9 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system.	

Tourism &	& Recreation Objectives	Implementation	Timeframe
BLESS16	To support opportunities to improve the tourism product in Blessington and to facilitate appropriate tourism development within the settlement.	To be supported on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system and via the projects and programmes of the Council's Economic Development Unit including Tourism Department, the Municipal District team and the TRO.	Ongoing
BLESS17	 To facilitate and support the development of improved linkages between areas of tourist attractions within the settlement of Blessington, as follows: The lakeshore and tourist facilities at Burgage More/Burgage Castle. Blessington Town Centre/Architectural Conservation Area/Greenway Hub. Glen Ding Forest and Rath Turtle Moat. Possible woodland attractions, lake views, and tourist services at Doran's Pit. 	To be proactively pursued and supported on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system and via the projects and programmes of the Council's Economic Development Unit including Tourism Department, the Municipal District team and the TRO and the Climate, Environment, Recreation and Amenity Directorate.	Ongoing
BLESS18	To facilitate and support future tourism projects in the Blessington lakeside area including but not limited to links between the town centre and the lakes, and a possible extension to the existing Blessington Greenway.	To be proactively pursued and supported on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system and via the projects and programmes of the Council's Economic Development Unit including Tourism Department, the Municipal District team and the TRO and the Climate, Environment, Recreation and Amenity Directorate.	Ongoing
BLESS19	To facilitate the redevelopment of the former HSE building on Kilbride Road as a Visitor Hub supporting future tourism projects in the Blessington area.	To be proactively pursued and supported on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system and via the projects and programmes of the Council's Economic Development Unit including Tourism Department, the Municipal District team and the TRO and the Climate, Environment, Recreation and Amenity Directorate.	Medium term
BLESS20	To facilitate and encourage the delivery of supporting tourism infrastructure as indicated on Map No. 7 Supporting Tourism Infrastructure.	To be proactively pursued and supported on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system and via the projects and programmes of the Council's Economic Development Unit including Tourism Department, the Municipal District team and the TRO and the Climate, Environment, Recreation and Amenity Directorate.	Ongoing

BLESS21	To facilitate active travel links to nearby tourist attractions, e.g. Russborough House, and other settlements in the area.	To be proactively pursued during the lifetime of the plan by Council's Roads and Transportation Department.	Medium term
BLESS22	 To positively consider the development of a) new hotels in Blessington; b) the development of touring caravan (Aires park) and camping sites (not static mobile home parks) having due regard to surrounding land uses and proper planning and development of the area; c) the development of hostels along established walking routes, the route of the proposed eGreenway within the settlement, and adjacent to existing tourism facilities; the improvement of, and extension to, existing tourist accommodation related developments, subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. 	To be supported on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system	Ongoing
BLESS23	To promote and encourage the sustainable recreational use of the lakeshore of the Poulaphouca Reservoir for eco-tourism activities. Where such recreational uses involve the development of structures or facilities, the Council will ensure that the proposals will respect the natural amenity and scenic character of the area.	To be supported on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system and via the projects and programmes of the Council's Economic Development Unit including Tourism Department and Climate, Environment, Recreation and Amenity Directorate.	Ongoing

Social Inf	rastructure Objectives	Implementation	Timeframe
BLESS24	The Planning Authority will resist developments that entail the loss of existing community, education and open space/recreation lands or buildings unless it can be demonstrated that (a) adequate community, education and open space/recreation lands and buildings would be retained in the settlement having regard to the planned future population of the settlement or (b) the particular lands or buildings are not suitable or needed for current or future educational, community or open space / recreational usage. In particular, developments that would unduly constrain the ability of existing schools to expand will not be permitted.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system.	Ongoing
BLESS25	To facilitate the provision of schools on lands zoned Community and Education (CE) and to consider the provision of schools on any land use zoning, excluding OS1 and OS2 zones, where it is in line with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan, relevant planning guidelines (including the Department of Education guidelines) and proper planning.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system.	Ongoing
BLESS26	To facilitate and support the provision of new childcare facilities in a manner, which is compatible with land-use and transportation policies and adheres to the principles of sustainable development. To facilitate and encourage the co-location of childcare facilities with other educational facilities such as schools. Applications for the development of new educational facilities, or the significant redevelopment or extensions of existing facilities, should consider the provision of co-located childcare facilities within the development.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system.	Ongoing
BLESS27	 To facilitate and encourage the delivery of new open spaces, parks and multipurpose sport uses close to the built-up area of Blessington, including covered spaces. In particular, To require the delivery of significant areas of outdoor play space on lands zoned AOS as part of SLO-2 and SLO-4. To require the delivery of public parks on lands zoned OS1 in SLO-1 and SLO-8. 	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system, supported by the Council's Climate, Environment, Recreation and Amenity Directorate subject to detailed design and availability of funding mechanisms and through their delivery in tandem with development proposals on privately owned sites	Medium term (developed led)
BLESS28	To facilitate and encourage the continued operation of existing and development of new community infrastructure, including (but not limited to) indoor multi-functional community spaces, youth centres etc., in Blessington. In particular, to require the development of a community hall in the redevelopment of Doran's Pit in line with SLO 4.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system, supported by the Council's Climate, Environment, Recreation and Amenity Directorate; the delivery of new facilities shall be subject to detailed	Ongoing

		design and availability of funding mechanisms and/or through the delivery in tandem with development proposals on privately owned sites	
BLESS29	To facilitate and encourage the continued operation of existing and development of new care and health related facilities, including (but not limited to) primary care centres, general practitioners surgeries, care / nursing homes and respite / hospice centres facilities particularly within the built-up area of Blessington.	lifetime of the plan via the Development Management	Ongoing
BLESS30	To facilitate and support the development of a swimming pool/leisure centre within Blessington.	To be supported by Council's Climate, Environment, Recreation and Amenity Directorate and Municipal District team.	Medium term

Heritage,	Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Objectives	Implementation	Timeframe
BLESS31	To consolidate and safeguard the historical and architectural character of Blessington through the protection of individual buildings, structures, shopfronts and elements of the public realm that contribute greatly to this character ¹ .	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system and via the projects and programmes of the Municipal District team, the TRO and the Council's Heritage Officer.	Ongoing
BLESS32	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.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system and via the projects and programmes of the Municipal District team, the TRO and the Council's Heritage Officer.	Ongoing
BLESS33	To promote the sustainable use and re-use of heritage vernacular buildings along Blessington Main Street/N81, Market Square, and Kilbride Road, and to resist the demolition of any such building unless absolutely necessary.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system and via the projects and programmes of the Municipal District team, the TRO and the Council's Heritage Officer.	Ongoing
BLESS34	Protect and enhance the character, setting and environmental quality of natural, architectural and archaeological heritage assets, and in particular those features of the natural landscape and built structures that contribute to their special interest. The natural, architectural and archaeological heritage of the area shall be protected in accordance with the objectives set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan. In particular, the heritage assets of the Poulaphouca Reservoir and Glen Ding Forest shall be rigorously protected.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system and via the projects and programmes of the Municipal District team and the Council's Heritage & Biodiversity Officers.	Ongoing
BLESS35	To protect the listed views and prospects, as they relate to the plan area, from development that would either obstruct the view / prospect from the identified vantage point or form an obtrusive or incongruous feature in that view / prospect. Due regard will be paid in assessing development applications to the span and scope of the view / prospect and the location of the development within that view / prospect. Particular regard will be had to listed (and other) views and prospects to and from the Poulaphouca Reservoir.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system.	Ongoing

¹ The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage can be utilised as a source of information with regard to the architectural value of any such features, but should not be considered an exhaustive list of buildings worthy of protection.

BLESS36	 To protect the following additional views: From St. Mary's Church to Bastion Wood and Glen Ding Forest. From side streets/laneways east (to the Poulaphouca Reservoir/Wicklow Mountains) and west (to Glen Ding) from Blessington Main Street. 	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system.	Ongoing
BLESS37	To reinforce the lakeshore character of the settlement and to provide for the enjoyment of the Poulaphouca Reservoir, Glen Ding Forest, and other natural areas as recreational and natural assets.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan through the projects and programmes of the Municipal District team, the Council's Climate, Environment, Recreation and Amenity Directorate, the TRO and the Council's Heritage and Biodiversity Officers.	Ongoing
BLESS38	 To promote and support the development of enhanced or new greenways and amenity walks at the following locations and require development in the vicinity of same to enhance existing routes and / or provide new links: Poulaphouca Reservoir (Blessington Greenway/proposed Blessington eGreenway) Glen Ding Forest Wooded areas at Doran's Pit Blessington Demesne (Town Park) The enhancement of existing, and development of new, recreational facilities along the lakeshore area, such as walking routes, car parking areas, signage, changing / toilet facilities and water based clubs/facilities, will be considered subject to compliance with the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive and other planning considerations. 	To be pursued on an ongoing basis during the lifetime	
BLESS39		lifetime of the plan via the Development Management	Ongoing
BLESS40	To facilitate the development of new green corridors within the plan area where	To be pursued on an ongoing basis during the lifetime	Ongoing

	 opportunities may be identified, and barriers in ecological connectivity rectified, via the development management process. In particular, the following additional green corridors will be facilitated: The creation of green corridors through Quarry Lands, and where relevant SLO3, to link the Deerpark watercourse and Glen Ding Forest with the plan boundary in the direction of the Red Bog SAC. The creation of green corridors linking the Deerpark Watercourse to Local Biodiversity Areas and existing wooded areas on the eastern boundary of SLO3 (refer to SLO3 below). The creation of a green corridor through the grounds of St. Mary's Senior National School to improve the connectivity between existing green corridors along Oak Drive/Blessington Business Park and Blessington Main Street. This link may in turn improve ecological connectivity to the lakeshore via boundary hedging on the grounds of the Church of Our Lady and the 'Priest's Walk' through the Rectory residential development. 	Municipal District team, the Council's Climate, Environment, Recreation and Amenity Directorate, and the Council's Heritage and Biodiversity Officers, subject to detailed design and availability of funding mechanisms, and/or through their delivery in tandem	
BLESS41	To enforce a general presumption against the culverting of watercourses within the plan area, except where absolutely necessary. Where development is proposed within sites that contain culverted watercourses, proposals should be included to restore or 'daylight' said watercourses with an appropriate riparian zoned in line with CPO 17.26 of the Wicklow County Development Plan. Similarly, where development includes significant works to existing roads with culverted crossings of watercourses, proposals should be included, where practical, to improve the ecological connectivity of these crossings, e.g. the replacement of culverts with clear span bridges, box culverts with wildlife ledges, etc.	lifetime of the plan via the Development Management	Ongoing
BLESS42	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.		Ongoing

Transport	tation Objectives	Implementation	Timeframe
BLESS- XX	In collaboration and with the support of the relevant transport agencies, to prepare a Local Transport Plan for Blessington.	The delivery of a LTP shall be actively progressed by the Council's Roads and Transportation Unit during the lifetime of the plan, subject availability of funding mechanisms, including public funding (Council / NTA / TII)	Short Term
BLESS43	 Support the implementation of proposed road safety and active travel projects, including (but not limited to): The Blessington Main Street N81 Road Safety Improvement Scheme The Blessington Pedestrian & Cyclist Improvement Scheme The Blessington Gateway Road Safety Improvement Scheme The extension of the existing Blessington Greenway into the Blessington eGreenway, as it relates to the plan area. 	The delivery of these road improvement projects and programmes shall be actively progressed by the Council's Roads and Transportation Unit and Climate, Environment, Recreation and Amenity Directorate during the lifetime of the plan, subject to final detailed designs and availability of funding mechanisms, including public funding (Council / NTA / TII) and through their delivery in tandem with development proposals on privately owned sites.	Short Term
BLESS44	 Support the implementation of the recommendations of the Transport Assessment with regard to the delivery of new regional/distributor roads and road improvements², including(but not limited to): a) The completion of the Blessington Inner Relief Road (northern and southern sections). b) The provision of a road objective through Doran's Pit, linking the N81 to Kilbride Road. c) The completion of a partly constructed link road in Blessington Demesne, linking the GAA grounds/educational/care facilities with Naas Road. d) The delivery of the N81 Tallaght to Hollywood Cross Road Improvement Scheme. Any development within the preferred route corridor will be assessed for acceptability having regard to the potential effects on the future viability of the proposed road. Active travel routes from the town centre to Glen Ding should be facilitated in the final design of the N81 Tallaght to Hollywood Cross Road Improvement Scheme. 	The delivery of these road improvement projects and programmes shall be actively progressed by the Council's Roads and Transportation Unit during the lifetime of the plan, subject to final detailed designs and availability of funding mechanisms, including public funding (Council / NTA / TII) and through their delivery in tandem with development proposals	(development led) b) Medium term (development led)

² The detail associated with new transport or green/blue infrastructure projects referred to in this Plan and accompanying Transport Assessment, including locations and associated mapping, that are not already permitted or provided for by existing plans / programmes / etc. is non-binding and indicative. Such new projects shall be subject to feasibility assessment, taking into account the environmental constraints and the objectives of the Plan relating to sustainable mobility. A Corridor and Route Selection Process will be undertaken for such projects where appropriate. Proposed interventions will be required to demonstrate that they are consistent with all relevant legislative requirements.

BLESS45	 Support the implementation of the recommendations of the Transport Assessment with regard to the delivery of safe active travel routes along the existing road network and along new off-road routes, including The delivery of the Greater Dublin Area cycle network, as it relates to the plan area. The delivery of the National Cycle Network, as it relates to the plan area (exact route from Blessington to Naas to be determined). The delivery of local/greenway feeder routes within the plan area (refer to Map 6 Active Travel and the accompanying Transport Assessment). The delivery of identified, and other, permeability improvements within the settlement (refer to Map No. 6 Active Travel). The delivery of identified, and other, traffic management measures within the settlement (refer to Map No. 5 Transport Strategy and the accompanying Transport Assessment). The delivery of new pedestrian and cyclist routes through green field and brownfield lands, as indicatively indicated on Map No. 6 Active Travel. The delivery of additional pedestrian and cyclist routes where development occurs along the boundaries of green corridors – on sites containing or immediately adjacent to OS2 lands, appropriate pedestrian and cycle routes should be laid out along the OS2 boundary, with permeability improvements and short sections linking to other routes where necessary at site boundaries. 	The delivery of these road improvement projects and programmes shall be actively progressed by the Council's Roads and Transportation Unit during the lifetime of the plan, subject to final detailed designs and availability of funding mechanisms, including public funding (Council / NTA / TII) and through their delivery in tandem with development proposals on privately owned sites.	Ongoing
BLESS46	To ensure that development along the route of the existing/proposed Blessington Greenway, and along indicated greenway feeder routes (see Map No. 6 Active Travel), minimises the creation of additional entrances/junctions to only those absolutely necessary, in order to reduce potential conflict between greenway users and vehicular traffic.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system	Ongoing
BLESS47	New development should, where relevant, have regard to the indicated street descriptions shown on Map No. 5 Transport Strategy (refer to the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets), subject to the completion of the necessary road objectives to allow that function (as set out in the	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system	Ongoing

	accompanying Transport Assessment.) Streets without an indicated description should be considered 'local' streets.		
BLESS48		The delivery of these road improvement projects and programmes shall be actively progressed by the Council's Roads and Transportation Unit and Climate, Environment, Recreation and Amenity Directorate during the lifetime of the plan, subject to final detailed designs and availability of funding mechanisms, including public funding (Council / NTA / TII) and through their delivery in tandem with development proposals on privately owned sites.	Medium Term
BLESS49	 To continue to work with the NTA to promote the delivery of improved and new bus services, facilities and infrastructure within the plan area and connecting the plan area to the wider region by: supporting the development and delivery of bus service enhancement projects, under the Connecting Ireland and Bus Connects programmes and measures to improve bus priority such as additional bus lanes and priority signalling etc as may be deemed appropriate; facilitating the needs of existing or new bus providers with regard to bus stops and garaging facilities (although unnecessary duplication of bus stops on the same routes / roads will not be permitted); supporting the development of enhanced bus shelters, of secure covered bicycle parking facilities at key locations along bus routes, to promote and support the improvement of N81 in a manner capable of facilitating greater free flow of public transport, to support and facilitate the existing service providers and encourage the further development of the Local Link Rural Transport Programme (and any other or subsequent rural transport programmes). Enhancing pedestrian and cycling connectivity to public transport services. 	Ongoing engagement between the NTA and the Council's Roads and Transportation Unit	Ongoing

BLESS50	To protect the strategic function of the N81 in accordance with the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoECLG, 2012) and in compliance with TII Publications.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system	Ongoing
Flood Ma	nagement Objectives		
BLESS51	 Applications for new developments or significant alterations/extension to existing developments in an area identified as at risk of flooding (Flood Zones A and B) as set out in the SFRA and flood maps appended to this plan OR in Flood Zone C but within an area that is deemed by the Local Authority at any time to be at possible risk of flooding having regard to new information with respect to flood risk in the area that has come to light; or that is identified as at possible future risk of flooding having regard to climate change scenarios either on Map X attached to this plan or on any future maps prepared by the OPW during the lifetime of the plan; shall comply with the 'Justification Test for Development Management', as set out in Box 5.1 of 'the Planning System and Flood Risk Management' Guidelines 2009 (as may be amended, supplemented or replaced during the lifetime of this plan) and shall be accompanied by a site specific Flood Risk Assessment. Site Specific Flood Risk Assessments shall be in accordance with the requirements set out in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and the plan SFRA. 	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system	Ongoing
Other Inf	rastructure Objectives		
BLESS52	To support the continued upgrade of Blessington Waste Water Treatment Plant and/or additional Waste Water Treatment Plants serving the plan area, subject to the full environmental protection of the Poulaphouca Reservoir and associated watercourses.	Ongoing engagement with the Council's Infrastructure Directorate.	Ongoing
BLESS- XX	To 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.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system and through the projects and programmes of the Council's Climate, Environment, Recreation and Amenity Directorate and other State Agencies such as Uisce Eireann, the EPA and IFI.	
BLESS-	To support and facilitate the improvement of the quality of surface water	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of	Ongoing

xx runoff that directly (or indirectly) will reach Poulaphouca Reservoir. This shall be applied to both new/expanded developments and to any planned improvements to existing urban spaces. In this regard, developments shall be designed in accordance with the guidance document "Implementation of Urban Nature-based Solutions: Guidance Document for Planners, Developers and Developer Agents" LAWPRO 2024

Add the following table:

Infrastructure assessment and requirements for key development areas (identified as SLOs)

		Current	servicing status		Additonal infrastructure needs to support full development of site
Site ID	Water	Wastewater	Surface Water	Roads &	
	Supply	Infrastructure	Infrastructure	Transportation	
SLO1 Naas Road	2	2	2	2	Roads – completion of link road within site to connect Oak Drive to Naas Road –
					Developer + WCC
					Water Services – services available in Naas Road - developer delivered
					Community facilities (school site) – land reservation
					Amenity park – Developer +WCC
SLO2 Blessington Demesne	1	2	2	2	Roads
(west)					(1) completion of link road within site to connect Oak Drive to Naas Road -
(expanded to include SLO8)					Developer +WCC
					(2) completion of northern section of BIRR – Developer +WCC
					Water Services – services available in Oak Drive - developer delivered
					Community facilities (school site) – land reservation
					Amenity Park – Developer +WCC
					Sports Park – Developer +WCC
SLO3 Quarry Employment	2	2	2	2	Roads – completion of BIRR – Developer +WCC
Lands					Water Services – services available from N81 or future BIRR - developer delivered
					Amenity park – Developer +WCC
SLO4 Doran's Pit	2	2	2	2	Roads – link road within site to connect N81 to Kilbride Road – Developer +WCC
					Water Services – extension of services outside of site – Uisce Eireann.
					Community facilities (community building) – Developer +WCC
					Sports Park – Developer +WCC
					Amenity Park – Developer +WCC
					Community / Tourism facilities – Developer +WCC
SLO5 Burgage More (north)	1	1	1	1	N/A
SLO6 Burgage More (central)	1	1	1	1	N/A
SLO7 Burgage More (south)	1	2	2	2	Roads – access via SLO6 - Developer +WCC
					Water Services – extension of services outside of site – Uisce Eireann.
SLO9 Santryhill	2	2	2	2	Roads
					(1) completion of northern section of BIRR – Developer +WCC
					(2) completion pedestrian infrastructure along N81 from town centre to new
					BIRR / N81 roundabout - Developer +WCC
					Water Services – services will be available in BIRR - developer delivered

SLO10 Blessington Demesne	1	1	1	1	Community facilities – Developer
East					
SLO11 Milltown Gate 1 1 1 1 2 Roads – roads safety improvements along N81 in area – Developer, TII		Roads – roads safety improvements along N81 in area – Developer, TII +WCC			
					Community facilities (public car park) – Developer

1 = serviced, 2 = serviceable, 3 = unserviced

Proposed Material Amendment No. 37

Submission

6. National Transport Authority

As part of this Material Amendment, an infrastructure assessment of the SLO sites is provided and it is stated that SLO 5 and SLO 6 are 'serviced' from a 'roads and transportation' perspective. Given the current lack of active travel infrastructure connecting these sites to adjacent areas, it is considered that this status should be reassessed.

NTA Recommendation

•Reconsider the servicing status attributed to SLO 5 and SLO 6 from a roads and transportation perspective. 11. Cairn Homes Properties Ltd

Cairn Homes notes pertinent references to Blessington Demesne in objectives listed in PMA 37, and supports the delivery of social infrastructure and recreation amenity; enhanced/new greenways; and road infrastructure; with the issue of implementation, phasing and funding being crucial to ensure these facilities can be delivered in a viable manner in tandem with residential development. BLESS7 has been amended here. Cairn is generally supportive of these changes as noted in Section 2 of this submission but maintains that the wording remains restrictive and advocate for a softer transition between RN1 and RN2 lands.

Opinion of Chief Executive

NTA – The CE wishes to draw attention to the objectives of SLO5 and SLO6 (partly under construction), alongside the provisions of Map No. 5 and Map No. 6, whereby the development of these lands would result in the following: (a) the development of greenfield pedestrian and cyclist routes through the lands linking into the existing Blessington Greenway; (b) the development of a vehicular network on the lands that would **not** incentivise the usage of the L-8858 (Troopersfield Road/Burgage More) by private vehicles, such that active travel users may (subject to further analysis at development management stage) utilise the L-8858 as a mixed traffic environment ahead of the provision

of any segregated infrastructure. On this basis, the CE is satisfied that the lands are serviced from a Roads & Transportation Perspective.

Cairn Homes Properties Ltd. – The CE notes the submission of Cairn Homes Properties Ltd. Issues raised in relation to Objective Bless 7 are addressed under PMA 8 above. Any modifications that may arise for PMA 8 will be carried into the above implementation tables as changes consequent without the need for a specific modification under PMA 37.

This proposed amendment was recommended by the Chief Executive in her previous report and is still recommended. The objectives listed represent the objectives as amended by the full range of proposed material amendments, including those which the CE does not support. Where the CE has elsewhere recommended against the wording of objectives repeated here, the tables can be updated as changes consequent to the decision of the elected members.

Recommendation of Chief Executive

To proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment No. 37

3.0 MAPS

List of maps to follow

- Map 1A: Land use Zoning Map published Draft LAP
- **Map 1B:** Land use Zoning map showing Proposed Material Amendments
- Map 4A: Current Flood Risk
- Map 4B: Current Flood Risk and Draft LAP
- Map 4C: Current Flood Risk and Proposed Material Amendments
- Map 4D: Future Flood Risk
- Map 4E: Future Flood Risk and Draft LAP
- Map 4F: Future Flood Risk and Proposed Material Amendments
- **MAP 5A**: Proposed Amended Transport Strategy Map
- **MAP 5B:** Proposed Amended Transport Strategy Map Opportunity Sites
- **MAP 6A:** Proposed Amended Active Travel Strategy Map
- **MAP 6B:** Proposed Amended Active Travel Strategy Map Opportunity Sites

PART 5: SUMMARY OF SEA / AA ISSUES RAISED AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OPINION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No.	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
1. Er	nvironmental Protection Agency		
а	We acknowledge your notice, dated 21st March 2025, in relation to the proposed Material Amendments ('the Amendments') to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025- 2031 ('the Plan' The EPA is one of the statutory environmental authorities under the SEA Regulations. In our role as an SEA environmental authority, we focus on promoting the full and transparent integration of the findings of the Environmental Assessment into plans and programmes and advocating that the key environmental challenges for Ireland are addressed as relevant and appropriate to the Plan.	Noted.	None.
b	Proposed SEA Determination We note your proposed determination regarding the need for SEA of the Amendments, that SEA is required. As a priority, we focus our efforts on reviewing and commenting on key sector plans. For land-use plans at county and local level, we provide a 'self-service approach' via guidance document 'SEA of Local Authority Land Use Plans – EPA Recommendations and Resources'. This document is updated regularly and sets out our key recommendations for integrating environmental considerations into Local Authority land-use plans. These should be considered, as appropriate and relevant to the Amendments.	Noted. The EPA's guidance, including the cited document, has been considered throughout the SEA/Plan- preparation process.	None.
C	Sustainable Development In proposing the Amendments, Wicklow County Council should ensure that the Plan as amended, is consistent with the need for proper planning and sustainable development. Adequate and appropriate critical service infrastructure should be in place, or required to be put in place, to service any development proposed and authorised during the lifetime of the Plan. In considering the Amendments, Wicklow County Council should consider the need to align with national commitments on climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as incorporating any relevant recommendations in sectoral, regional and local climate adaptation plans. Wicklow County Council should also ensure that the Amendments are consistent with key relevant higher level plans and programmes.	Noted. In preparing the Draft Plan and Proposed Material Amendments the following have been considered and advised upon: the need for adequate and appropriate critical service infrastructure; commitments on climate change mitigation and adaptation; and consistency with relevant higher level plans and programmes.	None.

d	Future Modifications to the Draft Plan. Where further changes to the Draft Plan are proposed, these should be screened for likely significant effects in accordance with SEA Regulations. They should be subject to the same method of assessment applied in the "environmental assessment" of the Draft Plan.	significant effects in accordance with SEA	None.
		Regulations. They will be subject similar methods of assessment as has been applied in the assessment of the Plan and Proposed Material Amendments to date.	
e	 SEA Statement – "Information on the Decision" Once the Plan is adopted, you should prepare an SEA Statement that summarises the following: How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan. How the Environmental Report, submissions, observations and consultations have been taken into account during the preparation of the Plan. The reasons for choosing the Plan adopted in the light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and, The measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Plan. A copy of the SEA Statement with the above information should be sent to any environmental authority consulted during the SEA process. Guidance on preparing SEA Statements is available on the EPA website at the following link: https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoringassessment/assessment/EPA_Guidance_web.pdf 	An SEA Statement will be prepared on adoption of the Plan, summarising the required information. The EPA's Guidance on preparing SEA Statements will be considered when preparing the statement. A copy of the SEA Statement will be sent to any environmental authority consulted during the SEA process.	None.
f	 Environmental Authorities Under the SEA Regulations, you should consult with: Environmental Protection Agency; Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications; and Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine. any adjoining planning authority whose area is contiguous to the area of a planning authority which prepared a draft plan, proposed variation or local area plan. 	Noted. These environmental authorities have been consulted with.	None.

7. D	7. Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage							
а	Nature Conservation	Noted.	None					
	The following observations are made by the Department in its role as the authority with overarching							
	responsibility for nature conservation and the nature Directives (i.e. the EU Birds and Habitats Directives)							
	and as an environmental authority under SEA legislation. The observations are not exhaustive and are							
	offered to assist Wicklow County Council in meeting its obligations in relation to nature conservation,							
	European sites, biodiversity and environmental protection in the preparation of the Proposed Material							
	Amendments to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025.							

b	 Proposed Material Amendment No. 25 – OP4 The Department is concerned about the Proposed Material Amendment from 'OS2 – Natural Space' to 'E – Employment', and potential impacts on the adjacent Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA. The Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA is designated for two Special Conservation Interest (SCI) bird species, greylag goose (Anser anser), and lesser black-backed gull (Larus fuscus). The PMA No.25 is approximately 530m from the SPA boundary. The SPA is of national importance for its Greylag Goose population, which is one of the largest in the country. The SPA provides the main roost for the birds, with feeding occurring mostly on improved grassland outside of the site. Several waterbird species may at times use habitats situated within the immediate hinterland of the SPA or in areas ecologically connected to it [i.e., ex-situ sites]. The reliance on these habitats will vary from species to species and from site to site. Significant habitat changes or increased levels of disturbance within these areas could result in the displacement of the listed waterbird species from areas within the SPA, and/or a reduction in their numbers. A Conservation Objective target for the SPA is to have sufficient area of utilisable habitat available in ecologically important sites outside the SPA. It is not known whether zoning this land will lead to loss of such supporting habitat and thereby undermine the conservation objectives for the SPA. A number of other Annex I and Annex II species listed on the Birds Directive also utilise the SPA and surrounding suitable habitats for foraging, roosting, and breeding, including whooper swan, lapwing, snipe, wigeon, teal, mallard, to name a few. In addition, a reduction in water quality (either alone or in combination with other pressures on water quality) from construction activities could result in the degradation of sensitive habitats present within Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA, which in turn could negatively affect the SCI bird species that rely	The CE notes the submission of the DHLGH. While the issues raised are noted, the CE is satisfied that the distance of the lands to the European Site as well as the application of the wide suite of environmental protection objectives in both the County Development Plan and this LAP to any application for permission that may be made on the lands, will fully ensure that no adverse impacts would arise on the Poulaphuca SPA. Attention is drawn to the following additional information:	None
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b	Proposed Material Amendment No. 25 – OP4 (continued)	Addendum I to the AA Natura	
		Impact Report for the Draft	
	The Department recommends that text is included for the zoning of PMA 25, to ensure all impacts as a	LAP provides a focused	
	result of any proposed works by itself and in combination with other plans or projects on the nearby	consideration of Proposed	
	SPA and any other European sites within the Zone of Influence of the site, are considered, and that all	Material Amendments with	
	proposed projects must have regard to the Habitats Directive in this site.	respect to European sites.	
	The Department further recommends all hedgerows and treelines and other natural features are	As detailed under Section 1	
	retained and light spill is avoided on these features within this site, to ensure ecological corridors	"Introduction" of this	
	between habitats to the south and north of SLO4 are maintained.	Addendum: "This report is part	
		of the overall and ongoing AA	
		process that is being	
		undertaken alongside the	
		preparation of the Draft Plan	
		(an AA Natura Impact Report	
		has already been placed on	
		public display alongside the	
		Draft Plan). It will be	
		considered, alongside other	
		documentation prepared as	
		part of this process, at	
		adoption of the Plan."	
		,	

Proposed Material Amendment No. 25 – OP4 (continued)	Section 3 of this Addendum	
	provides the findings of	
	screening for AA for relevant	
	European sites and all	
	Proposed Material	
	Amendments.	
	As detailed under Section 4	
	"Conclusion": "The risks to the	
	safeguarding and integrity of	
	the qualifying interests, special	
	conservation interests and	
	conservation objectives of the	
	European sites have been	
	addressed through measures	
	that have already been	
	integrated into the Draft Plan	
	and through existing, already	
	in force, policies and	
	objectives within the Wicklow	
	County Development Plan (as	
	varied) with which the	
	Proposed Material	
	Amendments and all lower tier	
	plans/projects must comply."	

Proposed Material Amendment No. 25 – OP4 (continued)	Appendix II to the Addendum	
	identifies the measures that	
	have been incorporated into	
	the Draft Plan and associated	
	existing Wicklow County	
	Development Plan (as varied)	
	in order to mitigate against	
	potential effects to European	
	sites, as already identified by	
	the AA Natura Impact Report	
	for the Draft Plan. These	
	include various European Sites	
	Objectives and measures	
	relating to the protection of	
	water quality, trees,	
	hedgerows and lighting.	
	Zoning of lands as "E -	
	Employment" does not mean	
	development will be permitted	
	on these lands. Any proposal	
	for development on zoned	
	land must demonstrate	
	compliance with the provisions	
	of both the Local Area Plan	
	and the Development Plan in	
	order to be granted	
	permission.	

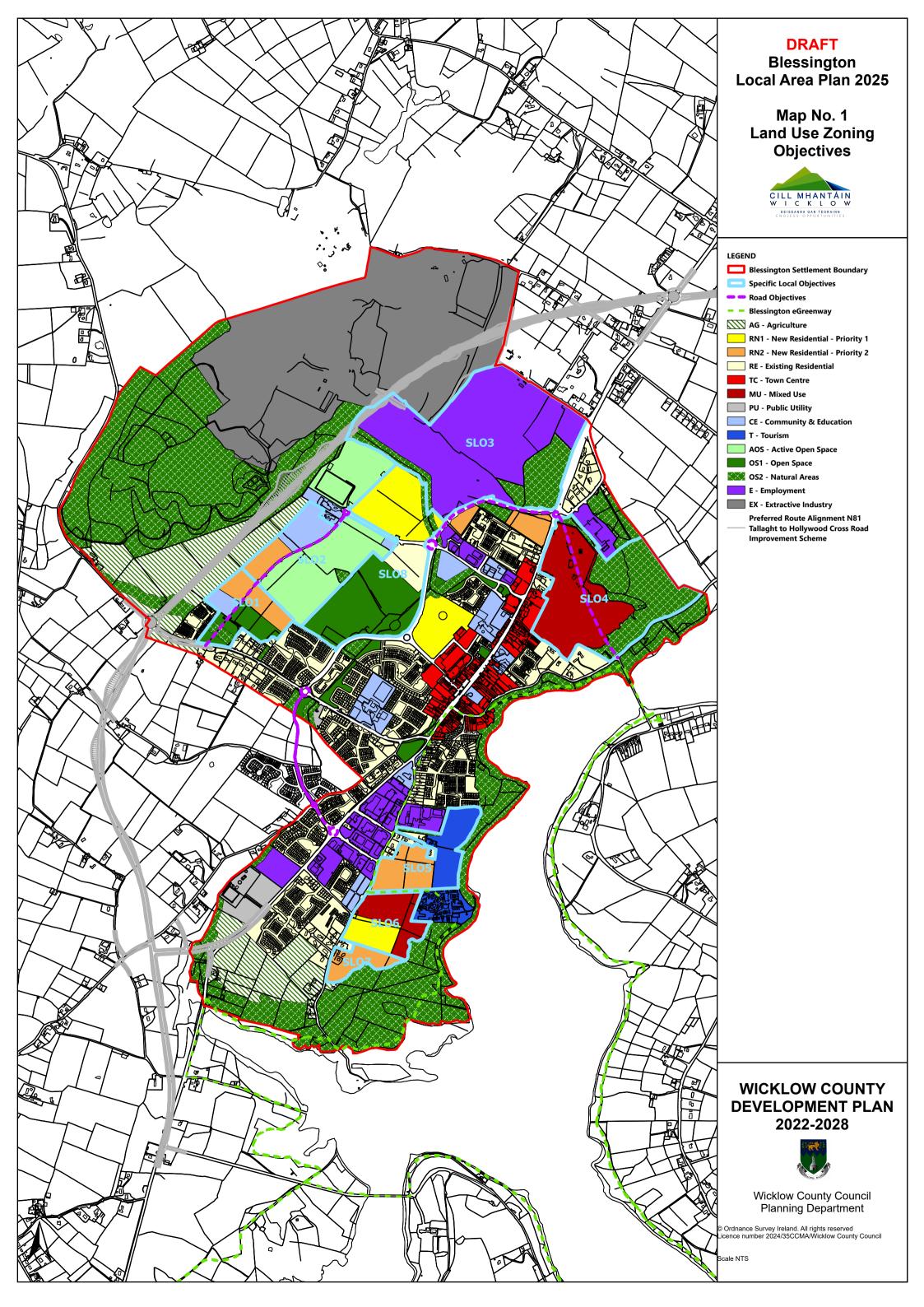
Proposed Material Amendment No. 25 – OP4 (continued)	This proposed amendment
	was recommended by the
	Chief Executive in her previous
	report; all of the CE's
	recommended amendments
	were subject to SEA and AA
	screening and through said
	process no adverse impacts on
	the environment or on the
	European Site were identified
	as likely. The CE is satisfied
	that this assessment remains
	robust.
	To proceed to make Proposed
	Material Amendment No. 25

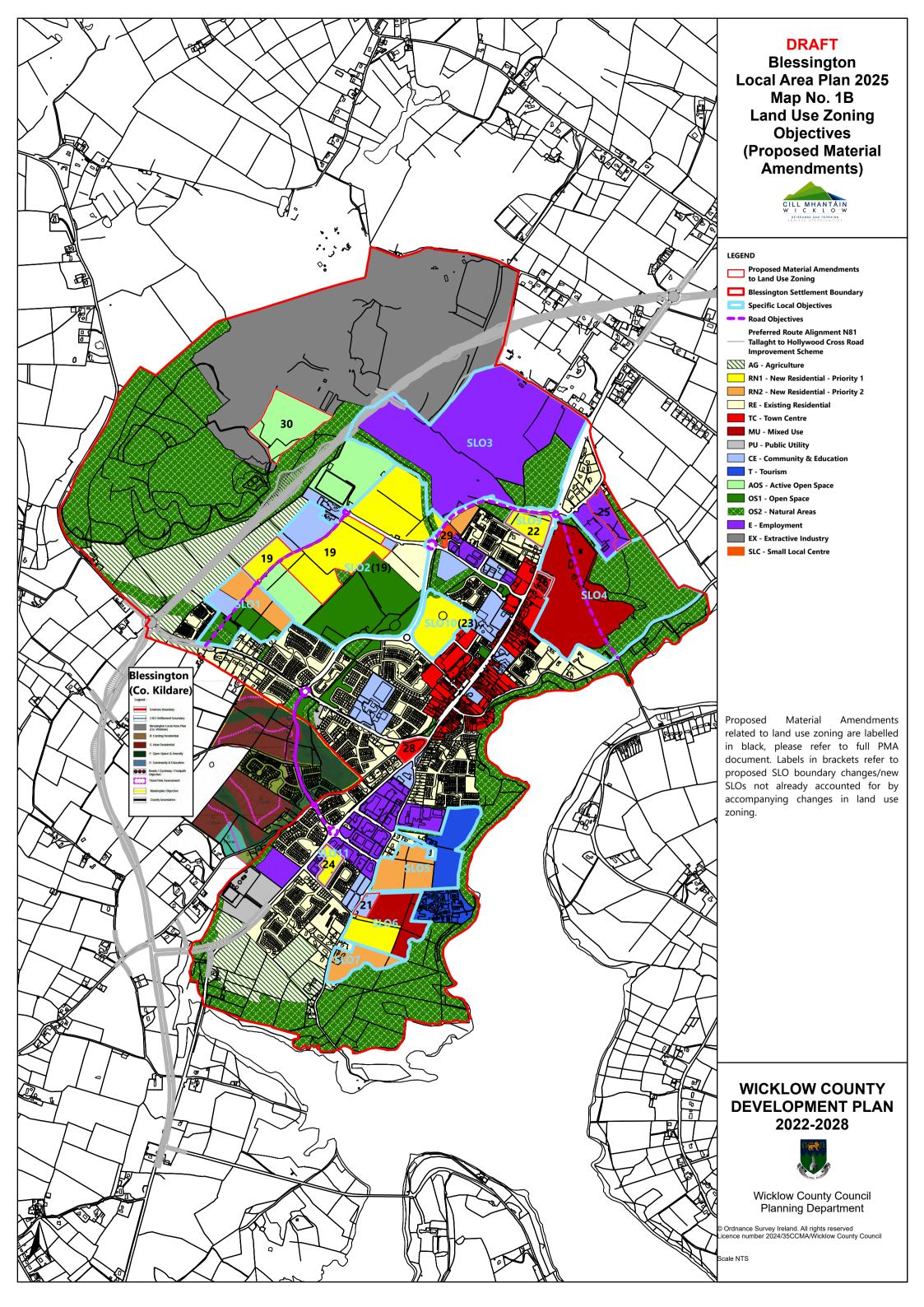
Proposed Material Amendments No. 5 – OP9	The CE notes the submission of • Any lighting
[This submission indicated that it was in relation to PMA No. 5, however its contents are rather in relation to PMA No. 6 and is addressed here.]	the Department. In relation to proposed should
	r in additional text regarding the have regard to best
	Habitats Directive, Objectives practice guidance
PMA No.5 includes the amendment from 'OS1' to 'TC Town Centre'. The Department welcomes the objectives for this site to retain hedgerows and treelines to the north/northwest, east, and southern boundaries. In order for these features to retain their suitability for foraging and commuting bats and	CPO17.4, CPO17.5, CPO17.6 on bats and
other nocturnal species, lighting should also be limited in this site. There should be no additional	
spill on the features where dark zones are existing currently, and any lighting proposed should ha	
regard to best practice guidance, such as the Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance on bats and artificial lighting. ¹	and proposal within the LAP.
	Further to the County Plan
The Department further recommends text is included to ensure all impacts as a result of any proposed works by itself and in combination with other plans or projects on the nearby SPA and any other European sites within the Zone of Influence of the site, are considered, and that all proposed projects must have regard to the Habitats Directive in this site.	objectives the draft Local Area
¹ Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting (BCT and Institute of Lighting Professionals 2023)	

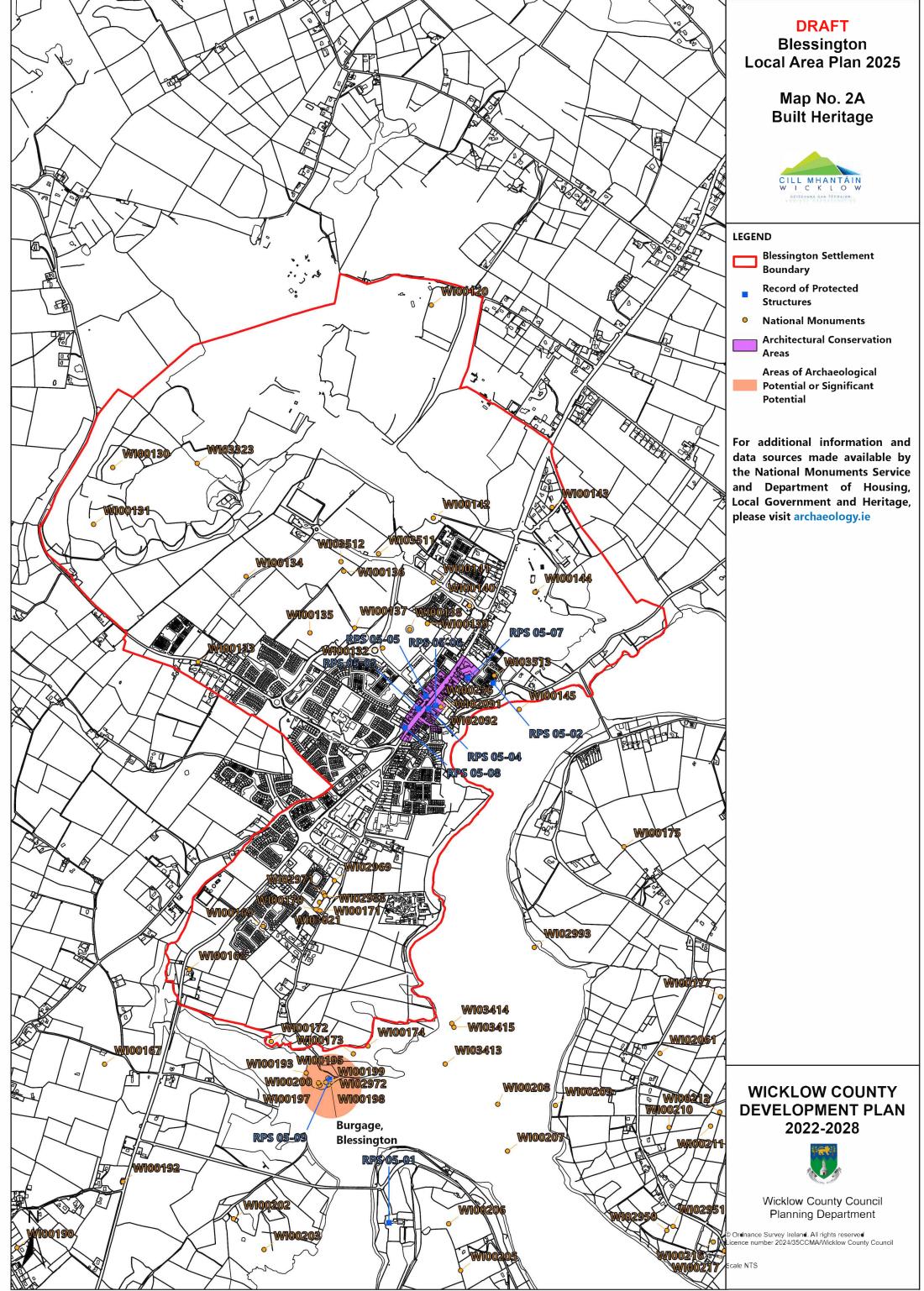
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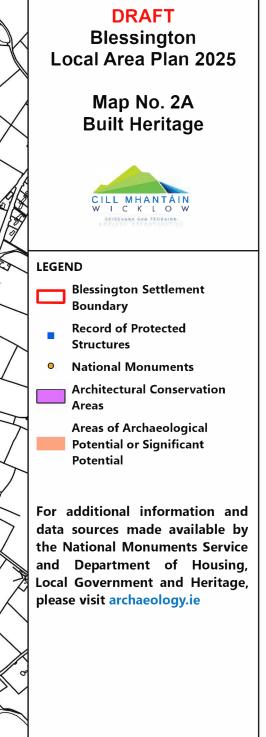
'European Sites Objectives To protect *European Sites and a suitable buffer* area from inappropriate development. Projects giving rise to adverse effects on the integrity of European Sites (cumulatively, directly or indirectly) arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall not be permitted on the basis of this plan15. Ensure that development proposals, contribute as appropriate towards the protection and where possible enhancement of the ecological coherence of the European Site network and encourage the retention and management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild fauna and flora as per Article 10 of the EU Habitats directive. All projects and plans arising from this Plan will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. In order to ensure the protection of the integrity of European Sites, the planning authority is not limited to the implementation of the above objectives, and shall implement all other relevant objectives of the CDP and LAP as it sees fit.'

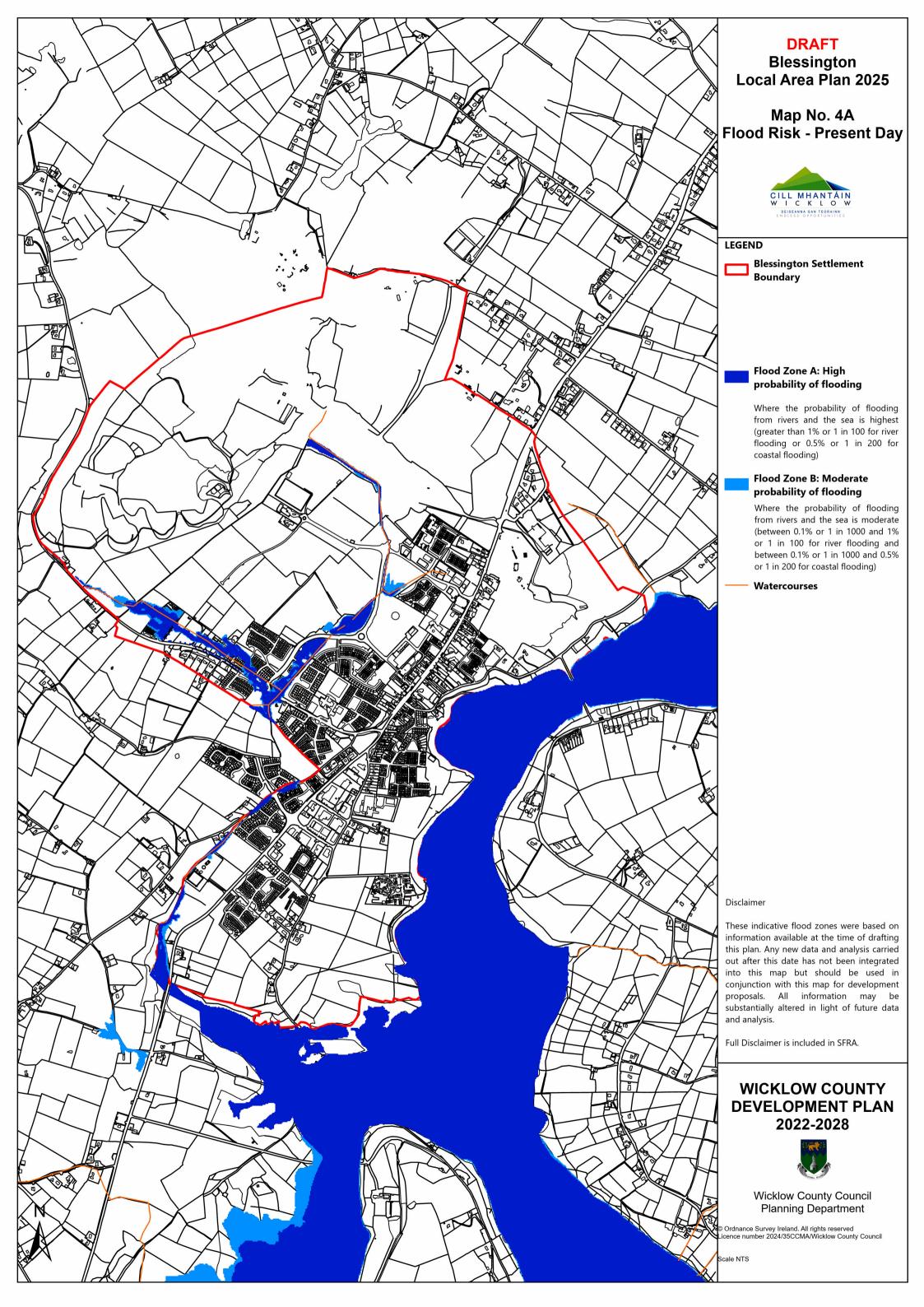
	the method wilds and a second will
	t is not considered necessary
to	o include a site specific AA
ot	bjective for each individual
pa	arcel of land that may the
pc	otential for impacts on
Eu	uropean Sites. The objectives
of	f the CDP and the draft LAP
ar	re considered appropriate
ar	nd sufficient to protect
Eu	uropean Sites.
l In	n relation to bat lighting on
th	he site, should the members
wi	vish to proceed to make the
Pr	roposed Material
Ar	mendments, it is
re	ecommended that the text of
th	he Proposed Material
Ar	mendments be modified as
de	letailed to follow.

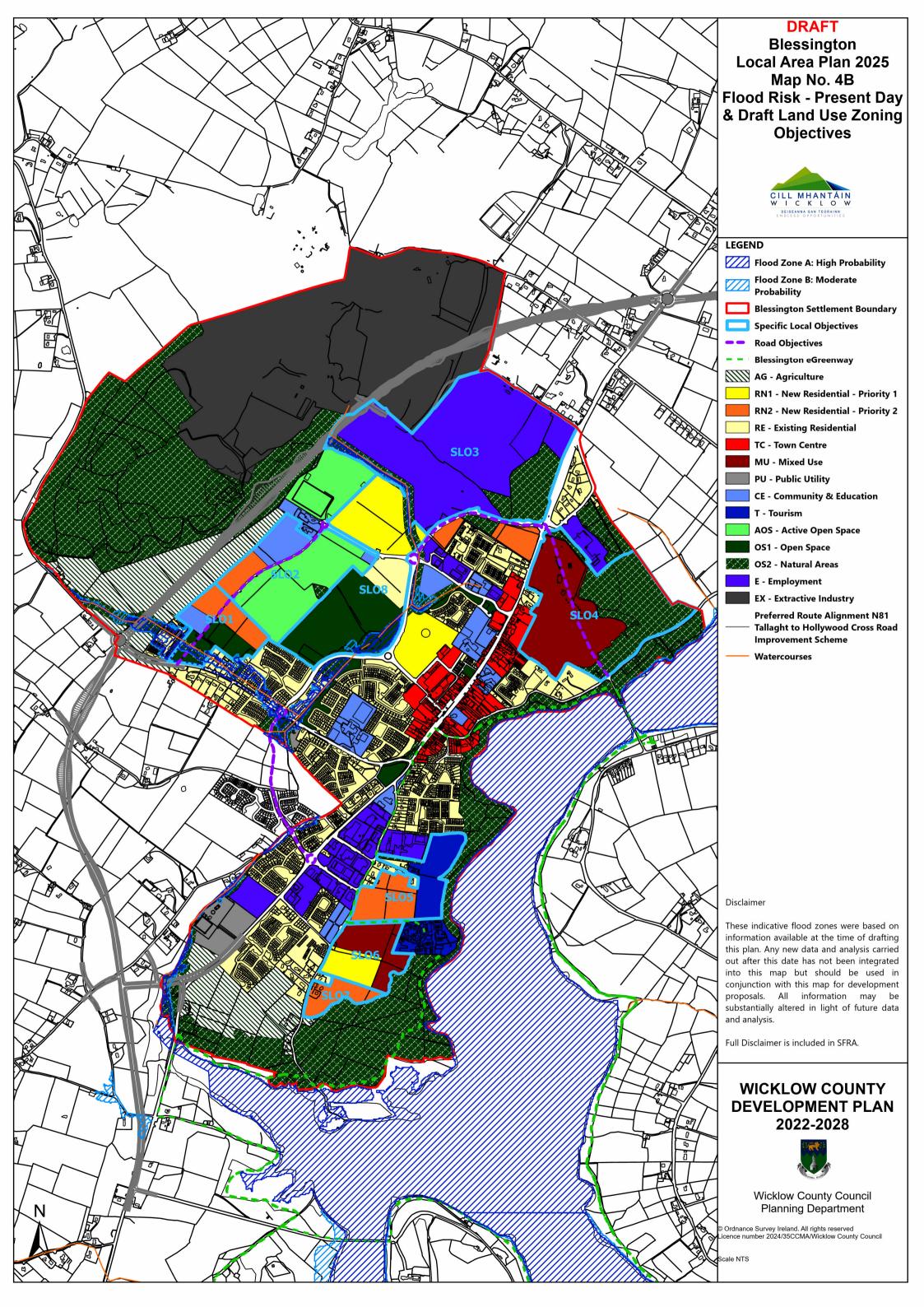


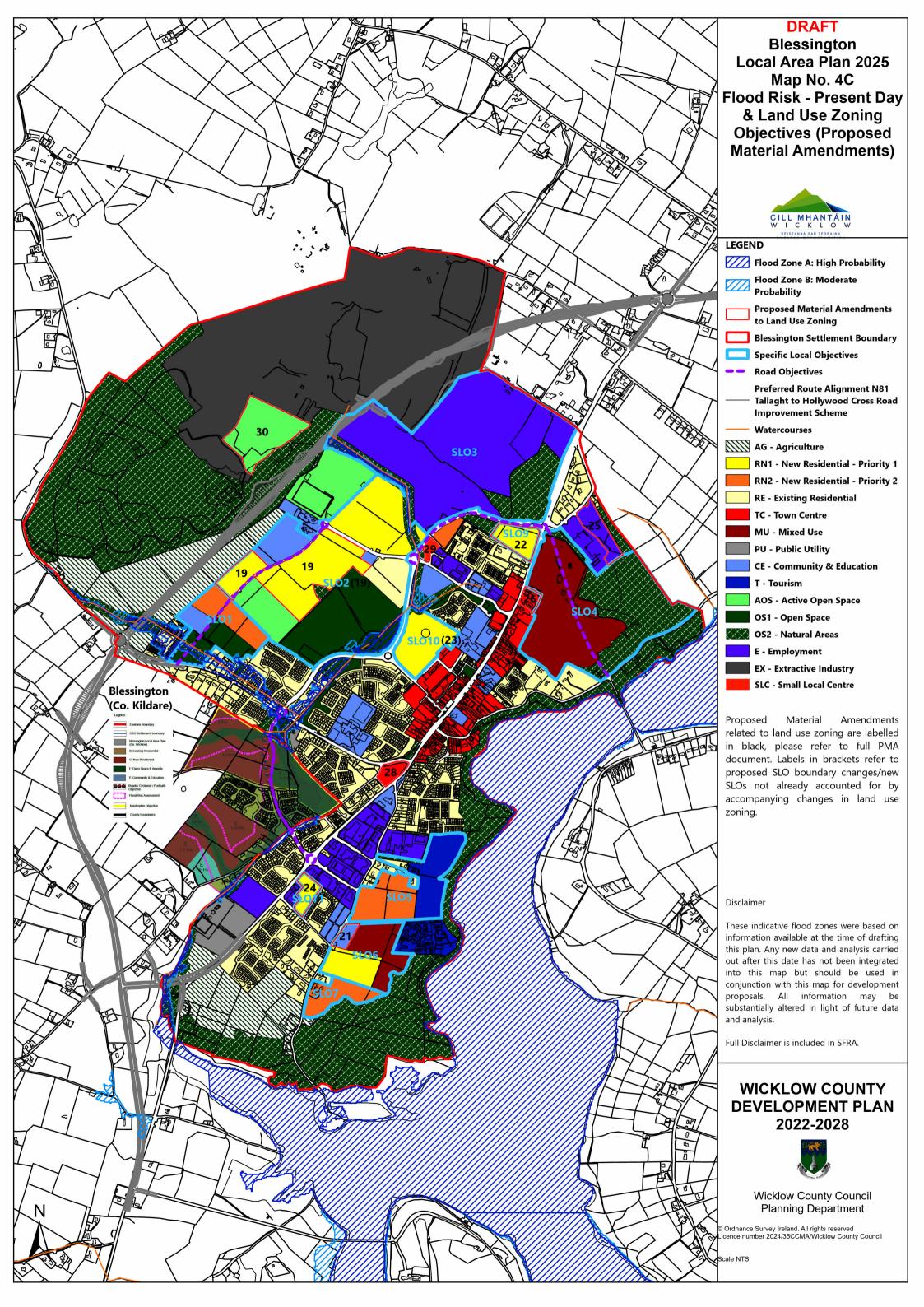


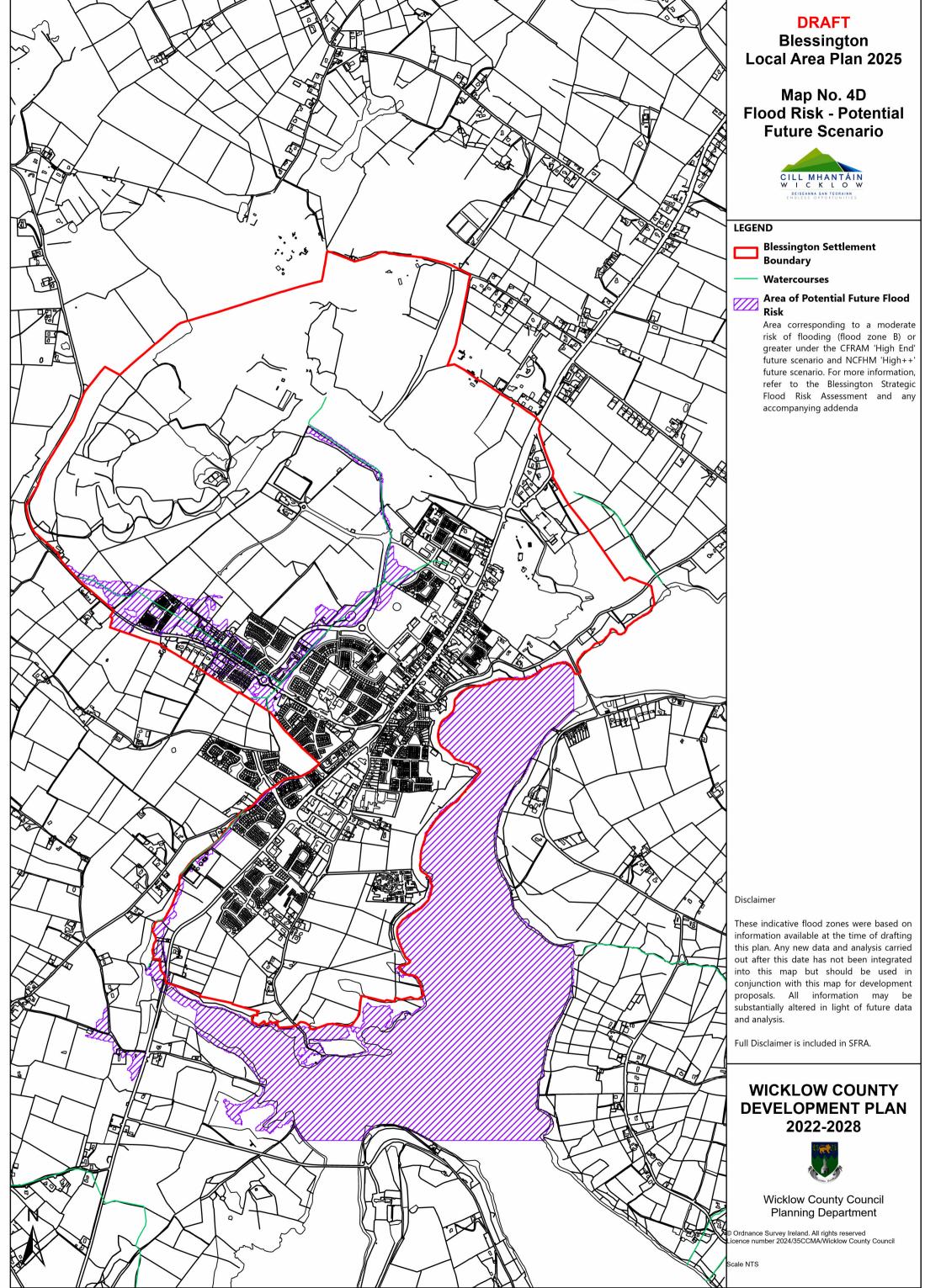




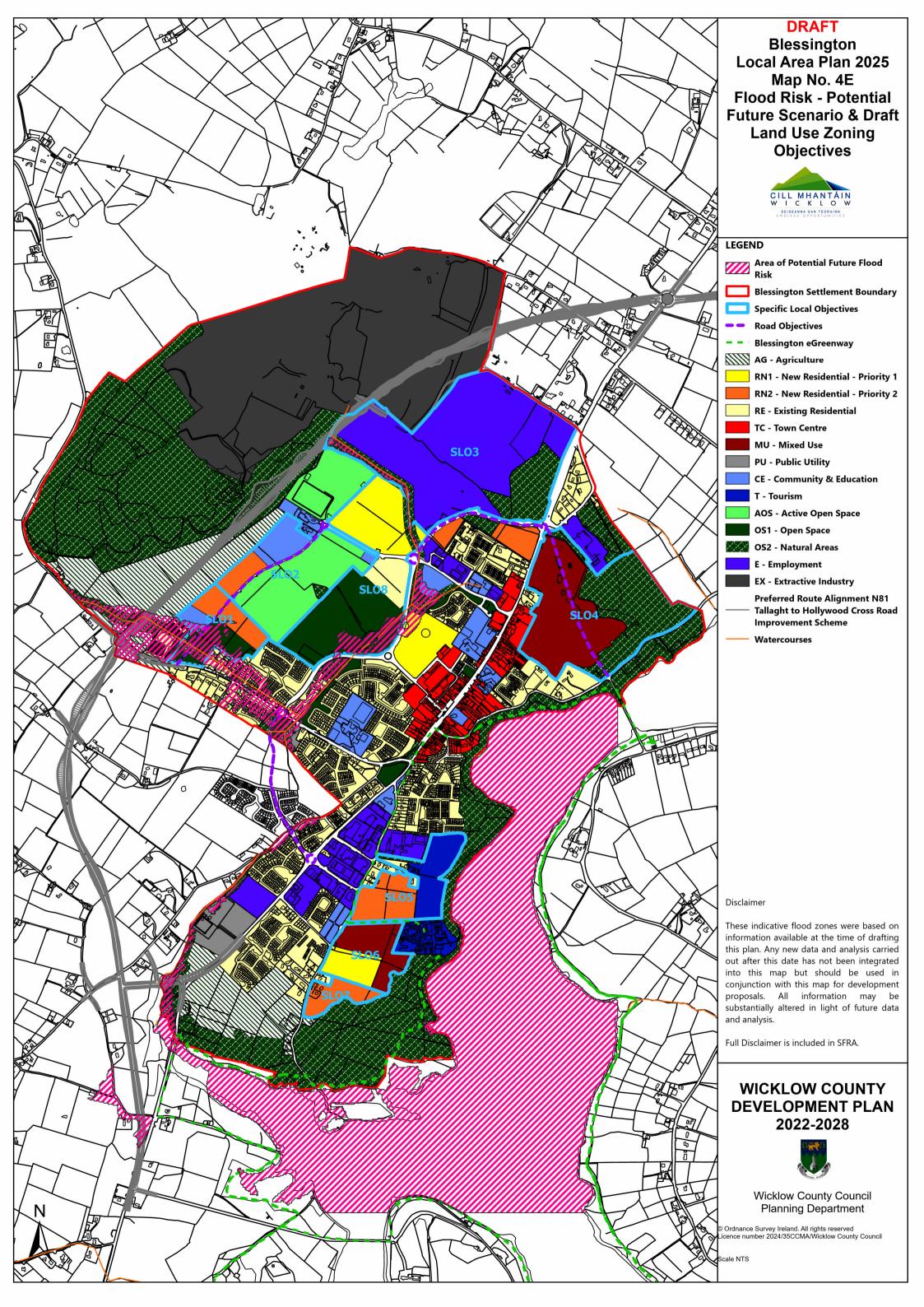


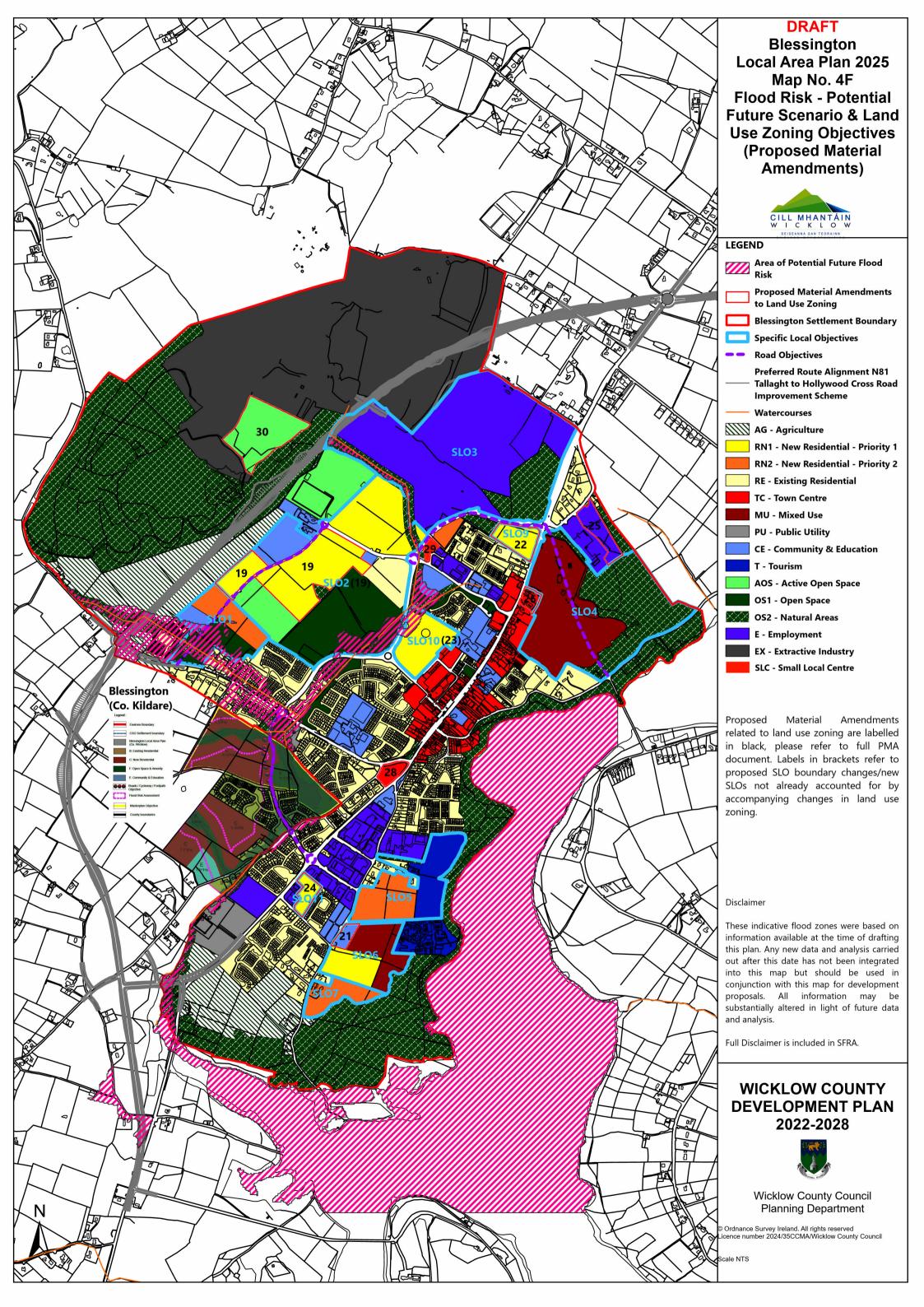


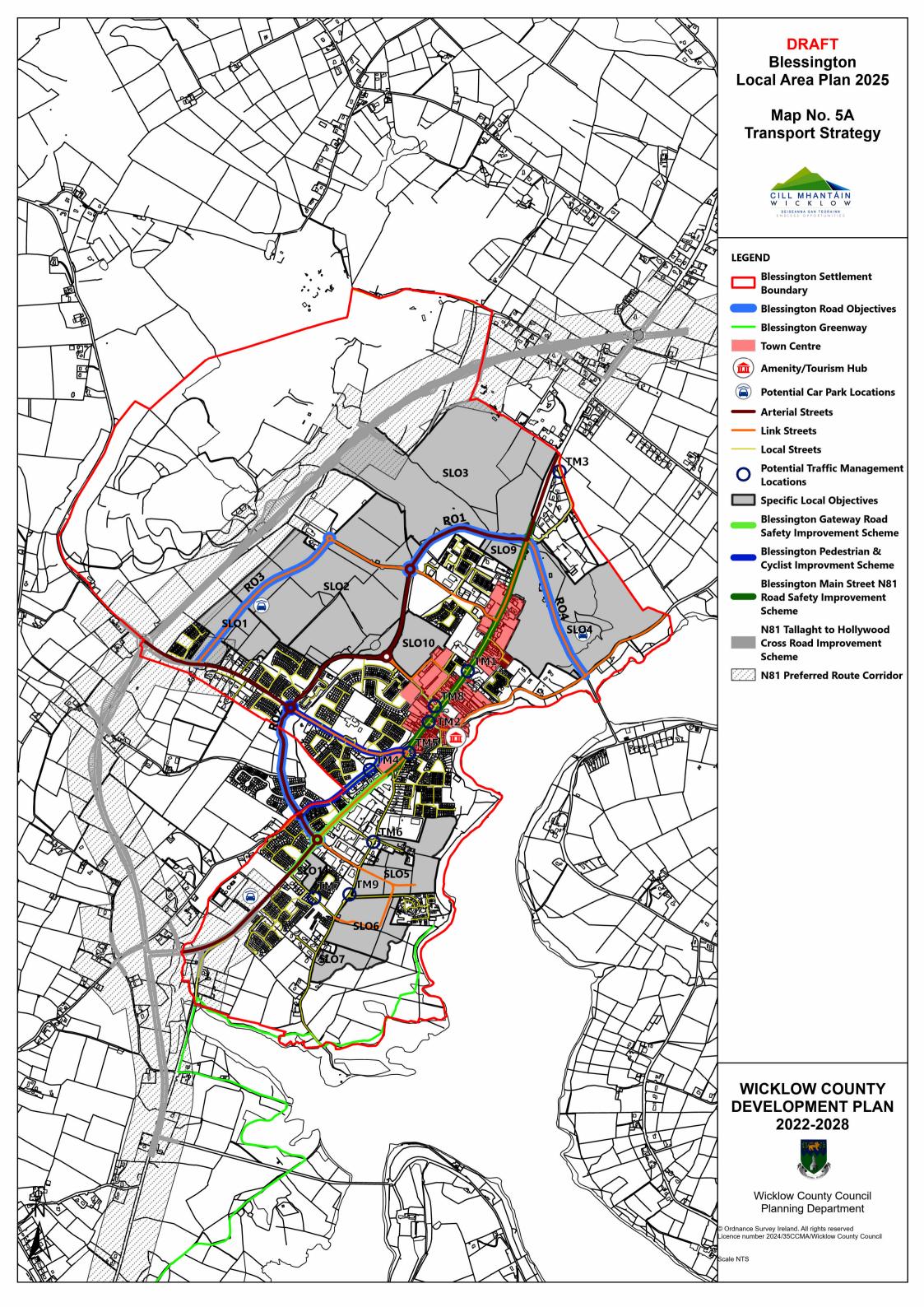


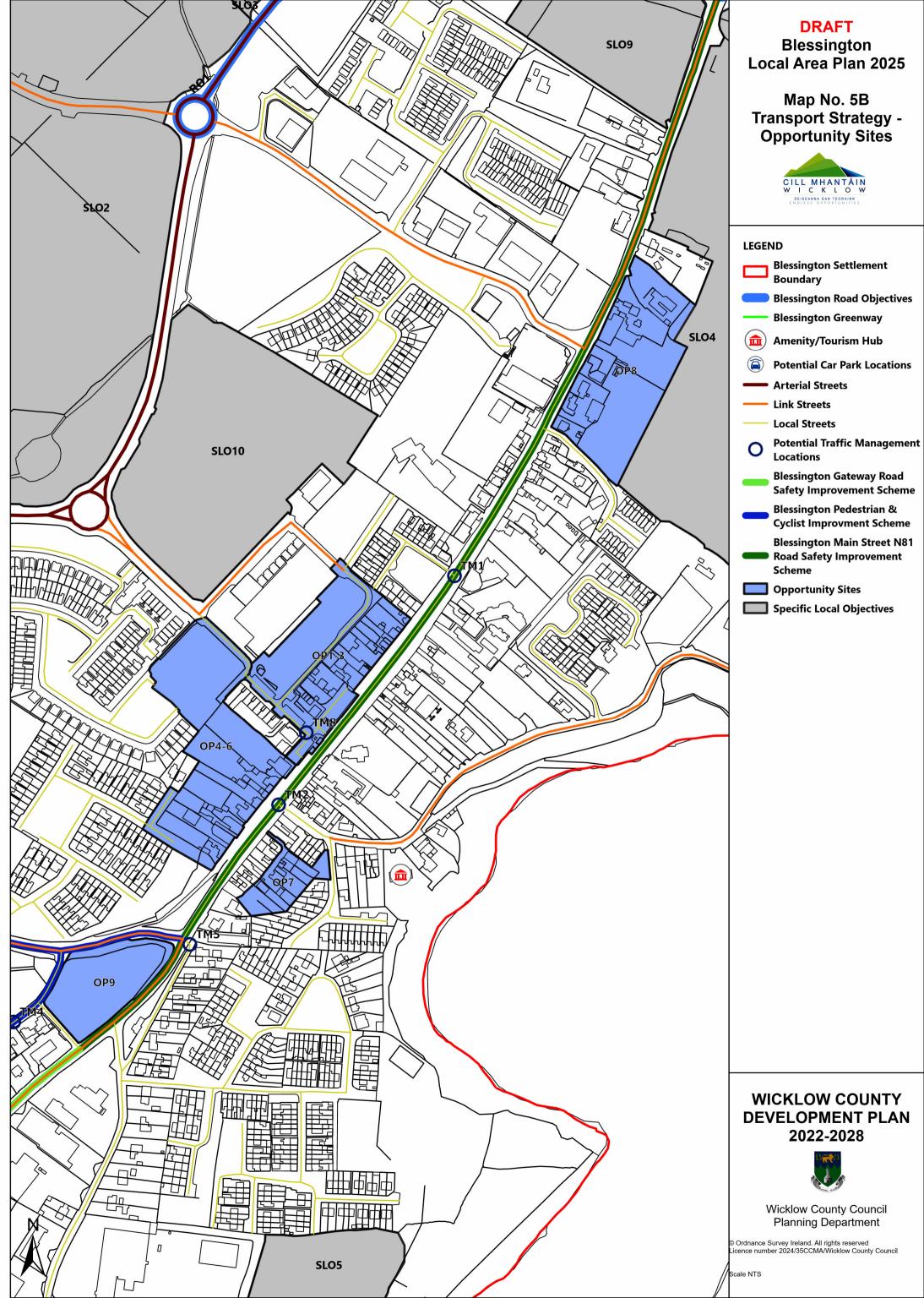


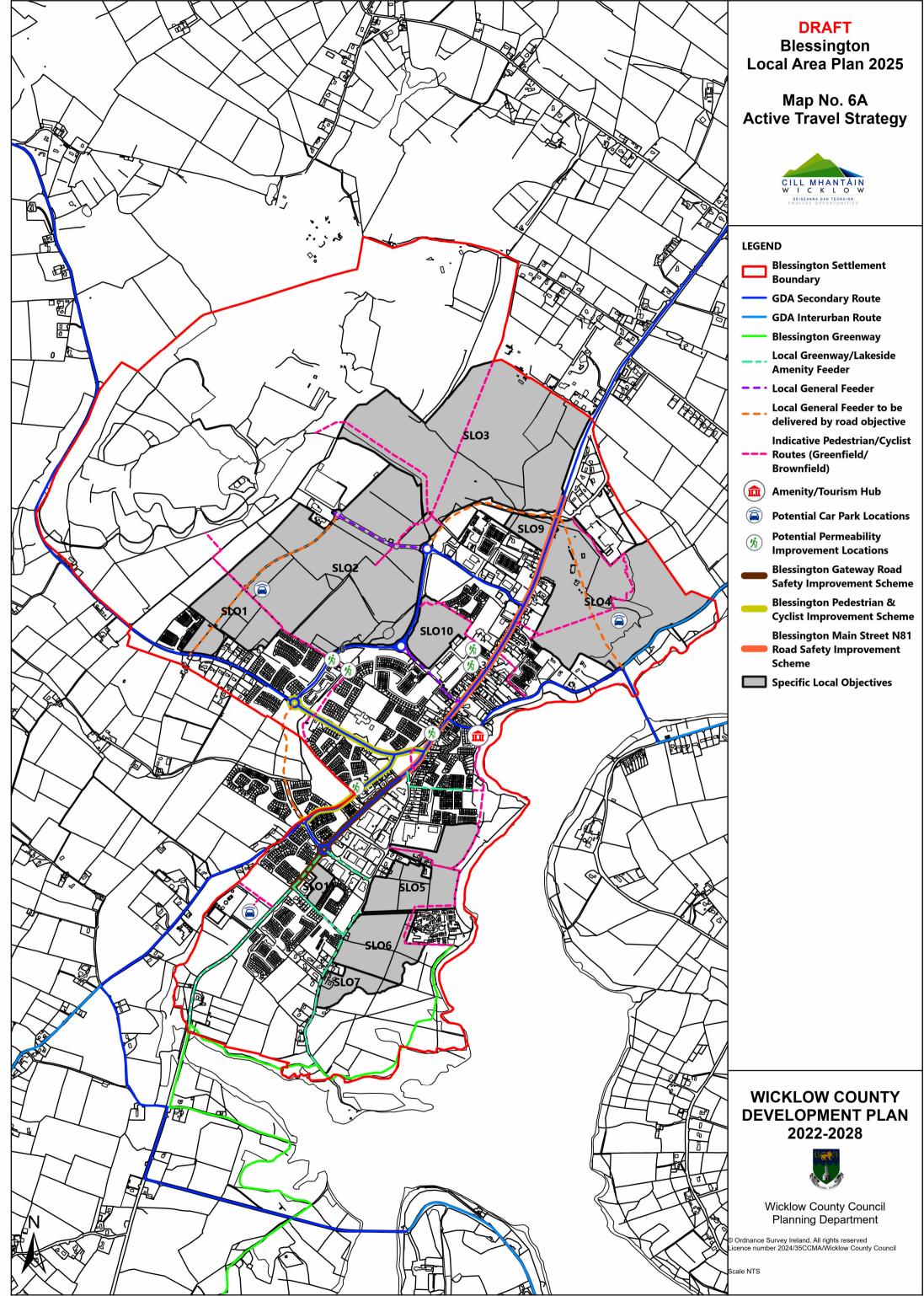


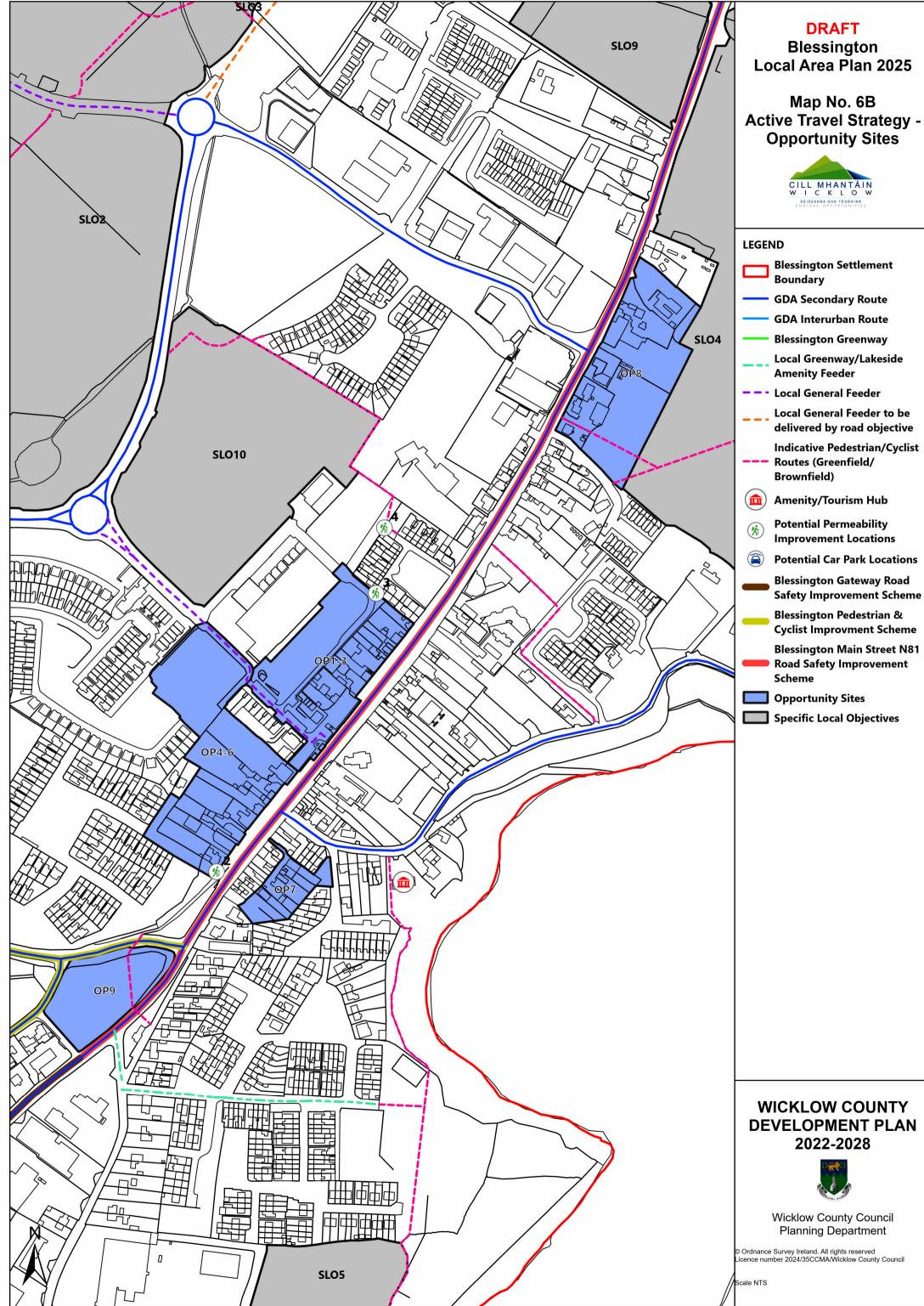












DEVELOPMENT PLAN